



Can Pay - Will Pay!

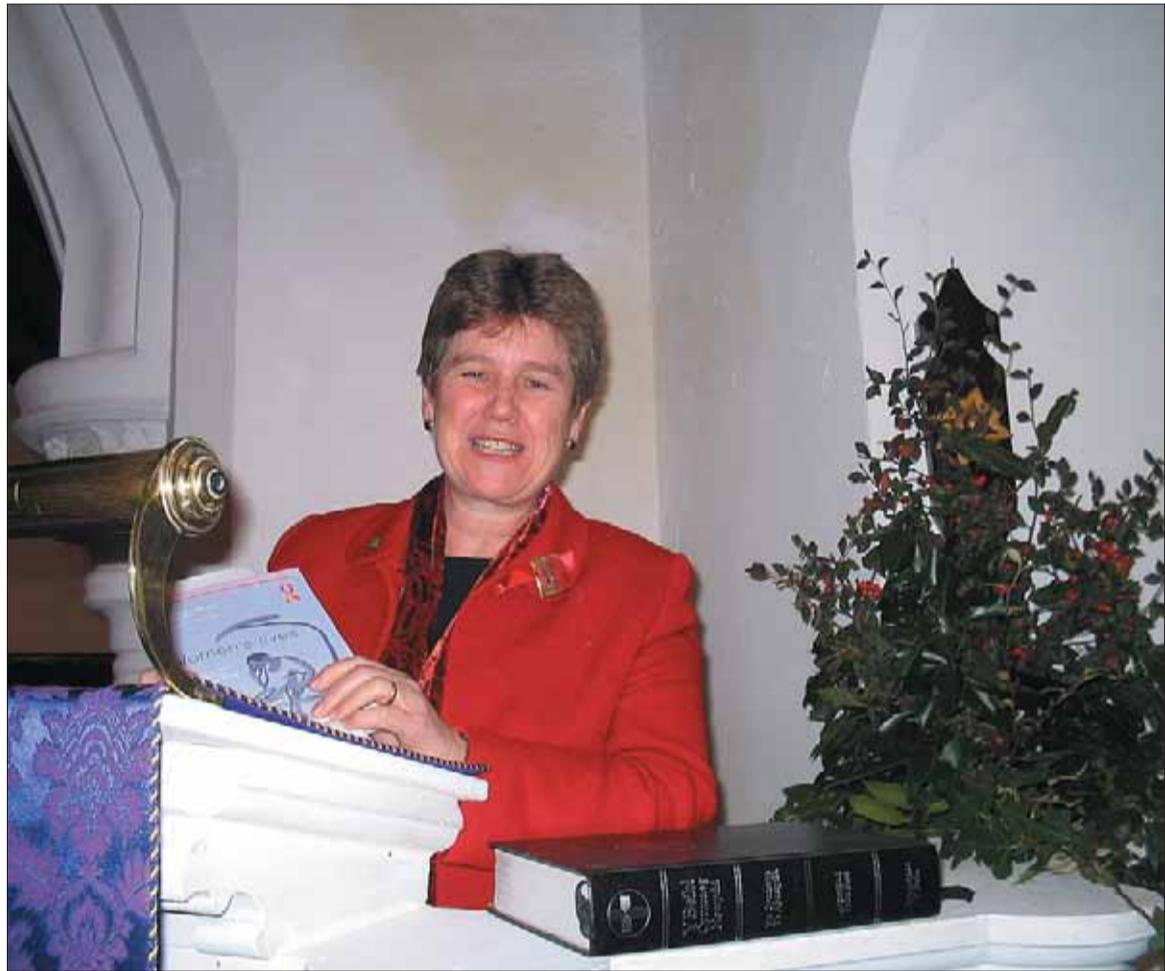
THAT'S THE MESSAGE the Bishop wants to hear as a result of the Archdeaconry roadshows which have now been completed. This new initiative involved getting all the Treasurers and Secretaries, together with Wardens, from every parish to hear presentations from the Diocesan Secretary, Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance, and Chairman of the Provincial Churches Committee, about the financial challenges of the years ahead. The meetings were planned to spell out the implications of the Rowe Beddoe Review's proposals, if implemented. All the meetings were well attended, and a video was made of the latest, at Fishguard Church Hall, for those parishes which would like to give the issues a wider Church airing. The climax of each meeting was the Bishop's address.

He said that there were two ways of approaching the financial situation in the church. One was to say: what have we got, so what can we afford? The other was to say: what do we want and so how are we going to pay for it? The first approach would lead to decline. The second was the dynamic way to approach the challenges of the future. He asked the fundamental question: is it that we *can't* pay, or is it rather that we *won't* pay? He believed that we can and we should, if we are serious about maintaining levels of clergy and church buildings.

The mind of the meetings was to meet the challenge, but some smaller churches have expressed fears about their future ability to

by John Holdsworth

meet financial demands. One Pembrokeshire vicar said, "It's more a question of, if we could pay we would pay, but we can't see where the money's going to come from." All those who addressed the roadshow meetings believe that the only long term answer is numerical growth, and that means engaging with the Venturing in Mission initiative as fully as possible (see article page 5). A Diocesan response to the Rowe Beddoe report will be completed by the end of the year. The Governing Body will vote on its recommendations in April.



Jane Hutt AM was the speaker at a special World Aids Day service at Llanddarrog church on December 1st
Photo: Roger Hughes

Merched yn esgobion yn Eglwys Loegr cyn bo hir?

DECHRAU mis Tachwedd, cyhoeddwyd adroddiad gwethgor sydd wedi bod yn ymlafnio dan gadeiryddiaeth esgob Rochester y Gwir Barchedig Michael Nazir-Ali ers 2000. Amcan yr adroddiad yw ystyried goblygiadau cael esgobion benywaidd o fewn Eglwys Loegr, ac fe gychwynwyd y broses o ganlyniad i gynnig, a gyflwynwyd gan Archddiacon Judith Rose i Synod Eglwys Loegr ym mis Gorffennaf 2000, yn galw am "astudiaeth ddiwinyddol ar natur rôl esgobion gan ganolbwyntio ar y materion hynny y dylid eu hystyried wrth baratoi ar gyfer trafodaeth ynghylch esgobion benywaidd yn Eglwys Loegr".

Wrth gyflwyno'r adroddiad pwysleisia Esgob Rochester taw nid dogfen o blaid nac yn erbyn esgobion benywaidd mo'r adroddiad ond yn hytrach adnodd ar gyfer astudiaeth ddiwinyddol bellach er mwyn gosod cyswll ddeallusol ar gyfer cynnal y

This is an article about the recently published Church of England report entitled "Women Bishops in the Church of England?"

drafodaeth. Fel y dywed cyflwyniad yr adroddiad, "mae llais yr Ysbryd Glan i'w glywed trwy leisau'r holl rai hynny sy'n cyfrannu i'r drafodaeth. Heb drafodaethau o'r math yng ngoleuni'r Ysgrythur, traddodiad a rheswm, bydd penderfyniadau yn cael eu gwneud ar sail credoau'r rhai hynny'n sy'n dal safleoedd o awdurdod a grym o fewn yr Eglwys ac fe fydd y cyfle ar gyfer derbyn dimadaeth ehangach yn cael ei golli." Nod yr adroddiad felly yw darparu deunydd er mwyn galluogi i'r drafodaeth fod yn un ar sail gwybodaeth gan gyflwyno'r wybodaeth hynny mewn ffordd hygyrch i'r gynulleidfa ehangaf posib.

Yn y bôn, mae'r adroddiad yn mynd i'r afael â thri chwestiwn:

- A fuasai'n iawn, mewn egwyddor, i ferched fod yn esgobion?
- Os taw 'buasai' yw'r ateb, yna ai dyma'r amser iawn i Eglwys Loegr ordeinio merched yn esgobion?
- Os taw dyma'r amser iawn, sut ddylid cyflwyno esgobion benywaidd a pha ddarpariaeth ddylid ei wneud ar gyfer y rheini na allant, ar sail egwyddor, dderbyn eu gweinidogaeth?

Bydd yr adroddiad hwn yn awr yn mynd i'w drafod gan Synod Eglwys Loegr ym mis Chwefror 2005 ac yn cael ei drafod ymhellach yng nghyfarfod Gorffennaf o'r Synod pan fydd y corff hwnnw yn penderfynnu pa un ai i gychwyn ar y broses o gael gwared ar y rhwystrau cyfreithiol i ordeinio merched yn esgobion. Nid yw'r pwnc hwn ar y gweill gan yr Eglwys yng Nghymru ar hyn o bryd.— *Siôn Brynach*

The Next Edition . . .

