



Mobi Launched

'Mobi', a new mobile drop-in unit for young people aged 11-25, was unveiled at Newcastle Emlyn Secondary School on 6 November. Mobi will provide access to youth information, advice and activities and will be staffed jointly by Plant Dewi staff and council youth workers. By day, it will visit local schools, followed each evening by community-based activities



Bishop's hopes for new WAG offices

THE new, £20m, Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) offices in Aberystwyth were opened by First Minister Rhodri Morgan on 15 October. The second regional office to open, this government base is part of WAG's plans to spread jobs more widely around Wales.

Bishop Wyn is particularly pleased that the focus on government posts moving to Aberystwyth will be countryside and rural affairs, saying "The issues facing Welsh farming and society in rural areas are especially acute in West Wales, let us hope that their presence here leads to an even greater

understanding on both sides."

With 7,600 square metres of office space housing up to 535 members of staff, the Diocesan Rural Life Adviser, Eileen Davies, also welcomed the move, saying:

"This is great news for Ceredigion, the heart of rural Wales. Decentralising from the Welsh Assembly Government in Cardiff ensures that those involved in the field are at first hand, closer to the farmer."

The building has a BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) 'Excellent' rating and is in the running for an award.

Saints and Stones Competition 2009

Anne Eastham celebrates this competition, which is attracting ever more entries

THE theme of this year's competition was Pilgrims and Pilgrimage. VA, VC, County Primary and Sunday Schools from across the County and Diocese were joined by adult groups of the visually impaired and church groups, even from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, making this year's entry base wider than before. While the majority of entries were artistic, this subject stimulated a considerable body of poetry and prose and research into individual sacred places and pilgrimage to St Davids or to Rome.

The standard of the entries was extremely high, some outstanding, in terms of quality of research, imaginative input and in technical, artistic and presentation skills evidenced in both the group and individual entries. Each partici-

pant received a Certificate and the individual and group entry prize-winners in each age group attended a presentation by Dean Jonathan Lean in the Cathedral on Friday 10 July. Each showed

qualities of thought and excellence but two in particular deserve special mention: Year 3 pupils in Tavernspite CP school based their pilgrims – plus dogs – on the sculpture of Giacometti and some forty figures trudge along the 10 foot ancient way of a gnarled tree trunk (see picture); Jade Davies, aged 11, from Ysgol Bro Dewi, turned to poetry to express her thoughts about today's and yesterday's visitors to St Davids.



THE INTERVIEW

Potted Crabb?

In the latest of our series of interviews, Stephen Crabb, Conservative MP for Preseli in Pembrokeshire, talks to Don MacGregor about Christianity and politics

Were you brought up as a Christian, or was there an awakening at some stage – or both?

Looking back, elements of both really. My mother, a strong Christian, made a point of ensuring that my brothers and I went to Sunday school and were exposed to Christian teachings for which I am very grateful. Then I remember when I was 16, over a period of months, a real desire emerged within me to try and understand it for myself. The more I looked into it, the stronger my faith became and my late teens to early 20's was a very active time for me in terms of my Christian life.

So your Christianity was established before your political life began. How has your faith informed our political life?

The challenge for all Christians is for their faith to infect and affect all aspects of their life. My workplace is parliament and politics and the challenge is for my faith to be worked out in a meaningful way. My faith has certainly informed my politics and what I get from the bible is a very strong indication of the right priorities for government, such as tackling social injustice; raising everybody's quality of life; extending opportunities; and good stewardship of resources, which includes the natural environment. There can be a lot of rough and tumble in politics and for a Christian in political life there is a challenge to model a different set of behaviours. For example, how we talk to our political opponents, what kind of language we use, how we use facts and statistics when we

present arguments. Anyone who watches Prime Minister's Question Time or looks at press releases that are churned out by the parties each day will realise that there are some quite interesting uses of statistics at times, which don't always give a true account of an issue. As a Christian I try not to indulge in that.

Conversely, how does politics affect your faith?

My time is split between London and Pembrokeshire, which makes regular churchgoing very difficult. That challenges me because one thing I do believe is that going to church regularly is about being with other Christians in a community of faith, and nurturing and developing that faith. However, the more I've got involved in politics, the more aware I've become of the opinions and values of other people, people who I may not necessarily agree with. One of the challenges for me is coming into contact with people who hold different values from my own, and how to reconcile that with my own personal views.

MP's have been getting some bad press recently. Reflecting on the expenses debacle, what would you want to say about that, from a Christian perspective?

Debate is exactly the right word. It's been deeply damaging for government in the broader sense, at a time of profound economic challenge for the country. For MP's to benefit from what was unquestionably an over-generous, lax expenses system has made them look like they were living on another planet, completely removed from the realities of most normal people. That has



created huge damage to the bond of trust that should exist between the people who are being governed and the MP's that they elect. There is a massive challenge now to restore that trust.

What do you think should be done?

Well, the process is underway already. What needs to happen now is for party leaders to really hammer out a cast iron set of principles and guidance for how an expenses system should be run. One thing I feel strongly about is that we don't want to turn the clocks back to when only the rich sons of aristocratic and great landed families could afford to be MP's. So we need to have a system that enables them to have a roof over their head for the 4 days a week that they are in London. If you start from there, the discussion continues - how do we define what an MP sensibly needs during the week? How do we constrain it to make sure that there's no scope for abuse?

How as a Christian do I see it? I was one of those MP's who was named in very publicly as someone who had, on the face of it, questions

to answer about their expenses. That was a very difficult period for me, for the office and for everyone. It was something we never expected because I was clear in my own mind that I had never set out to do anything wrong. As a Christian, one of the things I did was to sit down and retrace all the steps I took, the judgements I made, the decisions I made, the guidance I sought from the relevant authorities and examine myself again. I had to make a decision about one item on my expenses which, although it had been well within the rules, and no-one had asked me to pay any money back, I came to a point after reflection where I felt I had to pay back this sum of money. That was quite a difficult decision to make, because obviously it has implications for me and my family, as it was quite a substantial sum of money. But for me it was the right thing to do and I wanted to correct something which flows from my Christian understanding that if something isn't quite right, it isn't enough to just stand up and say 'sorry' – you should make attempts to fix it. So even though it's been a debacle, it is my hope as a Chris-

tian, as a politician and as a citizen of this country that some good and a stronger political process will come from all of this.

Church members are often at the heart of the community, sustaining all sorts of voluntary groups, and yet this beneficial effect of Christianity often goes unsung. Do you think this awareness should be brought more into the political arena?

Absolutely, I believe that. You look at the history of welfare, social care and provision in this country over the centuries and you'll see that it's bound up with the established church and non-conformist Christian organisations and that continues right up to this present day. Some of the most active Christian organisations within the UK are working with young people on the fringes of society – drug addicts, alcoholics etc. They often have deep roots within the Christian community and I think we should celebrate and honour that fact more than we do.

What in your view, might be the key issues for the Church today?

One of the burning issues is the state of family life in this country. The church has a particular and special role to play in speaking up for strong family life. That does not mean pushing a certain hard-edged moral view of what a perfect family should be like, and, as someone who grew up in a single parent home, I've got no time for politics that bash up single parents. But I do passionately believe that a strong and stable family life underpins successful societies and that children do better in stable homes and stable communities. I'd love to see the church having a stronger voice in that, because it does require the ability and willingness to speak some hard truths at times.

New Deanery Welcomed

Castlemartin and Narberth Conferences unanimously vote for new Pembroke Deanery

AT a time when there is lots of discussion about pastoral reorganisation, in South Pembrokeshire two deaneries have voted to merge. Unanimous decisions were made by special meetings of the Deanery Conferences in Castlemartin and Narberth deaneries. The new deanery of Pembroke will cover the area from Narberth in the north east to Angle in the south west, and include the major centres of Tenby, Pembroke and Pembroke Dock.

Outlining the reasons for the proposals, the archdeacon of St Davids told the conferences that the new unit had potential to offer a wider fellowship and context of discussion for the clergy, as well as benefits of scale that would enable

a more dynamic role for the deanery altogether.

Welcoming the decision, the bishop said that he believed there was scope for similar mergers in other parts of the diocese, and that he remained convinced of a real and distinct role for the deanery as a mission unit.

There are presently 15 deaneries in the diocese: five in each archdeaconry. When the merger takes effect there will be 14. Area Deans meet quarterly with their archdeacons and annually with the bishop. Deanery Conferences should meet at least annually, but may meet more often, and deanery cooperation may take many forms.

Christian Listening for People in Lay Ministry Roles

Simon Thane invites those in Lay Ministry to a training day

ST DAVIDS Lay Ministry Group has been asking Worship Leaders, Pastoral Assistants and Pastoral Eucharistic Assistants across the diocese what kind of additional training and support they need to help develop themselves and their lay ministry roles in their parish. It seems that getting people together where they can share experiences with others in similar roles, and also offering some key skills training to help directly with their lay ministry roles, would be much appreciated.

So when the Lay Ministry Group heard about Christian Listening



and the courses that Acorn Christian Listeners offer, they invited Acorn to facilitate a Listening Day Workshop for people in lay ministry roles across the diocese. It will be held on Saturday 13th March 2010, from 10.00am to 3.45pm at St Teilo's Parish Church in the centre of Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire.

We all listen every day. But how well do we do it? And why is

it important that we listen well to others? The workshop will involve a programme of teaching, listening demonstrations, time for practising listening skills and space for reflection. It is hoped that people attending the workshop will find the day valuable in helping to further develop their role within their parish.

