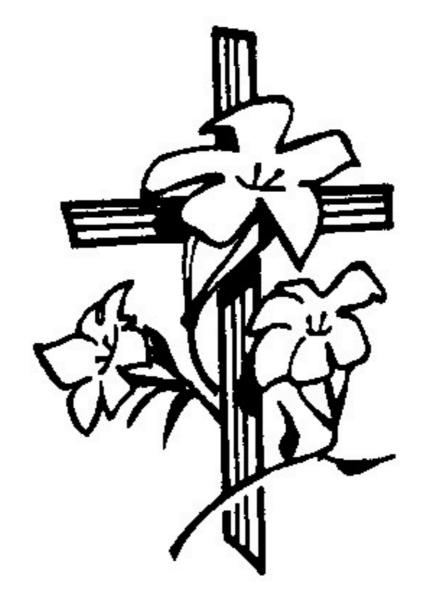
Blaenwysg Braf



Y gwanwyn - 2015 - Spring

The magazine for the six churches and communities of the Blaenwysg Benefice in the Upper Usk Valley



From the study window

We have entered upon the season of Lent, traditionally a time of discipline and study. Perhaps, we could as profitably use the time to look at our lives and ask ourselves how we use our time, skills and abilities and our money. We can readily squander all that we have been given



spending time on Facebook or Twitter and on games rather than a face-to-face conversation. Using our talents to selfishly satisfy our desires for a short time or buying things which we only think that we need is easy.

The Bible calls us to be wise stewards not just of our own time, our own skills and abilities and our own money but also of the earth. God made us stewards over all creation giving us a duty and responsibility to be wise in our care of that creation. Climate change makes us realise our responsibility for the earth and for the environment. We may not be able to affect the great issues of the earth but we can play our part in being responsible in the way we live. By our behaviour towards creation even in little things we can influence others to be more mindful of their role as stewards and perhaps ask themselves what kind of legacy or heritage do we want to hand on to others? Returning to the way in which we live or manage our own lives with regards to our use of time, our skills and abilities and our money we should, perhaps, ask ourselves how well and wisely do we live? If the season of Lent allows us to do nothing else, then to think about the way we live and the way we manage our lives is an important undertaking.

May you have a holy and fruitful Lent ready for the joys of Easter.



Women's World Day of Prayer

Thirty members of the churches and chapels in the area joined together in Llywel church on March 5^{th} for the Women's World Day of Prayer, which this year was prepared by the women of the Bahamas. The theme 'Jesus said to them: Do you know what I have done to you?' challenged us to think of how we might express such radical love. The collection raised £135-20 for the work of charities overseas and in Christian education.

Who and where

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Beryl Price 01874 636271

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Church wardens: Alwyn Perkins 01874 636151

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St David, Llywel, LD3 8RG

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Capel Rhydybriw, Sennybridge, LD3 8RT

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Regular Services

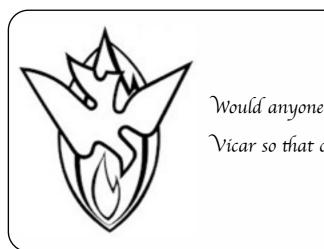
Sunday	First	Second	Third	Fourth
9:30 am	Crai	Crai	Rhydybriw	Crai (Mattins)
11:00 am	Defynnog	Llywel (Family Service)	Defynnog	Llywel
2 pm			Traeanglas	
3 pm		Llandeilo'r Fân		
4:30 pm	Llywel			Defynnog (Evensong)

A combined service is held at 10 am on the fifth Sunday. The next combined service will be on March 29th at St Cynog's Church, Defynnog. On Sunday May 31st, the combined service will be held at St Mary's Church, Traeanglas.

Holy Eucharist is held at Trecastle Community Centre at 10:30 am each Thursday and on the first Wednesday of each month at Rhydybriw.

Benefice Announcements

The Lent Study group will meet at the Vicarage at 7:30pm on Monday 23rd Feb, 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd March.