The next edition of *Pobl Dewi* will be published on 6th March 2005, Mothering Sunday. Articles intended for publication should be sent to the lead regional editor for the next edition: Revd Nicholas Cale nickthevic@parishofwiston.co.uk. This edition's lead editor was Tessa Briggs: tessab@bopenworld.com assuming that responsibility for the first time.

Additional contact details for other members of the editorial team are Dennis.wight@tesco.net drc@aber.ac.uk roger@plantdewi.co.uk.

Any queries about the wider work of the

communications team can be sent to the chair: jh@steynton.org.uk

The deadline for the next edition for commissioned articles is February 19. Please let us know if you'd like to write something. Don't just send it at the last minute as that may lead to disappointment.

Many thanks as always for the contributions of Siôn Brynach and Andy Taylor.

If you want to write a 'letter to the editor', it will be welcome, and should be sent to the address above. Snailmail communications can be made through the Diocesan office.

Mothers' Union claims 3,000,000 Members

The Church of North India and WFCS, Women's Fellowship for Christian Service

by Nan Warlow, Diocesan President, St Davids Mothers' Union

THE MOTHERS' UNION used to claim "we have one million members worldwide". Now other organisations, concerned with care for family issues, have joined in affiliation with the MU. When the Women's Fellowship For Christian Service, from the Church of North India, became affiliated as well as the church of South India, this helped to swell the number, so that now the claim is "we have three million members worldwide".

The Mothers' Union theme for 2004 is "Building Relationships", so when I was planning a holiday trip to Udaipur in Rajasthan, I asked headquarters for a contact name, and duly wrote a letter to Joytsna in Orissa province. There are 26 dioceses in North India, but the letter was passed on to Rajasthan, to Reverend Regina Alexander, pastor at the Church in Ajmer, and organiser and advisor to the WFCS.

She in turn got in touch with two of the members in Udaipur,



Nan Warlow



Giving out medicines at a field dispensary in India

Mrs Kusun Bishwas, a former Diocesan President, and Mrs Sheila Patrick. It was quite amazing that my host, Sonny, at Kaladwas actually knew Kusun's husband, Dr Bishwas (he is a vet, in our terms) Sonny having got his dog from him some time ago! This meant that we all went and met up at their home. Kusun, Sheila and Nan had a wonderful time talking about MU work and worship, meanwhile the Doctor and my hosts socialised over coffee.

What a lot we found in common in our aims, from prayer and worship and the Women's World Day of Prayer, to looking for ways to serve in our respective communities and to enthuse our members. We exchanged badges and literature. My gifts of the new MU prayer cards and the red prayer book "The Prayers We Breathe" were accepted eagerly, for books and literature are not so freely available in India.

Kusun and Margaret Alexander, who is trained in medicine, invited me to go with them on a weekly visit to one of three villages they have 'adopted'. These villages are at least an hour's drive over bumpy mountain roads through a very barren and inhospitable area of the Aravalli hills outside Udaipur. They do not even have the usual government clinic, and depend on Ms Alexander for what health care they get.

On a rickety bed, outside the school house, I learned to make envelopes out of newspaper to hold the tablets that were dispensed. I was also given the job of giving out the toast biscuits to all the children as they arrived in their groups. How impressive it was to see how well behaved they all were. No pushing or grabbing, no one tried to get in the line again as new children came along.

The land is very poor, and inadequate monsoons in recent years mean that crops have been even less. Many children had really bad coughs, aggravated by the cold mornings and nights and lack of warm clothes. One father, with his little boy wrapped in a bit of blanket, accepted some of the clothes Kusun had in one of her several bags.

Despite all, the dignity of these families was impressive. The children played around, their toys were simply a bit of stick or an old corn cob, until it was time to go into school. Each brought his or her little mat to sit on. The school had a blackboard, chalk and very little else except two very enthusiastic lady teachers who came from Udaipur.

It was an experience to be there and to hear about Christmas, their time of celebration, and the meal they would all enjoy at the little

church down the road, marked with its cross.

The parent church is the Shepherd Memorial Church of North India, Udaipur. It has a Vicar, the Reverend Emmanuel Damor (I was told that he was a converted Bhil tribesman), and a retired priest, Reverend AV Massey. Both of them gave a very warm welcome to me and my friend Billa (tour organiser and a Church member, from Dorset) when we came for the 8.30am service on Sunday. Most of the service was in Hindi, but familiar hymn tunes came through the rhythm of India, we joined in as best we could.

We could not but be impressed by the whole morning, the Church full, rows of chairs filling the courtyard outside and sophisticated speaker systems for all to hear. The congregation was a mixture of young families, teenagers and grandparents while the children were in the Sunday school house. There was a ceremony when a young baby was presented to the vicar, and a photographer recorded the moment.

I had been invited to speak to the congregation, with the aid of an interpreter. I did my best to bring greetings from St Davids and a Celtic prayer. Flowers were presented to Billa and me, and I was given a brass plate, with the peacock symbol, by the senior cleric. This will be a cherished memento of a time of shared faith and fellowship.

The service continued with an impassioned address (in Hindi) by the vicar. At the end of the service all chatted together outside in the increasing heat of the sunshine. Most people spoke English and wanted to talk to the visitors. All the members of the WFCS came to meet their sister in MU and get a photo, and gave us refreshments as we exchanged news and experiences.

A favourite blessing ends 'may the joy of the Lord Jesus fill your spirit', and so it was.

The Eames Report

by Siôn Brynach

MONDAY 18th October was considered by most people another 'ordinary' Monday. But for many Anglicans, it was the culmination of many months of waiting. It was publication day for the 93 page 'Eames Commission report' as it has become widely known (the Lambeth Commission having met under the chairmanship of Archbishop Robin Eames, primate of all Ireland) or as it is now officially known, following a bizarre last minute re-christening, the Windsor report.

Why was a Commission needed? Were they looking at the issue of the Anglican Communion's attitude towards homosexuality – as press reports have suggested during recent months – or was its real work

to consider the future 'governance' and structure of the Anglican Communion? The commission's mandate says:
The Archbishop of Canterbury requests the Commission to exam-

ine and report to him . . . on the legal and theological implications flowing from the decisions of the Episcopal Church (USA) to appoint a priest in a committed same sex relationship as one of its bishops, and of the Diocese of New Westminster to authorise services for use in connection with same sex unions, and specifically on the canonical understandings of communion, impaired and broken communion, and the ways in which provinces of the Anglican Communion may relate to one another in situations where the ecclesiastical authorities of one province feel unable to maintain the fullness of communion with another part of the Anglican Communion.
As Archbishop Robin Eames himself said in a recent interview "This is much more about the

future of Anglicanism than it is about any single issue. The key question is what sort of Anglican Communion do we want? . . . we don't have a curia as our Roman Catholic friends do. We have existed on what that famous report called 'bonds of affection'."
Archbishop Barry Morgan echoes this in his comments of 18th October, saying "The Commission . . . was not asked and has not tried to tackle the issue of human sexuality. Its brief was, given the fact that different provinces have different attitudes and understandings of various contentious matters, how do they acknowledge that fact and consult the wider Communion before making decisions that inevitably impact on the life of that wider Communion."

So does the report include any direct condemnation of ECUSA and the diocese of New Westminster or call for any sanction against them? In true Anglican fashion, yes and no. While the Commission does not suggest any additional censure as some commentators had predicted, the report does call on ECUSA and New Hampshire to express their 'regret' for having put at risk the 'bonds of affection' that holds the Anglican Communion together. It also calls on them to institute a "moratorium on the election and consent to the consecration of any candidates to the episcopate who is living in a same gender union until some new consensus in the Anglican Communion emerges."
However, the report uses equally forceful language in rela-

tion to three other specific matters. At the press conference on October 18th, Archbishop Robin Eames went out of his way to unequivocally condemn any expression of homophobia, saying "there is absolutely no room for homophobia in the life of the Christian Church, no room, no contemplation of it and no support for it". The report is also critical of those bishops who have sought to provide Episcopal oversight in dioceses other than their own, calling on them to 'express regret for the consequences of their actions'. Thirdly, the report is also critical of the tone of the discourse thus far, and particularly of those who acted or spoke precipitately and who ignored the Archbishop of Canterbury's appeals for calm while the commission did its work, saying "we deeply regret that the appeals of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the primates and of this Commission for a period of 'calm' to allow the Commission to complete

RE-Quest

AN RE WEBSITE is being built by a team in Somerset and is well worth a visit.

