

# POBL DEWI

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June / Mehefin 2025

## Past, present and future

*Bishop Dorrien reflects on the significance of the new diocesan logo*

**N**EXT year will be a Year of Mission inspired not only by the need I recognise in this diocese, but also by the example of my illustrious predecessor Archbishop George Noakes.

I'm sure many of you remember the service held at Stradey Park where people from across the diocese came to share in worship, and to be inspired by the action of the Holy Spirit as told in the Acts of the Apostles. And I'm sure those who were there remember the feeling of Christian love and fellowship when we shared the Blessed Sacrament together.

My hope is that we can not only recapture that spirit of 1986 but surpass it when we gather at the Carmarthen Showground in May 2026. Bishop Noakes in 1986 quoted Dean Howell of St Davids who said, "the greatest need of my



dear country and nation at this time is a spiritual revival through the pouring down of the Holy Spirit!" This was true in the 1880s, was true in the 1980s, and is still true now in the 21st century. I believe that we are on the cusp of a revival, but it cannot happen without our very real engagement, or without the activity of the Holy Spirit within each of us.

I wanted a new logo for the diocese that spoke of the past and yet looked to the future. Bishop Cameron of St Asaph, a highly skilled artist who has designed coins for the Royal Mint, graciously

accepted my commission and produced the design you now see; a design that portrays Dewi as an older man who probably reflected on his life and achievements dwelling as much on things he failed to do as with all he accomplished. The dove reminds us of the presence of the Holy Spirit in David's life. A reminder that he was called, just as we are called, to walk the path Jesus sets before us. But, as an older man, Dewi looked to the future, to beyond the span of his own life. He commanded his followers to be joyful, to keep the faith and to remember the little things. It is these words, words that speak of looking forward, that surround the image and form the statement of mission; Joy, Faith, Mission – I commend them to you and pray they will inspire you to action, and to love the Lord more dearly.



## Beth bynnag a ddaw, hindda neu law

*Anne May has enjoyed working with Coleg Elidyr students in the Bishop's Palace garden*

**G**YDA'R gwanwyn ar ei ffordd mae'n hen bryd i fyfyrwyr Coleg Elidyr dorchu eu llewys. Ers 2023, haul neu law, mae criw bach Coleg Elidyr yn dod i Barc yr Esgob bob wythnos. Mae profiad gwaith yn cynnig cyfle arbennig iddyn nhw weld beth i'w ddisgwyl wrth weithio mewn lleoliad cyhoeddus.

Sefydlwyd Coleg Elidyr yn Rhandirmwyn yn 1973 ar gyfer pobl ifanc gydag anghenion arbennig. Pryd hynny, cred wreiddiol y sefydliad oedd bod pawb yn haeddu parch a chyfle cyfartal mewn bywyd. Heddiw, prif nod y coleg yw "dysgu trwy weithio".

Wrth gyrraedd y parc mae pawb yn mynd i'r ystafell wirfoddoli i gwrdd â'r prif arddwr. Ar ôl trafod tasgau mae staff Coleg Elidyr yn defnyddio technoleg 'widgit' (symbolau) i gyfleu beth sy angen ei wneud gyda'u myfyrwyr.

Dyma restr o bethau hanfodol ar gyfer gwaith garddio:

- cot law
- menig diogelwch
- esgidiau cryfion
- diod a brechdanau

Ar ôl gwisgo mae pawb yn barod i gasglu offer o'r sied twls. Trwy gydol y flwyddyn, mae rhestr o dasgau cynnal a chadw i'w gwneud o gwmpas y parc

gan gynnwys: trwsio llwybrau, chwynnu, a chlirio mieri. Yn ogystal â'r tasgau rheolaidd, mae'r grŵp yn cyflawni nifer o dasgau tymhorol:

**Y Gwanwyn** – Adeg dda i hau hadau wrth i'r dyddiau gynhesu

**Yr Haf** – Tynnu Jac y Neidr sy'n tyfu'n hynod o gyflym o gwmpas y parc ac yn atal planhigion brodorol rhag tyfu.

**Yr Hydref** – Yng nghornel yr ardd furiog mae perllan o goed afal hynafol. Un o'r tasgau gorau i'w gwneud yr adeg hon yw hel a golchi afalau a'u rhoi mewn gwasg draddodiadol. Ar ôl cyflawni'r dasg, roedd pawb wrth eu boddau yn blasu sudd afal fres.

**Y Gaeaf** – Adeg ddelfrydol i docio a chael gwared â phlanhigion marw a chasglu dail sy wedi disgyn o'r coed er mwyn gwella safon y pridd

Dyweddodd cyn-fyfyriwr Ethan: "Dw i'n falch iawn. Dw i wedi dysgu sgiliau newydd

fel plannu bylbiau a dw i'n gallu adnabod coed brodorol sy'n tyfu o gwmpas y parc."

Dyweddodd Swyddog Ymgysylltu Parc yr Esgob: "Mae'n ffrind gweithio gyda'r grŵp hwn! Yn ystod y flwyddyn mae pawb yn cydweithio'n dda gyda'i gilydd. Prif nod

ein prosiect yw gwneud ein gardd yn ardd i bawb!"

Mae'r bartneriaeth rhwng Coleg Elidyr a'r elusen Ymddiriedolaeth Drws i'r Dyffryn yn mynd o nerth i nerth. Bydd yn braf gweld sut mae'r ardd yn datblygu dros y misoedd nesaf.



FOCUS ON VE DAY ANNIVERSARY, PAGES 8 - 10  
FFOCWS AR BENBLWYDD DIWRNOD VE, TUDALENNAU 8 - 10

Free  
Am ddim

## Appointments - Apwyntiadau



**MORGAN**  
Rhian, Assistant Curate (Non stipendiary) in the LMA and United Benefice of Bro Dinewfr



**OSBORNE**  
Revd Canon Marianne, as Priest in Charge in the LMA of Bro Caerfyrddin wef 31/03/2025



**FARAH**  
Ven. Mones, as Warden of Readers wef 02/04/2025

## Governing Body

Melanie Prince reports from the Spring meeting

THE Governing Body met in a very sunny Llandudno on 30th April and 1st May 2025. The event began with a eucharist at Holy Trinity Church where we welcomed Archbishop Mark O'Toole of the Roman Catholic Church to be our preacher. It was the first time a Roman Catholic priest had addressed the members of the Governing Body, and he spoke warmly of the importance of working together ecumenically.

The business meeting began with the Archbishop's Presidential Address. He invited the members on a journey through our own beautiful Ceredigion to the iconic stone Cofiwch Dryweryn and its call 'Do not forget who you are'.

He reflected on the ways in which our nation has been shaped, how it continues to change and the ways in which the Church has journeyed and changed too. He invited the Church in Wales to respond to the new challenges of the day by becoming a more professional, grounded, compassionate, connected and creative Church.

The usual reports were received including one on the Diocesan Learning Community and an update on the Growth Fund.

The item which generated most discussion was a Private Members' Motion brought by the Archdeacon of Llandaff to change the length of the terms of office for members of the Ministry Area Councils from

one year to three, and to instigate a system whereby a third of the Ministry Area Council stands down each year. An amendment was presented and voted upon, but in the end the motion was carried.

Dr Monica Attias of the Community of Sant'Egidio addressed the meeting to share about the work of the charity and a collection was made to support the work.

Sant'Egidio is a Christian community born in 1968 in a secondary school in Rome. Today, it has become a network of communities in more than 70 countries of the world. The Community pays attention to the periphery and peripheral people, gathering men and women of all ages and conditions, united by a fraternal tie through the listening of the Gospel and the voluntary and free commitment to the poor and peace.



## Passion, peace and pilgrimage

Sophie Whitmarsh reflects upon the Year of Children, Youth and Families so far, and looks forward to what is to come

IN April the diocese welcomed the LAMPS theatre company who performed in Ammanford, Hakin and Aberystwyth their *Passion* production. Each performance welcomed over 50 guests, totalling nearly 160 people. The overall response was positive and the engagement has been heartwarming.

In May, a dedicated team of clergy and volunteers provided two full days of activities in St Michaels, Aberystwyth and St Marys, Tenby. Over 270 children from schools across the diocese travelled to these events. The theme for this year's festival was 'Peace'. Activities offered were designed to inspire creativity and reflection.

Among the highlights were the captivating 'tornadoes in bottles', where children could create their own mini tornadoes, and the delicate art of making peace cranes, symbolising hope and harmony. Additionally, the *What is Peace?* collage activity encouraged the children to express their understanding of peace through art. The success of these events was evident in the smiles and laughter of the children as they engaged with each other and the activities. It was a wonderful opportunity for learning, creativity, and community bonding.

Looking forward to the rest of the year, on 14th June members of the faith, voluntary and statutory sector organisations are coming together in Pembrokeshire College to look at how we might work together for the well-being of our future generations, with the new Future Generations: Irons in the Fire Conference.

Between the 4th and 8th August we will be making our way to St Davids for the Annual Youth Pilgrimage – bookings are already being taken. The Angels



Scheme, which was set up to help people who are unable to afford the pilgrimage is also working well, with donations beginning to come, and I would like to encourage people to make donations if they are able.

Freedom Festival on 30th August will be a free event for all, and will be children, youth and families friendly. With a carnival, inflatables, crafts, face painting, drumming, live worship, Holy Fools and so much more, it is shaping up to be a Spirit-filled event. In association with Pure West Radio, the Sound of Wales and Get the Boys a Lift, we are expecting a great turnout and need the support of all our churches to make it a wonderful day for all to enjoy.

Information about all events can be found at

[www.stdavidscyf.org.uk](http://www.stdavidscyf.org.uk)



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# 2025 ORDINATIONS / ORDEINIADAU 2025

## Sally Farah

I WAS born in Essex, and raised in Tiptree, famously known as the land of strawberries and jam. Both my father and grandfather worked the land for the village's renowned jam producers. Later, my father farmed leased land from the URC Chapel for over 40 years and was among the pioneers of the 'pick your own' strawberry initiative.

At 18, I applied to Trinity College, Bristol, as an independent student. It was there that I met my husband, who was training for ordination with the Diocese of St Davids. I graduated in 1987 and we were married that December, ahead of beginning our curacy in Aberystwyth in June 1988.

Two and a half years later, we moved to Lampeter, where we served in chaplaincy for seven years. This was followed by 16 years in the Diocese of Chelmsford, ministering together on a housing estate in Chelmsford. In 2014, we returned to Aberystwyth for five years before relocating to Capel Hendre in 2019.

Since 1994, I have been actively involved in lay and preaching ministry, with a particular passion for encouraging members of the congregations we've served – young and old – to discover, develop, and live out their God-given calling.

Together with my husband, we

established two schools of ministry over the years, dedicating ourselves to nurturing a deeper understanding and practice of the gifts and ministry of the Holy Spirit, both in our own lives and in the lives of others. The call to ordained ministry had been growing in me for many years and became clear and compelling in 2019. This led me to begin the discernment process, culminating in my attendance at a Provincial Selection Board in March 2023. I then began training at St Padarn's in September 2023.

My deepest passion has always been to create and nurture worship spaces where the presence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is both experienced and honoured. I delight in growing and flowing in the gifts and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and I'm equally passionate about encouraging others to do the same. Nothing brings me greater joy than seeing people discover, develop, and confidently step into their God-given gifts and calling.

I enjoy reading, films, cinema, walking, and writing whenever I find the time. I also have a beautiful Welsh Collie who I love spending time with. My husband and I are blessed with four daughters – Elizabeth, Eleanor, Mary Anne, and Sarah, along with seven grandchildren, one more on the way, and three great-grandchildren.

## Josephine Dean

BORN in Surrey, I moved to Wales when I was 9 and grew up on the family farm in Ceredigion. In my twenties I worked abroad as a nanny in Paris before returning home and meeting my husband, Mike.

We moved to Derbyshire for a few years where both our children were born before returning to Wales to be closer to our respective families. I returned to full-time education in my thirties, completing my degree in Sociology at UWTSD. Immediately prior to being accepted for ministerial training, I worked in Carmarthen foodbank exploring the root causes of food poverty in the local area.

Raised an Anglican, my relationship with God has always been integral to my life but the birth of my children was a catalyst for me to explore both my faith and my calling to ministry more widely.

Furthermore, my experiences of attending church with young children ignited in me a passion for a ministry that is both accessible and supportive to the diversity of families in our communities, whilst also embracing the potential that this holds for welcoming them into the family of Christ.

My greatest wish is the opportunity to walk alongside children



and their families on their own faith journeys and to be able to help nurture and sustain them in their discipleship. However, as a farmer's daughter, I am also committed to the importance of rural ministry and look forward to being able to

develop this side of my ministry further.