Confimation

Would anyone wishing to be confirmed please contact the Vicar so that classes may be arranged.

Editorial

You will see that this issue of our magazine has been part funded by the Upper Usk Valley Rural Alliance and we are very grateful for their support. We have been able to make this a longer edition thanks to their support. This edition contains much more information about the activities in the UUV as well as local news and Easter dates. If you would like to contribute an article of local interest, or would like to advertise, please contact one of the editorial team:

John Clifford, tel 01874 638178, john.migley@btinternet.com Sue James, tel 01874 636126, tysiloh@gmail.com Sian Miller, tel 01874 638855, sian.miller@btinternet.com

Please note the deadline for copy for the next issue is May 25th. Advertisements: For a code of conduct contact John Clifford, tel 01874 638178, john.migley@btinternet.com

Sennybridge YFC

Sennybridge YFC has had a busy start to 2015, preparing for the Drama and Pantomime Festival at Theatr Brycheiniog. The club competed in all sections with great success. Our Junior Play, produced by Eileen Jones, was awarded first place as well as Best Production at the Festival – quite an achievement! Ffion Havard was also awarded Best Female Performer under 18 for her role. Cinderella, directed by John Phillips, was awarded second place in the Pantomime competition. Sennybridge YFC also entered the Junior and Senior One Plus competition, with Teleri Haf Thomas, Nia Havard and Daniel Hiscocks coming second in the Junior section with "Nella Fantasia" and David Price, Elin Havard, Gwen Price, Vicky Williams and Sophie Jones winning the Senior section with "Between the Sheets". Congratulations to all who took part and a big thank you to all who helped to stage these performances.

The Club has continued to be busy, performing in concerts to fundraise for the movement. John Price and Eifion Phillips were both successful in the County Hedging match, winning the U26 and the Farmer's Hedge sections respectively. John Price was also awarded Best Hedge – well done to them both!

News from the Pews

St Cynog, Defynnog

December saw the church busy with the Advent Craft Fair and Christmas Tree dressing. The church was colourful and festive with a total of 20 Christmas trees. Sennybridge School joined us for their Christingle on December 15th and the tower team was delighted to ring for the children as they arrived for their service. The Carol service was held on December 18th followed by delicious festive treats.

January storms blew away part of the church roof but we are delighted that our insurance firm has just given the go ahead for the repair so that we will be ready for any future meteorological excitement.

St Ilid, Crai

Crai church have been busy with a successful Bingo evening in early December. On the Sunday before Christmas we held our usual nativity scene in the stable: Joseph and Mary were Peter and Kate Smith with their baby son Sam, the angel was Eleri Isaac and the three shepherds were Jac Jones, Thomas Isaac and Josh Robson. The Off the Bus Club and Rainbows took part in the subsequent carol service, organised by Liz Matthews. A good congregation celebrated Christmas on the morning of 25th and enjoyed tea and mince pies afterwards.

Capel Rhydybriw, Sennybridge

Capel Rhydybriw hosted Compline as we prepared for Advent on Friday 12th and 19th December. The combined service on Sunday 28th December welcomed everyone from the benefice and a special visitor in the person of Arwel Price who played the organ and delighted us with his beautiful voice.

St David, Llywel

We started the year with a family Christingle service where ten children took part with prayers and lighting the Christingle, followed by tea and biscuits in the church. February family service had the theme of Creation Sunday where each child brought something they had created to share with everyone. We shared how God created the world and reminded ourselves to look after it and to care for each other.

The Friends group met on 26th February to discuss our plans for 2015 which will include events for the celebration of Agincourt 600. Watch this space!

St Teilo, Llandeilo'r Fân

A group of us marked the beginning of Advent with an informal carol service in which the children took part, and there was a large congregation to celebrate at the Christmas Eve communion service, followed by drinks and tea in the hall afterwards.