There's a revolution going on in our schools! Almost every school now has an IT suite – a room full of computers connected to the Internet, and classrooms are getting interactive whiteboards – large projected computer screens for whole class teaching.

For Religious Education, teachers need child-centered websites written by members of each of the faiths that they are studying together with interactive resources designed for whole class teaching as well as for individual learning.

However, more often than not, they cannot afford to pay for them.

RE:Quest is a free Christian website that helps meet this need.

It is part of the Government's National Grid for Learning and is used by thousands of UK schools every week. It only looks at Christianity, but it does so comprehensively. Written by members of every main UK Christian denomination it provides exciting lessons for children from Reception Infants through to GCSE.

There are interactive PowerPoints, photographs, video clips, interviews, worksheets and activities about every aspect of Christian faith

and practice. It looks at baptism, communion, confirmation, prayer, weddings, and key beliefs. Virtual tours take you round churches, chapels and cathedrals – and explain a living faith and the life. The teaching of Jesus, the Christian response to key issues together with frequently asked questions are all explored and the history of the UK Christian church is told, with links to the History syllabus.

A recent addition to the site was a virtual tour of the Cathedral at St. David's – an important addition in the light of the new RE framework's requirement for students to visit buildings of national religious significance. You can visit RE:Quest at www.request.org.uk. RE:Quest is a registered charity No 1094392.

World AIDS Day



Woman in a 'Living Positively' T-shirt, Namibia

Photo: Leah Gordon/USPG

ARCHBISHOP Desmond Tutu is backing a campaign launched by the Anglican mission agency USPG to help the world church in its struggle to tackle the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Launched in time for World AIDS Day on 1 December, USPG has published a 36-page information and resource guide – entitled Living the gospel with HIV/AIDS – which can be ordered free of charge.

Archbishop Tutu said: "The AIDS pandemic continues to escalate all over the world, particularly among the least developed countries and the poorest and most vulnerable communities. We're not talking just statistics, as AIDS kills people, made of flesh and blood – somebody's mother or father, or somebody's child.

"We all have a role to play in defeating AIDS. USPG is an organisation which works hard to fulfil the church's requests for help in defeating big issues overwhelming small communities. Please play your part by supporting the work of USPG through this appeal."

Global statistics for the epidemic are shocking: 30 million people have died from HIV/AIDS in the last 20 years; and there are currently 40 million people infected with the virus.

We want to stress that HIV/AIDS is not just a health issue: it is also a development issue. And we hope the articles in this special feature demonstrate how the world church is tackling HIV/AIDS by

simultaneously addressing problems such as poverty and gender inequality.

USPG's Health Development Officer Mary Corish said: "HIV/AIDS is not a short-term emergency. We are in the early stages of a global epidemic which, even if it were to end today, will affect generations for years to come. But there is hope! Your prayers and financial support can help the many initiatives of the world church in HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment. Together we can make a difference."

For a free copy of USPG's HIV/AIDS resource booklet, write to Distribution, USPG, Partnership House, 157 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8XA. Alternatively, phone 020 7803 3413 or email ruthn@uspg.org.uk

Founded in 1701, USPG provides churches in more than 50 countries with the people and grants they need to meet local requirements in areas such as education, health care, agriculture and theological training.

YouthAlpha@Dewisland –

More successful than sliced bread

by Louise Davies, Solva Vicarage

"IS IT REALLY TRUE that the youth alpha course will end in December?" asked Jordan, a hint of alarm in his voice. We were on the last weekend of the youth alpha weekend away. "Yes it will," I answered with a mixture of huge relief and sadness. Relief because youth alpha has been hard work, more than we ever thought. Sadness as it's great fun. Over 50 children attend our course, far more than we could ever have hoped and prayed for. We are overwhelmed and had to increase our team of adult helpers by 100% to 10!

There is a wide age range, stretching from 10 – 16 year olds, but an even mix of boys and girls. We've our own youth band, helped along by John Bennett.

We also have 'found' a fantastic youth band called *In Deep* from Narberth. They come over once a month and lead worship for us too, and came for the last night of our weekend away. Initially the children were unsure, a Christian band didn't sound up to much, "so uncool". Now they literally stand outside waiting for them to arrive.

We find parents creeping in to the back of the hall, wondering what it is all about. It is the talk of the playground and the pub. The sale of WWJD wristbands is at an all time high, they are on every wrist. It is amazing.

We meet on Thursday nights in Solva Memorial Hall, for 1½ hours. We cram a lot in: worship, food (a 'proper' hot dinner!), tuck shop, talk, cell groups, and end



with worship. It flies by. Before we know it we'll be at the end of the course. "What happens then?" asked Heulwen. We are thinking and praying hard on this one. Watch this space . . . new year, new church?

If anyone is thinking of running a youth alpha course, I would recommend the Holy Trinity, Brompton, Youth Alpha Conference (next one is 17 – 18 February 2005). We attended it this year and it was excellent. If you'd like any encouragement to start a youth alpha course, please make contact with me. We still have 100% enthusiasm, if only 50% energy!

its report have been ignored in a number of quarters".

So what are the positive proposals contained in the report? Since the Anglican Communion has no 'curia' and its 'bond of affection' are made manifest through the 'instruments of unity' – the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' meeting – it is hardly surprising that it is by these means that the commission sees the way ahead with proposals to beef up the role of each of these. The Archbishop of Canterbury is encouraged to institute an advisory council around himself to advise on Communion matters, and to identify himself more closely with both the Communion and the staff of the Anglican Communion office. Further work is also advocated on the ways in which the meetings and role of the ACC and Primates should develop.

However, the most tangible proposal arising from the Commission's work is the idea of a 'covenant' to which individual Anglican provinces would commit, while retaining their 'autonomy'. While this may not be a 'common canon law' which some commentators had predicted would be in the report, it is nonetheless a radical suggestion that some have suggested will almost certainly fail to attract widespread support. In a recent article in *The Times*, Rt. Rev John Spong, former Bishop of Newark in the USA, was scathing of this proposal saying, "This Commission . . . called upon the 38 national branches of the Anglican Communion to sign a covenant expressing their support for current Anglican teaching. That is a remarkable request! Where is current Anglican teaching enshrined? Is it in the resolutions of the Lambeth Conference where only bishops have voices? Would Anglicans in

the western world be asked to subscribe to a pre-modern mentality that opposes evolution . . . will we reinstitute a version of the Anglican Inquisition?"

If Jack Spong represents the radical response, then the conservative evangelical response to the report has been equally dismissive. Archbishop Peter



Archbishop Robin Eames

Photo: ACNS / Rosenthal

Akinola of Nigeria for example said of the Commission's conclusions "After an initial reading it is clear to me that the report falls far short of the prescription needed for this current crisis. It fails to confront the reality that a small, economically privileged group of people has sought to subvert the Christian faith and impose their new and false doctrine on the wider community of faithful believers."

At the 18th October press conference in St Paul's Cathedral crypt in London, Archbishop Robin Eames allowed himself one personal reflection arising out of his work in the cause of peace in Northern Ireland – "So much of my pilgrim-age in Northern Ireland has been surrounded by years of intense violence and suffering and division and in the course of that ministry I have learned the hard facts of what reconciliation means. You cannot impose reconciliation. Reconciliation

comes when people want it to be a reality."

Sadly, as yet, there appear to be few signs of this desire for reconciliation within the Communion and the Commission's report acknowledges this reality, noting "there remains a very real danger that we will not choose to walk together". Archbishop Barry Morgan also echoes this view in his response to the report's publication saying, "The report needs to be pondered long and hard by the provinces of the Communion" closing his comments with a stark warning that "... if the way forward advocated by this report is found unacceptable then the future for the Anglican Communion is indeed bleak".

Further details about the Eames Commission report are available from the Anglican Communion web-site <http://www.anglicancommunion.org>

Plant Dewi goes Live on Air

THE BBC studios and the Welsh Assembly building on the bay were the perfect venues to conclude Plant Dewi's radio project.

Youngsters from Llanybydder, Clynderwen, Gelli Aur and Dyffryn Teifi were treated to a tour of the BBC studios, brushing shoulders with some very familiar faces in the streets of Cwmderi, and even having the chance to broadcast from the famous news desk that overlooks the stunning Cardiff Bay. If that wasn't enough they were then treated to watching a radio show – live on air! It was then on to the studios and the young people got their five minutes of fame, when they were interviewed on their views and thoughts on rural stress!

To end the day it was down to Cardiff Bay for a tour around the Welsh Assembly "Pierhead Building".

