STORY 1: Rhys and the Advent Wreath

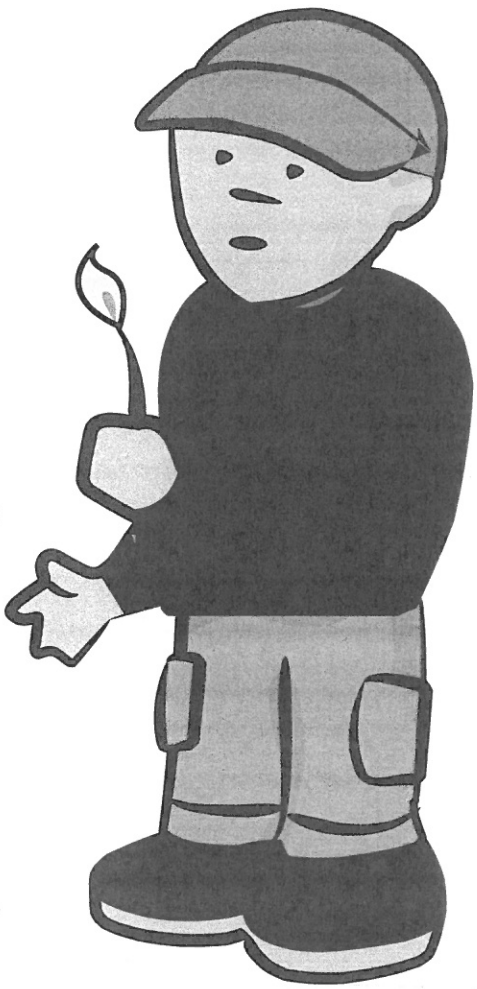
Rhys sat on the seat nearest the window and looked out at the big green hills beyond the sea.

"That's the Gower", said Grandma "we are nearly there".
Rhys smiled, he had sat on the train for what felt like for-ever. Grandma had got him up very early in the morning even before the sun was up and now the sun was setting and although he had enjoyed the train journey he was now tired and hungry and he really missed Mummy and Daddy.

Mummy was going to have a baby; a sister or a brother, hoped Rhys.

Grandma had been up to stay to help Daddy cook and clean because mummy needed lots of rest. The doctor said that mummy needed so much rest that she needed to go in to hospital. Mummy had said that it would be better if Rhys went to stay with Grandma and Granddad for a few weeks until she had had the baby and even though Rhys was nearly 10 and had tried to be brave he had cried when he waved goodbye to Mummy.

The train slowed, rattled over a level crossing, and came to a halt.
"Out we get, and don't forget your bag", shouted Grandma. Rhys jumped off the train, bag in hand, and followed Grandma as she walked briskly towards the car park.
Granddad was waiting for them and as soon as the car was packed they drove through the town and into the dark countryside.
Eventually they came to the village where Grandma and Granddad lived and after stopping off at the chip shop where Rhys was allowed his favourite, large sausage and chips they arrived at the house.



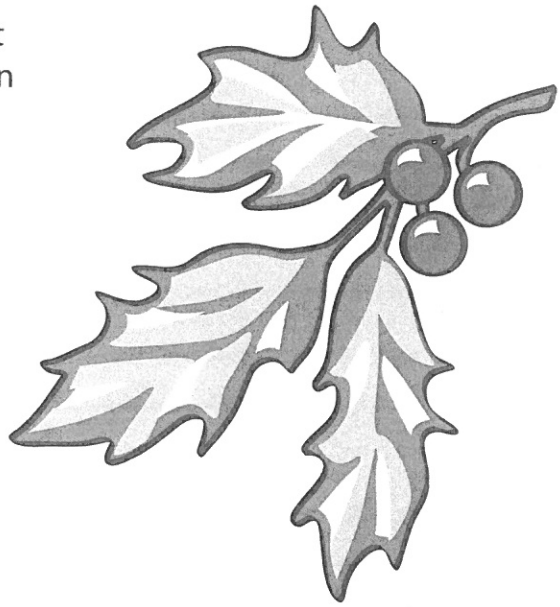
Rhys, Grandma and Granddad were sitting by the fire eating their chips when Granddad said," We are going to Church in the morning Rhys and your Grandma has to finish making the advent Wreath tonight".
"Oh", said Grandma, "I had forgotten all about the Advent Wreath, can you give me a hand to finish it tonight Rhys?"
"What's an Advent Wreath?" asked Rhys.
"Well", said Grandma, "when you have finished your chips if you give me a hand to complete the Wreath I will tell you about it."

After supper Rhys watched Grandma get out a large wooden ring and bags with candles, holly branches, and tinsel in them.
Grandma then started to place four red candles on the outer ring of the wreath and a white candle in the middle.

"What is an Advent Wreath Grandma?" asked Rhys.

STORY 1: Rhys and the Advent Wreath

" Well", said Grandma, "we start to celebrate Advent four weeks before Christmas and we light a new candle each week as we get ready to celebrate when Jesus was born at Christmas and then on Christmas Day we light the fifth candle."



Grandma then decorated the wreath with holly and Rhys helped to put on the tinsel.

After making the wreath Rhys went to bed and even though he was nearly 10 he let Grandma hug him before he got into bed because he missed Mummy very much.

The next day Rhys felt more cheerful as he walked to Church with Grandma and Granddad.
Matthew, the vicar was waiting by the door, "Hello Mr and Mrs Lewis thank you for making the advent wreath", said the vicar as he looked down at Rhys holding the wreath, "well young man your Granddad has been telling me all about your Mother having a new baby, are you looking forward to having a little brother or sister?". Rhys smiled.

Rhys was helping Grandma put up the Wreath when Matthew the vicar came up and asked Rhys if he would like to light the first advent candle. Rhys said he would like to.
"When you light the candle", said Matthew, "you might like to say a prayer for Mummy and the baby."
Rhys thought it was a good idea and sat down trying to think of what to pray about when his time came to light the candle.
At the beginning of the service Vicar Matthew asked Rhys to come up and light the candle, Rhys was very nervous, but as he was nearly 10 he didn't want to show it.
Vicar Matthew handed him the lit taper and as Rhys lit the first candle he said to himself, "Dear God, please be close to Mummy and the baby."

After the service everybody had tea and biscuits and then Rhys went back to Grandma's house where his cousins were waiting to play with him.

That night, as Rhys lay in bed thinking of what had happened in the day and how he hoped that God would keep Mummy and the baby safe, Grandma came in with the phone. "Rhys I have someone who wants to talk with you."
Rhys took the phone and said, "Hello?"
"Hello Rhys", came the response, it was his Mummy!
"I have some news Rhys, I have had a scan and the doctors have told me that the baby is doing great and that he should be born some time after Christmas."