St Mary, Traeanglas

This year Traeanglas was the venue for the Trecastle Young Farmers' Club Carol Service. What a pleasure to hear the young voices taking part in the readings, poems, prayers and carols. Their nominated charity for the collection was Wales Air Ambulance. The following week we had the chance to come together and see the church looking so festive at our Christmas Eve service.

As a very rural parish, lambing time is upon us and we think about all involved working in all kinds of weather. We wish you well.

Community news

Beryl and Rees Price of Pantmaes celebrated their Golden Wedding in February with a party in Maescar Hall. Donations in place of presents were given to Diabetes UK and raised the wonderful sum of £1,700. Beryl has been assured that this will be used on Welsh projects. Beryl and Rees would like to express their sincere thanks to everyone involved.

Trecastle YFC

Brecknock Y.F.C. held its annual Drama Festival in February 2015 at Theatr Brycheiniog, with the usual strong competition between clubs. Trecastle Y.F.C. acquitted itself well with Josie Howells, Carwyn Pugh, Cerys Lewis, Rhodri Workman Steffan Davies, Iwan Davies, Lewis Davies and Geraint Workman displaying their many talents.

The pantomime, Hansel and Gretel, featured a cast of thousands and was guaranteed to reduce the audience to tears of laughter. Thanks for the hard work of Shelley Davies, Julie Elliott, Katie Davies and Eirlys Pugh, Tex, Lyn Davies, Dan Millar, Dave Howells, Julie Howells and many others. It is appreciated by all who saw the show, and we know that the children get a great deal of pleasure out of taking part in Y.F.C. events.

Trecastle reprised their performances at Sennybridge School on Saturday 21st February, for those who wanted to support the event again or didn't manage to get tickets for the Theatre performances. This relaxed evening featured superb guest appearances from Sennybridge YFC which helped make it a sensational night. If you missed the professionalism, atmosphere and commitment of YFC Drama, then put it in your diary for February 2016.

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Off The Bus Club ...



This lively group continues to flourish with a regular group of 12 children and five adult leaders. We will be celebrating Mothering Sunday this year in Horeb Chapel, Crai at 10.30 am and hopefully taking part in Easter celebrations in Defynnog. Everyone is most welcome to attend these services and see what we can do.

We meet from 3.50pm to 5pm on Monday afternoons in Crai Hall and each session includes a mix of games, singing, Bible stories, snack, and prayer. There are children in the group from Crai and Trecastle and we would love to welcome more from throughout the Benefice.

For more details please contact Liz on 636797 or <u>liz@abercottages.com</u>

From the Registers

We welcomed Layla Sian Davies and lestyn Eric Rhys Price into the Church.

We gave thanks for the lives of : Brychan Jones Ian Robert Lowe Joseph Vivian Davies Maud Elizabeth (Betty) Davies

Chapel services 2015

March 8th	2.00pm	Ty Newydd	Trecastle
March 22nd	2.00 pm	Zoar Chapel	Pentrefelin *
April 5th	2.00pm	Ty Newydd	Trecastle
April 19th	2.00pm	Ty Newydd	Trecastle *
May 10 th	2.00 pm	Zoar Chapel	Pentrefelin
May 24 th	2.00 pm	Zoar Chapel	Pentrefelin *
May 31st	2.00pm	Ty Newydd	Trecastle
June 14th	2.00pm	Ty Newydd	Trecastle *

^{*} these are Communion services.

Where and what is the Upper Usk Valley?

A land of history and legend on the wilder side of Wales

The Upper Usk Valley(UUV) offers dramatic scenery with patchworked green fields, deciduous woodlands and coniferous forestry complete. This is the "Wilder Side of Wales" where the River Usk starts its 63 mile journey.

The area has some of the best known mountains and hills in Wales, with challenging paths along and above the River Usk. At the same time, the picturesque upland landscape gently grazed by sheep and other animals is shared with wildlife, in the river, fields and woods and flying high above the crags and escarpments. Beautiful sunny days and wild weather can be experienced here at any time of the year, in this huge expanse of mountains and moorland, where only a few farmers and villagers live all year round.