The training day will be free of charge. If you are in a lay ministry role in your parish and wish to attend contact Simon Thane, Tel: 01558 823060,

simon@tricordant.com

Appointments



Jones – Revd Roger, Team Vicar, Rectorial Benefice of Monkton, to be also Canon of the Cathedral, to occupy the stall of Mathri, date of Installation 19 November.



Wight – Revd Dennis M., Vicar of Dale & St Brides w Marloes & Area Dean of Roose, to be also Canon of the Cathedral, to occupy the stall of Caerfarchell, date of Installation 19 November.



Griffiths – Revd Canon Aled, Vicar of Llangynnwr & Cwmffrwd, to also serve as Clerical Secretary of the Diocesan Conference, the Diocesan Standing Committee & the Diocesan Nominations Board, end of 2009 – taking over from Revd Roger Jones.



Livingstone – Revd John P., Vicar of Elerch, Pnrhynoch & Capel Bangor, has also been appointed Coordinator of St Davids College of Spiritual Directors, replacing Canon Brendan O'Malley.



Herrick Revd Andrew, Team Vicar, Rectorial Benefice of Aberystwyth, to serve as Team Vicar, Rectorial Benefice of Aberystwyth with responsibility for Penparcau & Llanychaearn, 16 November.



Rees – Revd Michael Ll., Vicar, Gorslas, Cross Hands & Carmel, & Area Dean of Dyffryn Aman, to be also Canon of the Cathedral, to occupy the stall of the 4th Cursal, date of Installation 19 November.

Mackness – Revd Paul, Rector of The Maenordeifi Group, & Area Dean Cemais & Sub-Aeron, to also serve as Assistant Clerical Secretary of the Diocesan Conference and the Diocesan Standing Committee, end of 2009.



Pictured with Bishop Wyn Revd Cecilia Charles who was appointed Vicar of Borth, Yscubor-y-coed (Eglwysfach) and Llancynfelin on 27 June



Bishop Wyn with Canon Sian Jones and confirmation candidates at St Peter's Church, Llanelli, on 19 July



Revs Chris Bolton and Sian Jones at their installation as Canons of the Cathedral on 10 July, pictured with the Dean (far left) and Bishop Wyn (far right)



A service to admit and license Lay Readers was held in the Cathedral on Saturday 17 October. Pictured with Bishop Wyn are, back row left to right, Cyril Bond, Lawrie McCarthy, David Annis, David Poole; front row, left to right, Anne McKnight, Glenys Bowen

New Diocesan Communications Officer

Award-winning broadcaster and journalist David Hammond-Williams has joined the Communications Team here in St Davids diocese

davidhammondwilliams@churchinwales.org.uk

DAVID first worked at the *Western Mail* and then spent twenty-five years as a journalist and later a producer at HTV, where he was Head of Religious Broadcasting, responsible for series including *Wales on Sunday*, *Heart & Soul*, *Perspectives and God, Sex, Drugs & Rock 'n' Roll*.

He also made a number of religious documentaries including *Celtic Connections*, *Cambrensis*, *William Morgan – A Bible Story* and a TV biography of St David, and he led the team producing Welsh editions of the popular *Highway* series presented by the late Sir Harry Secombe.

Since leaving ITV, David has worked as a freelance. His most recent credits include the highly successful *Breaking New Ground* and *Renewable Energy* for the Church In Wales, as well as the DVD to accompany the *Menter* course.

He writes: "As an organisation, ours is all about communication



and not just the Good News of the Gospel. We need to keep each other in touch with what's going on around the diocese. And we need to tell the rest of the world about it too.

"Newspapers, magazines, websites and broadcasters are all eager to receive material about what

we're doing. So please let me know about anything – however small – that you feel deserves a wider audience. If nothing else, put me on your mailing list so I can keep up to date.

"Too often, the Church hits the headlines for the wrong reasons. By being pro-active, we can change that or at least add some balance to the mix. I know from my previous work with the Church that there's much to celebrate in our midst. But unless I hear about it I can do nothing.

"The media are especially interested in human interest stories – good people doing good things. By portraying church life in a positive way, we can have a real impact on how others see us.

"But communication is a two-way street. So how can I help you? Whatever it is, I will give it my best shot. Let me know. Together, we can make a real difference."

Ninety-Year-Old Plan Implemented in Haverfordwest

As four churches merge into one new benefice, Nick Cale looks forward to the challenges ahead

ALAN suggested almost 90 years ago will finally be implemented in Haverfordwest over the next few months. At the Ruridecennial Conference held in 1921 it was suggested that the parishes within the town of Haverfordwest, west of the river, should be amalgamated to form one benefice. It was hardly expected then that the plan would take almost ninety years to be carried out but strides are now

being taken in that direction.

Last year, with the impending retirement of Canon Derek Evans, the incumbent of the benefice of Haverfordwest St Mary and St Thomas with Haroldston St Issels, discussions began again to consider joining that benefice with the neighbouring benefice of Haverfordwest St Martin. Following the agreement of both PCCs, the Standing Committee of Diocesan Confer-

ence adopted the new boundary changes, effectively joining the two into one united benefice.

The newly formed benefice will comprise the four churches of the current two benefices, under the care of one incumbent and a curate (the parish of Haverfordwest St Martin is also currently vacant). The Area Dean and the PCCs of the former parishes are currently drawing up a parish profile which will

form the basis for an advertisement for the new incumbent. It is hoped that the post will be advertised later in the autumn, and a suitable appointment be made sometime before Easter.

At a recent meeting of the Collegiate Council, of which the new benefice forms a part, Archdeacon John Holdsworth explained the next stage of the process and when the new parish might expect its new incumbent, saying "This is a very exciting time for the parishes involved in the new merger, as they work together in drawing up their hopes and vision for the future."

The parish of Camrose, which until now had been part of the benefice of St Martin, will now be

made a separate parish and will be advertised soon as a "House-for-Duty" post.

Reservations voiced at the conference in 1921 by the then Vicar of St Martins, Fr Arthur Baring-Gould, who was vicar from 1908 to 1955, that this was a manpower-saving exercise which would result in all the parishes in Haverfordwest being made the same, seem to have been allayed. Rather, there is now a note of hope and expectation that the merger will bring about an era where the four churches in the new benefice will be able to work together more successfully in mission and ministry in the town, while still maintaining their individual identities.

A week to remember

Elizabeth Arnold-Davies basks in the memory of the 2009 Pilgrimage to Walsingham

"The best week of my life!" So said a member of our 2009 Pilgrimage. It was certainly very different from our other visits to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, as we were able to experience two "once in a lifetime" events. On Monday 5 October the coach gathered up 16 pilgrims from about 12 different parishes. Many knew each other, but this time we had two new pilgrims.

Each pilgrimage has its own programme, which fits around the programme of worship in the Shrine church, and individuals may choose what to do and where to go within what is on offer. This year the choices were rather different. On Tuesday the relics of St Thérèse of Lisieux arrived at the Roman Catholic Shrine. On the way through the village the hearse stopped at the Anglican Shrine for a service of welcome. Whatever one's views on the veneration of relics, it was an interesting, and, for many, a moving experience. Thursday, too, was special. The new Milner Wing (a Welcome Centre, Reception area and superb accommodation) was formally opened by



Torches behind Greek Orthodox Archbishop Gregorios

HRH The Duke of Edinburgh and attended by Guardians (the Trustees) and guests, staff and pilgrims, the affair was both imposing and yet relaxed and joyful. The Duke spent longest talking to a lady and her disabled daughter, who were staying in the special facilities provided in the new wing.

The high points are always the services in the Shrine Church. The candlelit procession of Our Lady, followed by Benediction, is a prac-

tical reminder of life's pilgrimage. It was made even more impressive by the participation of the Guardians in their velvet mantles; three of our pilgrims were privileged to take a prominent part. Pilgrimage is not all ceremony and worship – the social side is important too; the journey on the local light railway, the walk on Brancaster beach and even the late evening visits to The Bull, which reputedly closes when "the last priest goes to bed."!

Food For Thought

David Hammond-Williams reports from this year's Diocesan Conference, which demonstrated the church at its very best

IT'S the conference season again, and not just for politicians or seaside resorts beginning with 'B'.

For two weeks, Lampeter was the centre of my universe; no sooner had the Governing Body departed than our own Diocesan Conference filled the University's Arts Hall. As Bishop Wyn said in his address, we are a journeying church. It certainly feels that way just now.

Pride of place went to the Committee For Social Responsibility, and when better than during a recession to throw the spotlight on the way we as Christians address the problems it brings, especially

to families?

To quote Bishop Wyn again, "If the gospel is not social then it's not working." Well, based on what we heard at Lampeter, it is most certainly working. Miracles is probably too strong a word, but it's the one that came to mind.

Eileen Davies, Rural Life Adviser, kicked off with a resumé of the how the Church supports farming families. Too often in rural villages, the church is the only social body left standing as jobs and services disappear one by one. The answer, she suggested, is a blend of spiritual and practical service: if the church is all that is left, then

why not put a post office in it? Or perhaps a shop selling the produce the farmers rely on for their livelihoods? Anything to combat the supermarkets that pay the farmer 20p for a litre of milk and sell it to us for 75.

Back in town, Sonia and Cheryl were waiting to tell us how the support they received from Plant Dewi had literally rescued their lives; two women blighted in childhood by abuse, neglect and the low self esteem that results, transformed into confident, successful people. Their moving testaments to the power of "warmth, safety and support" brought a lump to my throat and, I dare say, many others. If anyone tells me again that the Church is out of touch and irrelevant, I know exactly where to take them.