I enjoy reading, walking with my dog, exploring the countryside and spending time with my husband Mike and my children Jemima and Jack.

## Cofio Gwenllian

*Arwel Davies tells the tragic story of a Welsh princess*

AR 12fed o Hydref 1278 priodwyd Llywelyn ap Gruffydd ( ein Llyw Olaf) Tywysog Cymru ac Arglwydd Eryri, ag Eleanor de Montford (merch Simon de Montford) ar risiau Eglwys Gadeiriol Caerwranon. Roedd mam Eleanor yn ferch i Harri'r 3ydd, a'i thadcu oedd Brenin John o Loegr. Yn bresennol yn y briodas oedd Alecsander, Brenin yr Alban ac Edward Iaf o Loegr, cefnder y briodferch. I ddatlu'r digwyddiad gosodwyd ffenest liwgar yn y Gadeirlan . . . sydd yw gweld o hyd. Bu dathlu ac anrhegu hael ond doedd dim parhad i'r cyfeillgarwch yma!

Yn 1282 yng Ngarthcelyn ger Bangor, ganwyd Gwenllian, unig blentyn Eleanor a Llywelyn. Yn drist iawn bu farw Eleanor ar enedigaeth Gwenllian. Roedd y baban yn olyniaeth teulu Tywysogion Cymru, ac roedd Edward yn ei gweld yn fgygythiad i'w Goron. Chwe mis yn ddiweddarach trefnodd ef i Lywelyn gael ei lofruddio, a

hynny ger Llanfair-ym-muallt. Gwnaeth Edward fradychu'r Cymry wedi iddo addo y byddai'r milwyr yn ardal Cilmeri, droi tuag adre'n dawel, ni fyddent mewn unrhyw berygl, ond fe lofruddiwyd 3,000 o Gymry. Aeth blwyddyn cyn i Edward fentro droedio yng Nghymru eto, ac mi roedd yn gyfnod bregus i'r Saeson! Trefnodd Edward i Wenllian, y ferch amddifad, gael ei chipio pan oedd tua deunaw mis oed a'i hanfon i Briordy ar dir Abaty Sempringham yn Swydd Lincoln.

Bu'n gaeth yno am 54 o flynyddoedd yn lleian, heb hawl i gael ymwelwyr nag anrhegion na gadael y lle. Dyma lle bu hyd ei marw yn 1337, yn 54 oed, heb wybod am ei theulu nac am Gymru. Dyma ffordd Edward i sicrhau na fyddai dilyniant i linach Tywysogion Cymru.

Yn 1991 ysgrifennodd Byron Rogers erthygl mewn papur newydd o dan y pennawd "The Lost Children" a ddarllenwyd gan Richard Turner, hen gapten llong yn 1993, ac fe drefnodd

fod cofeb i Wenllian yn cael ei gosod yn Sempringham. Erbyn 2001 roedd y gofeb yn dadfeilio ond fe godwyd cofeb newydd drwy haelioni nifer o Gymry, o dan ofal Cymdeithas y Dywysoges Gwenllian.

Gwaith Ieuan Rees, y cain-lythrennwr byd enwog o Sir Gar, yw'r gofeb. Hefyd lluniwyd Llechen Deyrnged a'i rhoi ger copa'r Wyddfafa.

Er fod yna ganu cerddi a defodau sifalri yn y Brydain Canol oesol, roedd yn gyfnod o greulondeb dwys a chaledi. Mae mor bwysig felly, nad anghofiwn hanes y Cymry dewr drwy'r oesoedd.



# Bukavu under siege

*Our correspondent describes 100 Days of silence, resilience, and hope in our Companion Diocese of Bukavu, in the Democratic Republic of Congo*

IT has been nearly 100 days since the city of Bukavu fell under the control of rebel forces. This prolonged occupation has brought daily life to a near standstill, crippling both public and private institutions. With the government no longer in control, many public services have shut down entirely, forcing employees into temporary unemployment banks and micro-finance institutions – normally dependent on the central government – remain closed, cutting off the population from their savings and halting all formal financial transactions. Only mobile banking services are still operational, but they offer limited functionality.

For major businesses, the situation has created an environment of high uncertainty and risk. While some companies are waiting for a resolution to the conflict to resume operations, others are cautiously reopening, yet nothing is as it was before.

Non-governmental organisations, too, are struggling. Funding has been disrupted, with many donors suspending support until the situation stabilises. Insecurity in conflict zones continues to hinder humanitarian operations, as reports of clashes between armed groups persist.

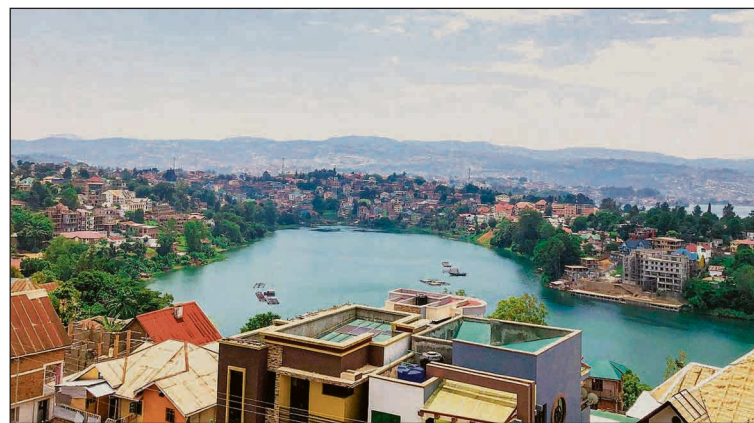
Efforts to restore peace are underway at multiple levels,

involving local, regional and international partners. However, in a context shaped by competition over natural resources and global geostrategic interests, peace in eastern Congo remains an increasingly complex pursuit.

Meanwhile, the population bears the brunt of this crisis – economically, socially, psychologically and spiritually. Each day brings new burdens, yet the people of Bukavu continue to demonstrate remarkable resilience, holding on to hope even when it feels fragile.

This moment calls for renewed solidarity. The suffering in this part of the world must not be ignored. The voices of the voiceless must be

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*Bukavu, the capital city of South Kivu, in September 2020*

amplified and action must be taken to pave the way towards lasting peace.

Just like Gaza, Yemen, Ukraine,

and Sudan, Eastern Congo waits for peace – like a desert waiting for rain.

## Penblwydd elusen Dolen Cymru yn 40 oed!

*Anne Loughran, celebrating 40 years of the Cymru-Lesotho link, gives a personal view of her visits there*

MAE Cymru a Lesotho newydd ddathlu perthynas arbennig ac unigryw. Deugain mlynedd nôl, ar y 12fed o Fawrth, 1985, sefydlwyd Dolen Cymru mewn cynhadledd i'r wasg yn y Swyddfa Gymreig yng Nghaerdydd. Mewn neuadd fawr a addurnwyd â baneri Cymru a Lesotho, i seiniu corau o blant ysgol Caerdydd yn canu yn Gymraeg a'r gwesteion yn canu yn Sesotho ac yn dawnsio, croesawyd Uchel Gomisiynydd Lesotho, Ntate O.T. Sefako, yn ei wisg draddodiadol, gan Dr Carl Clowes, Cadeirydd cyntaf y Ddolen. Ac felly gwiredwyd y freuddwyd o sefydlu gwlad yn efaill i Gymru!

Yn 2005 ces i wahoddiad gan Dr Mary Thorley i fod yn aelod o dîm o ddarlithwyr dan ei harweiniad hi o adran addysg Coleg y Drindod, Caerfyrddin, i deithio i Lesotho gyda'r bwriad o wneud cysylltiadau gyda choleg addysg a phrifysgol yno

(Lesotho College of Education a'r National University of Lesotho). Wel, doedd dim angen meddwl dwywaith! Am gyfle! Mynd ati yn syth i greu adnoddau, gan ein bod i gyflwyno gweithgareddau i ysgolion cynradd gwledig yn Lesotho yn ystod ein hymweliad, Sue Ainsworth yn paratoi rhai Llythrennedd a minnau rhai Mathemateg. Y cyffro o hedfan i Johannesburg ac yna mlaen i Maseru, prifddinas Lesotho, a theimlo wrth lanio yn Maseru fy mod nôl 'adre'! Ac wedi bod nôl 17 o weithiau!

Ychydig fisoedd ar ôl yr ymweliad cyntaf, ym mis Ionawr 2006, gan adael y teulu ac ymfudo gyda 5 o athrawon eraill i dref Hlotse yn Leribe am 6 mis. Dysgu Mathemateg a Saesneg oeddwn i, yn Ysgol Uwchradd Hlotse. Cynnal cyrsiau i athrawon cynradd ar draws y wlad, a thrwy gefnogaeth Coleg y Drindod llwyddwyd i

fewnforio 25 o flychau adnoddau Mathemateg i ysgolion cynradd, sydd dal yn ddefnyddiol ugain mlynedd yn ddiweddarach, fel y gwelais yno yn ddiweddar!

Trwy Ddolen Cymru cawn gyfle i groesawu disgyblion, athrawon a darlithwyr o Lesotho i Gymru yn gyson, gyda chant efallai wedi ymweld â Chydweli, Caerfyrddin, a Llanelli ers 2022. Yn 2010 daeth pedwar i Goleg y Drindod, i wneud ymarfer dysgu. Eleni aeth 14 o ddisgyblion ac athrawon o Ysgol Bro Preseli, drwy drefniant 'Taith', i Hlotse (lle bues i'n dysgu 20 mlynedd nôl), a chawsant groeso arbennig gan rai o'm hen ffrindiau yno! Mawr yw'r disgwyl i'w ffrindiau newydd ymweld â'r Preseli nes ymlaen yn yr haf.

Fe gyfoethogwyd fy mywyd yn fwy na allaf ddweud drwy fy mhrofiadau gyda Dolen Cymru.



## Bukavu – Stop Press

CURRENTLY, our region is under the control of rebel groups who treat us with inhumane brutality. Access to healthcare, clean water, and electricity has become a luxury beyond reach for many. Children are forced to abandon their education, wandering the streets without hope for a better future.

Each day, we witness looting, sexual violence and the abandonment of women and girls, some coerced into prostitution or theft to survive. Famine is intensifying, claiming innocent lives.

The situation is dire, and the dangers are escalating daily. In this context, your support is a breath of fresh air, a reminder that we are not alone. Your prayers and compassion empower us to continue hoping and striving for a better future. I kindly ask you to continue praying for us, for the restoration of peace, the triumph of justice and the victory of humanity over barbarity. May God bless you abundantly and the entire Christian family of the church of Living Hope for your love and solidarity.

## New Regional HR Officer



IN March our new Regional HR Officer, Helen Lovitt, joined us. Helen was previously Head of HR at Estyn and has over 15 years' experience in all aspects of HR. Her role is to support LMAs and other bodies to navigate the sometimes complex world of employing staff, including recruiting, onboarding, case management and any other aspect of the employee life cycle. Her advice will cover both clergy

and lay employees.

In time she will also be providing training on a range of topics including managing performance, having difficult conversations and managing conflict.

If you have any questions or concerns about anything related to HR, you can contact Helen on [helenlovitt@cimw.org.uk](mailto:helenlovitt@cimw.org.uk) or by phone on 07984 985380.

## Calling all church bell ringers! (and those that know them!)

*No matter if you are new to bell ringing or have been doing so for a number of years, you are all cordially invited to attend safeguarding training which is being delivered specifically for bell ringers across the Province*

THE Church in Wales Safeguarding Training officers have been working to improve their own understanding of bell ringing and to this end have been liaising with each of the four Bell Ringing Guilds within the Province as well as the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers. The team have revised the training content to make it more contextually relevant to you as bell ringers and we sincerely hope that take-up will be high.

There will be three sessions of Module B – Understanding Safeguarding in the Church – all of which will be held on-line via Zoom. Here are the session details:

- 18th June 2025 – 10am-12noon
- 15th July 2025 – 6pm-8pm
- 6th November 2025 – 2pm-4pm

As a team, we would welcome any support you can give in encouraging attendance at these sessions. We will also be hosting a Welsh language Module B Zoom training session for the first time on Tues-

day, 1st July at 1.30pm. Spaces should be booked in advance. <https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/clergy-and-members/safeguarding/safeguarding-training/safeguarding-training-booking-form/>

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to get in touch with your Diocesan Safeguarding Trainer and Engagement Officer, Meleri Cray at [melericray@cinw.org.uk](mailto:melericray@cinw.org.uk)



**Abuse – Recognise it Respond to it Record it Report it**

## Grief at Llanboidy

*A masterpiece memorialises the life of an extraordinary man in a Carmarthenshire village, as Richard Davies recounts*

THE charming village of Llanboidy lies in west Carmarthenshire. Tradition says that the village name is derived from *beudy*, the Welsh word for cowshed, as St Brynach, the 6th century patron of the church, supposedly found shelter in such a building; others state he founded the area's first church in a cowshed.