If you missed any of the dramas that were played on Radio Wales, don't worry they are still available on the Internet go to the Radio Wales page and look up 'Rural Stress Week'. Steve Austin from BBC Wales has said "Over 2,000 website hits have already been received". A CD or tape of the plays will be available through the Plant Dewi office after Christmas.

This exciting and innovative project would not have been possible without Julie Barton the Editor of Radio Wales. Her personal interest, guidance and advice throughout have been invaluable to all who have participated in it. BBC Radio's



award-winning journalist Gilbert John's encouragement and good offices were also essential elements of our success.

Dolan Davies and Mathew Jones (Plant Dewi Project Workers) would like to take the opportunity to thank every young person who has taken part in the project, the BBC for being approachable and very helpful during the planning of "Rural Stress Week" and throughout the trip, as well as all the schools, young Farmer groups, col-

leges and youth clubs that have been extremely supportive.

When a young person was asked what they had learnt from the project they said "children can talk about things and be heard". Another young person was asked whether they would take part in a Plant Dewi project again? "Yes, it gave me confidence and I got to socialise with other young people."

All the young people with their goodie bags outside the studio!!

Plant Dewi yn ennill gwobr werth chweil

MAE PLANT DEWI wedi bod yn llwyddiannus yn ei cais i fod yn rhan o brosiect CREDU "Ieuenctid Digidol Cymru". Mae tri phrosiect arall sydd a chyswllt gyda Plant Dewi (Dr M's, prosiect Tanyard a'r Prosiect Strydoedd) hefyd wedi bod yn llwyddiannus yn y prosiect cyffrous hwn ar gyfer pobl ifanc yng Nghymru.

Bydd bod yn rhan o'r prosiect yn caniatáu i pobl ifanc

trwy'r Esgobaeth ddatblygu eu sgiliau technolegol i'r eithaf a'u rhoi nhw ar ymyl flaen yr oes wybodaeth.

Bydd y Digilab yn caniatáu hyfforddi aml-safle rhyng-weithiol a rhannu gwybodaeth ar gyfer cynllunio busnes a datblygu. Y gobaith yw y bydd pobl ifanc yn cael rhagor o wybodaeth ar ystod eang o bynciau ac yn medru gwneud penderfyniadau bywyd gwell.

Dywed Dolan Davies gweithwraig project "Bydd pobl ifanc yn medru cael yr help a'r sgiliau sydd eu hangen arnynt er mwyn cyrraedd y brig, a byddant yn dysgu mewn modd ymarferol".

Bydd y labordy digidol yn cael ei leoli yn 21 Stryd Y Brenin, Caerfyrddin, uwchben siop Plant Dewi. Gobeithir bydd pob math o bobl ifanc yn defnyddio'r cyfleusterau nodedig hyn.

LET THEM KNOW IT'S CHRISTMAS

by Bishop Carl

TWENTY YEARS AGO Michael Burke reported from famine stricken Ethiopia and broadcast images that affected people around the world. Bob Geldof was so moved and outraged by the plight of the famine victims that he, together with his Band-Aid colleagues, produced the song, "Do they know it's Christmas?" Millions of pounds were raised for famine relief. This year Band Aid 20 has been launched by the new generation of pop stars in an attempt to help the people of Sudan and other African nations.

It is certainly the case that the words of this powerful and popular song articulate aspects of the Christmas Gospel. It reminds us that 'There's a world outside (our) window. It's a world of dread and fear' and encourages us to realise that 'The greatest gift they'll get this year is life.' Geldof and his friends state that Christmastide is a time for 'letting in light and banishing shade'. Quite rightly, they conclude that the way to do this is to *Feed the World*. God came to earth in Jesus to

identify with the poor and outcast. He told us that the care of those in need is not an optional extra. When we fail to do this, we fail to be the body of Christ.

During a recent interview Geldof admitted that Band Aid, despite all its success, was only a Band-Aid – a sticking plaster. The real answer to our world's ills was much more profound than simply filling stomachs. This is where the Christian Gospel speaks with eternal power. Our world is afraid and not just in

Africa. Much has been made recently of the role that fear played in the recent American Presidential Elections and in our own government's plans outlined in the recent Queen's Speech. In the Christ Child we have a God who comes among us in the murkiness of human life and living. His birth was heralded with the message: *Do not be Afraid*. This child lived, died and rose again so that nothing will ever separate us from his love. He also promises to be with us in all of life's ups and downs. We are never alone and not even death need make us afraid.

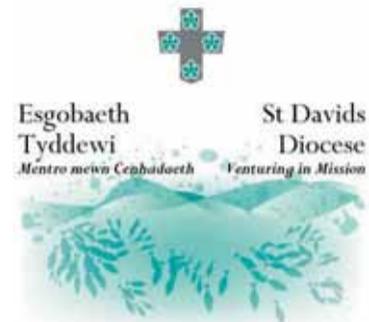
We live in a hungry world. There are those suffering from desperate physical starvation. Equally, there are millions suffering from the fear of spiritual starvation. My prayer is that all will know it's Christmastime because Christians are in the business of feeding the world – stomachs, minds and souls.

New Logo for Diocese

AS PART of the Venturing in Mission enterprise, the Diocese now has a new logo. It was unveiled rather hastily at the Diocesan Conference, and since then the colours have been enhanced and spelling mistakes remedied! The bishop, who chose the design with the help of senior staff, believes the logo is an invitation to reflect, rather than something with a single obvious point to make. "Mission is a many faceted thing," he said this week, "and the logo helps us to think about that variety where we are."

The sense of place is established with the rolling hills which form the main backdrop. We imagine the sea to be in the foreground, since the fish are to be found there. However, fish are potent Christian symbols in their own right. They remind us of the Gospel stories about evangelism and how this symbol was used by the early Christian community to describe belonging and fellowship. The fish are arranged in patterns reminiscent of roots, reminding us of our heritage. The whole picture is surmounted by the familiar cinquefoil cross of St David.

The bishop is keen that the new logo is used widely throughout the diocese on posters, notepaper, parish magazines and other publications. It can be downloaded free of



charge from dedicated websites, and is available in both colour and greyscale versions (colour at 100% from www.cozya.co.uk/dstd/100.zip black & white version from www.cozya.co.uk/dstd/bw.zip). New applications for the logo include car windscreen stickers, available soon, as well as prayer cards and bookmarks.

St Davids: Becoming a Fairtrade Diocese

"... the fields of the poor may produce abundant food, but injustice sweeps it away." Proverbs 13 verse 23

"Fairtrade is not a charity; it is about trading in a fair way with communities who often have little economic strength."

IN OCTOBER our Diocesan Conference passed a resolution: "To support the initiative for St Davids to become a Fairtrade Diocese, and To encourage deaneries, parishes and Diocesan committees as part of their mission in the world to make available and use the range of Fairtrade products in their activities, and through further study to develop their witness in the area of Trade Justice.

Is your church ready to take part?

To become a Fairtrade Church, your PCC needs to pass a resolution to use tea and coffee that carries the Fairtrade Mark.

From this beginning you can seek to make people in your community aware of the need for trade justice and encourage individuals, groups and businesses to choose Fairtrade products.

Further information will be sent out to parishes early in 2005, and if your PCC agrees, you will be asked to return a signed pledge form, or inform the St Davids Fairtrade Campaign. You will then be sent a Fairtrade Church certificate to display. Our aim is for the Diocese of St Davids to be recognised by the Fairtrade Foundation as a 'Fairtrade diocese' by autumn 2005.

Rev Vic Millgate (01834871617)

Kidwelly Support Group presents cheque



Ms Catherine Thomas AM for Llanelli, Rev Roger Hughes Diocesan Officer for Social Responsibility and Mr Dennis Rees Chairman of Kidwelly Deanery Support Group for Plant Dewi at a buffet evening and reception held on Friday 12th November 2004 at the Selwyn Samuel Centre at Llanelli when over 160 people attended. Ms Thomas and Mr Rees handed over a cheque to Rev. Roger Hughes in support of the work of Plant Dewi from the Kidwelly Deanery.

From Roch to the Ranges

by the Rev. Michael Rowlands, Vicar of Nolton and Roch



Rev Michael Rowlands pictured at his Induction as Vicar of Nolton Roch Hayscastle St Lawrence and Ford on November 22. Also pictured with the bishop is the Area Dean, Canon Derek Evans

Photo John Holdsworth

HAVING received a phone call from The Royal Army Chaplain's Department asking if I was available to accompany a British Army training exercise to Uzbekistan, a country north of Afghanistan, I soon found myself rendezvousing at Maindy Barracks, Cardiff. I would be joining The Royal Welsh Regiment (TA) on the first training exercise in this former part of the USSR.