100 years of Girlguiding

Emily Vallow and Miriam Lowe, from the Girlguiding Ceredigion Executive Committee, look forward to a year of centenary celebrations

GUIDING is still going strong in Ceredigion and this year celebrates 100 years of Girlguiding UK.

To launch a year of centenary celebrations, members from Ceredigion Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Senior Section along with Leaders and Trefoil Guild joined together for a day at Fantasy Farm, near Llanrhystud, on Saturday 5th September. Over 260 members, plus families and friends, attended the celebration, which involved many activities including feeding the animals, making crafts, rodeo, go-karting and face painting. Members paraded through the site with unit flags and banners, made by the girls especially for the occasion. A traditional campfire, again enjoyed by members of all ages, finished the day on a high note, as songs from across the decades were shared.

Girlguiding UK is celebrating 100 years since a group of girls approached the founder of the Boy Scout movement, Lord Baden Powell, at a Scout rally at Crystal Palace Park, to ask if he would consider starting 'something for the girls'. Girlguiding was later established in Ceredigion in 1915 and today has over four hundred members who meet regularly across the county. While the organization

aims to be relevant to modern society, the common standard on which Girlguiding was built remains to this day, as girls and women from all sections continue to participate in learning life skills, crafts and games which encourage them to commit to doing their best in serving the communities in which they live.

The year ahead promises a feast of centenary challenges and 'mountain top moments' for the girls to enjoy. In Ceredigion these will include a Guide getaway holiday to snowy Switzerland and Brownies taking over Aberystwyth castle for a fun day. On Saturday 27th February 2010, the whole county will come together for a service in St Michael's Church, Aberystwyth, giving thanks for 100 fabulous years, and looking forward to an equally fantastic future. Past members are very welcome to join us for that service. The centenary year will culminate in October with members nationwide joining together to simultaneously renew their Guide promise at 20:10 on 20/10 in 2010!

To find out about other ways to celebrate visit www.girlguiding100years.org.uk/ or to get involved locally contact miriam@stmikes.net



Members at the centenary launch party at Fantasy Farm on Saturday 5 September

Help and Helpers for Parish Treasurers

Following analysis of returned questionnaires, Ewan Wilson explains that help is at hand for Parish Treasurers. He would also like to hear from anyone who could assist individual parishes with their accounts

THE Diocesan Board of Finance has been concerned for some time about the responsibilities and pressures placed upon Parish Treasurers, particularly following changes in recent years in the Charities Act requirements.

The DBF is very aware that many treasurers do not have any formal training in accounting, or experience gained through employment. It is, therefore, forming a group of people with the relevant expertise to act as 'mentors' and who will be available to assist and advise on an individual basis.

It is intended that a letter and a package of worksheet templates be sent out to all Parish Treasurers in the coming weeks, with a view to the group beginning its work before the end of the calendar year 2009. It is further intended that in the New Year there will be visits to Area Deaneries to meet treasurers

to discuss, advise, assist and learn of problems.

It must be stressed that it is recognised that many treasurers have perfectly good systems in place and produce excellent, accurate and easily comprehensible accounts. There is no intention to interfere with their work or impose anything upon them. The Board's experience, however, is that there are many other treasurers in the Diocese who need, and would welcome, assistance. This was borne out by analysis of the questionnaires completed at the presentations to Parish Treasurers by David Holloman of the Representative Body in July.

We need more mentors. If we have a few more, the work should not be too onerous. Could anyone who is willing to act as a mentor please contact the Diocesan Office on 01267 236145.

A Safe Haven for Thai Children

Over the summer Camilla Lewis spent four weeks in Thailand working on the Mae Kok Foundation project

THE Mae Kok Foundation was initially opened as a drug rehabilitation centre by Mr Pipat, and, although he was seeing positive impacts from the program, the results were not good enough, and he decided that the best method was prevention, not cure. He therefore put his efforts into starting hill tribe schools, so that the children could be educated and thus be given opportunities which their parents had not had and shown a life away from opium. Mr Pipat made a huge difference working as a teacher in these schools before reopening the foundation as a shelter and educational facility. Sadly, Mr Pipat died earlier this year, but his wife, Analuck, is now manager of the project and mum to the children.

There are 30 children living on the foundation. They all go to a local school, and, importantly, they are given a loving and caring home where they are utterly safe.

I was one of seven volunteers living on the foundation. Every day two of us got up at 5am to help the children with their morning chores and organising the younger ones for school. Then we began maintenance work. We were working on one of the boys' dormitories and painted a mural of some geckos, and an elephant playing football.

Our other main responsibility

was teaching, and every afternoon three of us would go to a local school and teach. This was challenging because we had no idea what class we were teaching, what English they already knew, or what resources we would have! The salary for teaching is so low in Thailand that it is practically impossible for teachers to live on teaching alone. Often, many did not come in as they were at other jobs, and several times we had to take three or four classes at the same time.

We also taught English in the evenings at the foundation – this was particularly rewarding as we could see that the children were learning and their confidence growing.

The foundation was an incredible place – a safe haven for some wonderful children who deserve to have opportunities open to them, and I feel very lucky to have been able to experience their lifestyle and to do a bit to help them.

Good Spot

Sharp-eyed readers will have spotted that we inadvertently displayed a photograph of Llangathen Church, rather than Llanarthne, on page 9 of the last issue. We apologise for any confusion this may have caused.

Menter Diddorol a Llwyddiannus

Dyfrig Lloyd reports on a special reunion service held at Gartheli Church in Ceredigion for all former members of the Sunday School, the church choir and others who had been involved in the life of the parish over a period of many years. This was a unique opportunity for the church family, past and present, to meet one another. The response to the service was breathtaking and the event was thoroughly enjoyed by all who were in attendance

MAE 'na lawer o sôn y dyddiau hyn am rwydweithiau cymdeithasol ar y rhyngryd. Gwefannau megis Bebo, Facebook, Friends Reunited ac yn y blaen. Eu bwriad yw cadw pobl mewn cysylltiad â'i gilydd, neu er mwyn i hen ffrindiau ail gysylltu â'i gilydd ar ôl blynyddoedd. Hefyd mae ysgolion yn mynd ati bob hyn a hyn i drefnu aduniadau er mwyn i gyn-ddisgyblion a chyn athrawon ail gwrrd yn eu hen ysgol. Am hynny, penderfynodd Eglwys Gartheli, Eglwys allan yng nghefn gwlad godidog Ceredigion, tua phum milltir o Lamed, drefnu aduniad Eglwysig. Gwahoddwyd cyn aelodau'r ysgol sul, y côr, cynifer o bobl a phosib oedd â chysylltiadau â'r Eglwys, i wasanaeth arbennig ar ddydd Sul yr 20^{fed} o Fedi 2009. Roedd yr ymateb yn un rhagorol, gyda phobl yn trafaelu gryn bellter er mwyn dod yn ôl i'w gwreiddiau ysbrydol, yn yr hen Eglwys. Hefyd, gwahoddwyd cyn ficeriaid a'u teuluodd. Braff oedd gweld yr Eglwys o dan ei sang y



Sul hwnnw, a'r awyrglych yn un hapus, un o ddatliad ac atgofion melys ac i'r mwyafrif, roedd y gwasanaeth yn un emosynol. Rhai ohonynt ddim wedi gweld ei gilydd am dros ddeugain mlynedd. Ar ôl y gwasanaeth hwylus a bendithiol, roedd amser i bawb gymdeithasu dros ddisgled o de a chacen; edrych ar hen luniau

a hel atgofion. Cyfle ydoedd, ie, i gofio'n nôl, ond hefyd i'n hatgoffa'n hunain, fel dywed Sant Paul yn ei Epistol at yr Effesiaid, "...nid estroniaid a dieithriaid ydych mwyach, ond cyd-ddinasyddion â'r saint, ac aelodau o deulu Duw". (Effesiaid 2^o).

Y Parchedig Dyfrig Lloyd,
Ficer Tîm Eglwys Gartheli

Flood at the Royal Welsh Showground

Val Wakeman enjoys New Wine Cymru's summer conference



IN August a group from the Goodwick/Fishguard area joined many Christians of all denominations for New Wine Cymru's week long conference at the Royal Welsh Showground.

Thought provoking talks were under the headings Evangelism, Ministry, Spirituality, Contemporary issues and Discipleship.

We were challenged to decide prayerfully what we should do in our own area to take the gospel into our communities, not compromising our faith, but having compassion for those around us and going out with courage in the

power of the Holy Spirit.

We heard what some Christians are doing in their localities. There was a programme for all age groups (including under 4's!) with world renowned speakers at both large and small gatherings and outstanding music ministry at all main meetings. It was really good to have the opportunity to meet others from the Diocese and further afield, to talk about the Christian faith, to worship and pray together and to have great fun.

The title this year was The Welcome of the Kingdom (Croeso'r Deyrnas), sharing God's great

invitation to mercy. Very thought localities. One church, in a very difficult area, decided, amongst other things, to provide free weekly meals and they have seen 3,000 people commit their lives to Christ in the past 5 years; another church places chairs at a bus stop and offers to pray for people; and yet another had a small group of men meeting for Bible study in the local pub and before long people were asking questions and joining! In China Christians just tell their story to those they meet and their number has grown from about 10,000 in the 1940's to more than the total population of the UK today. This is also true of many Eastern churches.

And the flood? Well actually we had good weather, unlike West Wales, but the flood was one of God's love and as the chorus of Amazing Grace says –

My chains fell off, I've been set free,

*For God my saviour has ransomed me,
And like a flood his mercy flows,*

Unending love, amazing grace.

