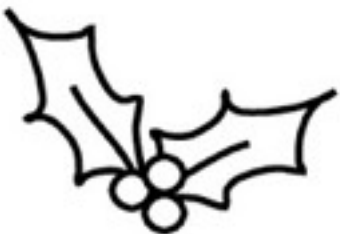


# Blaenwysg Braf



**Gaeaf- 2015 - Winter**

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



## Who and where

Rev M P Wilding, Bryn Orsaf, Sennybridge, LD3 8RR 01874 638927

Benefice wardens : Paula Jones 01874 638863  
Beryl Price 01874 636271

St Cynog, Defynnog, LD3 8SB

Church wardens : Paul Salisbury 01874 636943  
Siân Miller 01874 638855

St Ilid, Crai, LD3 8YP

Church wardens : Gwyn Price 01874 638844  
Beryl Price 01874 636271

St David, Llywel, LD3 8RG

Church warden : Lynn White 01874 636293

St Teilo, Llandeilo'r Fân, LD3 8UD

Church wardens : Valerie Lewis 01874 636485  
Mervyn Prosser 01874 638261

Capel Rhydybriw, Sennybridge, LD3 8RT

Church warden : Thurza Morgan 01874 638106

St Mary, Traeanglas, LD3 8RE

Church wardens : Ivor Pugh 01874 638158  
Bess Jones 01874 636256

## Blaenwysg Braf Editorial Team

John Clifford Carn y Castell, Sennybridge 01874 638178  
Sue James Ty Siloh, Llandeilo'r Fân 01874 636126  
Siân Miller 1, Prospect Row, Defynnog 01874 638855

## From the study window



I wonder do these dark, gloomy days as the year speeds towards its end make you long for the warm, balmy days of summer? Or are you looking forward to nights in by a cosy fire? There is a sense of longing in the air, a sense of looking forward too, of anticipation perhaps linked to Christmas and the New Year.

The short season of Advent - the four Sundays before Christmas - has as one of its themes the idea of expectation, of hope. This hope, this expectation is linked with the birth of Jesus and what this birth means for us and for the world. It is because of this, our hope, our expectation is not just a wistful longing - a somewhat nebulous, unformed looking forward but an expectation, a hope that is purposeful, determined. We are expecting and hoping for the coming, the entry of the kingdom of God. A Kingdom which is ushered in upon the world with the birth of Jesus. Our expectation, our hope should be clear and focused so that we are ready for that kingdom and what it means not just for the world but for ourselves.

May God make ready our hearts and our minds to the coming of His Kingdom that when the Kingdom comes we may welcome it with praise and joy. Amen.

Paul

## Epynt a'r Wysg Ministry Area Inauguration

On Sunday 11th, Bishop John Davies held the service of inauguration for the newly formed Ministry Area of Epynt a'r Wysg. The Ministry Area is made up of the two benefices of Blaenwysg and Dan-yr-Epynt. Our ministry area name reflects and values both identities. The inauguration is just a start as the two benefice councils and worship teams find a new way of working together.

The service was held at St David's Trallong which was beautifully decorated with Harvest blooms. We followed our shared worship with light refreshments.

## 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 January 31st at Crai. Holy Eucharist is held at Trecastle Community Centre at 10:30 am each Thursday and at 10 am on the first Wednesday of each month at Rhydybriw.

## Benefice Announcements

### Enquirers' Course

"Any Questions?" is coming here - not with Jonathan Dimbleby, though. The Ministry Team are running an Enquirers' Course called "What's it All About?". It will be a chance to ask questions and find out more about being a Christian and why we do the things we do. There will be 5 sessions on Monday evenings at 7.30pm in Trallong Hall, starting on 4th January.



### Compline

Compline services will be held at 7:30 pm at Capel Rhydybriw for four weeks starting on Monday 30th November. This reflective service will help us keep a quiet time in the sometimes hectic period of Advent. Come and join us in peace and contemplation.