The ancient standing stones and Churches show that hardy people have lived here, down the millennia, enjoying its special qualities, which remain largely unchanged today. History and legend is woven into the landscape. Local sites offer a variety of places of interest to explore from ancient stones, ancient yew trees, castles, mediaeval churches and Roman camps to wartime plane crash sites. Close to the source of the River Usk, on higher ground is Llyn y Fan Fach. Legend tells the famous story of The Lady of The Lake, and her sons the Physicians of Myddfai. You can find this enchanting story told by Owen Staton on Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4akhjGQ65Y.

Running through the Upper Usk Valley is the A40 trunk road connecting to Brecon at its eastern edge and to Llandovery in the west. Sennybridge is the focal village for the UUV with its shops, livestock market, surgery and school. Much of the A40 is an ancient Drovers Road which was also used by the bowmen and soldiers who set off to fight at Agincourt in 1415.

As you might expect, the open countryside of the "Wilder side of Wales" offers wilder activities including extreme sports for the intrepid who want to test their determination in their chosen sports. There are two Dark Sky Discovery sites in the area if you want to look at the stars. But if you want to spend your time just breezing through the beauty of the Upper Usk Valley and dropping into a local tea room, then that's on offer too.

What is the Upper Usk Valley Rural Alliance?

The Upper Usk Valley Rural Alliance is an open group. It is dedicated to the promotion of social, economic, cultural and environmental vibrancy within the Upper Usk Valley. The initiative is supported by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and the Welsh Assembly Government. Initially, it helped to bring the villages of Defynnog, Crai, Trecastle and Sennybridge closer together and recently Heol Senni, Llandeilo'r Fân and Pentrebach have also joined in.

We want others to benefit from the attractions of this stunningly beautiful area. We want to encourage increased involvement by local residents and businesses and to extend the use by visitors and tourists. The rural alliance is keen to organise more events in our local calendar, especially to create more opportunities for local people to be involved.

The Upper Usk Valley is **our** community ... Please join in!

www.upperuskvalley.co.uk

Agincourt 600

This Year Trecastle will be remembering those special men who left our area to fight at The Battle of Agincourt in October 1215. There were 10 named men from Llywel, and one of them was knighted on the battlefield. He was the army captain, and his name was Sir Watkin Lloyd, who was born and lived at Marchog Tir in Trecastle. Other fighting men came from Glyntawe and Ystradfellte and Defynnog.

There will be an AGINCOURT EXHIBITION & FLOWER FESTIVAL with activity day at St David's Church at Llywel on 14th/15th August 2015. Please check for all events on Trecastle's website: Trecastle.org.uk

Trecastle Dark Skies Event

On FRIDAY APRIL 24TH 2015, we are looking forward to launching Trecastle Dark Sky Discovery Site with a very special event. From FRIDAY 17TH APRIL 2015, there will be a "Planet Trail Passport' available at a number of outlets in the UUV. At each planet venue you can get your passport stamped to show that you



have read and seen the planet information. Completed passports will be entered into a prize draw on the night.

In the afternoon of the 24th April, professional astronomer Allan Trow will be at Sennybridge school Solar Scoping with the children. Then it's back to Trecastle Community Hall for the adults to have a go. From 5pm there will be opportunities to learn all about the night sky by visiting the pop up planetarium near to the Community Hall. Night sky talks will be given in Trecastle Chapel during the evening. Refreshments will be available from The Community Hall as well as drinks at The Three Horseshoes, The Castle Coaching Inn and other pubs in the UUV.

Weather permitting, at 9pm, we plan to run a shuttle bus to the Roman Road to do some real life stargazing with telescopes, guided by the experts. On this particular night the planets are lined up: Mercury, Venus The Moon and Jupiter should be visible to make a spectacular show.