Around 160 soldiers joined me aboard a Hercules flight to an American air base and then overland to a training camp set in a wonderful plateau surrounded by rugged and spectacular mountains. The Regiment being a well-oiled machine swung immediately into action. The various training tasks and exercises were performed to the Regiment's usual high and professional standard.

Host Nation

As a Padre I was fortunate to be able to travel around the training area and meet our own troops and those of our host nation. The role of a Padre and the freedom it allows a priest to exercise his ministry in the army is a great privilege

and must never be underestimated or taken for granted.

As well as visiting The Silk Road and the trading routes at the ancient city of Samakand, a truly memorable moment came when least expected. Travelling through a high mountain range with an army medical team, I met a group of Uzbeks visiting a remote Muslim cemetery. I was privileged to accompany the Mullah in saying prayers and then sharing an open-air meal of 'cawl'. In return for such honour and hospitality I presented them with a camouflaged Bible, which they accepted with gratitude and obvious reverence.

I thoroughly enjoyed being part of a well-organised and professional team and rekindling the unique camaraderie of a soldier's life. It truly was a privilege and honour to work once again with Welsh soldiers and appreciate the role they now play on a world stage. The dedication of the Commanding Officer and men of The Royal Welsh Regiment during the exercise reminded me of the quote: "The true patriot looks upon the whole world as his nation not just his own country."

Direct Line to God

WITH CHRISTMAS approaching, the Churches' Advertising Network (CAN) is using posters and radio to remind people of an age old call centre. The message behind the campaign is: "Call God – the whole heavenly host of angels is waiting to take the call."

The poster reminds us of the role of angels in the Christmas story, of Gabriel asking Mary to be the mother of God's Son and of telling Joseph. A host of angels summoned the shepherds to the manger. An angel warned the wise men about Herod in a dream.

Poster

Last year's poster and radio campaign encouraged people to ask a Santa-dressed baby Jesus, "for something this Christmas". This year's theme follows that by



saying: "Why not ask him for something else this Christmas?"

So, why "lines open to God 24/7"?

"Because God is listening, with no robotic voice telling you to hold

Celebrating World Mission

by Ann Howells

THE CHALLENGES and opportunities of Christian Mission in today's world were brought home to those who attended the Diocesan Mission Service in St Peter's Church, Carmarthen, on 15th October. During the service Bishop Carl interviewed Peter and Gloria Davies, Mission Partners from the Diocese who were about to return to Central Asia with their young family. Living in a Muslim society, amongst people of a very different culture to West Wales, Peter and Gloria witness to God's love in a situation where it is not permitted to openly preach the Gospel.

What a contrast to the challenges faced by the guest speaker,

the Rev. Anthony Poggo. A native of Sudan, Anthony works for ACROSS, a Tearfund partner working with Churches in Southern Sudan. Anthony outlined the historical background behind the civil war in Sudan and shared his hopes for the successful outcome of the present peace process. Despite the lack of peace and security the churches of Southern Sudan are growing fast, and in need of resources for teaching and theological training.

Those present were encouraged to experience something of the joy and vibrancy of African worship in the songs led by Kevin Cecil, CMS Area Co-ordinator, the music group from St John's, Carmarthen and the Youth Group of Llandeilo Parish

Church. A group of students from Atlantic College performed a lively dance from their native Sudan.

Concern for the worldwide church and Mission Partners serving in various countries was expressed in the prayers led by Tim Greenhaigh, South West Area Secretary for the South American Mission Society, and Siôn Meredith of Tearfund. After the service, discussion and sharing continued over tea and coffee, and there was an opportunity to learn more about the mission agencies from the various displays.

It is good to be reminded from time to time that we are members of a worldwide Christian family. Watch out for the next event organised by the members of the Diocesan World Mission Group and don't miss out on the opportunity to experience the worldwide church on your doorstep.

St Nicholas or Santa Claus?

St Nicholas' day is celebrated on 6th December and he is widely thought to have been the basis for the modern 'Father Christmas'. Here, Siân Phillips outlines some of the facts and myths surrounding this munificent figure.

MANY stories have been told of St. Nicholas' life and deeds and these help us understand why he is so beloved and revered as a gift-giver; patron and protector of children; the friend and protector of all in trouble or need; and patron of sailors and voyagers. St. Nicholas continues to be a model for the compassionate life.

Tradition says that Nicholas was born to wealthy parents who raised him as a devout Christian, in the village of Patara (Turkey), during the third century and that his parents died during an epidemic when he was young. He continued to obey the words of Jesus, to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," and used his entire inheritance to ease the plight of others. He was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man and became renowned for his munificence.

One story relating to St Nicholas tells the story of a poor man with three daughters who had too little to offer as a dowry to prospective husbands. In those days, the larger the dowry, the better the chance that a young woman would find a good husband. Without a dowry, a woman was unlikely to marry and destined to be sold into prostitution. Mysteriously, on three different occasions, a bag of gold appeared in their home

– providing them with needed dowries and therefore pawning them out of slavery. The bags of gold were tossed through an open window and are said to have landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. This led to the custom of children hanging stockings out eagerly awaiting gifts from Saint Nicholas. Sometimes the story is told with gold balls instead of bags of gold. That is why three gold balls, the symbol for pawnbrokers and sometimes represented as oranges, are one of the symbols for St. Nicholas.

Under the ruthless Roman Emperor Diocletian, Christians were persecuted: Bishop Nicholas suffered for his faith, was exiled and imprisoned. After his release, Nicholas attended the Council of Nicea in AD 325. He died on 6th December, AD 343 in Myra and was buried in his cathedral church, where water, which formed in his grave, was said to have healing powers,

encouraging the growth of devotion to Nicholas. The anniversary of his death became a day of celebration.

In 1087, sailors from the Italian seaport city of Bari succeeded in liberating the bones to Italy. An impressive church was built over St Nicholas' crypt and the shrine in Bari was one of medieval Europe's great pilgrimage centres.

Sailors claimed him as patron and St Nicholas chapels were built in many seaports. His popularity spread during the Middle Ages and he became the patron saint of many European countries. He was so widely revered that more than 2,000 churches were named for him, including more than 400 in Wales and England alone.

St Nicholas' feast day on 6th December is widely celebrated in Europe and is what was known as Old Christmas Day. Simple gift-giving in early Advent helps preserve a Christmas Day focus on the Christ Child.

There is at least one church dedicated to St Nicholas in the diocese of St Davids – in the Parish of Granston with St Nicholas, Pembrokeshire – an ancient Christian community and settlement for over 1600 years. It is approximately one mile from the coast.

Further details about St Nicholas and about how to celebrate his feast day are available from the St Nicholas society at www.stnicholassociety.com

or press the next button. It's personal, not an electronic answer machine" said a spokesperson from CAN. The network has used the biblical teaching that an angel is a messenger. The publishers believe God has messages for people – for us – as well as telling the shepherds about the birth of Jesus. It also reminds us that God listens to us, accessible at any time, and in any place. The message of the angels is about peace and goodwill – we need that today.

It is hoped that this campaign will provide food for thought and discussion. If it makes us smile and think about the message of Christmas, it will have done its job.

Dennis Wight



Photo: Will Hustler, Atlantic Productions

Ring out, wild bells!

by Michael Slaney

Ringling Master, St Davids Cathedral and Diocesan Bells Adviser

IT IS INTERESTING to follow the changing fashions of Christmas card design. In our increasingly secular society, pictures of the Virgin and Child are becoming less common, as political correctness reduces the sending of cards with specifically Christian content, even though we are celebrating Christ's birthday. But the theme of bells seems more resistant to this madness and, certainly, the sound of bells is associated in most people's minds with Christmas and the New Year.

Almost all churches in the diocese have at least one bell in working condition and many have *rings* of bells ranging from a pair of bells up to rings of ten. Churches with single bells have them hung so that they are rung with their mouths downwards, a technique correctly called *chiming* and requiring virtually no skill from the ringer. But for proper ringing, with a set of five or more bells, the bells are hung in such a way that they can be left resting with their mouths upwards. A simple, fairly gentle pull on the bell rope then tips the bell over the balance point, allowing it to swing through a full circle, finishing once again upside down ready to ring a second time. This procedure (which is what the word *ringing* means to British bell ringers) produces a much louder and richer clang from the bell and requires some skill on the part of the ringer. If the bell is heavy (the biggest bell in the cathedral weighs about a ton and a quarter) a lot of experience is needed to ring it safely.