## Editorial

You will see that this issue is again 20 pages since we have been lucky with gaining further support from advertisers, so if you are prompted to contact one of the businesses, please mention this magazine. This issue contains more information about the winter activities as well as all the information about Christmas in our area. We have been especially pleased to welcome a contribution by Rev Caroline Owen of the Dan-yr-Epynt Benefice. 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](mailto:john.migley@btinternet.com)

Sue James, tel 01874 636126, [tysiloh@gmail.com](mailto:tysiloh@gmail.com)

Sian Miller, tel 01874 638855, [sian.miller@btinternet.com](mailto:sian.miller@btinternet.com)

Please note the deadline for copy for the next issue is February 19th.

Advertisements: For a code of conduct contact John Clifford, tel 01874 638178, [john.migley@btinternet.com](mailto:john.migley@btinternet.com)

## Defibrillator training

Did you know that we have defibrillators at Crai and Trecastle village halls and there will soon be one at Maescar? Did you think you need to be a paramedic to use it? Not true! They are placed on the outside of buildings and as soon as you switch them on, they tell you what to do. That's right - the machine talks to you. Since the start of the campaign to place these in public places in Wales, eight people have been saved by members of the public. At a short training session in Trecastle village hall, about 80 people learned how to use these life-savers. Look out for more training sessions soon.



## **News from the Pews**

### **St Cynog, Defynnog**

The Autumn has flown by with our Open Doors weekend for Cadw at the end of September where the registers were available for enthusiastic amateur historians. A visitor from Australia was delighted to find her grandparents' marriage in our records. At the Harvest Festival on October 1st we enjoyed a happy and thoughtful service where the church was decorated with a selection of lovely flowers and produce. November saw our Craft Fair with beautiful arts and crafts made by local artists on sale. We were delighted to raise approximately £320.

### **St Ilid, Crai**

Really this has been a year of playing 'hunt the builder'. The Church is desperately in need of repair but we need at least two quotes from reputable builders and then these have to go before a committee within the Diocese before work can commence. What a palaver! No sooner do we think we are nearly there than something goes wrong with the process. So calling all builders: if you would be happy to quote for work and can give some kind of guarantee please get in touch and we will happily supply you with an outline of the work required.

On a lighter note some of us enjoyed meeting our new friends at the Ministry Area inauguration at Trallong in October. We very much look forward to working together on some wonderful projects in the future.

### **Capel Rhydybriw, Sennybridge**

Our small community was delighted to welcome people to our Harvest Festival on October 18th. Glorious flowers decorated our lovely little church. On November 29th we held the benefice combined service and were pleased to see so many people from the other churches of Blaenwysg and for the first time we were able to offer refreshments after the service.

## **St David, Llywel**

A dark autumnal evening is not always a cheerful prospect, but on a Friday in October the Friends of St David's Llywel held a demonstration evening and it was an autumnal evening filled with warmth, friendship and laughter.

We were very fortunate that Gareth Richards agreed earlier in the year to do a cookery and flower arranging demonstration evening for us. The evening started with refreshments and by the time Gareth took the stage the hall was full and people were catching up with friends old and new.

It did not matter whether you had seen Gareth in action previously or not, he certainly held everyone's attention and again provided informative fun with his knowledge of both food and flowers. It is such a lovely sound to hear a group of people laughing and that sound was heard throughout the demonstration.

So having raffled off Gareth's exhibits, along with many other prizes, it was time to go back out into the autumnal evening and make our way safely home. As the hall emptied the Friend of St Davids reflected on a successful evening and we would like once again to thank everyone for their support which resulted in a great evening adding £500 to our fundraising efforts.

## **St Teilo, Llandeilo'r Fân**

The congregation of St. Teilo's church are preparing for an Advent Service on Sunday 13th December which will include the Baptism of two new babies in the valley: Rhys William, the son of Huw and Eleanor Davies and Alffi Jac Kenny, the son of Andrew and Nerys MacDonald. We look forward to welcoming the children into our church community.

## **St Mary, Traeanglas**

At St Mary's on 6th October, a nice congregation had the chance to express our thanks for a good harvest, the Autumn having made up for the not so warm summer. Later in the month we held our annual bingo. The hall in Trecastle was full in readiness for "Eyes Down". We were delighted and thank all who made it such a great evening.