As someone at the conference said 'with all this on offer it's nuts not to be a Christian'!

This is an annual event for families so why not join us next year? Full details at www.newwinecymru.co.uk

Plant Dewi Welcomes New Charity Shop Manager

Rhiannon Mitchell is the new Manager of the Plant Dewi Charity Shop in Carmarthen. Sue Fletcher gives a brief introduction

SHOP Manager, Rhiannon Mitchell, has brought her own flair to the Plant Dewi Charity Shop in Carmarthen. Born nearby and educated at Ysgol Bro Myrdin, Rhiannon brings with her a wealth of experience in charity retail. The shop window has been brightened with new lighting and a hessian floor. Inside, displays show off the goods to their best effect.

Plant Dewi Project Manager, Sue Fletcher, said: "We are delighted to welcome Rhiannon to our shop and I am sure she will build on the good work of her predecessor. We hope that the local community will continue to support the shop as they have done so magnificently in the past."

Donations

The shop, which is open from 9.30am to 4pm, from Monday to Saturday, sells a wide variety of donated items, including men's, women's and children's clothing, bric-a-brac, toys, DVDs and books. Donations of such goods are always welcome; sales raise vital funds while also increasing awareness of the services Plant Dewi offers to



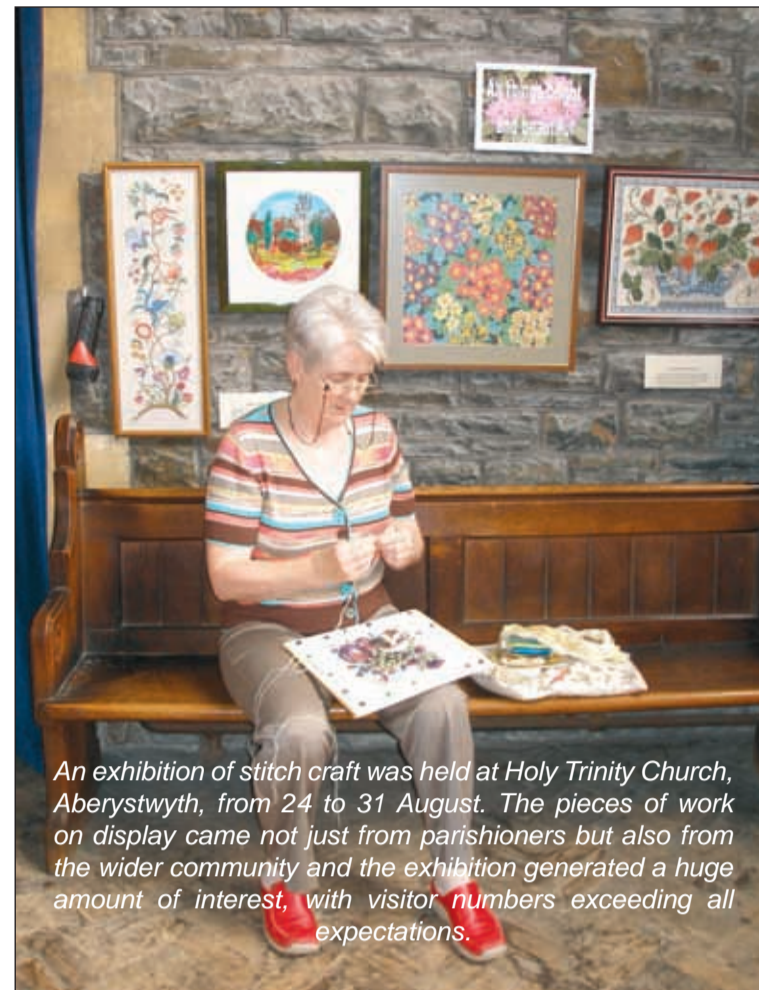
Shop Volunteer Betty Murphy (left) and Rhiannon Mitchell

children, young people and their families in the area.

Currently, 20 volunteers, from all over Carmarthenshire, help on a rota basis, and, as Rhiannon says: "We are very lucky to have a good customer base and so many people who support us. We have a core of volunteers and I'm really excited about the future of the shop

and working with them and we are hoping to recruit new volunteers to strengthen our team."

Archdeacon Alun Evans, Chair of the St Davids Diocesan Council for Social Responsibility, commented: "We are very pleased with Rhiannon's appointment as shop manager which is in such a good location at the heart of a lively



An exhibition of stitch craft was held at Holy Trinity Church, Aberystwyth, from 24 to 31 August. The pieces of work on display came not just from parishioners but also from the wider community and the exhibition generated a huge amount of interest, with visitor numbers exceeding all expectations.

and supportive community. Building on hard work done over the years, we look forward to the shop going from strength to strength."

To volunteer in the shop, no experience is necessary and you

can sign up for whatever amount of time you are able to give.

To volunteer or to donate goods, please call into the shop and speak to Rhiannon herself or telephone 01267 238408.

Walk of Witness



St David's representatives at the Cursillo GB National Ultreya preparing for the "Walk of Witness" through the town centre of Ely, Cambridgeshire

'Do this in Remembrance of me'

Will Strange reminds us of Jesus' instruction to 'make disciples of all nations', and invites readers to get in touch with the new Diocesan Evangelism Team

EVERY time we attend a Communion service we are reminded that breaking bread and sharing wine is something Jesus told his followers to do – and to go on doing. But it isn't the only thing he told us to do and keep on doing. He also said 'Go, and make disciples of all nations'.

As a church we have concentrated more on one of these commands than on the other. To some extent we are still living with the idea that 'making disciples' applies to: a) children, and b) people overseas. But society is changing around us and today the mission field is our own backyard. And that is why evangelism is now so vital. And what is evangelism? David Bosch gave as good a working definition as any, when he wrote:

"Evangelism is the proclamation of salvation in Christ to those who do not believe in him, calling them to repentance and conversion, announcing forgiveness of sins, and inviting them to become living members of Christ's earthly community and to begin a life of service to others in the power of the Holy Spirit."

And now we have a Diocesan Evangelism Group (part of the Communications Team) to keep this activity on the agenda of parishes and the diocese. A good

aim for the Diocesan Evangelism Group would be to make ourselves unnecessary. After all, we don't need a Diocesan Eucharist group to encourage churches to keep the Communion service on their agenda! The ideal would be for our obedience to Jesus' command to 'make disciples' to be as much a natural and everyday part of every church's life as his command to 'do this in remembrance of me'.

The Evangelism Group consists of: the Revd Canon Stuart Bell (Rector of Aberystwyth); Val Petherick (Faith & Policy Co-ordinator, MU); The Ven Dr Will Strange (Archdeacon of Cardigan); Steve Traynar (Port Chaplain, Milford Haven); The Revd Richard Wood (Curate of Aberaeron)

So if you have any ideas, projects or other thoughts do please pass them on to us.



Plant Dewi Sunday was celebrated at St Davids Cathedral on 12 July. Pictured with Bishop Wyn is Cheryl Huish, who is a member of South Cefn Caeau Family Centre, Llanelli. Cheryl told her remarkable story during the service and at the Diocesan Conference on 3 October (see 'Food for Thought' on page 4)

Delving into the Past

For the last 5 years Mary Baker has welcomed guests from all over the world and introduced them to our splendid historical and archaeological sites. Here she reveals a little about St Gwyndaf's Church, Llanwnda

LLANWYNDWA Church, between Goodwick and Strumble Head, is one of my very favourite places, and the treasures it hides tell a story that is intriguing to try and unravel. I bring visitors from all over the world and we look at ancient burial chambers, standing stones and castles. The churches in West Wales however have a beauty and mystery of their own – St Gwyndaf's, in particular, is a must-see location.

The tour starts at the small, overgrown well opposite the church where the tumbledown stone surround seems medieval in origin. Pilgrims on their way to St Davids probably bustled here to draw clean water; it must have been quite exciting as they were nearing the end of a long, hard journey. I wonder if there was a hospice here where they rested weary limbs; did they stop and pray in the church? We cross to the church through the fish decorated gates and I surprise my guests by showing them the first of the inscribed stones, a simple cross built into the church wall.

Round the back of the church, views open up of Carreg Wasted – the landing place of the French invasion in 1797. Here there is another cross, and on the wall around the corner another, this one has a groove in the top and we run our fingers along it imagining the countless other digits doing so over hundreds of years. We turn the corner and there is yet another

cross, this one is thicker and looks a little later in age.

The final engraved stone is the finest, for here we have a figure staring back at us appearing to be wearing a hooded cloak. The Cross of St Andrew sits above the figure. We don't know if this is male or female, saint or pilgrim, but the form is ancient and reminiscent of Romano British carvings. It



has empty eyes and a mournful expression.

There are mysteries here to solve. Who was St Gwyndaf? Research suggests a priestly friend of others saints, a relative of St David himself perhaps? We do know, though, that the so called Dark Ages shone a lot brighter here in West Wales thanks to the saints and the churches they left as a legacy. I, for one, will continue to delve and wonder and share my musings with guest from afar.

Mary Baker runs Archaeotours, a small tour company based in Pembrokeshire – visit www.archaeotours.co.uk or call 07890 155538 for more information.

Cwrs rasio ceffylau – Ffos Las



Ffos Las, between Kidwelly and Llanelli in Carmarthenshire, is the first new horse racing course to be opened in the UK for 80 years. The course has made a positive impact on the local area with new jobs being created, and, so far, events have been well supported. Vincent Lloyd is impressed

ELENI, ar 28ain Awst gwelsof agoriad swyddogol cwrs rasio ceffylau Ffos Las. Cofnodwyd yn y llyfrau record fel y cwrs cyntaf i agor ym Mhrydain ers wyth deg o flynyddoedd. Mae'r cwrs yn aml bwmpas sy'n cynnig rhedeg fflat a neidio. Cwrs dosbarth yn Orllewin Cymru am y tro cyntaf ers 1937.