Although experience is required, not much actual strength is needed and it is very satisfying to control a

ton and quarter of swinging metal with a fairly light but expert touch on a rope.

There are twelve churches in the diocese with sets of five or more bells, hung to ring in this way. The ringers at these churches are keen to meet prospective learners, who can be any age from nine or so upwards, although some tower captains may not accept children until they are somewhat older than this. The illustration shows a young girl at St Davids holding a *sally*, ready to ring. You can learn to *handle* a bell, so that you can safely ring it from the upside down position, in a few hours of practice, say five short weekly instruction sessions. But that is only the start and you can then progress to ringing *rounds* (when the bells ring in a descending scale) and, finally, *changes* (when the bells ring in a different order each time they ring). *Change ringing*, only practiced in Britain and in a few other countries with a colonial past, is a complex study which can, if you so wish, involve aspects of serious mathematics. But most change ringers are satisfied when they can safely and happily make their way

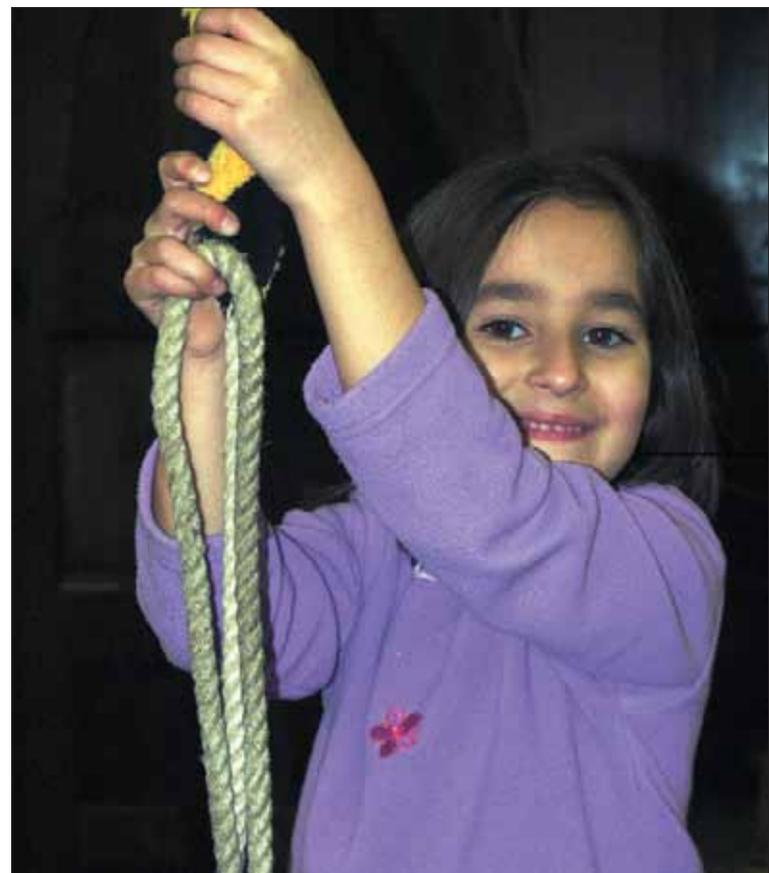
through a variety of *methods*, sets of rules for creating patterns of bell arrangements.

Why do people become bell ringers? Well, apart from the obvious satisfaction in learning a new skill, meeting new people, becoming part of a team and helping in an important part of your church's life, there are at least four other, less obvious benefits, outlined below:

1 Ringing is extremely good exercise. The act of ringing, gently stretches the back, loosens the shoulder muscles and provides a mildly aerobic experience.

2 All the bands of ringers in the diocese are members of the St Davids Guild of Bell Ringers, which holds very pleasant monthly get-togethers: social occasions taking you round the diocese from Llanbadarn Fawr in the north to Llandovery in the east and Llanelli in the south.

3 Once you can ring, you are always sure of a welcome when visiting a town or village with a ring of bells.. I have just returned from Australia where the ringers at Brisbane Cathedral were most hospitable and involved me in their



Holding a "sally", ready to ring

ringing. You get a real chance to meet local people instead of remaining a tourist, outside the community.

4 Finally, village churches are wonderful places to visit and enjoy. They are, these days, unfortunately, often locked but, as a bell ringer, you can always discover the local practice night and spend some time looking round the building as well as talking to the other ringers, joining them in their ringing and, often, afterwards socialising over a drink.

If you would like to contact your local ringers and, perhaps, have a try yourself, give me a phone call on 01437 720804 and I will either meet you in the St Davids tower or put you in touch with your nearest active ringing group. Why not have a go? It's a great family activity and could be a fun thing to try after stuffing yourselves with too much Christmas fare. Do re-read the reasons above – isn't it a tantalising prospect?

Venturing in Mission – the next steps

FOLLOWING the launch of the new Diocesan direction, Venturing in Mission, at the Diocesan Conference, senior staff, at their recent residential, have been thinking about the next steps in the initiative. The idea is to provide a new dynamic framework for church life and action under a series of seven headings. They are:

- A catholic church with a local focus
- A worshipping church
- A serving church
- A co-operating church
- A collaborating church
- An evangelising church
- A venturing church.

The next major stage will be for each local church to consider what its priorities are going to be over the next few years, under each of the headings.

To help in this process, a magazine format publication will be available after Easter next year, provisionally titled "adVenture/Menter." It will include further explanation about the thinking behind each of the headings, together with practical examples from within the diocese of things that might provide encouragement and inspiration. Churches will be invited to set out their own plans in the light of this. Parishes will be encouraged to set time aside, even perhaps to have a day away at an appropriate venue, to consider their response. The annual Visitation services will be a further

opportunity to engage in this process of widening our horizons and stimulating our imaginations. There will also be further archidiaconal clergy days and roadshow-format days for Church officers along the lines of the meetings held this year, which have produced such a good response.

In the meantime, the diocesan nurture course is in its final stages of preparation and will be launched at the Diocesan Conference next year. Prayer cards and book marks are being produced to help everyone remember the seven headings. And of course, every edition of Pobl Dewi brings its own dose of inspiration!

The last copy date for articles for the next edition of **Pobl Dewi** is February 19th 2005

Rural priest and City children



Photos: John Holdsworth

REV MICHAEL PLANT believes that his role in the Dewisland rectorial team as a non-stipendiary priest, and his job at Treginnis farm make a near perfect fit. Treginnis farm is not quite like other farms in this beautiful part of the St Davids peninsula. It is owned and run by the charity Farms for City Children, and for the last seventeen years Mike has been its local face.

The idea is that children from

urban or perhaps even deprived backgrounds can come to the farm, which has extensive residential facilities, and experience something completely different from what their normal life provides. Around 1500 children take that opportunity, currently, and they come from all over England and Wales, and even as far away as Edinburgh.

Life at the farm can be a bit of a shock with dawn starts to feed the stock, collect eggs and change



THE ROYAL SCHOOL OF CHURCH MUSIC

Venturing in Music

by Richard Stephens, RSCM Secretary, West Wales

THE RSCM was founded in 1927 by Sir Sydney Nicholson, and, almost 78 years on, it has grown to be the best voice for Church Music in the world, being a global educational charity with over 7,000 affiliates and 4,000 friends worldwide. Its core mission statement is to 'develop and promote music in Christian worship' – this means all kinds of worship, and the RSCM is now truly interdenominational.

The Diocese of St Davids comes under the 'West Wales area' umbrella, the latter having been in existence since 1988 and which now has 19 affiliated churches and 8 friends. The area committee has continued to grow over the past few years and we have a dedicated team, made up of clergy and musicians, all of whom work for the further development and promotion of music within our worship here in the Diocese

After a very successful meeting with Bishop Carl, the committee will be looking at ways of 'venturing in mission' in 2005, and it is planned to establish a 'music development and outreach team' whose job it will be to go out to parishes and churches that have a desire to develop their musical side of worship. Individuals making up the team can spend one period a month with the choir/worship group/instrumentalists etc., giving practical help and encouragement. At the moment this team is in its early stages but details will be available for all parishes in the coming months. It is hoped that churches will look upon this as a means of encouragement and growth, as music within worship is crucial to the quality of the service we offer to God. We will work with whatever resources an individual church has and develop what is on offer, at the same time working with the leader to inspire. Hopefully through this work we can all prepare for the future mission of the Church.

We, as an area committee, continually seek ways in which we can make ourselves attractive to both affiliates and non-affiliates, and we work extremely hard trying to organise events and activities that are going to be enjoyed. Enjoyment is one of the most important aspects of any music, and hopefully we have got this balance right in our events.