## A Christmas message from Revd. Caroline Owen, Vicar of the benefice of Dan-yr-Epynt

Dear friends,

At this time of year our minds are filled with images from the Nativity Story: the gentle baby in the manger surrounded by the cattle, the triumphant angels singing to the shepherds on the hillside, the dramatic entry of the Kings in all their splendour, hands filled with precious gifts. We have seen these images in paintings, stained glass windows and story books, we sing about them in our carols.

Perhaps a little less familiar is the image of Mary and Joseph desperately fleeing Bethlehem with the baby Jesus, escaping the anger of Herod and the swords of his soldiers. It's a race for their lives into exile in Egypt, a foreign land.



Every day on our TV screens and in the newspapers, we see images of refugees and asylum seekers, people driven from their homes by war and violence. Jesus began his life as a refugee. Perhaps recognising this will help us to respond to the needs of all refugees, and to show them all the care and support we can this Christmas: Jesus said "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

May you have a blessed Christmas and a joyful New Year,

Caroline



*Confirmation*

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



## Chapel services - Winter 2015 /16

December 6th	10:30am	Horeb	Crai
December 6th	6pm	Zoar	Pentrefelin
December 13th	10:30am	Horeb	Crai
December 13th	2.00pm	Saron	Cwmwysg
December 20th	10:30am	Horeb	Crai
December 20th	2.00pm	Saron	Cwmwysg
December 20th	2.00pm	Ty Newydd	Trecastle*
December 24th	6:30pm	Horeb	Crai
January 3rd	10:30am	Horeb	Crai
January 10th	10:30am	Horeb	Crai
January 10th	2.00pm	Saron	Cwmwysg
January 17th	10:30am	Horeb	Crai
January 17th	2.00pm	Ty Newydd	Trecastle
January 24th	10:30am	Horeb	Crai
January 24th	2.00pm	Ty Newydd	Trecastle
January 31st	10:30am	Horeb	Crai
January 31st	2pm	Zoar	Pentrefelin*
February 7th	10:30am	Horeb	Crai
February 14th	2pm	Zoar	Pentrefelin
February 14th	10:30am	Horeb	Crai
February 14th	2.00pm	Saron	Cwmwysg
February 21st	10:30am	Horeb	Crai
February 28th	10:30am	Horeb	Crai
February 28th	2pm	Ty Newydd	Trecastle*

\*these are Communion services.

\*\*\*\*\*

### From the Registers

We gave thanks for the lives of :

David William Davies (Priest at St, David's, Llywel)

Gwyn Price of Defynnog

Kenneth Morgan of Heol Senni

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Community Action for Road Safety (C.A.R.S)**

The Campaign held an open meeting on 9th October with guests Chris Davies Conservative M.P. Brecon and Radnor, William Powell Liberal Democrat A.M. for Mid and West Wales. Dave Howells introduced the meeting noting that there is a great concern about increasing speeding in the area, serious and fatal car collisions and worries of locals about motorcycle speed and the small percentage of inconsiderate drivers and riders.



C.A.R.S. has contacted villages and communities with similar problems within a 30 mile radius of Sennybridge and hope they support our goals and possibly share resources such as the mobile speed checks. Unfortunately, a bid was submitted to The Police Commissioners Fund for a mobile speed camera and was turned down, although it appeared to meet all the criteria.

The meeting discussed speeding motorbikes and lorries which frequently travel at high speed through the villages. The area is attracting increasing numbers of cyclists who are also vulnerable to speeding vehicles. Motorbike noise was also a concern since some can be heard several miles away before they get to our villages.

Focusing on the objectives of C.A.R.S no-one wants to drive motorists or motorcyclists away from the Brecon Beacons, but there needs to be education, speed enforcement and respect for this rural environment. C.A.R.S. wants to see excessive speed reduced lawfully and punished accordingly. There needs to be a visible/tangible deterrent for unacceptable and unlawful speed and anti-social driving through our villages, and on the open road between villages. Chris Davies reminded the meeting that there are two main issues : appropriate speed limits and how they are enforced.