The present settlement is in many respects an estate village, the handiwork of the local squire, W. R. H. Powell of the 3,500 acre Maesgwynne estate. His hand can be seen in many of the public buildings in the area: *Pevsner* lists, amongst other structures, the Maesgwynne Arms, the market hall, the primary school, a small courtyard of estate houses which carries

the name of *Piccadilly Square* as well as a drinking fountain which commemorates Powell's efforts in supplying the village with a water supply. The parish church, too, benefitted from his largesse and he paid for the 1878 restoration.

It may not be a surprise that the squire founded his own pack of foxhounds of which he was the Master for 50 years, but, more unusual, he laid out his own race course! However, what is most surprising about this man, who was MP for Carmarthenshire between 1880-1885 and West Carmarthenshire between 1885 and his death in 1889, were his markedly radical views. Author Dr Denley Owen lists some of his beliefs: 'he advocated the disestablishment of the Church of England in Wales, education for all, tenants rights, expansion of the franchise, local democracy, Home Rule for Ireland and for Wales. Powell may have gone to church on Sunday but for the rest of the week he was a dissenter!'

Powell died in 1889; not for him a plaque on the church wall or a stained glass window, but rather, the family commissioned Cardiff-born, W. Goscome John to produce a memorial. For John, who had studied with Rodin and who would become one of the leading sculptors of his generation, this was his first major commission. What he produced was a 'Scantly dressed female figure, either Truth or Despair, leaning, abandoned in grief, against a wall. The emotion is palpable . . .' (*Pevsner*). This masterpiece, stood for many years in Llanboidy churchyard, but due to the effects of the weather, the wise decision was taken to move it inside the church, where it can be seen in the south transept.



## When the Waters Rose

*Neil Hook relates a story of hospitality and hope in Haverfordwest  
"Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers." (Romans 12.13)*

WHEN floodwaters devastated the VC Gallery's building in Haverfordwest last year, it wasn't just bricks and mortar that were swept away. In a matter of hours, a vital lifeline to the community – art therapy sessions for veterans, mental health support groups, creative workshops for those recovering from trauma, and a welcoming drop-in centre for anyone in need – was lost.

But the story did not end there. St Martin of Tours Church, just a short walk across town, opened its doors wide. Recognising both the need and the opportunity for service, the church community, led by Revd Jude Bevan, Pioneer Priest, offered the use of their multi-function hall as a new home for the gallery's activities. With warmth and generosity, St Martin's provided more than just space: they offered care, welcome, and a place for community life to continue.

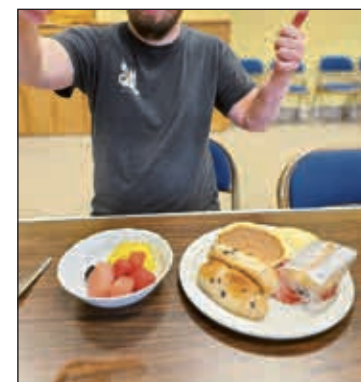
At the heart of it all was Revd Jude's leadership which not only stewarded the collaboration but

provided quiet, faithful pastoral care to all who came through the doors. Within days, the hall was transformed into a hub of creativity, support, and belonging. Every Friday morning, the aroma of breakfast and the sound of laughter filled the space once again.

Week by week, the hall became a place of gathering where art, conversation, and companionship stitched a new tapestry of hope. Over 1,641 breakfasts were shared, each one an act of kindness, a small feast of restoration for those who needed it most.

This partnership was more than practical; it was deeply personal. New friendships blossomed. Barriers were dissolved. The church and the gallery, two communities shaped by different callings, discovered a shared mission: to stand alongside the vulnerable, to offer dignity, and to build places where every person is seen and valued.

Now, as the VC Gallery prepares to return to its restored home,



the time shared at St Martin's is being celebrated, not as an ending but as the beginning of something enduring. The ties formed through months of collaboration will continue to shape the life of Haverfordwest, a testament to what becomes possible when faith meets need, and hospitality becomes a living Gospel.

In every welcome offered, every breakfast shared, and every hand extended in friendship, St Martin's has shown that the Church is at its most powerful when it simply loves its neighbour.

## Running for Gaza

THE Al Ahli Hospital, run by the Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem, is the only fully functional hospital left in Gaza City. Or it was until Palm Sunday when it was partially destroyed by Israeli bombs.

In a gesture of solidarity, Canon Marcus Zipperlen undertook a fundraising run in the Pembrokeshire hills, tackling the renowned annual Preseli Beast course – 24 miles of rugged terrain rising to nearly 2,000 feet.

"It was disturbing to learn that

the Anglican run Al Ahli hospital in Gaza had been bombed," Marcus says. "So I thought I'd try and do

something to raise a little money to contribute towards its rebuilding."



Al Ahli Hospital: Omar Ashtawy/APA Images

## Being present

In his latest article, Matt Webster considers the sharing of the rhythm of life and looks forward to a summer festival

IN my first article I introduced the Community of the Way – our emerging monastic community rooted in Llansteffan, shaped by prayer, simplicity, and radical hospitality. This time, I want to share more about our sense of mission – how a contemplative life can also be one of deep engagement with the world around us.

Monastic life is sometimes misunderstood as a retreat from the world. But for us, it's a commitment to *being present* – to God, to each other, and to the community we

live among. The Rule that guides us calls us to welcome those who seek peace or reflection – not indiscriminately, but with attentiveness, boundaries, and reverence. It's not about offering quick answers, but sharing a rhythm of life where love can be known in the ordinary.

A lot of our mission unfolds quietly: sitting with someone over soup and bread, walking the estuary path with a friend, or simply listening, or to gather for a dawn fire on the beach – a vision of prayer grounded in the rhythms of

tide and light. Moments like that help shape how we live now.

Some of our outreach is based in Carmarthen, where we collaborate with organisations supporting people living through poverty, addiction, or mental distress. These friendships are built gently and respectfully. The monastery is not a service provider – it's a household of prayer, and those who join us become part of its rhythm, even briefly.

We also see our relationship with the land as part of our mission. Through the Glasbren Project at Lord's Park Farm, there are opportunities to help to grow food, keep bees, and join in with the practice of community-supported agriculture. It's slow, earthy, and shared. As Pope Francis reminded us, "The very flowers of the field and the birds which (Jesus') human eyes contemplated and admired are now imbued with his radiant presence." We believe that caring for creation is not just good stewardship – it's a way of being close to Christ.

This summer, 9-24 August, we're hosting a two-week festival inspired by St Francis' *Canticle of the Creatures*, exploring how praise, justice, and care for creation belong together. The festival will include writing workshops, concerts, an open mic poetry night, and a stunning exhibition featuring large embroidered sculptures by Romola Parish. One weekend will focus especially on Franciscan themes of simplicity, peace, and kinship with all creation.

To learn more or get involved, visit

[www.communityoftheway.org.uk](http://www.communityoftheway.org.uk)



## All aboard!

Lynn Rees extols the benefits of volunteering with the Sea Cadets

FOLLOWING service in the Crimean War, Revd Henry Barton returned to his ministry as Vicar of Whitstable to find increasing numbers of destitute boys orphaned by the war.

In 1856, to help these boys, he established an orphanage 'which taught nautical skills'. In time further orphanages were established and became known as the Navy Lads' Brigade. In 1910 the Navy League sponsored a small number of units and in 1919 adopted the name of the Navy League Sea Cadet Corps.

Today there are over 14,000 Sea Cadets and 9,000 adult volunteers in 400 units overseen by a national charity, the Marine Society and Sea Cadets, which follows the traditions and customs of the Royal Navy. St Davids Diocese has Sea Cadet units in Aberystwyth, Fishguard, Milford Haven, Pembroke Dock and Tenby with a new unit planned for Carmarthen soon.

I have been a volunteer at Aberystwyth Sea Cadets since 2008 and

was appointed unit Chaplain in 2016. Chaplains play an important role amongst the 9,000 adult volunteers as a friend and advisor to all, of any faith or of none.

Involvement with the Sea Cadets provides a great opportunity to reach young people in our community and greatly broadened the scope of my ministry as well as providing opportunities to develop my experience and learn new skills.

I have recently returned from the annual Chaplaincy Continuation course at HMS Raleigh in Plymouth where 30 Sea Cadet Chaplains came together for a week's training and fellowship.

Units in Llanelli, Tenby, Pembroke Dock and Milford Haven do not currently have a Chaplain. They offer also a variety of different volunteer roles so if you are interested in finding out more, please contact Rev Lynn Rees at

[lynnrees@cinw.org.uk](mailto:lynnrees@cinw.org.uk)

or the Sea Cadets at

[www.seacadets.org](http://www.seacadets.org)



## Off to see Our Lady

Plans for this year's pilgrimage to Walsingham are well under way. Mary Rees outlines what's in store. And you are invited

WE have provisionally booked accommodation at the Shrine from September 15th to 19th 2025. Both the faithful pilgrims who have come over the years and also new pilgrims are assured of an unforgettable experience both spiritually and socially.

We travel on a luxury coach (with a toilet on board). However, we have several comfort stops along the way! There are many pick-up points en route and this year there is also one in Cardiff (as now we are delighted to welcome new pilgrims from Ministry Areas there).

I would be delighted to hear from people who would like to join us. Please contact me on 07947985191 or [maryevanrhys@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:maryevanrhys@hotmail.co.uk). Clergy who are interested please contact our lead priest Fr Adrian Furse who will be pleased to give you the details.

A very successful Walsingham information evening was held at Dafen Parish Church on May 7th and was hosted by Fr Stuart Tanswell.

I look forward very much to

hearing from you. It is wonderful to be thinking, once again, of spending time in the sacred and incomparable Shrine of our Lady of Walsingham.



# Maha Kumbh Mela

The Kumbh Mela is a Hindu pilgrimage festival that takes place in India every 12 years at the confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna rivers in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh.

Interfaith Officer Shirley Murphy describes the experience

FOR many Hindu pilgrims, bathing at the festival where three holy rivers meet is the spiritual journey of a lifetime. The pilgrims come, millions upon millions, in an unrelenting tide, forming one of the largest religious gatherings in history.

It's based on the belief that bathing in the sacred rivers cleanses sins, brings people closer to spiritual liberation and bestows blessings that last for generations. Pilgrims make the trip not just for themselves but for their children and grandchildren.

Day after day, the crowd swells, pressed closely together. They make their way through a sea of people, treading carefully down the slope before reaching the riverbank. At times they lean on bystanders to steady themselves, at other times they run the risk of trampling those around them.

It is celebrated when Jupiter is in the sign of Aquarius (Kumbh). This year, that was from January 13 to February 26 at the Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj, one of four cities where the festival takes place.

In Hindu mythology, during the *sagar manthan* or churning of the ocean of milk by gods and demons, a fierce battle erupted over the *amrit* (nectar of immortality). In this cosmic struggle, the gods spilled four drops of the nectar of immortality on Earth and, when the Moon and Jupiter align, the Ganga and the Yamuna are joined by a mystical river called Saraswati, meeting at the points where the divine nectar fell.

The 45-day festival attracted some 400 million people, a staggering number that dwarfs the two million pilgrims who journeyed to Saudi Arabia for the annual Hajj pilgrimage last year.

The pilgrimage site was turned into a sprawling tent city, stretching over 40sq km along the riverbanks and divided into 25 sections to provide smoother management. There were over 3,000 kitchens, 150,000 toilets and 11 hospitals. Indian Railways ran more than 90 special trains, making nearly 3,300 trips to transport the devotees, in addition to its regular services.

Saints, yoga enthusiasts, travellers, photographers and believers from around the world come to the Maha Kumbh Mela for different reasons. Some are drawn to the vibrant cultural performances, the captivating displays of folk art and traditional cuisines, and the chance to immerse themselves in vibrant Indian culture. Others consider it a unique opportunity to encounter sadhus, holy men with austere lifestyles, offering a glimpse into ancient spiritual traditions.

Many people say the Maha Kumbh Mela experience will always stay with them because of the sheer faith, determination, and enthusiasm of many people vying for a dip in the sacred water.



## Whole community involvement

Plant Dewi has a range of family support projects across the diocese and it is encouraging to see how Tŷ Mair, Burry Port Family Centre and the local church come together to work with local families and children. Shan Cheesman, Manager of Tŷ Mair, reports

ST MARY'S Church has, historically, played a pivotal role in life of the family centre. In 2010, a group of likeminded people from the local schools, the church and community had a vision to support families – together, they formed a committee and registered as a charity. From the humble beginnings of a weekly Families Together Group, the charity has grown into a five day a week service, working in-house and delivering an outreach provision to neighbouring communities.