Each year is exciting, and 2005 promises to be equally so. Events are organised throughout the year and below you will find some of those which have been planned so far (some times to be confirmed):

Sat 26th February (am) — Training day/advice for trainers and singers looking to sit their RSCM chorister awards (Deans and Bishops). This event is being led by Geoff Weaver (Senior RSCM adviser). It will be held in the Pembroke group of Churches.

Sat 26th February (pm) — Workshop using prayer and music of Taize. The event will end with a devotional act of worship/Eucharist. Event directed by Revd Dennis Wight (Vicar of Dale) and music directed by Geoff Weaver.

March (date TBC) — RSCM Chorister award examination; to be held at St Davids Cathedral. For details of this, please contact Simon Pearce, 01437 720057

Sat 7th May 10.30 am onwards — Area Choirs' Festival at St Davids Cathedral. Directed by Timothy Noon.

The RSCM in the Diocese of St Davids is justifiably proud of its achievements and with YOUR help we can continue to develop our musical offerings to God. We NEED your support to do this. The scope of space allowed to us in *Pobl Dewi* does not permit me to go into too much detail, but I would be more than happy to hear from anyone who would like to learn more about what we do, or to offer positive help in any way. Please contact me on 01437 760269, or by email to rd@keatspriory.fsnet.co.uk Alternatively, you can find out about all RSCM activities nationally and regionally by logging on to the websites: www.rscm.com www.rscmwales.org www.rscmcymru.org

animal bedding. It can also be a transforming experience, as it allows children to see animals being born and nurtured and gives them a new window on life in the countryside, and perhaps on life itself. Mike believes that priests are there partly to help people grow, and sees that kind of growth with every new group. Although it may seem strange to be rushing home from the atmosphere of leading cathedral worship to don wellies and trudge through the mud and the muck, Michael believes his ministry finds equal expression in the two settings.

There are vacancies for groups who would like to visit the farm. Each year CPAS Falcon groups of faith-based youngsters come from the Bristol Diocese and there is room for more.

For further details contact Mike direct at 01437 720840.



Gosodiad Blodau

gan Donald Morgan, Llanrhystud

YN GYNTAF hoffwn ddiolch am y cyfle i rannu un o'm gosodiadau Nadoligaidd gyda chwi, sef Gosodiad Bwrdd mewn Dysgl Terracotta.

Bydd angen y canlynol.

Llestr addas terracotta mawr i ddal yr oasis.
Un bloc o oasis wedi'i wlychu am ryw bedair i bum munud.

Un rhodyn o dâp gwyrdd i gadw'r oasis yn ei le.

Blodau a deiliach angenrheidiol.

Tri sbrigrin o Hedera helix 'Buttercup' (iorwg gwyrdd a melyn).

Tri sbrigrin o Ilex 'Golden King' (celyn).

Tri sbrigrin o Euonymus (piswydden).

Tri sbrigrin o goniffer.

Tri sbrigrin o Sbrriwsen Sitca.

Pump i saith Dianthus Coch (carnasiwn).

Pum darn o Rubus × tridel neu unrhyw ganghennau eraill.

Hefyd.

Pum darn o *ting-ting*.

Tri *bauble* a thri chôn.

Dau o beli'r winwydden.

(gellir eu prynu mewn unrhyw siop flodau).

1. Rhowch yr oasis yn ddysgl, yna rhowch y Rubus × tridel yng nghefn y gosodiad. Ar y ochr chwith i'r canghennau rhowch y tri darn o sbrriwsen. Yna ychwanegwch yr iorwg melyn a

gwyrdd i'r gwaelod eto ar y chwith. Ar yr ochr dde rhowch y celyn.

2. Gorchuddiwch yr oasis gyda'r coniffer, yr Euonymus a'r conau gan adael lle yn y canol.

3. Ychwanegwch y blodau, y

baubles a'r peli, a rhowch y *ting-ting* i mewn i greu symudiad.

Pob hwyl gyda'r gosodiad, a gobeithio y cewch hwyl yn ei greu. Hwyl tan tro nesaf.



Plygain ... An outsider looking in!

by John Matthews

AS THE TITLE suggests, this is written with the view of an 'Outsider Looking In' – a little like Ebenezer Scrooge looking through the window of Bob Cratchett's family home on Christmas Day. It is therefore, with great trepidation that I begin this very short article, being particularly aware as I am, of those who know so much more about 'Plygain' and its traditions than I do. I merely seek to make a few observations on, what I believe remains, a Mid and West Wales tradition.

So what is 'Plygain'? There is some doubt as to its meaning, the most likely is thought to be the translation of 'The Cock Crow' (Pulli Cantus) alluding to the tradition of the Dawn Mass early on Christmas morning. Having developed out of a separate devotional section of the mass, post-Eucharist,

it thence evolved into something that followed Matins, instead of the Eucharist, very early on Christmas Morning.

It was with some exhaustion after the Midnight Eucharist that I struggled to arrive at St Peter's Church, Lampeter, for 8 am one Christmas morning. I was told that, in days gone by, the service was much earlier (in some places between three and six o'clock) and entirely in Welsh, where carols were sung as a significant part of the Eucharist but quite differently from our present tradition. It was a 'Plygain'. Hearing this word but not really knowing what it meant aroused my interest.

Within three weeks I found myself with several other bands of singers in St Peter's Church, Llanybydder, singing unaccompanied Plygain Carols – truly a first

for me. The service began with a shortened version of Evensong (notice, the time is a little more hospitable!), and then, starting with the host church's group, we each continued unannounced to present our Plygain carols, alternating with congregational carols. There was no applause, it was done with quite some dignity – it was not an excuse to keep an age old tradition going, nor was it merely an opportunity to enjoy the music, this was a genuine offering of worship.

The act of 'Plygain' was as much about the words of the carols as it was the music. In fact the carols each enshrine a measure of theological teaching (in contrast perhaps to Jingle Bells). As Scrooge thus is drawn into the bosom of the Cratchett family, this outsider was drawn in, 'in wonder love and praise'.

Valley Looks Forward to Team Working

JUST AS Bishop Carl was commending new co-operative styles of working to the Diocesan Conference, the latest area to consider team working had committed itself to moving forward. The Upper Amman Valley has, currently, three parishes, and until recently, three incumbents. The retirement of Rev George Ladd from Cwmgors and the preferment of Rev Paul Nash from Glanamman have reduced the stipendiary clergy to one – Rev Adrian Teale, Vicar of Brynamman.

A meeting on 30 September addressed, by the Archdeacon of St Davids, was the latest in a series which has been looking at the best way forward. The meeting adopted a two-stage strategy which will see, in stage one, two incumbents in

separate parishes: one based in Brynamman and the other in Garnant. The hope is that the whole valley will see itself, increasingly, as one ministerial area, with the crossing of parish boundaries enabling the gifts both of incumbents and church members to be fully utilized. It is hoped that lay ministry will develop, in an area where personal pastoral ministries are particularly important.

In stage two there will be a move to formal recognition of the co-operation in ministry, either as a Rectorial Benefice or in some other appropriate form. The parishes are now involved in drawing up a profile for the new appointment, which they hope can be made as soon as possible.

Reviews

The Heavenly Man

By Brother Yun with Paul Hattaway
Published by Monarch Books
in conjunction with
Christian Solidarity Worldwide
ISBN 1-85424-597-X

THIS BOOK is subtitled 'the remarkable true story of Chinese Christian Brother Yun', and remarkable it certainly is. Known throughout China as 'the Heavenly Man' following an incident in which he refused to tell the authorities his real name, Yun's story is one of incarceration, beatings, torture, persecution and deprivation as he struggles to bring Christianity to his countrymen.

Yun's times in prison must have

been bad beyond that which most of us can even begin to imagine. Moreover, even during the time he was free Yun lived much of his life on the run for he refused to give up his evangelising, his preaching and his proclamations of faith. Whilst he never forgets his earthly family there is just the occasional grumble from his long-suffering wife, Deling, and one cannot help but sympathise because she had much to put up with.

Paul Hattaway, in his introduction, confirms that he interviewed many Chinese Christians to verify the events which are told with startling simplicity in this book.

However, for many people struggling with life and faith and not obtaining an immediate answer,

the effectiveness of Yun's prayers may be somewhat irritating. Frequently, it seems, he only has to pray for something and it happens; for example, one cannot deny that his escape from one of the prisons is nothing short of miraculous. This, perhaps, is the message of the book – that one should put absolute, unquestioning faith in the message of the Bible and Jesus Christ.