Lleolwyd Ffos Las rhwng tref Llanelli a Chydweili ger pentref Trimsaran. Mae'r cwrs rhyw 15 munud o'r M4 a rhyw awr o siwrne o derfynfa fferi Abergwaun a Doc Penfro i'r Iwerddon. Mae hyn yn gyraeddadwy i'r frawdoliaeth Wyddelig.

Mae'r trac ei hun tua 60m ar led ac yn brin o un filltir a pum ystaden mewn cylchedd. Oherwydd bod y trac yn wastad mae'n gwrs uwchraddol i'r rhedwyr ac un sy'n cynnig golygfeydd godidog i'r gwylwyr. Mae'r lleoliad yn wych gyda bryniau, cefn gwlad a golygfeydd o Gwm

Gwendraeth a Bae Caerfyrddin yn ymestyn i'r pellter. Mae'n anodd credu mai yma oedd safle mwyaf gwaith glo brig Ewrop.

Mae'r safle yn darparu ar gyfer ddigwyddiadau tu hwnt i rasio, sef priodasau gyda threfnydd personol, cynhadleddau busnes a dathliadau achlysuron arbennig.

Hyd yn hyn mae'r calendr gosodiadau rasio a'r diwrnodau teuluol wedi profi i fod yn boblogaidd iawn yn denu sylwadau positif gan bawb sydd wedi mynychu. Mae hyn yn argoeli'n dda i ddyfodol Ffos Las ac mae'n cael effaith positif ar yr ardal leol. Mae wedi dod a swyddi llawn a rhan amser i'r ardal, a chynnydd yng ngwasanaethau oddiar y safle hefyd.

Mae Ffos Las yn cynnig tipyn fel lleoliad a fyddai werth ymweld â'r safle beth bynnag yw eich diddordebau.

Rt Revd Anthony Rudd:

Roger Hughes sheds light on the 16th bishop of St Davids

IWAS inducted in Llangathen Parish Church sixteen years ago. That night, the then Chief Executive of Dinefwr Borough Council, took me to one side and said; "I hope you realise that this church is the Cathedral of the Towy Valley." Such, it seems, was the local impact and legacy of Bishop Rudd (c.1548-1614). Quite at odds with Freeman and Basil Jones, who, in their History and Antiquities of St Davids, dismiss him with the words "Anthony Rudd calls for no special notice". Perhaps these words have a hollow ring to them today, thanks to the international interest and publicity generated by the "Gardens Lost In Time" at Aberglasney, his Llangathen home, which is to be featured in the next series of the BBC's Antiques Roadshow.

Anthony Rudd was an ambitious Yorkshireman who had risen to become Dean of Gloucester. He was described as "a high flying

cleric", before being appointed to the then wealthy, See of St Davids in 1594. As we all know, the ambitions of high flying clerics often come crashing down; Rudd proved to be no exception.

Hotly tipped, some say groomed, to succeed Archbishop Whitgift as Archbishop of Canterbury, Rudd was summoned to Richmond Palace to preach to Queen Elizabeth I at Easter 1596. His text was Psalm 90 v12, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom". Her Majesty interpreted these words, together with his subsequent remarks, as alluding to her advancing years and, in consequence, sent Rudd back to St Davids. With that royal command, all his hopes of further preferment came to an abrupt end.

Perhaps it was for that reason that, in 1600, he bought the Aberglasney Estate, and subsequently many other notable properties in

the immediate area. Choosing to be buried in Llangathen Parish Church, rather than in the company of his predecessors in the Cathedral Church at St Davids, and building a chapel to facilitate this, makes a statement. Not only a man of independent means, he was either a bishop of courage, with a remarkable and independent spirit, or a fool who didn't realise what he was doing, particularly in the presence of the monarch. I like to think he was the former, but perhaps not.

He certainly spent much of his remaining Episcopal years in Llangathen where it is said he used his chapel in the church on a daily basis, accessing it along the "Bishops Walk" from his Aberglasney residence. Bishop Anthony Rudd remains a strong presence in the parish thanks to the outstanding "bedside scene" tomb, thought to be the work of the Gloucester mason Samuel Baldwin and erected by Bishop Rudd's wife Anne in 1616.

Deciding upon this as his final physical resting place indicates a deep affection for Llangathen, the place he decided to make his home.



Attractive bedding in St Mary's Fishguard

by Jeremy Martineau

THE quilters of Fishguard area were thrilled with the public response to the first exhibition of their quilts which were displayed in St Mary's Church Fishguard for two days in August. Jacquie Rees and Dilys Tabraham organised their colleagues to bring over 100 quilts, which literally covered every part of the church – pews, font, altar and pulpit. Over 400 people enjoyed the fantastic needlework and designs including two coaches of visitors who had stopped to see the famous

Fishguard tapestry. £500 was raised to be shared between the church and another local project.

The popularity of this event suggests an annual exhibition, over more days so that tourists can plan to come when the quilts are displayed. The church representative on the Chamber of Trade is keen to see more events like this in the long term diary with more advertising to help visitors plan their stay.



Open Day Success

Jill Wheeler tells how some careful preparatory work resulted in a hugely successful day at All Saints' Church, Llangorwen, near Aberystwyth

FOLLOWING the Bishop's letter which encouraged us all to think about Open Churches Day on 19th September, we, at All Saints' Church, Llangorwen, decided to combine the Open Day with a Gift Day.

I had agreed to organise the event and, using the documents stored in our church safe, information at the National Library of Wales, and the internet, I was able to produce a history of the church from its very early days, and then display various other items on the open day. I composed a letter for the gift day and, by deleting one paragraph, the same letter formed an invitation to all those who had held baptisms or marriages at the church since 1995.

Going back 14 years in both the marriage and baptism registers was simple, and, for the most part, those in the baptism register lived at the same address. However, it was only possible to send letters to those married in the church if they were still living at the same address as they had before their marriage!! The same names often cropped up in both registers, so care had to be taken to avoid duplication of letters.

About two weeks before the

day, invitations were sent to those on the electoral roll as well as those mentioned above, posters were distributed and fliers were hand-delivered by church members. A large board was placed near the gate which advertised the church as being open on the 19th – the latter was very effective and drew a number of people in.

Parishioners provided complimentary tea, coffee, homemade cakes and biscuits and on the day were there to meet and greet. We opened at 10am and had no visitors for the first hour; my heart sank. Then the visitors started arriving – the atmosphere was relaxed and happy. The vestry, where we were making refreshments, resembled a homely kitchen, with church members and visitors alike sitting around chatting. The vicar mingled with the visitors for most of the day and, apart from a lull over the lunch period, we had a constant flow of people, with the last couple leaving at 4.30pm. The two offertory plates were overflowing, so was the gift day box and our Treasurer was delighted to be able to report that we had taken £3,150. What's more, much of that was Gift Aided and, as I write, donations are still coming in.



Art Foundation

Jonathan Copus reveals a plan to return churches to the art of their communities

ANYONE who has ever sung or played in a church knows what marvellous acoustics most of them have. Yet they're vastly under-used as artistic venues, largely lying idle for six days out of seven. And it's not just music: painting, poetry, drama, sculpture, pottery, crafts of all kinds – these are the sorts of displays and activities for which our churches can provide magnificent, sensitive, resonant settings. On a more practical level, the buildings could be earning their keep much more effectively if they were better used as concert halls and exhibition spaces.

But there's more to it than that. We may be basically naked apes, as anthropologist Desmond Morris once famously said, but we're not just animals: there's something in us which makes us human, something that can love and be loved,

something that can appreciate beauty, that can be awed, and above all that can create.

All these aspects of humanity can be called *spiritual* qualities; and they're exactly the kind of faculties called into play when we take part in artistic activities, from painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel to being a drummer in a rock band. Well, a guitarist in a rock band, anyway.

Now a new venture, *Velfrey Arts*, aims to promote the use of churches as artistic venues and explore the connection between spirituality and the arts. At the same time, the events which it promotes are designed to put under-used buildings back at the centre of their community's life – and contribute to their upkeep. The Bishop of St David's has kindly agreed to be the scheme's President.

Although the project is based on the Velfrey Group of Churches in the Deanery of St Clears, it aims to service any church in the diocese interested in promoting these aims. After a deduction for expenses such as printing, the host venue retains the proceeds.

Events so far arranged include a recital by the early music group *La Volta*, an organ recital by the RSCM's Peter Carder, an exhibition of work by the children of Tavernspite School, and a concert by the Corran Singers of Laugharne.

If you would like to consider arranging an event and taking advantage of the organising group's expertise, please contact the Revd Jonathan Copus on revjc@denton.co.uk, or phone 01994 419834.

When we opened our doors

Philip Jones rejoices in the success of opening St Ystyffan's Church, Llansteffan, near Carmarthen, on a daily basis

WHEN some PCC members and I met representatives of the Ecclesiastical Insurance Company last January, we were told, much to some people's incredulity, that they encouraged the opening of churches, provided some safeguards were put in place. This included opening the church during reasonable hours, objects of intrinsic value being locked in safes behind a padlocked vestry door, and all items painted with 'Smart Water'.

Pilgrims

Llansteffan is visited by many tourists and we opened our doors to pilgrims and visitors on an all day, every day, basis in the early summer. Since then, our visitor/guest book has been inundated with scores of wonderful comments from people the world over. Local people, too, have visited us for various reasons including the wish to find peace.