Revd Lorna Bradley, the current Chair of the centre, has continued and developed the meaningful relationship between Tŷ Mair and the church. Some of the congregation sit alongside Lorna on the management committee and others fundraise for the centre.

Fundraising is done through

Coffee Mornings, the Bible Study group and generously gifted financial donations to the centre. The centre participates in the annual sponsored walk, providing an opportunity for the centre and church to come together in an informal way, ending the day with high tea for all at the church providing much needed respite and an opportunity for non-church people to visit the building.

St Mary's has an in-house community wardrobe which the centre can refer families to, thanks to the generosity of the community. This helps to mitigate the impact of the cost of living crisis on family budgets. Throughout the year Lorna has delivered a Christingle Service, an Easter Thoughts session and is on hand for pastoral care for staff and families alike. Tŷ Mair has also enjoyed the Harvest

## Prepare for stardom!

'Lights, Camera, Action' is not what you would usually expect to hear in a church! But think again, says Caroline Evans

THIS issue we are shining a spotlight on churches, encouraging us to think about how we can use our many wonderful buildings as locations for film, TV and advertising productions, providing an additional opportunity to generate income for parishes.

With a wealth of so many beautiful and unique listed historic and architecturally significant buildings, we have a lot to offer production companies. In recent years, some Welsh churches have featured, such as St Cattwg's Church, Llanmaes, having been the location for Gavin and Stacey's wedding in the popular BBC series and St Govan's Chapel, Bosherton, in several productions. St Cattwg's reported a constant stream of visitors after the episode was aired, with two days of filming and the churchwarden letting his loo be used by the cast and crew. The church received payment for allowing its space to be used,



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providing valuable income to the parish.

Churches can sign up to feature their buildings by registering with Creative Wales, which is a Welsh Government economic development agency set up to support our creative industries. They have assisted thousands of productions, from popular television shows such as Sex Education, Doctor Who and Sherlock to major feature films such as Harry Potter and the

Deathly Hallows and Snow White and the Huntsman. Preparing to register, do a thorough deep clean and tidy up, grass cut, get lots of good photographs, both exterior and interior, ready to upload, as well as historical and practical information. Good parking is very helpful.

There are important considerations when working with production companies. Firstly, it's crucial to understand the terms of the agreement, including the duration of the filming, the fees involved, and any potential impact on church activities. Also check the content of what they would be filming – no orgies or black masses! Churches should ensure the preservation of their space, working with the production team to minimise any wear and tear on the building. Filmmakers often value historical accuracy and unique settings, making the rich heritage of our many churches an attractive option. Churches are advised to liaise with the diocese for support and to seek approval from their Archdeacon, ensuring contracts are clear and safeguarding their sacred space. It can be quite an upheaval to host a film crew but enjoyable.

<https://www.creative.wales/sites/creative/files/2022-04/Location%20Guidelines.pdf>

Scarecrow event and the Christmas Tree festival, providing a warm welcome to families at their local church.

If you have a Plant Dewi project in your area, please do get in touch to see how you can get involved. For more information, please visit the Plant Dewi website – [www.plantdewi.org.uk](http://www.plantdewi.org.uk) or email [info@plantdewi.co.uk](mailto:info@plantdewi.co.uk).



### Cyfraniadau ar gyfer Pobl Dewi

Y mae croeso i erthyglau oddi wrth ddarllenwyr, ac yn arbennig cyfraniadau Cymraeg.

Dylid anfon erthyglau at y Golygydd:

David Hammond-Williams

[editorpd@churchinwales.org.uk](mailto:editorpd@churchinwales.org.uk)

# Focus on VE Day Anniversary

## Ffocws ar Benblwydd Diwrnod VE



### VE Day at Aberystwyth

Around 65 people came along to Holy Trinity Church, Aberystwyth, on 4th May to commemorate 80 years since VE Day, when we remembered and paid tribute to all those involved in WW2. The service also included a series of readings, hymns led by the choir and prayers for peace in today's world. Among those who attended were (pictured left to right) Ann Margaret Jones, High Sheriff of Dyfed; Brown Owl and Leader of 1st Llanilar Brownies, Janet Webb; and Sam Hearne, Chair of the Aberystwyth Branch, Royal British Legion

## Thomas Myrddin Evans

A WIRELESS operator from the old parish of Merthyr near Carmarthen was one of the remarkable men who helped the formation of the Special Air Service (SAS) in 1941. Thomas Myrddin Evans of Henfwlch was a signalman in the Long Range Desert Group, which supported audacious and heroic attacks featured in the award-winning BBC television series 'SAS Rogue Heroes'.

Myrddin was part of a small, elite unit of volunteers in the North Africa Campaign, which carried out deep penetration, covert reconnaissance patrols and intelligence missions behind German and Italian lines. In November 1941 they were given the task of collecting Captain David Stirling and 30 parachutists who raided airfields west of Tobruk. Twenty-one survivors later became the nucleus of the SAS. Because Myrddin and the Group were experts in navigation they were assigned to guide special forces and secret agents across the Western Desert.

The Long Range Desert Group, or LRDG, known initially as the No 1 Long Range Patrol unit, was founded in 1940 by General Archibald Wavell, Commander of Middle East Command in Alexandria. The idea came from Major Ralph Bagnold, who wanted men who were 'energetic, innovative, self-reliant, physically and mentally tough and able to live

and fight in seclusion in the Libyan desert'. Radio operators like Myrddin were from the Royal Corps of Signals, skilled in communications and able to maintain and repair their equipment without any outside help.

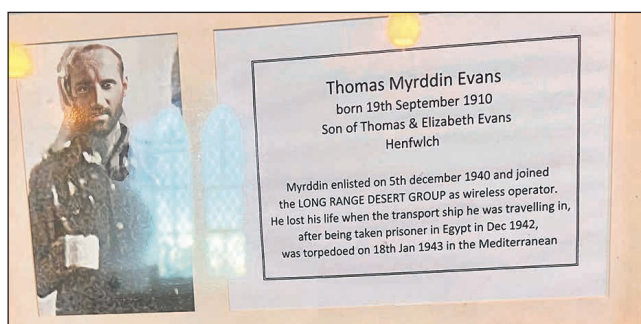
In December 1941 the LRDG twice ferried the SAS on raids on Axis airfields, destroying 151 aircraft and 30 vehicles. During the second raid, at Sirte, the SAS devised a new method of attacking parked aircraft. Instead of quietly infiltrating the airfield, they drove at speed between rows of aircraft, attacking the planes with machine guns and hand grenades. This helped to disrupt the advance towards Egypt of German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, known as the 'Desert Fox'. The raid at Sirte is featured in Series 1, Episode 3 of the Bafta Award winning TV drama series starring Jack O'Connell, Alfie Allen and Dominic West.

Myrddin became a prisoner of war, aged 32, in December 1942. He was killed when an Italian troop

THOMAS James Stretch was born in Goodwick, Pembrokeshire, on 17 January 1915, before studying at St David's College, Lampeter, and in 1938, becoming curate at Holy Trinity Church, Aberystwyth. Ordained shortly before war broke out in 1939, his ministry at Holy Trinity continued until April 1943, when, having enlisted as an army chaplain, he departed with a private communion set presented to him by grateful parishioners.<sup>1</sup> A few days after the D-Day landings, Stretch embarked for France with the British Second Army, which then battled through the Low Countries and into Germany. Weeks after crossing the Rhine in early April 1945, German army representatives offered to surrender Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where a typhus epidemic had broken out.

As chaplain to 10 Garrison Detachment (Military Government), Stretch was therefore amongst the first to enter the camp, finding almost 60,000 inmates, most sick and starving, and 13,000 unburied bodies. Amidst the horror, Stretch and the chaplains were tasked with performing mass burials and attempting to comfort the survivors. With the unfortunate distinction of being one of the first to see firsthand the crimes that had been perpetrated in the name of racial purity, Stretch was filmed

ship was torpedoed in January the following year and his sacrifice features on the war memorial in the church of St Martin and St Enfail in Merthyr. He is survived by great-nephews and great-nieces from the local farming community.



## 'This camp has dealt in one commodity . . . that commodity is death'

Ewan Lawry considers the WW2 service of The Revd T. J. Stretch and the liberation of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp

in front of an open mass grave. "Never", he said, "in my life have I seen such damnable ghastliness." That morning they had buried 5,000 bodies, the pit he stood in front of contained 5,000 more. He also wrote a report for the *Church Times* contrasting the 'really beautiful' scenery surrounding Belsen, with its 'undulating hills and vast pine forests', and 'the hideous doings . . . hidden behind them'.<sup>2</sup> Ensuring that readers were under no illusions about the nature of the camps, he went into graphic detail about the conditions, describing how inmates drank ditchwater, slaughtered and devoured a raw pig, and then died because their stomachs could not manage even a little food. He was disgusted at the way that the German guards 'treated the in-

ternees as beasts' and 'gloated over the suffering', regretting that so many were identifiable only by the numbers tattooed on their arms (for which the corresponding records had been destroyed). The only comfort he found was in seeing the inmates begin to get 'a little of their self-respect back'.

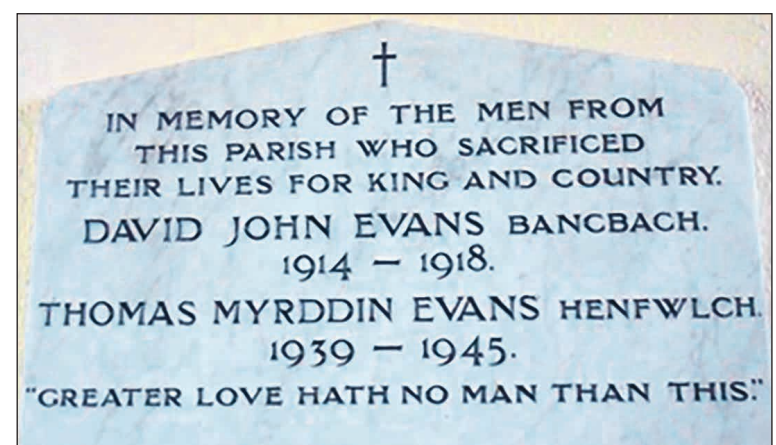
After the war, Stretch returned to parish ministry, serving across Lancashire before his death in October 1973. He concluded his *Church Times* article poignantly: 'what I have seen, I shall never forget'.

<sup>1</sup> 'Aberystwyth', *Welsh Gazette*, 8th April 1943, p.8.

<sup>2</sup> *Church Times*, 18th May 1945, <https://www.belsen.co.uk/rev-thomas-james-stretch/>



Screenshot of Stretch at the liberation of Bergen-Belsen camp. Behind him is a mass grave of bodies, taken from <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/film/british-army-chaplain-describes-bergen-belsen-upon-liberation>



# A substantial contribution to the Allied war effort

George Lisinski highlights the important part played by Polish servicemen during WW2

GERMANY attacked Poland on 1 September 1939, thus starting the Second World War. Following an earlier non-aggression treaty between the Soviet Union and Germany, the Soviets also invaded Poland on 17 September. Meanwhile, Britain and France declared war on Nazi Germany after the start of the Polish invasion. The Poles, heavily outnumbered on all flanks, surrendered on 6 October.

The defeated Polish army was imprisoned in new POW camps in Poland, Germany and the USSR. Many Polish servicemen managed to escape the conflict, making their way through Hungary to France and Great Britain. A Polish government in exile was formed in London to manage the defeated remnants of the Polish forces, liaise with the British and French Allies and continue the struggle against the Nazis.

Those imprisoned in the USSR included General Wladyslaw Anders, who was wounded during



Wladyslaw Anders

the initial invasion and incarcerated in Moscow's Lubyanka Prison.

Several other Polish officers were captured by the Soviets and transported to Russia. Their fate was hidden from the Allies until 1941 after the Germans had launched their invasion of Russia. The Nazis announced they had discovered a mass grave in Smolensk of some

22,000 Polish officers. The Soviets refused to accept responsibility for this massacre until 1991.

For those Polish airmen who managed to escape the invading Germans and Soviets a significant number joined the RAF and figured in the Battle of Britain in 1940. About 5% of Allied pilots who took part in this aerial conflict were Polish.

Poland remained occupied during the rest of the war. However there were two unsuccessful rebellions in Warsaw during this period: Jewish ghetto (1943) and the Warsaw uprising (1944).

After the German launch of Operation Barbarossa in June 1941, Allied attention was focused on the remaining Polish servicemen imprisoned in the USSR and the possibility of mobilising them into a new Allied division. Stalin agreed to this plan and Anders was released from Lubyanka to manage this mobilisation. The 'Anders Army' was thus created with Polish servicemen released from POW



Polish volunteers to Anders' Army, released from a Soviet Gulag camp

camps and instructed to make their way south to Kazakhstan and ultimately to Tehran. They played a significant role in the successful battle of Monte Casino in 1944.