Not an easy book to read but one which gives just a glimpse of the oppression suffered by those who seek to spread the word of God in places where it is actively discouraged.

It is also a testament to one man's faith, suffering and survival in the name of Christianity. – *Tessa Briggs*

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

Essential 100

Whitney T. Kuniholm
ISBN: 1-84427-103-X
The Scripture Union,
PO Box 5148, Milton Keynes
MK2 2YX
tel: 01980 856006
www.scriptureunion.org.uk

IF YOU'VE EVER wanted to read the Bible in a structured way, but never been quite sure how to go about it or, indeed, what, exactly, the passage you have just read means, then Scripture Union's 'Essential 100' may be the book for you.

Taking you through the Bible in chronological order there are 100 readings, divided into 20 sections of 5 readings each. Each reading is self-contained and is usually one or two chapters or part-chapters, although there are a few which are longer.

For each reading there is brief prayer to start with, followed by

details of the passage to read, then a 'Reflect' section which encourages you to consider the main points and how they relate to present-day life. This is followed by 'Apply', which, as its name suggests, asks you to think about how the passage applies to you, personally, and what you can take from it. It is all then rounded up with a closing prayer. Finally, each section ends with a 'Review' page in which you can make your own notes.

At Holy Trinity, Aberystwyth, where a large number of the congregation is taking part in this scheme, the Vicar's Sunday address then gives us an overview of the 5 passages which have been earmarked for reading at home the previous week. However, the Revd Ian Aveson has pointed out that it is not necessary to have read the recommended passages to understand his sermon!

As we go to press with this edition of *Pobl Dewi*, we are just under half way through the series of readings and a straw poll of the congregations has indicated that this has been a constructive scheme and one which they have enjoyed.

If, like me, you have bookmarks in various places of your Bible for your favourite passages but have never been dedicated enough to read it from cover to cover, then why not make it your New Year's resolution for 2005 to give this series of readings a go? They are not difficult and many of the passages you read will be familiar but the 'Reflect' and 'Apply' sections, in particular, may give you pause for thought and shed new light on old favourites.

A resource pack for churches is also available by contacting Mr Andy Twilley, directly, at the above address. — *Tessa Briggs*

Christmas at St Davids Cathedral

THE WHOLE SEQUENCE of services from Advent to Candlemas has become increasingly popular in recent years. The Advent Carol Service, with processions from west to east symbolising the movement from darkness to light, attracts an ever-increasing congregation. For many people, the season of Christmas is the focal point of their religious observance. The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, which is held by candlelight, attracts a capacity congregation and has a particular atmosphere all of its own. Lessons and Carols combine to remind us of the Christmas story in preparation for the Festival of Christmas itself. The carol service at the Cathedral is always held on 22 December, at 7 pm. To avoid disappointment, it is as well to come early, many people are in their seats at least an hour before.

The Bishop is present as a celebrant and preacher at the First Eucharist of Christmas at 11:30pm on Christmas Eve. The celebrations continue on Christmas morning

with a Family Eucharist, and Choral Matins which is an integral part of Christmas Day for a surprising number of visitors and local people, some of whom travel some distance for the experience.

The celebrations do not end there, as we have developed the Epiphany Carol Service to include a procession for the whole congregation to the crib, where gifts are presented to symbolise the gifts brought by the Wise Men, before all process out into the darkness as a sign of taking Christ to the world.

We conclude the sequence with a Candlemas Vesper and Procession, where again the whole congregation is invited to process around the

Cathedral with candles, and a sharing of the light which, on this occasion, is perhaps even more poignant as we begin to turn our thoughts away from the light of Christ towards his coming passion.

The list below shows those services and concerts which have been arranged to take place in the cathedral in the period leading up to Christmas Day. The services on 22nd and 24th are always extremely well attended and you are advised to arrive at least 45 minutes before the service starts.

Due to construction work there is no parking near the cathedral. Parking is available at Merrivale Car Park on St Justinians Rd on mainly level ground and The Pebbles (space limited) just before the Tower Gateway. The Main car park is at the entrance to the city near the Tourist Information Centre, about 500 yards from the cathedral.

December

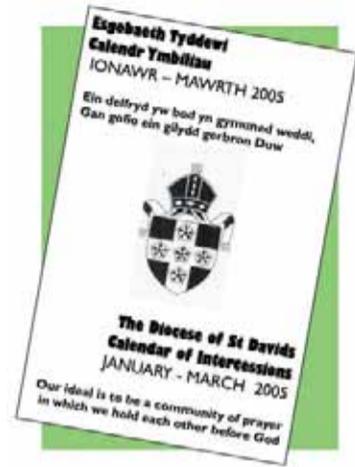
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| 12th | Ysgol Bro Dewi, Carol Service and Nativity | 2.30 pm. |
| 14th | Ysgol Dewi Sant, Carol Services | 2.30 pm. & 7.30 pm |
| 15th | Royal Signals Regiment (Brawdy) Carol Service | 11.00 am |
| 16th | Recording of Welsh Carol Service for Radio Wales | 7.00 pm |
| 18th | Concert by Cathedral Choristers with guest Horn Player | |
| 22nd | Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols | 7.00 pm |
| 24th | First Eucharist of Christmas, Procession and Blessing of Crib | 11.30 pm |

New Look Prayers

A DIOCESAN Calendar of intercession sent to all clergy and available on our website is being developed into a booklet.

Once an A3 sheet naming all parishes, licensed clergy, some of the bishop's engagements and biddings from the world church, it will be extended to include thanksgivings and offerings for prayer from our clergy. Also, it is our intention to list all those assisting the clergy in the parishes. Half of our clerics have already been asked for information for the January to March 2005 issue of the calendar. "It has been very uplifting for me," said Dennis Wight, "to hear of so much going on in the diocese. It will make such a difference to our prayers for each other".

It is hoped that more people will join with the clergy day by day to pray for our diocese, other places in the Anglican Communion and the world church. The clergy receive a copy for each church building and the calendar can be downloaded from our website on www.StDavidsDiocese. As we venture into mission together it will be good to hold each other before



God. It is encouraging to know that on a particular day, twice a year, your parish and priest and other ministers will be named and prayed for. There are of course many areas of work in our three counties and the Communications Group of the diocese wishes to encourage Organisations and Boards to send in items for prayer. Any individual will be most welcome to provide an offering about a particular piece of mission or pastoral work. These can be sent to Dennis Wight, The Vicarage, Dale, SA62 3RN, tel: 01646 636255.

Notices received

'Come and Sing' – Handel's Messiah at St John's Church, Pembroke Dock. Saturday 16 April 2005; rehearsal 2.30pm, performance 7pm. Admission for singers and audience: £3. For further details call 01646 682943/685010.

Open Learning Theology Classes, University of Wales, Lampeter: The new term starts on Thursday, 6 January, 2005, at 7.30pm in The Queen's Hall, Narberth, covering 'Church History: Christianity from Commonwealth to Disestablishment' with The Rev Chancellor Geoffrey Morris, MA, as tutor. Contact Mrs Jeanne Thomas, tel: 01437 767182, for details.

Pilgrim Adventure's 2005 programme is now available and includes Caldey Island and the Pembrokeshire Coastal Path, Ireland, Orkney Isles, Iona and Tiree, Cornwall. All pilgrimages will take place between May and September and are suitable for singles and couples of all ages. With an average group size of 10, walking takes place most days with the emphasis on fun, relaxation, sharing and making new friends. For further details contact: Pilgrim Adventure, 27 Oldbury Court Road, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 2HH. Tel: 01179655454; e-mail: pilgrim.adventure@virgin.net

Holiday-retreat lets for clergy and/or their wives are available at Bromley & Sheppard's Colleges, Kent, at £160 per week for a one-bedroomed house. Contact: The Revd Andrew Sangster, Chaplain & Clerk to the Trustees, Bromley & Sheppard's Colleges, The Chaplain's House, Bromley College, London Road, Bromley, Kent, BR1 1PE. Tel: 020 8460 4712; e-mail: bromcoll@aol.com

Pobl Dewi's Bilingual policy

Several people have contacted *Pobl Dewi* to ask about the paper's policy on Welsh language articles, so here it is. *Pobl Dewi* will contain articles in both English and Welsh, rather than slavishly translate everything. Accepting that some readers will be unable to access articles written in Welsh we ask contributors in Welsh, where appropriate, to provide a short summary in English. On some occasions we have commissioned separate articles on the same subject, in each language. Sometimes it's just not possible or useful to provide a summary (as in our flower arranging article in this edition). We hope the entire production just about avoids frustrating too many people, and reflects the first language choices of all our readers.