The event is funded by Rural Alliances so is FREE for everyone to take part. All we ask is that you come along with your families and friends to enjoy this truly fascinating experience.

We hope that this will be the first of many Dark Skies events in the Upper Usk Valley to make the most of our Discovery Site Status in Crai and at The Usk Reservoir. After all, we live in the darkest place in the Brecon Beacons so we should make the most of it!

Check locally for details, call 01874 636433 or visit www.upperuskvalley.co.uk

Spring Calendar

	<u> </u>	
Thurs 19th 7:30 pm	Speakers Roy and Daphne Godwin from Ffald y Brenin	Bronydd Mawr
Fri 27th Mar 7:30 pm	Hoe Down and Hog Roast - Sennybridge Farmers' Hunt £5 (£7 on the door)	Crai Village Hall
Fri 3rd April (Good Friday) 2:30 - 4:30 pm	Easter crafts for children with an Easter story and Easter Egg hunt	Trecastle Community Centre
Tues April 7th 7 pm	Sennybridge WI - Literacy skills in the community with Mrs Angela McFall	Maescar Hall
Fri 17th Apr	Crai Gardening Club visit to RHS Flower Show	Cardiff
Sat May 2nd	Eisteddfod Details Sian Norgate 636621	Heol Senni Village hall
Sun 3rd May	Hound, Terrier & Lurcher Show, Qualifiers, Tradestands, Bouncy Castle, Bar, BBQ. £2 on the gate	SFH Field, Sennybridge
Tues May 5th 7 pm	Sennybridge WI -Resolutions and bring & buy	Maescar Hall
May 22nd - 25th	Beer Festival with live music	Tanners Arms
Sun 31st May	Plant and Produce Sale	Crai Village Hall
Tue s 9th June morning	Sennybridge WI -trip to Brecon Mountain Railway	meet at Maescar Hall

Monthly Diary

	<u> </u>	
First Monday	Community Garden Club	Crai Village Hall
Second Tuesday	Trecastle Ladies Guild	Trecastle Community Hall
First Wednesday	Merched Crai	Neuadd y Plwyf Crai
Last Wednesday	Craft Club	Neuadd y Plwyf Crai
Third Thursday	Worship Meeting	Bronydd Mawr Farm

Weekly Diary

Mondays	3:45 - 5pm	Off the Bus Club	Neuadd y Plwyf Crai
	7:00 - 8:30pm	Girl Guides	Sennybridge Youth Wing
Mon - Thur	9:30 - 12:30 pm	Cylch Meithrin	Sennybridge Youth Wing
Tuesdays	1:00 - 3pm	Toddler Group	Sennybridge School
	6:00 - 7:30 pm	Brownies (age 7 - 10)	Sennybridge Youth Wing
Wednesdays	1:00 - 3:30 pm	Afternoon bowls	Maescar Hall
	5:00 - 6:00 pm	Rainbows (age 5 - 7)	Sennybridge Youth Wing
	7:00 - 9:00 pm	Short Mat Bowls	Maescar Hall
	6:30 pm	Knitting Club	Trecastle Community Hall
	7:30 pm	Trecastle YFC	Trecastle Community Hall
Thursdays	6:30 - 7:30	Zumba	Maescar Hall
	7:30 pm	Trallong Ladies Choir	Maescar Hall
	7:30 - 8:30 pm	Bell ringing	St Cynog's Church, Defynnog
Friday	pm	Sennybridge Junior Football Club	Riverside Park (football ground)

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Look on our website for examples of the work that Fix It Build It have undertaken.

Welsh Gymanfa - Sennybridge & District at the Plough Chapel, Brecon on May 24th at 6pm. Conductor Philip Watkins, Llandovery.

Would you like to join in? There are rehearsals at the Senni Hall at 2pm on Sunday April 19th and at the Plough Chapel on Sunday 10th May at 2pm. All welcome.

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Functions such as christenings/parties/funerals can be hosted.