Other WW2 Polish military involvement included decryption of the Enigma machine, the Battle of Arnhem and the Siege of Tobruk.

Photo credits

## Wladyslaw Anders

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anders%27\\_Army#/media/File:W%C5%82adys%C5%82aw\\_Anders.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anders%27_Army#/media/File:W%C5%82adys%C5%82aw_Anders.jpg)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anders%27\\_Army#/media/File:Z\\_niewoli.JPG](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anders%27_Army#/media/File:Z_niewoli.JPG)

## Polish volunteers to Anders' Army, released from a Soviet Gulag camp

By Unknown author – Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe, copy Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=61615986>

## Digging for History

The Department of History and Welsh History at Aberystwyth University has used a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant to run a year-long community project exploring the history of Aberystwyth during the Second World War. Siân Nicholas reports

WARTIME allotments have a long tradition in Aberystwyth, with the fields around the National Library, for instance, turned into growing plots during the First World War and we were hugely fortunate when the University Farms offered us an undeveloped field nearby. Although initially daunting – overrun by brambles, nettles and rabbits – we soon realised the potential of this site for a volunteer-led experiment in living history.

Unfortunately, our start date coincided with the Covid lockdown, requiring an urgent rethink of all our planned indoor activities.

However, if we couldn't Make-Do-And-Mend, perhaps, we thought, we might Dig for Victory?

So, in early 2021, we launched the AberWW2 allotment garden, modelled on a 1942 Ministry of Agriculture leaflet instructing householders how to turn their back gardens into year-round vegetable plots. Some adaptation was needed – wartime gardeners, it turns out, were enthusiastic sprayers of chemicals, mostly now illegal – though it was nice to find so many old seed varieties still available. We grow organically, keeping to the old tradition of sowing in strict rows, but adding companion plants such

as nasturtiums and marigolds to provide colour and attract insects. We don't have space to store our crops, so we donate surplus vegetables to local food banks.

Now in our fourth year, the AberWW2 garden is almost unrecognisable from its early days, boasting a well-stocked toolshed, a water tank and a (much-needed!)

rabbit-proof fence (provided, with grateful thanks, by Tyfu Dyfi). We have had valuable help from Ysgol Gatholig Padarn Sant, Ysgol Gynradd Plascrug, and our new Ysgol Penglais gardening group. We continue to develop our Living History project, with a heritage fruit orchard and (in association with the Aber Conservation Volunteers) a new Indigenous American Milpa/Three Sisters' plot of corn, squash and beans; we hope one day to plant a medieval herb garden. Above all we rely on enthusias-

tic volunteers who show up week after week to weed, dig, plant and harvest, with no reward other than the veg they take home with them. Meanwhile the value of our initial experiment has widened far beyond the historical: an opportunity to work collaboratively, to watch the changing seasons, and to enjoy the sense of achievement and wellbeing that comes with seasonal growing.

If you would like to know more, please contact me: [shn@aber.ac.uk](mailto:shn@aber.ac.uk).



## Joy, solemnity, memories and community spirit

THE VE80 Service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving with the Royal British Legion at St Elli's Church, Llanelli, attracted more than 300 people on 8th May. We had a wonderful service; the whole town pulled together and the event had a warm, friendly and community vibe to it. The church was full to the rafters with standing room only. Ysgol y Ffwrnes sang and Ysgol Penrhos read a poem. The church bells rang at 6.30pm, service at 7pm, refreshments and

entertainment at 8pm and lighting of the Lamp of Peace at 9.30pm.

Then, on 10th May, at St Peter's Church, Llanelli, we had a traditional Street Party. All the ladies made sandwiches, desserts and cakes that took us back to bygone days! It was a traditional party, full of community spirit, laughter and a jolly good singsong to finish.

St Elli's and St Peter's pulled out all the stops to ensure both events were successful and brought joy to the communities they serve.



## All-age Alpha

Bro Aman LMA has recently completed an Alpha course, held in All Saints Church, Ammanford. Ali Reeves is encouraged

A SMALL but engaged group of participants attended, ranging in age from 16 to 60-something. The group came with a wide variety of experiences of church; some were regular longstanding churchgoers, but we also had some who had only recently been baptised and one who had drifted away from church many years ago.

Some of the group had met in church before but didn't know each other well, whilst others were strangers. Some icebreaker games in the first couple of sessions soon helped people to relax and it was lovely to hear some very personal stories shared during the course, once people felt comfortable with each other.

A lack of catering facilities meant that food had to be prepared in the vicarage and brought down each week but the jacket potatoes were probably a favourite and home-made cake always goes down well.

The facilitators were delighted to see how the group came together during the course, developing the confidence to pray out

loud together and, as the course progressed, becoming more confident in articulating how their faith was developing. Some of the comments we received included:

- 'Free food is always good!'
- 'I feel the course has brought me closer to God.'
- 'I've been a churchgoer for many years but this has definitely deepened my faith and understanding.'
- 'I have two families now, my

home family, and my church family.'

- 'I pray every day now and Jesus is definitely a part of my life.'

We are delighted that three of the course participants have asked to be confirmed at our upcoming LMA confirmation service in July with Bishop Dorrien.

Although we had a small group for our first course, we would definitely recommend Alpha as a tool for bringing people into a relationship with Jesus and we are hoping to run the course every year from now on.



## Haf o rialtwch

Richard Davies considers the history of St Peter's Church, Little Newcastle, and looks forward to a series of 150th anniversary events

PAN olynodd Parch Arthur Richardson ei ewythr, Parch Peter Davies Richardson, fel ficer Casnewydd- Bach yn 1866, un o'r tasgau cyntaf a oedd yn ei wynebu oedd cyflwr gwael eglwys y plwyf. Yr oedd gan San Pedr hanes digon cyfnewidiol yn barod: yr oedd y strwythur canoloesol mwy na thebyg wedi cynnwys corff, eil gogleddol a changell, ond yr oedd yr eil ogleddol wedi ei cholli mwy na thebyg yn yr unfed neu ail ganrif ar bymtheg a llanwyd y ddwy arcêd gron.

Ar ddechrau'r bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg ceisiwyd gwella cyflwr yr adeilad: un rhan o'r arcêd yn cael ei hail-agor a chwarter yr eil ogleddol wedi ei hadennill. Serch hynny, am wahanol resymau, yr oedd

yr adeilad a ymddangosodd o ansawdd isel iawn a hynny a orfododd Arthur Richardson i gychwyn y trydydd adferiad mewn llai na saith deg mlynedd.

Lluniodd y Pensaer Esgobaethol, E. H. Lingen Barker gynllun chwildroadol: collwyd yr eil ogleddol, gwnaeth y corff yn hirach ac yn fwy llydan ac ychwanegwyd cyntedd a festri. Cafwyd caniatâd yn 1870, ond ni ddechreuwyd ar y gwaith tan hydref 1872 a roedd y gwaith mewn dwy ran, mwy na thebyg am resymau ariannol. Er yn bensaerniol anenwog, y mae'r strwythur yn fodel gwerslyfr o beth y tybiai eglwyswyr cyfoes y dylai eglwys 'iawn' i fod gyda rhaniad tair rhan esgynedig o gorff, cangell a chysegr ac

addurniad (cyfyng) i ychwanegu at y 'theatr o addoliad'. Gyda gosod y pulpud ac organ un bob ochr i fwa'r gangell, yr oedd gan bob addolwr olwg heb ei chyfyngu o'r allor.

Ar Orffennaf 21, 1875, pregethodd Basil Jones, Esgob Tyddewi ar y pryd, ar ail-agoriad yr eglwys, a'r Gorffennaf hwn, bron i 150 mlynedd i'r diwrnod, bydd Esgob Dorrien yn pregethu yng ngwasanaeth y Penblwydd, a chinio dathlu i ddilyn. Ei ymweliad bydd uchafbwynt y dathliadau, ond y mae llawer o ddigwyddiadau wedi eu trefnu drwy'r flwyddyn i nodi'r garreg filltir hon yn hanes yr eglwys, sydd yn barod wedi cynnwys darlith am yr eglwys 1840au, ymweliad gan Ymddiriedolaeth

Adeiladau Hanesyddol Sir Benfro, tra bydd taith Sul y Gweddiau yn daith o dan arweiniad o gwmpas y fynwent yn tanlinellu'r nifer o bobl diddorol a phwysig sy wedi eu claddu yno. Yn nes ymlaen yn yr haf, ymysg pethau eraill, bydd yr eglwys yn fan i ddau

digwyddiad a drefnwyd gan Wyl Gerdd Abergwaun, yn cymryd rhan yng Nghynllun Drysau Agored ym mis Medi ac yn yr Hydref Cymanfa Cynhaeaf i helpu codi arian gogyfer â'r Eisteddfod Genedlaethol a gynhelir flwyddyn nesa yn Sir Benfro.



## Learning to love moles!

Harriet Carty, from *Caring for God's Acre*, celebrates a well-known, but seldom seen churchyard friend

MANY of us rarely if ever see an actual mole. But we do however see signs of them – their molehills. Moles breed in spring, between February and June and this is the time when we see new molehills that have been dug by males expanding their tunnel network in search of female mates. They also create spherical nests which they line with dry leaves and grass and the moles will sleep in these nests as well as rearing young there.

Male and female moles spend most of the year alone, living underground and feeling their way

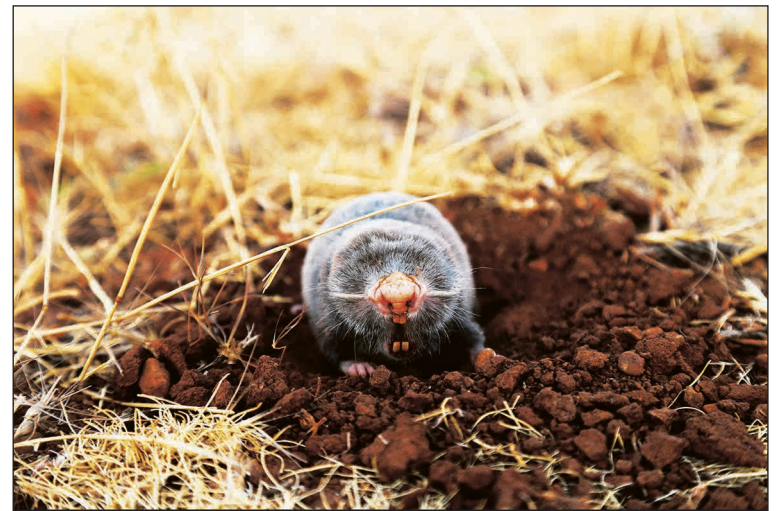
around their tunnel network using their sensitive noses and also their tails. They have poor eyesight and are at risk from predators when above ground but underground they are in their element, using large, spade-like forelimbs to expand the network as needed. Most of the tunnels are permanent and quite deep, covering hundreds of metres and lasting for several generations. Moles are fiercely territorial, familiar with their own tunnels and using them to suit the season. In colder or drier weather they head for their deepest tunnels where their main

food, earthworms, will be found.

Moles create a winter larder by storing earthworms in a chamber, keeping them alive but immobilising them with a bite to the head segment. Up to 450 worms have been found in one chamber.

They used to be killed in large numbers by trappers to make mole-skin clothes from their pelt and were thought of as a problem needing controlling. Actually, moles are both friend and foe – friends as they eat many pests such as wireworms, slugs and snails and also aerate the soil with their tunnelling; foes as they throw up molehills which some see as a problem.

But getting rid of your resident mole may not be a good idea as it leaves a territory open for another mole to move in. It may be best to learn to live with your mole and to press molehills back into the



ground or move the soil to flowerbeds or planters. The bare ground they produce also makes space for wildflower seeds to germinate which may not happen in a tight grass sward. So all in all, moles add to the rich diversity of life

found within our churchyards and we need to learn to love them!

[www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk) – individuals and groups in the diocese receive 20% members' discount on all CfGA materials. Use the discount code diomem22.

## The Creation-caring Church of the future

In our confused world, the Church must demonstrate commitment and leadership in caring for our common home, says Marcus Zipperlen, Diocesan Creation Care and Sustainability Officer

BACK in the nineties one celebrated political scientist wrote about the End of History when he foresaw the majority of countries moving towards liberal democracy and international cooperation. These days there is a darker mood abroad, with the spread of authoritarian governments, go-it-alone politics, and natural systems on the brink of collapse, threatening a more catastrophic end of history. It is complacent to think people will drift in the direction of justice and generosity; these goals must be actively pursued. Similarly, it would be complacent to think nations and people will just drift towards a greater care for creation, because this too is a good that has to be worked for with application and energy.