The name Llansteffan obviously alludes to the Church of St Stepen, the first Christian Martyr.



However, our church is actually dedicated to the 6th century Celtic Saint Ystyffan, and is one of only two dedicated to his name (the other being in Powys). An ancient church, with ancient traditions, lovingly restored, St Ystyffan's has a nave dating back to the 13th century, a peal of eight bells, pre-reformation wall paintings, a John Petts

east window, a Kusha Petts Mosaic background to our holy water stoup in the porch and a myriad of other interesting features.

Most of all, though, it is the warmth, love and spirituality which visitors feel when they walk into this warm and inviting church. Please visit us.

Threads of Prayer

The Guild Hall Gallery, Cardigan
4-9 January 2010

Poetry, music and reflection supported by a display of crafts. Artists, spinners, weavers, knitters and stitchers will share their talents and tales, while raising awareness of the benefits of Christian fellowship. Completed items for consideration by the selection group to be available by 30th November – children's and group items encouraged.

Full details available from
threadsofprayer@googlemail.com

Disclaimer

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Advent Reflection

God's Eye View

Alun Evans, Archdeacon of Carmarthen, invites us to celebrate the hope which Advent brings

IT'S a long time since I went to Oakwood with a group of young people from my Cardiff parish – not that I'm pining! When I went, if you didn't fancy a ride on Megaphobia, you could visit the Imax Cinema – like a giant igloo, the screen enveloping you. It's big and very close, and you feel you're there, in the picture.

The show included the flight of the space shuttle. We went up through the noise and tremor of blast-off, on to the silence of space. We looked down at the breathtaking spectacle of the earth slowly turning in space. Looking carefully we could spot the small island on which we live.

The sight was stunning. From that stupendous vantage point our worries and struggles seemed totally insignificant. The earth looked beautiful and mysterious – a sphere in unity and at peace with itself. No wonder so many astronauts have spoken of their space flight as a deeply spiritual experience. Serene, quiet, beautiful. No conflicts, dirt, or blood.

The show ended and we pushed our way out – and everything was ordinary again.

The grandeur, the serenity, the unity and the beauty of what is seen from space is so removed from life at ground level. There are no crowds pushing their way around up there, no governments ill treating their people, no refugees desperate for a home, no exploitation of the earth's resources, no private or corporate greed, no credit crunch, no terror, no war.

The perspective from above is very different to the perspective from below. It's tempting to think of the 'above' view as the God perspective and the 'below' view as the human perspective. Genesis gives us a picture of God looking over his creation and reflecting on his handiwork. "It is very good," he says. (Genesis 1:31) The view of the earth from space looks something like that. Serene, integrated, peaceful.

Rather different from below, isn't it? At ground level, we can long for the unity of all things in

God – but reality lies with the cries of the hungry, endless wars, natural disasters, the recession and unemployment, and daily horrors in the news.

But these are not two perspectives. They are both God's perspective. The message of Advent is that God holds out to us that vision glorious of a universe whose beginning and end lies in the harmony of all its parts and it finds its meaning and unity in Christ who will be all in all.

But God also has a view of the earth from ground level, for he has been as one of us in his Son. He's walked where we've walked, laughed as we laugh, cried as we cry, died as we died. The thrill of Advent is that God has come among us and nothing human is alien to him. In Jesus, God has assumed all that is human into himself - in order to redeem it.

This is why I find Advent to be such an exciting season. It celebrates a hope for the future and a hope for now. That end-time hope of a new heaven and a new earth, the cosmos restored, renewed, redeemed in God – and the immediate hope of the here and now, that God has been among us, one of us, and because of that, things can never be the same again.

Experiencing Easter



Rhiannon Johnson encourages us all to consider planning an innovative and rewarding display for Easter

THE idea is very simple. Set up six displays around a church building that help explore the events of Holy Week and Easter, then invite the local school or schools to come and experience the story.

It began in Gloucester diocese and was tried in a few parishes in this diocese for Easter 2009. One of those parishes was Walwyn's Castle in Pembrokeshire where nearly ninety children were led through the experience by volunteers from several of the local parishes. The church was kept open with the displays up for Holy Week and a number of the children came back bringing parents and grandparents. Some of them were very moved to have the story told them by the youngsters.

They drew their hopes and dreams on pebbles and laid them at

the foot of the cross, washing hands (a little easier to manage with children than foot washing), made models to learn that God is always with them even in dark Gethsemane, shared broken bread, sat under the cross and shared sorrows, wondered at resurrection and went home munching little Easter eggs.

The pack, available from www.jumpingfish.org.uk, made everything very easy, with pictures of the displays for us to copy and scripts for the leaders. The Gloucester Diocesan website provides prayer material and has some prayer resources linked to the displays. A venturing in mission grant helped us develop the project and the dedicated people of Walwyn's Castle made it all run smoothly. We have already made some plans for next year and would encourage other churches to give it a try.

Adolygiad Addysg yr Eglwys yng Nghymru

Jean Voyle Williams, Diocesan Schools Officer and RE Advisor, reports on the Church in Wales' Education Review, which was launched at September's Governing Body meeting

MAE'r rhagarweiniad i Adolygiad yr eglwys yng Nghymru yn dechrau drwy ddweud mae bod yn gysylltiedig ag addysg yn meddwl gweithio mewn amgylchfyd lle mae cyfeiriad at draddodiadau yn gryf, ond lle mae'r angen am newid yn thema gylchol. Yma yn Esgobaeth Tŷ Ddewi rydym yn ymwybodol o draddodiad cryf gyda Griffith Jones wedi sefydlu eu hysgolion cylchynol tu fewn yr esgobaeth ac wedi gwneud cymaint i dyfiant addysg yn y 18fed ganrif. 'Rydym fel esgobaeth yn falch iawn o'n hysgolion eglwys ac yn gwerthfawrogi yn fawr iawn yr holl waith da sydd yn cymerid lle yn ein 9 Ysgol Wirfoddol dan gymorth a'n 24 Ysgol Wirfoddol dan reolaeth. Ond er hynny nid ydym yn hunanfodlon.

Gwnaeth yr adolygiad gyfeirio at le a statws y Gymraeg yn yr ysgolion eglwys. Roedd 'na wahaniaeth rhwng y modd yr oedd dwyieithrwydd yn cael ei ddechongli yn y gwahanol Awdurdodau Lleol a thybiwyd y dylai fod yna bolisi o ddwyieithrwydd cydlynol a chyson trwy'r dalaith.

Awgrymir y dylai'r ysgolion eglwys wneud yn siŵr fod pob plentyn erbyn 11 mlwydd oed yn medru ymgomio yn hyderus yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg ac yn ymwybodol o'r diwylliant sydd ynghlwm a'r ddwy iaith.

Gwnaeth yr Adolygiad amlygu'r angen i'r ysgol ,y Plwyf a'r gymuned i weithio gyda'i gilydd a chredir fod hyn yn bwysig i bob ysgol yn yr esgobaeth. Mae yn bwysig i'r plwyfi wybod cyfraniad y staff i'r gymuned leol. Tanlinella'r adolygiad yr amser a'r egni sylweddol y mae clerigwyr plwyf ledled Cymru yn eu rhoi i ysgolion. Cyfeiria hefyd y dylai fod yna gyswllt rhwng yr ysgolion a'r ddeoniaeth yn enwedig gyda'r ysgolion Uwchradd.

Mae angen darpariaeth caplaniaeth yn y sector Addysg Bellach ac Uwch. Trwy Gymru mae 260,000 o fyfyrwyr wedi ei cofrestru yng ngholegau Addysg Bellach a 123,000 yng ngholegau Addysg Uwch a hyn yn nodi yn glir yr angen am ofal bugeiliol.

Mae'r Adolygiad yn cyfeirio at feithrin galwedigaeth Dysgu a rôl yr eglwys leol yn cefnogi

athrawon Cristnogol ym mhob ysgol. Mae yn herio pob Cyngor Plwyf Eglwysig yn y dalaith i wneud camau positif i wella'r gofal bugeiliol sy'n bodoli i aelodau sy'n gweithio mewn ysgolion a hefyd i'r athrawon yn yr ysgolion lleol tu fewn y Plwyf. Pryd wnaeth materion i ymwneud a'r Ysgol leol ymddangos ar agenda'r Cyngor Plwyf Eglwysig?

Mae yna bryderon am ddifyg hyfforddiant i glerigwyr ym maes Cyd addoliad wedi cael ei drafod ers hir amser yn yr Eglwys yng Nghymru a gobeithio yn sgil yr Adolygiad diweddaraf yma y gwelwn rywbeth prof-fesiynol yn datblygu oherwydd mae ein disgyblion yn haeddu'r gorau posibl oddi wrthym.

Felly mae yna sawl her i ni fel esgobaeth yn yr Adolygiad ond os fyddwn yn barod i weithio mewn partneriaeth a'n gilydd fe allwn adeiladu ar y gwaith da sydd eisoes yn bodoli yn ein hysgolion ni.

A corresponding article in English by Rev Canon Brian Witt, Diocesan Director of Education, is available on the diocesan website.

Education Review given positive response

Paul Mackness reports from September's Governing Body meeting

THE centrepiece of business this session was the launch of the Church In Wales Education Review, a comprehensive study of Church involvement in education and schools, including religious education and collective worship.

Dr David Lankshear, the author of the report, clarified some of the issues raised by the review. A five-year work programme was laid out in the report and the Governing Body responded positively to it.