There are numerous walks from the pub and you are welcome to park your car whilst on your walk.



Web site: http://theshoemakersarms.web.com/

C.A.R.S. - Community Action for Road Safety

The CARS Group aims to improve driving behaviour locally. We are concerned about traffic incidents and the attitude of *some* drivers to speed through and between the villages. *Some* motorcyclists reach speeds of 130 m.p.h. and fine weather always brings out anti-social drivers.

We want to work with the police in reducing accidents, injury and death on our roads which are amongst the worst in Wales. We have met Kirsty Williams A.M., Roger Williams M.P., Edwina Hart A.M., and Dyfed-Powys Police Commissioner Christopher Salmon but with limited positive, tangible response so far. Local Police Constable Jason Hawkins has been pro-active across the communities but there is only so much he can do. The group has applied for financial assistance from The Police Commissioners Fund to purchase 4 cameras to monitor speed through the villages. Cameras in specific locations could make a big difference if the police use the evidence to re-educate offenders.

We intend to reignite our enthusiasm for this cause and invite other communities to join us.

Contact: Dave Howells (dave@howlingtir.plus.com or 01874 638290)

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Traddodiadau'r Pasg - Easter customs

At Easter we still observe some of these traditions, and we might like to think about reviving some others.

Sul y Blodau - Palm Sunday. On this Sunday it is traditional to clean and then decorate the graves with flowers, in preparation for the resurrection a week later. It was also customary to have new clothes, after the darkness and cold of winter.

Dydd Gwener y Groglith - Good Friday. In times past all shops and businesses closed on Good Friday. In Tenby the local people traditionally walked bare foot to church, in order 'not to disturb the earth', the burial ground of Christ. In Brecon all the churches join together in a walk of witness, following a cross and stopping for readings and prayer at specific places, ending with a social gathering and hot cross buns.

Cennin Pedr - Peter's leek. Cennin Pedr, cennin Pedr, melyn a gwyrdd, melyn a gwyrdd, yn dansio yn yr haul, yn dansio yn yr haul, cennin Pedr, cennin Pedr. The childrens' song describes the yellow and green daffodil dancing in the sunshine. Does the term Peter's leek for the daffodil flower refer to Peter's denial of Christ when he was crucified? The daffodil is usually in flower at Easter, so this seems very probable. Many churches use daffodils in their decorations to symbolise the glory of the resurrection.

Sul y Pasg - Easter Sunday. People used to form a procession to climb a nearby mountain at sunrise, to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus at first light. Some churches have recently re-instituted this tradition.

Pasg Hapus - A Happy Easter



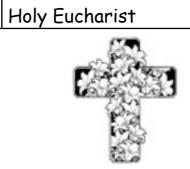






Easter Services

Sun 29th March 10 am	Holy Eucharist with Palm Ceremonies	St Cynog, Defynnog
Mon 30th March 7 pm	Holy Eucharist	St David, Llywel
Tues 31st March, 12 noon	Chrism Mass	Brecon Cathedral
Wed 1st April, 10 am	Holy Eucharist	Capel Rhydybriw
Maundy Thursday 7pm	Holy Eucharist with Stripping of the Altar	St Ilid, Crai
Good Friday		
2:30 pm	Good Friday Service	Horeb Chapel, Crai
3 pm	Good Friday Service	Brychgoed Chapel
7 pm	Readings of the Passion	St Cynog, Defynnog
Holy Saturday / Easter	Easter Vigil with	St Cynog, Defynnog
Eve	Blessing of the Easter	
7 pm	Light	
Easter Day (Sun 5th)		
9:30 am	Holy Eucharist	St Ilid, Crai
10:30 am	Communion	Horeb Chapel, Crai
11 am	Holy Eucharist	St Cynog, Defynnog
2 pm	Easter Service	Ty Newydd, Trecastle
4:30 pm	Holy Eucharist	St David, Llywel







www.upperuskvalley.co.uk