### Zero-Carbon Church

With this in mind the Church in Wales declared a climate emergency, committing to a pressing timetable to become a Zero-Carbon Church, contributing no new greenhouse gasses to the atmosphere (principally carbon dioxide, hence 'zero carbon'). There is currently a powerful political backlash against addressing climate change by those who want freedom without responsibility, which makes it imperative we hold firm.

Being zero-carbon will mean reducing the energy we use in heating and travel, obtaining what power we do use from renewable sources, generating some renewable energy of our own, and probably supporting tree planting to soak up whatever carbon emissions we can't avoid. It will require reordering our priorities and habits, yet in directions we are already becoming

familiar with from everyday life. Becoming zero-carbon is a mammoth task for us as an institution, and we will, in humility, need to accept help and advice from the secular world to get there.

But zero-carbon living isn't the be-all and end-all of caring for our Earth. The Church has so much to offer the world in turn, through our understanding of the Earth as a gift, with ourselves as custodians not owners, with every one of God's children essential to bringing forth the fulness of the Kingdom. Similarly, through modelling delight in creation by care of the land we manage, creating mini-Eden's to the glory of God and the refreshment of our souls. And through our recognition that the love of Jesus is the very energy behind all creation, the energy that moves the stars and drives evolution, indeed the goal to which creation moves (Col. 1: 15-18) and the way we are to get there. Let's hope that in gaining credibility by setting our own house in order the Church's voice will be heard more clearly.



The church of the future – hands-on with creation – during 'Wild Church' at St Justinians, Freystrop

## Your hospital, your health service: have your say

It seems that every five years or so we see still more proposed health changes looming on the horizon. Hywel Dda is adamant that this is about improved and safer health services, but as is often the case, these services won't be available for us to access closer to home. Lisa Francis, Chair of Protect Bronglais Services, outlines the proposals and encourages us all to get involved

THIS time the consultation, (which will run until 21st August), is about the reconfiguration of nine clinical disciplines across the area.

If changes are adopted, Bronglais Hospital Aberystwyth (which serves patients from as far away as Tywyn, Caersws and Rhayadr), will see detrimental changes to its excellent Stroke Unit. This means that stroke patients initially admitted to Bronglais will be sent almost immediately onwards to either Withybush, Haverfordwest or Llanelli for their rehabilitation – a cruel and ill-thought through decision. Successful rehabilitation for stroke patients is largely dependent on the care and motivational support of loved ones and this means a round trip of 200 miles for many patient visitors. There

are no direct public transport links and visiting will be impossible for those without a car.

Clinicians have described the plan as dangerous. At a public meeting last January, even the Board's own Chief Executive admitted that the plans were incomplete. Now, with the consultation under way, there is still no detail about how stroke patients will be transferred or repatriated back to their homes, or how there will be family liaison in respect of their discharge. According to the Sentinel Stroke National Audit Programme, Bronglais Hospital's Stroke Unit is the best performing of all of the stroke units in the Hywel Dda area. So why the change? If the Stroke Unit at Bronglais scores top marks, then why can't funds be used to improve it further? It's frankly difficult to

understand the Health Board's mindset in all of this, except that as ever, they seem obsessed with empire-building further south nearer to their power base.

I would urge everyone living in the Hywel Dda HB area to respond to this consultation; please don't let it just slip by without making your feelings known.

Protect Bronglais Services needs your support at our next public meeting which will be on Friday, 20th June at 7pm at the Great Hall, Aberystwyth Arts Centre.

In the meantime, please continue to fill in our Patient Travel Surveys and Patient Stories (this can be done anonymously) on our website,

[www.protectbronglais.com](http://www.protectbronglais.com)



# Unique collection of early Bibles on show in our Cathedral

Mari James, St Davids Cathedral Library Development Officer, outlines opportunities for LMAs across the diocese to share works brought together for a special Cathedral Libraries conference

FOR the first time, Wales is hosting the annual conference of the Cathedral Archives, Libraries and Collections Association of UK & Ireland (CALCA). It will be on 17th, 18th and 19th June.

A major session of the conference will focus on early Bibles produced in Welsh as the key project in Wales of the 16th and 17th Reformation. When the required legislation was going through, Queen Elizabeth I declared that she wanted there to be a Bible in Welsh in every village in Wales.

Being brought together for the conference will be original Welsh Bibles from 1567, 1588, 1620

and 1770. Elizabeth I intended to bring the Welsh churches under the common leadership of the still turbulent Reformation church. Inadvertently, she also may have saved the Welsh language.

## Growth of literacy

The standardised form of the Bible in Welsh was the first widely distributed book in Welsh and established an accepted, and easily understood, written Welsh. It also led to a wide interest in people wanting to read it themselves and have copies at home. The growth of literacy in Wales followed; we all know the story of Mary Jones saving up and then walking across the mountains to Bala to buy a Bible of her own at home. This was also the roots of the SPCK.

At the conference, we will also have the first Old Testament produced in the Irish language. This is now in the care of the Cotton Library in St Carthage Cathedral, Lismore, Co Wexford. This will feature on a session considering the history of the Cathedral Libraries of Ireland.

People from across the diocese are welcome to attend the CALCA conference. Online booking, with the full conference programme, is via the Cathedral website or by

enquiry to

[CALCAconference@StDavidsCathedral.org.uk](mailto:CALCAconference@StDavidsCathedral.org.uk)

After the conference there will also be several Cathedral Library visits and tours taking place which can be booked online via the cathedral website. If any LMAs would also like to arrange their own group visits to the Cathedral Library to see this unique collection of early Bibles, telling the story of our Celtic Christianity in west Wales and south east Ireland, then that can be arranged. Please contact me on

[Library@StDavidsCathedral.org.uk](mailto:Library@StDavidsCathedral.org.uk)



1685 Irish Bible Old Testament



1620 Welsh Bible New Testament



## Join us, join in

Glenys Payne, St Davids Diocese President of Mothers' Union, looks forward to an exciting 150th anniversary year

IN Mothers' Union (MU), we act as God's hands, feet and heart in God's world, reaching out to support those who need our help most.

It was Mary Sumner who was inspired to set up the first MU groups in 1876 and to date there are four million members worldwide working to support people of all faiths and none in 83 countries, promoting stable family life and the protection of children through praying, enabling and campaigning.

As we prepare for our 150th Anniversary in 2026, the path ahead remains uncertain – people have many calls on their time, and we know that, here in Wales, membership has been slowly declining for over 30 years.

We could easily accept the certainty of a continuing decline, yet the issues that drove Mary

Sumner to take action 150 years ago remain as real as ever. Many parents still struggle to provide for



Mary Sumner

and bring up their families; gender injustice remains a major problem and too many people are having to leave their homes and rebuild their lives elsewhere.

There are so many projects worldwide and they are different in every country, in every diocese, in every archdeaconry, in every LMA and in every branch. In our diocese alone, our projects include working with the Plant Dewi Baby Bundle project, providing knitted items and toiletries to seafarers, and many branches are involved in the *Cross in my pocket* project shared through hospitals.

The *Away From It All* scheme is one of our longest-running projects, which supports families through the provision of holidays and trips, offering much-needed respite to those unable to afford or access trips and holidays due to difficult circumstances.

We need more people to *Join us, Join in* – our theme for this year. For more information contact [www.mothersunion.org](http://www.mothersunion.org); [stdavidsmu@googlemail.com](mailto:stdavidsmu@googlemail.com) or follow us on Facebook – St Davids Diocese Mothers Union.

Photo: [www.londonmembers.com](http://www.londonmembers.com)

# Summer Events at St Davids Cathedral with Tŷ'r Pererin

## Friday Pilgrimages

Every Friday from 16th May - 31st October  
10.30am - 12.30pm

Visit the birthplace of St David, hear stories and reflections and view the ancient ruins as you walk a route from the coast path to the Cathedral. This is a short, guided walk (1½ miles) taking the field route to St Non's Chapel ruins and Holy Well before reaching the Cathedral. Join us at Oriel y Parc Information Centre. We finish our journey at the Cathedral where participants may like to stay for prayers at the Shrine of St David at 12 noon. £5pp.

## Quiet Garden Afternoons

Thursday 26th June; 24th July & 21st August 2.30 - 4pm

Join us in Erw Dewi Community Garden (The Close, next to the Canonry, St Davids, SA62 6PE) for a **Quiet Garden Session** where we will be exploring how flowering plants can inspire our thoughts and theology using poems, prayers and silence. Time to rest, reflect and receive. Donations towards the work of the Community Garden.

## Cathedral Explorer

July – September, 11 - 12.30 & 1.30 - 3pm

Pop-up guided interactive Cathedral trail suitable for children aged 5-11 with their families. Explore the cathedral, listen to the stories, make a memento to take back home with you. £10 per family (check website for weekly updates).

## Family Activities in Erw Dewi

Wednesday 23rd July & Tuesday 19th August 2 - 3pm

Join us in the Community Garden (The Close, next to the Canonry, St Davids, SA62 6PE) for a host of activities with different themes each month.

## Pilgrimage Events with Lever Arts

Jake and Gillian Lever who together run Lever Arts ([www.leverarts.org](http://www.leverarts.org)) will be our Artists-in-Residence during August. As well as creating a small-scale installation of Jake Lever's work, they will be running a series of events.

## Talk by Jake Lever – Reflections on art and pilgrimage

Tuesday 12th August 2 - 3.15pm

Jake will give an illustrated talk about his own art practice, relating it to the theme of pilgrimage and to the Cathedral. There will be an opportunity to visit the Library and Quire to view pilgrimage artefacts and the art installation. The event is FREE. Meet in the North Transept.

## Make your own Pilgrim Badge

Wednesday 13th August 11am - 1pm & 2 - 4pm

Jake and Gillian will offer the opportunity for children, families and adults to make their own personalised pilgrim badges, referencing the medieval tradition of pilgrim badge wearing. Craft materials and equipment will be provided and the activity is suitable for all ages. The drop-in event is just £1 per person. Meet in the North Transept.

## Quiet Afternoon - Soul Boats

Thursday 14th August 2 - 5pm

Jake and Gillian Lever will lead a gentle art workshop for adults, offering the opportunity to reflect upon our own life's journey through the making of a small boat. We will be working with paper, collage and paint, creating a personalised vessel to take away. The cost of the event is £10 per head, bookable in advance, to include tea and cake. Meet in the Lady Chapel. (Places are limited).

## Book a Pilgrimage Day

For options download our Pilgrimage Guide

<https://stdavidscathedral.org.uk/education/pilgrimage>

Can't see what you want? Just contact us to discuss a bespoke day/weekend/week for all your needs.

## For more information or to book, contact

Tŷ'r Pererin,

Quickwell Hill, St Davids

Tel: 01437 729151

[education@stdavidscathedral.org.uk](mailto:education@stdavidscathedral.org.uk)  
[pilgrimage@stdavidscathedral.org.uk](mailto:pilgrimage@stdavidscathedral.org.uk)

Find us on Facebook and follow us on X



# The Church on the streets

*Pembroke Street Pastors is a wide ecumenical movement made up of local churches working together and overseen by Ascension Trust. Nicola Durnford, one of the team, describes the range of help they can offer*

WE are the Church on the streets ready to listen, care, help and support anyone in need without any discrimination.

We work in partnership with the police, local councils and a range of voluntary and statutory organisations to reach those in need. We also work alongside those involved in the night-time economy and other local clubs and businesses.

We patrol mostly on a Saturday night between the hours of 10pm and 1.30am staying out later if needed depending on the events in town.

This year we have helped many people including some of the most vulnerable in our community. We

have given out nine pairs of flip flops to people who have abandoned their high heeled shoes and are walking bare foot on the streets often by broken glass. These enable them to get home safely without injury. We have also given out five bottles of water and 292 bags of Haribo's. Street Pastors have also collected 113 glass bottles and glasses off the streets and disposed of them safely, avoiding accidents if they remain and break. This also prevents the glass being used in any fights that may occur and helps reduce the need for the emergency services and benefits the whole community in terms of cost and safety. We have also

returned 16 glasses to the appropriate establishments.

What we do on the streets varies from helping people get home safely, finding lost keys, wallets and phones to return to the owners. You might find us singing in the pubs, being dragged on to the dance floor or making people laugh thus changing the atmosphere!

When we are on the streets, people are more relaxed. We receive positive feedback and respect from the public and those working in the local pubs and night club. We also get many hugs. One of our favourite quotes from the streets is, "We love you more than you love us" – a debate and lots of



laughter follows! When our patrol is finished we ensure the people and our streets are safe.

God is at work as we serve Him. We are His hands and feet, and He calls us to go and share His love.