Children

The meeting also continued the theme of Children and Young People with presentations giving examples of outreach to children and families in a variety of contexts.

Marriage

On the liturgical front, the GB received draft texts for the Marriage Service for full approval next September. These include additional material to help clergy and couples adapt services to their particular needs.

Swine Flu

At Question Time, Archbishop Barry suggested that parishes

should decide for themselves whether to offer the cup or to give people the choice of taking the cup during the current swine flu pandemic. However, the practice of intinction (that is dipping the wafer into the wine) was to be banned, as there was a higher risk of cross infection from this than from sharing the cup.

Constitution

The GB adopted a new model constitution, making it more user-friendly way. An amendment was made reducing the length of time allowed by the Board of Nomination for an appointment in a vacancy from four months to six months, after which the right of nomination passes to the Diocesan Bishop.

ACC

Finally, delegates were greeted by the sounds of Bob Marley's "One Love" as the Church in Wales' Representatives to the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), Very Revd Chris Potter and Mrs Helen Biggin, gave a presentation and report of their meeting in Jamaica.

The importance of the family

Rosemary Kempzell, World Wide President of the Mothers' Union, was the Archbishop's guest speaker at Evening Prayer during the MU Governing Body meeting in September, and was warmly welcomed by the 140 members who had filled the University Chapel

AFTER being introduced by Archbishop Barry, Rosemary began her short talk on the work and objectives of the MU by quoting from Matthew 28:19 (*Go then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit*). The MU, we were reminded, is a distinctively lay organisation led by prayer. Projects which support families are being run all over the world, including here in Wales. Rosemary, who lives in the Diocese of Southwark, remarked that she was very conscious of our unique Welsh culture and identity and, indeed, many other countries that she has visited are fiercely protective of their own cultures and identities.

Recently Rosemary had been privileged to attend a meeting of 24 MU Presidents from around the world, when it had been noticeable that Nigeria and the USA were particularly willing to put their differences aside and hold talks. This is important as the more we communicate, the more we will understand.

Furthermore, it is important to God how we behave when we are together, whether as a family or in the context of our worldwide family. Families are part of God's creation – they come in different shapes and sizes and Rosemary was keen to say how privileged



Mary Salmon, MU Provincial President (left), with Rosemary Kempzell, MU Worldwide President, in Lampeter

she feels to be welcomed wherever she goes as part of a worldwide family.

Our goal, as Christians, is to develop and grow to be more like God's loving family. Relationships can be difficult at times (in the Old Testament there are a number of examples), but this can lead to growth and reconciliation. Children need roots and, particularly, wings which are the greatest gifts parents can give.

A hundred and thirty years ago Mary Sumner knew that many women had no help bringing up children and she decided to form

a support group for these mothers: the MU was born. Nowadays, there are branches in 79 countries, where members champion the values of marriage and family life and confront injustice; 2,000 members meet in Baghdad every day. These members, and many more, are supported in prayer and in practical ways, such as parenting programmes and literacy programmes.

Rosemary ended by asking for our support and prayers to continue the work and further God's mission all over the world.

– Eiryth Thomas

Syria to Sinai – a remarkable trip to remarkable places

“AN incredible experience” was how one participant summed up the St Davids Archdeaconry pilgrimage to Jordan, Syria and Egypt, which returned this month. The twelve-day trip visited sites from Damascus to Mount Sinai. The thirty-four pilgrims were able to visit sites which are only just beginning to feature on pilgrimage itineraries. These included the Decapolis towns, such as the beautiful Gadara, famous for the swine that threw themselves into the sea as a result of Jesus healing the man who was possessed. Mount Nebo, site of Moses' death was another awe-inspiring spot, and a highlight for many was St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai.

This was a pilgrimage which, unlike many Holy Land tours, did not visit many churches. One notable exception was St Ananias just off the Street called Straight in Old Damascus, where one of the daily acts of worship was held, and where pilgrims were able to reflect on the events surrounding Paul's conversion and Ananias's response.

A substantial number of the



party made the dawn ascent of Mount Sinai, at least part of the way. Some travelled for over two hours by camel up the 8,000 foot mountain. The final ascent had to be undertaken on foot, but the view and the significance of the spot made it worth it for those who managed it.

The recently excavated site of Bethany Beyond the Jordan made a fitting site for the final eucharist.

The area was only uncovered after the 1994 Peace Treaty between Jordan and Israel. Until that time it lay under a minefield in border country.

The pilgrimage leader, the Archdeacon of St Davids, said: 'this was a remarkable trip to remarkable places, and I am sure that the whole experience will live in the minds of the pilgrims for a very long time.'

Something to say

The Short Skirts that Changed My Life

Jonathan Copus begins our new series with his opinion about the welcome we offer non-churchgoers

WHEN I was training for the ordained ministry back in the sixties, living in London, far from my native Scotland, I attended the famous church with the pillars in Waterloo. Very trad, it was – but then so was I, a former classical scholar, a lover of pre-Baroque music, and soon to be the latest in a long line of parsons.

In the middle of the service one Sunday morning, the doors opened and in clacked two young ladies, clouded in cheap scent and with skirts up to their ba (told you I was a classical scholar). They knelt down two pews in front of me. And then they started shaking – but not with religious fervour: they'd got the giggles.

I was outraged. 'Disgusting! What are they doing here if they don't know how to behave in church?'

They must have heard me, because shortly afterwards they tottered out, and as the doors swung to behind them they erupted into uncontrollable laughter.

And then as it were scales fell from my eyes, and I saw clearly. And lo! I beheld an old man in a dress at the distant end of that bare barn, facing away from us and mumbling incomprehensible mantras to a wall. And suddenly there came a mighty wave of realisation that the world outside, the real world, the world of tarts and street traders and meths drinkers and Waterloo Station, had dropped in on us as a guest that Sunday morning and to our shame we had sent it empty away – not by being unfriendly, but simply by being alien.

Next term I set my fellow ordinands a quiz. I took random phrases out of the Prayer Book and asked them to translate them into plain language. The average percentage score was in the low twenties. Ye heavens and all the powers therein! If the professionals didn't know what they were talking about, what hope was there for the rest of us? Language isn't everything, of

course; but as people in Wales know especially well, it can be seen as a defining characteristic, and often a divisive one. And yet we church folk cling so readily to modes of expression and ways of doing things which seem quaint and foreign to people outside. No wonder that fewer and fewer of them drop in of a Sunday morning – even to giggle.

That was forty years ago. Now I am that old man in a dress, and desperately anxious to do penance for that terrible sin of inhospitality, of wrapping up the things of God inside my own cosy cocoon, my comfort zone. Where would we be if the first followers of Jesus had refused to leave their comfort zone, if they had responded to 'Follow me' – to a life of discomfort, risk, and challenge – by saying: 'No, thanks – we'd rather stay as we are, if it's all the same to you?'

I really wish I didn't care. I really wish I could just quietly take the services, addressing God in mock-Tudor language (albeit contrary to the explicit teaching of the New Testament, which invites us to talk to God like a teenage son or daughter) and just bank my pay cheque. But I do care – about the few people who are in church, and even more about the many who aren't. We have to face the fact that numerically the church in Wales is dying. And it's no use shutting our eyes and kidding ourselves that if we just hang on harder to the old ways everything will come right in the end. As a recipe for success, it just isn't working.

So do me a favour, eh? Next time you meet for worship, put yourself in the place of a dropper-in – not necessarily a Lambeth tart: a tourist, or a member of a wedding or baptism party, perhaps. And ask yourself how much of what you see and hear is relevant or even intelligible in the context of the real life outside the church door.

But please – don't get the giggles.

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 emailed to the Editor, Tessa Briggs
tessa@ygilan.net

or they can be posted to:

Pobl Dewi,
The Diocesan Office,
Abergwili, Carmarthen, SA31 2JG,
marked for the attention of 'The Editor'

FINDING COMMON GROUND

Exploring the spiritual and creative side of life in North Pembrokeshire

NORTH Pembrokeshire, from St Davids to St Dogmaels, has a long, deep and rich spiritual heritage, from prehistoric times to the Christian era, and it draws people from all manner of backgrounds. Many spiritual seekers today have little or no experience of traditional religion, finding that it provides neither a context nor a language which is helpful or meaningful on

Religious divides are fuelled by fear and misunderstanding and rarely reflect the reality of those who live with a sincere faith. It is time to dwell on the positives and recognise that people who seek to live peacefully with virtue, discipline and self knowledge can be role models within our communities

– Inter-Faith Wales report, December 2008

their journey. Others are looking for new ways to engage with the ancient wisdom of the past, while still others are directing their spiritual energies into justice and peace or environmental initiatives, the

creation of new communities, or the arts.

This new spiritual movement has emerged over the last 50 years, characterised by exploration, experimentation, new ideas and

many old ones recycled. Coupled with the explosion of the information age, it has developed an increasing influence in western culture in recent years, evidenced by the huge growth of the ‘mind, body, spirit’ sections in every bookshop. Complementary therapies are often seen as part of it, as are a whole raft of spiritual practices. Many are simply seeking for more in life, spiritually yearning for the best, highest and purest, for a forward step in consciousness for all humanity. This movement is now coming of age and flies under the banner of ‘Holistic’ or ‘Contemporary’ Spirituality.

There is a great deal of mistrust and misunderstanding between the holistic spirituality movement and Christianity. The ground-breaking report from Inter-Faith Wales recognises Holistic Spirituality as a new and influential movement in our society:

“Holistic Spirituality is the name given to the growing contemporary movement of people who do not feel tied to one of the traditional faith communities but take a more generalised approach to spir-

ituality. They respect and welcome diversity of belief, and respect the core values and inspiration of the traditional faiths. They also recognise the intimate interdependence between spirituality, environmentalism, citizenship and healthcare.”