William Powell suggested a petition against excessive speed, enforcing speed signage, education of motorists. Trecastle have already had a petition with 125 signatures, but didn't believe that this was strong enough to be accepted as legitimate evidence for changes to be made. However, the petition still exists and could be used as part of a further campaign.

It was suggested that a community neighbourhood team should be created to work more closely with Police. The next task for C.A.R.S. will be to focus on a set of proposals and engaging with schools and local news organisations. Chris Davies promised to support the cause and he would be contacting Christopher Salmon, the Police Commissioner immediately to ensure he would be able to attend the next meeting.

## Off The Bus Club ...



The Club has been meeting regularly to have fun all term with a special 'light party' during half term. We made some lovely lanterns to light our way to the stable during the Carol Service and some very interesting light bugs with wings and glowing bodies. During the afternoon we thought about the light Jesus brings into our lives and all the great celebration parties we have during the year.

Looking ahead we will be having a Christmas party at the end of term (a term full of parties) and will be taking part in the Carol Service in Crai Church on 20<sup>th</sup> December and Horeb Chapel at 6pm on Christmas Eve.

We are open to all children from Sennybridge, Trecastle and Crai (and the wider area) of primary school age, all welcome.

For more details please contact Liz on 636797 or [liz@abercottages.com](mailto:liz@abercottages.com)

\*\*\*

### **1<sup>st</sup> Mynydd Du Rainbows, Brownies and Guides**

The girls have had a hectic time this autumn culminating in a big sleepover in Heol Senni Village Hall, Rainbows and Brownies on one night and Guides the next. We travelled around the world at break neck speed learning and taking part in traditions from countries as far spread as Canada, Australia, India and Japan. We travelled by train, plane, ship and hot air balloon and we all survived (although it took all the following week to catch up on sleep!) It was altogether great fun and laughter. The girls have also entered the RWAS Winter Fair making Christmas trees and stars, we are hoping for some success but as this goes to press we have our fingers, well and truly, crossed.

Girlguiding enables girls and young women to develop their potential and to make a difference to the world and it can start at any age! Rainbows is the youngest section of Girlguiding open to girls aged 5 to 7 years, then come Brownies from 7 to 10 years and finally, in Sennybridge, Guides from 10 to 14 years. It all gets really exciting from then on. The Senior Section are 100 this year and this is the age for travel and adventure worldwide. If you, or your, daughter would be interested in any of these groups please feel free to give us a ring, Liz or Nicola on 01874 636797.

## Winter Calendar

Thurs 3rd Dec 6pm	School Christmas Concert	Sennybridge School
Fri 4th Dec 2pm	School Christmas Concert	Sennybridge School
Mon 7th Dec	School Christmas Fair	Sennybridge School
Tues 8th Dec 7:30pm	Trecastle Ladies Guild - Christmas Demonstration by Gwyneth Williams	Trecastle Community Hall
Thurs 10th Dec 2pm	Sennybridge School Christingle	St Cynog's Church, Defynnog
Thurs 17th Dec 7:30 pm	Carols and mince pies	Neuadd y Plwyf Crai
Tues 29th Dec 6:30 pm	Christmas Party	Neuadd y Plwyf Crai
Thurs 31st Dec 9pm	New Year's Eve Party	Neuadd y Plwyf Crai
Tues 5th Jan 7pm	Sennybridge WI Members' Evening	Maescar Hall
Fri 15th Jan time tbc	Trecastle Ladies Guild - New Year's Dinner	Trecastle Community Hall
Sat 30th Jan	Noson Lawen	Neuadd y Plwyf Crai
Tues 3rd Feb 7pm	Sennybridge WI 150th Sennybridge Show	Maescar Hall
Tues 16th Feb 7:30pm	Trecastle Ladies Guild - Talk by Dave Howells about his family history	Trecastle Community Hall