We know that God goes before us and knows our every need. We pray for God's blessing on our town and the safety of all who pass through it.

## Messy Easter brings joy and connection

*Michelle Lloyd, Children, Youth and Families Worker and Evangelist in Bro Gwendraeth and Bro Amman recently enjoyed two Messy Easter events with Revd Ali, Revd Lindy and volunteers*

THESE events have been hailed as a resounding success, drawing in numerous families and creating an atmosphere of joy, friendliness, and fun. Thanks to a generous grant, I was able to reach out to the community through school assemblies and personal invitations, resulting in a fantastic turnout. The sessions also brought volunteers together, who enjoyed serving and meeting new families.

### Vibrant posters

Children from four different local schools eagerly participated, with more families joining in after spotting vibrant posters shared across social media. The events provided a wonderful opportunity for people to come together, engage in creative activities, and experience Easter, learning what Jesus did for us all, in a hands-on and memorable way.

The positive impact was palpable, with attendees expressing their delight and a strong desire for similar events in the future. Families were encouraged to stay connected by following the event organisers' Facebook page for announcements of upcoming sessions and activities.

### Gratitude

Organising this event took quite a bit of time, from the grant application, purchase of resources, to sharing and finding volunteers to run the event. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for the grant, emphasising that it was instrumental in making the outreach possible across both ministry areas. I would also like to highlight the vital importance of these events

in demonstrating that the church is a welcoming and safe space for families – a place where they can feel loved, share their joys and challenges, and build connections with others in the community.

The success of Messy Easter underscores the power of community engagement and the positive role local churches can play in fostering connection and spreading joy among families. The enthusiastic response has undoubtedly laid the groundwork for future initiatives.



## Eglwys Sant Marc, Cwmcoch

*Canon John Gravell, previous incumbent, and Gill Evans, Warden, tell the history of the little church, near Llandybie, which recently closed its doors for the last time*

YMATEB y Parch. Rees Evans, Ficer Llandybie (1861-1877) i dwf y boblogaeth yn ei blwyf, pan agorwyd y pyllau glo yno, oedd sefydlu ysgoldy yng Nghaerbryn. Mewn cydweithrediad â'r ddwy Miss Prothero o Blas Cwmcoch, fe agorwyd Ystafell Genhadol Cwmcoch. Trwyddedwyd hon gan yr yr Esgob Basil Jones ar Ragfyr 17eg, 1875.

Llyegwyr duwiol, hyddysg yn yr Ysgrythurau oedd yr arweinwyr. Hwy fu'n gyfrifol am ffyniant yr achos, ac fe ddaeth Ysgoldy Cwmcoch yn ganolfan i aelodau o bob enwad yn y gymuned.

Un o'r llyegwyr mwyaf nodedig yno, a gofir o hyd, oedd John Roberts, Tireynon. Y mae stori hyfryd am y diweddar Ganon Winzey Richards am ddechreuad ei guradiaeth yn Llandybie – cyn ei ymweliad cyntaf â Cwmcoch, meddai'r ficer wrtho 'Ni fydd eisiau i ti wneud na dweud dim, bydd y cyfan yn nwylo medrus John Tireynon'. Ac felly y bu, gyda'r hen batriach yn cyfeirio yn ei weddi at y curad newydd fel 'Y crwt sydd wedi cael ei ddanfon i'n plith'.

Cefais hanes y Te Cynhaeaf a'r parti Nadolig gan Miss Eleanor Williams, un o hen athrawesau yr Ysgoldy, oedd hefyd yn cynorthwyo ei mam, i ofalu am y lle. Gwasanaethai Eleanor ar fferm cyfagos, a dod adre at ei mam ar y penwythnos, i helpu gyda'r glanhau a'r darparu yn Cwmcoch.

Ond yn 1966 dechreuwyd ar waith Glo Brig yn 1966. Aeth nifer o gartrefi a ffermdai i grombil y tyllau mawr a agorwyd – gan gynnwys Ysgoldy Cwmcoch. Sicrhawyd safle newydd gerllaw Neuadd Lesiant Caerbryn, a dau

gaban mewn maes parcio gerllaw oedd cartref y gynulleidfa. Ac fe fyddai eglwys, nid ysgoldy! Agorodd Esgob John Richards Eglwys Sant Marc Cwmcoch ar Fai 30ain 1967. Rhoddwyd y safle a'r adeilad gan y Bwrdd Glo, ond cyfrifoldeb yr aelodau oedd dodrefnu yr adeilad newydd, a bu eu hymateb yn hael iawn, fel y gwelwyd yn nhaflen y Gwasanaeth agoriadol.

Roedd dau wasanaeth bob Sul, ac Ysgol Sul, gyda gweithgarwch ieuenticid yn ystod yr wythnos. Lluniwyd yr adeilad fel y gellid ei ddefnyddio ar gyfer y sanctaidd a'r seciwlar, yn gyfoes ei weledigaeth.

Warden annwyl a hoffus trwy'r cyfnod newydd oedd Mr Lynn Chapman. Bu'n gwasanaethu, fel athro ysgol sul, yn llenwi bwllch pan na fydda gweinidogaeth ar gael. Yr oedd yn gefn a chyfaill i bob ficer.

Ein gweddi, gan feddwl am y gynulleidfa niferus a ddaeth ynghyd i'r gwasanaeth olaf ar Sul y Blodau, yw mae saib yw hwn, ac nid diwedd ar waith yr Arglwydd yng nghymundau Blaenau a Chaerbryn.



## Hanesion plentyndod ficerdy Hobiau a diddordebau

*No seamstress or lover of dolls, but other hobbies appealed*

RWYN dechrau gan ddweud beth NAD oedd o ddi-ddordeb i fi. Doeddwn i ddim yn hoff o chwaraeon, heblaw am wylia a chwarae dipyn bach o dennis. Doeddwn i ddim yn hoff o wnio na gwau, er bod fy mam a'm mamgu yn arbennig o dda. Fe gofiai eistedd gyda fy ffrind Sylvia, Nymbar 3, yn gwneud 'cross-stitch' dibendraw yn yr ysgol un prynhawn bob wythnos. Mae sawl darn yn dal gyda fi, rhyw fag bach, darnau i roi ar ford, defnydd glas gyda thyllau'n barod am y pwythau. Rwyn siŵr bod eraill o'm oed yn cofio hynny hefyd. Roedd bag o ddefnydd cotwm gwyn gyda phob un, i gadw eu gwaith llaw yn ddo, gyda llythrennau blaen eu

henwau wedi gwno ar y blaen. Wrth eistedd nesa at ein gilydd, roedd ein bagiau'n dweud SAD JEW! Sylvia Ann Davies a Jane Eluned Williams. Doniol!

Mae plant yn mynd drwy wahanol gyfnodau o ddi-ddordeb mewn gwahanol bethau, a doeddwn i ddim gwahanol. Darllen oedd fy mhrif ddi-ddordeb, yn ogystal ag ysgrifennu cerddi, storiâu a chadw dyddiadur, ond bu ambell un arall. Dechreuais gasglu darnau arian, 'coins' ac wrth fy modd i ddsysgu bod y gair 'Numismatics' yn ei ddisgrifio. Roedd ficer Pontiets ar y pryd, Parch Alex Clark, yn ddigon caredig i roi arweiniad a gwybodaeth i mi, yn ogystal ag ambell ddarn

arian, gan ei fod ef, fel finnau, yn numismatist! Roeddwn nhw gyda fi tan yn ddiweddar.

Er nad oeddwn yn berson doliau, bydde pobl yn rhoi doliau o wledydd eraill i ni, yn enwedig fy Mamgu, Treforys, oedd yn mynd ar wyliau egsotig i'r Cyfandir ar y trên yn rhad ac am ddim gan fod Tadu Treforys yn gweithio ar y rheilffordd. Doedd dim llawer o ddiben iddyn nhw, mewn boc plastig, ac yn rhy oeraidd i chwarae â nhw.

Roedd creu llyfrau lloffion, scrap books, yn gyffredin iawn yn y 50au a 60au. Byddem yn cadw rhaglenni cyngherddau, taflenni ymweliadau ar ein gwyliau neu gyda'r ysgol, a'u gludo'n ofalus. Roedd fy mam yn derbyn *Woman's Weekly* a byddai hi'n ceisio hybu ein diddordeb mewn barddoniaeth Saesneg drwy dorri allan darnau o'r cylchgrawn i'w gludo.

Byddwch yn synnu darllen mod i ar un pryd wedi dechrau



'scrapbook' y teulu brenhinol, ond, er bod yr un arall yn dal gyda fi, fyddwch chi DDIM yn synnu

nad yw'r llall, ac fe ddi-flannodd hanes y frenhinaeth o'n tŷ ni!

## Diary of a retired Parson Revd Christopher Lewis-Jenkins is off on his travels again

I START my latest thoughts where I left off in the last issue and that's my new electric car.

This time I'm having to search the internet to find out where the fast-charging stations are on the way to Heathrow airport, as Anne and I prepare to visit our American family in Pennsylvania.

I'm not going to worry about how much charge I have because we will have planned the trip (I hope!)

Talking about Americans, though, I can tell you that they are suffering high prices there too as their president tries to take over the

world . . . and they are not happy!

Anyway, it's some time since we've been to the USA so we're looking forward to some nice sunshine and visiting places we haven't been to before; and of course being with our grandson and granddaughter. It's nearly 20 years since our daughter settled in the USA after meeting her husband at a summer camp in New Jersey. I shall therefore be writing my next entry in Pennsylvania and telling you all about the places we've visited.

We hope you get some sunshine too.



## Diary of a Parson's wife Decisions decisions

*Polly Zipperlen considers logical versus sensible*

“WHAT a ride!” was my finishing quote for social media when we arrived in Antigua after 53 days, 12 hours and 1 minute rowing across the Atlantic Ocean. And it was definitely an exhilarating ride with occasional moments of terror as the boat lurched in ridiculously large and chaotic waves.

Our team of four women survived and thrived as often women do in the face of adversity, remaining resilient and kind to each other, with the odd injection of humour to boost morale. Much of the on-board mirth involved some gentle teasing. For example, our recurrent conversation about whether or not a particular course of action might be the 'logical' conclusion to our extensive deliberation. We were known amongst the other teams for having excessive meetings – we would indeed do well on church committees.

The conversation would generally go somewhat like this:

“Well, is this the logical course of action?”

“Well, does it need to be, rowing an ocean for fun isn't very logical?”

“Yes, but is it logical?”

“But humans aren't logical.”

“But it's not sensible.”

“Well, rowing an ocean for fun isn't sensible.”

At which point we would then discuss our thoughts with the other crews, the event organisers and anyone else within the vicinity.

More often than not, the final decision would be deferred to

another day!

And this is how I found myself, drill in hand, on the dock beside our boat 30 minutes before leaving in front of an assembled crowd of 200 onlookers. I am not accustomed to using power tools, apart from my beloved Magimix. So to be in charge of drilling holes into the plastic cuffs on the oars, to thread through a lanyard to attach the oars to the gates, minimizing the risk of losing an oar in high

seas, was somewhat alarming – and definitely not sensible. But there I was.

What if the drill-bit broke, what if the plastic cuff split, what if I fell in the water in front of everyone? Oh why hadn't I asked Marcus to do this or done it before departure-day?! To top it off, there was a drone filming my efforts and a local radio-presenter regarding me inquisitively, keen to know which direction we would be headed out of Lanzarote. To which I pointed roughly south-westerly and shrugged my shoulders. Quietly thinking to myself “rowing an ocean for fun is neither sensible, nor logical”. But it was definitely fun!



## FAME AT LAST! (Part 2)

Theresa Haine concludes her two-part account of the celebrations marking the anniversary of the martyrdom of Rasalama, the first Malagasy missionary

At exactly 10am we heard the band strike up outside and in came all the government representatives; then, last of all, the President and his bodyguard. The service lasted for full three hours but was well thought out and interesting. I managed my speech (in Malagasy) without too many hesitations. The President's speech was not what we all expected. He suggested that the missionaries were agents for a foreign power and that the Queen's actions in persecuting the Christians were justified – she was doing what she thought was right for the whole people. However, he praised Rasalama for her faith and courage. At the end of the service massed choirs sang the Halleluia Chorus

from Handel's Messiah. There were several conductors following the beat of the orchestra conductor who was out of sight of most of the singers. Despite their efforts one end of the huge choir, about 1,000 voices, got out of step with the other for several anxious minutes but they managed to find each other (and the by-this-time frantic conductors) before the final triumphant Alleluia!

Once outside the stadium we were surrounded by beggars. I gave my cardigan to a poor ragged woman with a tiny naked baby and a toddler hanging on to her skirt. There were so many beggars that we had extreme difficulty extricating ourselves.