In response to this, a group of us have decided to step out and start some interfaith work, which we have called “Common Ground”.

As people explore and deepen their spiritual experience, practice and commitment, many of them are looking for information and for companionship. They seek access to new thinking, new ways of seeing, new experiences and for new opportunities to connect with fellow travellers – kindred spirits – embarking on a similar quest. It is these people, primarily, whom Common Ground hopes to link together in a spirit of enquiry and dialogue.

This is an interfaith initiative giving an opportunity to communicate some of the values and riches of Christian spirituality with care and respect for others viewpoints. Its function is to provide opportunities for sharing, growth, discussion and understanding, building mutual trust and awareness.

– Don MacGregor

Find out more at www.commongroundpems.org.uk

No Organ? No Organist? No Problem!

Jonathan Copus finds a solution to an increasingly troublesome problem for rural churches

THE Church in Wales has a rich musical tradition, largely nurtured by the West Wales Area of the Royal School of Church Music. But rural churches in particular often find themselves without an organ, or an organist – or both. In these circumstances, there’s a choice between no music at all, unaccompanied singing and using pre-recorded accompaniments.

These can be played from a CD or an MP3 player over a suitable sound system. A ‘ghetto blaster’ will do at a pinch, although most parishes can rustle up a spare domestic hi-fi. And if the idea proves popular, it’s not too expensive to fit a good-quality professional sound system.

It’s important to respect copyright, and not to play any recordings for which the building isn’t licensed. However, copyright lasts only 100 years after the death of the last person involved in the creation of the work, and many hymn words and tunes are firmly in the public domain and free from copyright restrictions. So if you use a hymn tune that is over (say) 200 years old unchanged, you’re in the clear; but if you use a version which has been re-harmonised by someone more recently, you’re likely to infringe their copyright. The same principles apply to the words.

If you arrange a folk tune or an ancient melody yourself, the copyright is yours. This is obviously not an authoritative statement of copyright law, so if in doubt, take legal advice or check with anyone who *claims* ownership of the work.

There are two main ways of providing pre-recorded accompaniments. The obvious way is to record someone playing them. If you opt for this method, it’s best to connect an electronic organ or piano directly into the recording equipment.

The other way is to make an arrangement on a computer and record the results. You can use a notation program such as Finale or Sibelius, or else a sequencer such as Cubase, record the results as a WAV or an MP3 file, and either burn a CD or load it onto your MP3 player.

If you have a friendly computer whizz-kid in the parish (anyone under the age of 13 is born with the necessary ability) it’s a good way of involving them in preparation for worship.

To encourage people to share their home-grown accompaniments, we are starting a modest selection on the Diocesan website. They’re not intended to be clever – perhaps interesting, but above all functional. You can find a sample

at www.stdavidsdiocese.org.uk/resources.

There are just one or two points to remember:

A live organist can adjust the speed of the music to suit the singers, and speed up or slow down if they get ahead or behind. But a pre-recorded accompaniment can’t do this.

- As a result, you must make it clear when people are to ‘come in’, perhaps having a short intro to each verse of the hymn.
- An alternative to a between-verses intro is to make the first note of each verse slightly longer to allow people to realise the verse has started and it’s time to join in.
- The accompaniment must give a firm indication of the tempo, either with a clear top line or else with a ‘beaty’ bass.
- Make it clear what’s a ‘play-in’ and when the actual singing should start.
- Remember to check that the accompaniment has the same number of verses as the hymn book or sheet.
- Play the accompaniment at the right volume – loud enough for people at the back not to get lost, but not so loud that the blast straightens the hair of the folk at the front!

entertaining way accompanied by personal and family anecdotes – you don’t need to be ‘family’ to enjoy them.

Copies are available directly from Judith, Rhydlew House, Rhydlew, Ceredigion, SA44 5PE, at £4.95 each plus £2 per book p&p. Cheques payable to St Michael’s Church, Troedyaaur.

A Cookery Book with a difference

ST MICHAEL’S Troedyaaur, near Newcastle Emlyn, like many small, rural churches, is suffering from the ravages of time – uncertain roof, rotting wood, dodgy electrics, crumbling plaster and collapsing leaded windows. The latest fund-raising project for

repairs is a cookery book, entitled ‘Judith’s Dark Secrets – (in the kitchen)’ in which Judith Russill lifts the lid on many of the recipes she uses on a regular basis, including those which have been handed down through her family. Culinary secrets are revealed in a novel and

Voice of Gold



KATHRYN PAGE has a golden voice – and that's official. She was presented with the Royal School of Church Music Gold Award by the Dean of St Davids, the Very Revd Jonathan Lean, in the Cathedral during the RSCM's annual Festival Evensong.

Singers from all over West Wales took part in the service, which included music by Stanford, Chilcott, and SS Wesley.

The occasion gave choirs a chance to enjoy performing with the more experienced musicians of the Cathedral Singers and the boys of the Cathedral Choir, under the direction of Assistant Organist Simon Pearce. It also gave them ideas to take back to their home parishes.

For future events organised by the RSCM, please see the Diocesan Website.

Llangwm Warms to the Sound of Africa

Pam Hunt reports from St Jerome's Church, Llangwm, where the winter concert season began on 10th October with an amazing performance by Umdumo Wesizwe, a choir of nine young men from Zimbabwe

UMDUMO WESIZWE, meaning Sound of the Nation hails from Zimbabwe's townships and was established in 1994. Singing songs of love, hope, worship, courtship, hardship and African social commentary, the group has not only carved a name for themselves in the World music circuit, but has warmed the hearts of audiences throughout the UK.

The traditional music sung by Umdumo Wesizwe is based on *isichathamiya* (is-cot-a-meya), which was born in the mines of Southern Africa. But since the choir's formation they have gradually adapted the music bringing in influences from R and B, Jazz, Kwaito and Reggae to create a sound that appeals to audiences all over the world.

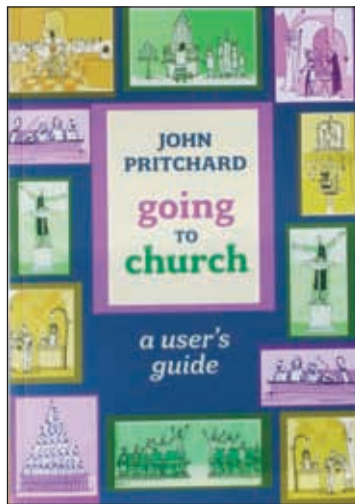
What makes Umdumo Wesizwe's performances so special are the dances that they perform as they sing and they enthralled the sell out audience in Llangwm. St Jerome's staged the concert with the support of "Night Out",



a scheme run by the Arts Council of Wales. The aim of the scheme is to bring top quality professional performances to small communities throughout Wales, by underwriting the cost of the artistes and taking away the risk of making a loss.

A *Festival of Remembrance*

Book Review



"Going to Church – A user's guide"
by John Pritchard, Bishop of Oxford
SPCK 2009;
ISBN 978-0-281-05810-5

When asked to review this book I admit to sceptical questions: "Who is this book for?" and "Should I be the one reading it?" Having read the book I think it's "a little gem"! It doesn't take long to read, with short manageable chapters and the follow-up questions could provide a promising lent course! Amusing pictures, witty jokes and words of wisdom from across the globe give it richness, depth and humour.

The book is partly aimed at those thinking about going to, or returning to, church. However, "Mrs Average in the pew," "Mr I'm not sure what I think or believe anymore," and "the keen Churchwarden" would all find this book thought provoking. It draws together lots of ideas and issues and

could offer to those who might feel that they are "lagging behind", the opportunity to come "up to date." I challenge all vicars who actually read this review to buy a copy too!

The book is written in three parts. The first looks at "The Church as it is" exploring such issues as the "reasons for not going to church" and "Why is going to Church worth it?" This section is a realistic perspective of "now."

The second section looks at "The church as it should be" and I found this very helpful, being clear without being too simplistic. It answers the question "What's the Church for?" Both clergy and laity could allow this book to put them "back on track" with its honesty and thoughts. I am sure there is plenty of material for some inspirational sermons here too!

The third part looks at "The Church as it might become"

and without describing an absolute vision gives the qualities and values with which the church of the present needs to move flexibly in the direction of the future.

If you are finding Church difficult at the moment, this book may speak to you. It doesn't shy away from difficult questions and reminds us that Church-going isn't all about "feel good" factors. The reader is asked to recognise that no one is perfect and that no church is perfect. Helpfully the author puts some onus back on the reader to consider how they approach going to Church and challenges each of us to make an effort to, perhaps, change our own way of thinking.

As the blurb sums up, "Whatever our situation, we're likely to finish this book with a lot more understanding and a lot more hope!" – Heather Cale

Notices received

Bi-lingual Cards from Plant Dewi



This year Plant Dewi has new Welsh, English and bi-lingual Christmas cards, available by calling 01267 221551;

or visit their website at:
www.plantdewi.org.uk

All proceeds go to support children, young people and their families in our diocese.

Faith and the Future of the Countryside – a major ecumenical conference exploring the future sustainability of rural communities and their churches: 3-5 November 2010 in Swanwick, Derbyshire. Full details from The Arthur Rank Centre, tel 024 7685 3075; or katrinas@rase.org.uk

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Am fanylion bellach cysylltwch/Further details from:
Y Parch/Rev'd Matthew Hill 01570 424823:
m.hill@lamp.ac.uk