## Monthly Diary

First Monday	Community Garden Club	Crai Village Hall
First Tuesday	Sennybridge WI	Maescar 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
Mon - Thur	9:30 - 12:30 pm	Cylch Meithrin	Sennybridge Youth Wing
Tuesdays	1:00 - 3pm	Toddler Group	Sennybridge School
	5:30 - 7 pm	Brownies (age 7 - 10)	Sennybridge School Hall & Youth Wing
	7:00 - 8:30pm	Girl Guides	Sennybridge Youth Wing
Wednesdays	1:00 - 3:30 pm	Afternoon bowls	Maescar Hall
	5:00 - 6:00 pm	Rainbows (age 5 - 7)	Sennybridge School Hall
	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)

Epynt a'r Wysg Ministry Area Carol Service  
Saturday 12th December at 5pm in Penpont Church



All welcome

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## Upper Usk Valley Rural Alliance Achievements 2015



Update and reprint of area leaflets with history trails



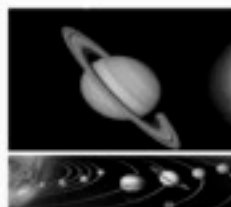
New Trecastle Dark Sky Discovery site at Usk Reservoir



Reopening of Sennybridge public toilets with plans to redevelop to include an info centre



New waymarkers for key footpaths in and around the villages



Dark Sky event at Trecastle with over 120 attendees Planetarium, talks and planet trail.



Beer mats to help area identity and encourage local spending

Sennybridge, Defynnog,  
Crai & Trecastle  
**2015**

## Christmas Events

Sat 5th December 2 - 4:30pm	Children Crafts for Christmas with a tea party, donations of party food would be appreciated	Trecastle Community Hall
Sun 6th Dec 2 - 4pm	Christmas Tree Decorating - 20 trees to decorate so come along to help.	St Cynog's Church, Defynnog
Sat 12th Dec from 2pm	Decorating the Christmas Tree	St David, Llywel
Thurs 17th Dec 7pm	Carols and mince pies, films of local interest and raffle	Neuadd y Plwyf Crai
Sun 20th Dec 6:30 pm	Live nativity and Carol Service	St Ilid's Church, Crai
Fri 25th Dec 9:30 am	Eucharist, St Ilid's Church Crai, to be followed by hot drinks, mince pies and chocolates	St Ilid's Church, Crai
Tues 29th Dec 6:30 pm	Christmas Party	Neuadd y Plwyf Crai

### Epynt a'r Wysg Ministry Area

Why go to church?

Who am I?

Life?

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What about the Bible?

God?

Who was Jesus?

What happens if I pray?

**Trallong Hall on Mondays at 7.30pm  
4th January to 1st February**

## Christmas Services

Sun 6th Dec 6pm	Carol Service	Zoar Chapel, Pentrefelin
Thurs 17th Dec 7pm	Carol Service	St Cynog, Defynnog
Sun 20th Dec 9:30am	Holy Eucharist	Capel Rhydybriw
11 am	Nativity Service	St David, Llywel
2:30 pm	Carol Service	Heol Senni Village Hall
6:30 pm	Nativity Service	St Ilid, Crai
Thurs 24th Dec 2pm	Christmas Service	Saron Chapel, Cwmwysg
6pm	Holy Eucharist with Carols	St Teilo, Llandeilo'r Fân
6:30 pm	Carol Service	Horeb Chapel, Crai
9 pm	Holy Eucharist with Carols	St Mary, Traeanglas
11:50 pm	First Mass of Christmas	St Cynog, Defynnog
Fri 25th Dec 9:30 am	Holy Eucharist with Carols	St Ilid, Crai
11 am	Holy Eucharist with Carols	St David, Llywel
Sun 27th Dec 10 am	Holy Eucharist	Capel Rhydybriw
2pm	Christmas Service with Communion	Ty Newydd, Trecastle
Sun 10th Jan 10 am	Christingle Service	St David, Llywel

Christmas Tree Decorating at Defynnog. We have 20 trees to decorate and oodles of decorations or bring some of your own. Come along on Saturday 5th December from 2pm to 4pm. Seasonal refreshments to tickle your festive palate !