There was a formal dinner

in the evening. The good meal and general high spirits made it a memorable end to a memorable day. The restaurant had a colour TV and we all watched ourselves on the box – the first time I have ever been on TV.

The following morning, just a few days before my return to the UK, a beggar woman with a toddler and a naked two-month-old baby followed me up 400 steps from the market place, down the other side of the hill to my friends' place and back up the hill again. She was almost certainly the one to whom I gave my cardigan the previous day. I told her that I had no more clothes or money to give – which was true as I had only enough for the airport tax and my clothes were all packed. She then pleaded with me to take her baby abroad with me as its father had disappeared and she could not afford to keep it. It broke my heart, but in the end I had to



The martyrdom of Rafaravavy Rasalama

take her to a social-worker friend who I hoped would know how to help her. Sadly I never heard the end of the story.

## An alternative vision

One of the consequences of the unrest in Israel/Palestine, Syria and Lebanon has been that the relatively peaceful and welcoming island of Cyprus has been rediscovered as a place of Christian interest.

John Holdsworth reports on one such encounter

GROUPS of pilgrims are making their way to Cyprus aided and abetted by tour companies desperate to find new itineraries. There is plenty here for them to see and experience. Cyprus is, of course, a Bible Land. Acts 13 describes how Paul and Barnabas made their way across the island from Salamis to Paphos but, beyond that, there is a wealth of Christian heritage to delight groups of visitors.

The Diocese of Europe is one of the most recent. The members of their Ministry Experience Scheme, a group consisting of people under

the age of 30 who are trying to discern a vocation, recently made a pilgrimage here. It's an annual event which normally visits Israel/Palestine.

They were attracted not only by the Bible link but by the exposure to Orthodox Christianity, how that operates as the established Church in the Republic of Cyprus, and what that means for church/state relations. The political division of the island following the events of 1974 gave opportunity for reflection about reconciliation, and dialogue between Christianity and Islam. The Anglican Church is

a 'guest' in both jurisdictions, and that provided an additional interest. The group visited the church where St Lazarus was (eventually) buried, as well as seeing the tomb of Barnabas. They visited some of the UNESCO-rated painted churches and were able to celebrate the Eucharist at Agia Kyriaki church in Paphos, built on the site of a huge Christian Basilica and reckoned to be the site of Paul's meeting with the Roman governor Sergius Paulus.

One thing the group's leader, Dr Clare Amos, was very keen to do was to arrange a Eucharist to celebrate the Transfiguration at the highest Anglican church on the island – St George's in the Forest – which stands around 6,000 ft above sea level in the Troodos mountains and is often unreachable because of snow. Although there had been



recent snow, it proved possible to hold a freezing cold service there. Clare preached at that service and quoted Archbishop Michael Ramsey, "to be a theologian is to be exposed to the vision of heaven and

the tragedies of mankind." That is a great thought for those contemplating ordained or lay ministry, and a pretty astute summary of what any pilgrimage to the Middle East today might discover.

## St Womar's Church, Minwear, Pembrokeshire

This little gem is just waiting to be discovered, writes Caroline Evans

WITH the summer months upon us, the A40 will be hectically busy, despite the improved section opened recently. But console yourself with the thought that nearby there is a small church nestling in a place of quiet and peace, with a rich history, waiting for you to discover it. South-west of Narberth, and overlooking the Eastern Cleddau River, is the little church of St Womar at Minwear, a Grade II listed church of Norman origin associated with the Commandery of Slebech, which, notwithstanding heavy restoration mainly in the 19th century, retains minor vaulting and an interesting font and tower.

The church probably dates from the time when it was granted by Robert, son of Lomer, to the Knights Hospitallers of the Order of St John of Jerusalem at Slebech, in 1150. The Order also had an important establishment nearby known as the Sisters' House (only ruins remain). The church's low round chancel arch appears to be of Norman date and implies that the church probably consisted originally of nave and chancel. The nave southern doorway also appears to be the original. In 1540 the order was ejected by King Henry VIII under the Dissolution of the Monasteries, sold off to the Barlow family of Slebech, and by

1850 the village had disappeared, leaving just the church and a farming hamlet.

A fraud scandal emerged in the Victorian period. In 1861 Baron de Rutzen of Slebech found himself in trouble with the Bishop of St Davids when it was claimed that in 1844 he was responsible for the unauthorised semi-destruction of the church of St Womar in Minwear – a recently sacked employee bore witness against him. Also in 1843, he had borrowed £600 from the Church Loan Commissioners for a new church at Minwear but spent it building his new church at Slebech (now in ruins).

Clearly peace was restored as the Bishop stayed at Slebech Hall for the consecration of the 'new' church in 1848. The font (pictured) was retrieved from the farmyard.

The story is displayed inside the church on paddles and the light

airy interior is a peaceful place for contemplation, far from the warrior knights and their famous battles and their white cross emblazoned cloaks. The church is open to visitors.

Postcode SA67 8BJ;

What3words: airports, scatters, throat.

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Previous editions can also be found at:

<https://stdavids.churchinwales.org.uk/en/pobl-dewi>

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# Reviews · Adolygiadau

## You couldn't make it up

**Agent Zo: The untold story of fearless WW2 Resistance fighter Elżbieta Zawacka**

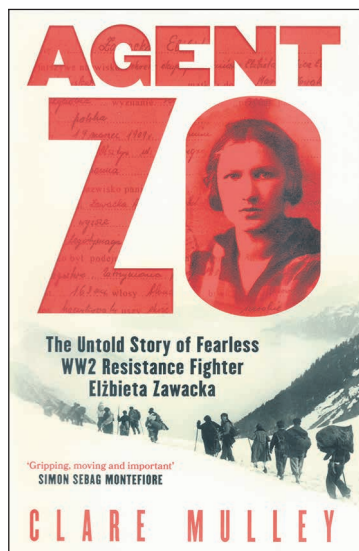
Author: Clare Mulley  
 Publisher: Weidenfeld & Nicholson; 2025  
 ISBN: 978-1399601085  
 Price: £12.99 Paperback

Elżbieta Zawacka, born in 1909, grew up as the seventh of eight children on the outskirts of Toruń in Poland. However, Toruń was in Prussian-annexed territory and, despite their Polish roots, people were forbidden to speak their own language. The children grew up speaking German, going to German schools and surrounded by German culture. Any evidence of Polish culture incurred severe punishment but Elżbieta's mother secretly observed national traditions which she inculcated in her children.

Toruń was among the territories incorporated into the reborn Polish Republic in 1919. Despite being determined to be a part of this new Poland, Elżbieta found that speaking only German she was ridiculed so she learnt Polish and was rewarded with a place at a Polish school, going on to graduate in mathematics from Poznań University.

While at university she attended a session with the new Women's Military Training Association (PWK) and declared that their 'concept of trained and armed women engaging in military defence had 'set her on fire.' In 1931 she attended a month-long PWK camp and discovered that she 'could love mathematics and the military for their own sake and in her own right, as a woman and a soldier.' From then on she would fight for the military role of women to be recognised but that didn't happen until 1943.

In 1939, Elżbieta, who still spoke perfect German, had a fair complexion and had already spent many months crossing wartime borders, volunteered to smuggle material



between Warsaw and Berlin. Once the call came, she chose the nom-de-guerre Zo. Travelling on false papers, she smuggled secret documents into the heart of Nazi Germany, which arrived in London seven days later. Throughout the following winter, Zo rushed between Warsaw and Berlin 'like a whirlwind.'

In May 1942 Zo's underground network was infiltrated, leaving her as the only one not arrested by the Gestapo. However, she was being followed and, despite being afraid of heights, she jumped from a moving train to evade capture.

With her identity compromised, she was then appointed to carry intelligence between Warsaw and London. She was the only woman to serve in this capacity and her journey would take her through Germany, France and Spain, including a ride inside a train's water tender when she nearly drowned. She went on to be the only woman to parachute from Britain back into Nazi-occupied Poland and played a major part in the Warsaw Uprising.

This is an enthralling, detailed biography about a brave, uncompromising woman.

Tessa Briggs

## A luminous journey

**The Girl from Montego Bay: The Autobiography of Britain's first black woman bishop**

Author: Rose Hudson-Wilkin  
 Publisher: SPCK Publishing, 2025  
 ISBN: 9780281089604  
 Price: £12.99 (hardback)

This is an inspiring story of faith and resilience, overcoming adversity, with humour and poignancy; a story of faith and endurance. It made me smile and cry. God works in mysterious ways and he certainly did with Bishop Rose.

The book chronicles her life, from her childhood in Jamaica to her ministry in England, including her time in London, the Midlands, Hackney, the House of Commons, and ultimately as Bishop of Dover.

Bishop Rose starts her autobiography describing the moments she met her two heroes: Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela. Attracted to them because she "loved their resilience, their hope, their way of living out the Christian faith, their uncompromising stance on justice," she goes on to comment: "Most of all, I loved that they looked just like me!" But she hadn't wanted to simply meet them; she wanted to emulate them.

A poster that she has long embraced says 'Do not go where the path leads. Go where there is no path and leave a trail.' That's just what she's done.

Bishop Rose poignantly describes the many times she was discriminated against due to her colour, her gender and the pressure she has felt as she has forged the way for others: "I'm conscious of carrying the weight of the knowledge that I am a woman, and a black woman; I don't have the option of being second best or mediocre, because other black women need to come after me, and how I perform will determine how they are received," she says.

How she performed is revealed by the fact that she became one of the first women to be ordained as a priest, the first black priest to be chaplain to the Queen, to the Speaker of the House of Commons and the first black woman to be a bishop in the Church of England.

We're all on a journey. And this is a luminous journey of resilience, of faith, of joy and hope. Bishop Rose's ability to share her experiences with 'passion and integrity,' showcasing her 'costly and lifelong obedience to Jesus Christ' is inspiring, encouraging readers to embrace



opportunities and challenge societal norms. Above all the honesty and vulnerability in recounting both the triumphs and hardships of her life are highlighted.

For me, it stirred up some emotions and was inspiring and thought provoking, having been discriminated against myself several times due to my colour, gender and race. I loved her courage in speaking out for justice and for her commitment to those who suffer discrimination and prejudice. Highly recommended.

Revd Shirley Murphy

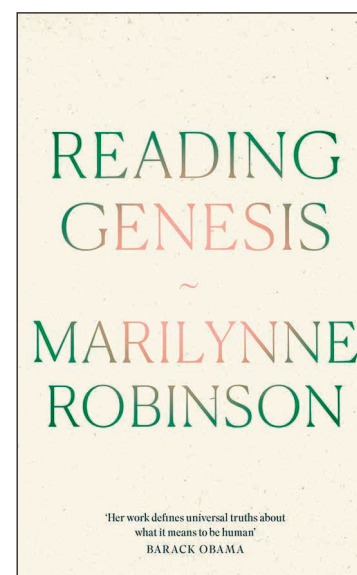
## Engaging with the original context

**Reading Genesis**

By Marilynne Robinson  
 Publisher: Virago  
 ISBN: 978-0-349-01875-1  
 Price: £12.99

Marilynne Robinson's *Reading Genesis* comes highly recommended, the quotes on the front cover being from Dr Rowan Williams and Barack Obama no less!

*Reading Genesis* is divided into two parts, the first 'Reading Genesis' and the second, the book of 'Genesis' (the King James Version). Robinson has chosen not to divide the book into chapters, nor use sub headings, leading me to presume that she assumes the reader will start at the beginning and follow through in a logical order. Consequently if one wanted to see what she says about a particular narrative (there are few chapter/verse references), one needs to flick through to the appropriate story. The style is that of literary criticism and is far from being a commentary on the book of Genesis (as I naively presumed on hearing the title!)



Robinson draws on historical literature and myth to compare and contrast with the narratives in Genesis, placing the stories within the context that they were originally written. This grounding helps the reader to engage with the original context, rather than the one from which we currently read, reminding us that "It is surely

reasonable to assume that we are not always the Bible's primary audience." (Robinson, p.117) A helpful reminder to each of us as we engage with the Bible as a whole.

A book, I'd suggest, that needs to be read slowly, from the beginning. To have time to sit with and ponder the complex links to both the historical and wider literary context that Robinson makes. It's not an easy read and to enjoy it at its best I suspect the reader would need a prior degree of literary and theological knowledge; complex terms being regularly used without explanation. As I read and contemplated, having revised my expectations as to the purpose of *Reading Genesis* my engagement with it grew too. *Reading Genesis* would likely appeal to those used to engaging with the genre of literary criticism and I'd recommend it to such a group.

Revd Becky Evans

### Contributions to Pobl Dewi

We welcome articles of interest from readers and, in particular, we would like to encourage submission of articles in Welsh.

Articles should be e-mailed to the Managing Editor:

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