



The LINK

*Newsletter of the Cwmbbran churches
of the
Gwent Hills & Vales Methodist Circuit*

Summer 2010



From the Manse

Dear Friends,

It seems to me time is speeding up as I feel as if it were just “yesterday” that I wrote the last letter for the Link, but it was in fact more than three months ago!

Indeed, we have now all but completed our first year as a new circuit. The Gwent Hills and Vales is now more or less established, the name which took us so long to come up with now rolls off the tongue with ease, and the new faces we have been encountering are fast becoming old friends.

It has been quite a year! In the midst of it I have felt at times excited, and at other times nervous. At times I have felt exhilarated, and at other times exhausted. But, by the grace of God, we have made the transition and, in my humble opinion, as well as we could have expected.

I am about to go on holiday – a much anticipated break, back to Jamaica after three years. It has come at the opportune time, for I acknowledge that I am tired after the last year of hectic activity. And I thank God that he has commended rest to us – indeed modelled for us the need to rest and “come apart”, both in the creation story where as Creator he rested on the seventh day, and through the example of Jesus who regularly went alone for rest, prayer and recharging his batteries. I have known ministers (and no doubt you have too) who have boasted about not taking holidays for their entire ministry. I am not one of them! I believe rest and relaxation are as

important as hard work – indeed they enable hard and creative work for the Kingdom of God.

So, I will be away from July 22nd to August 13th. During that time, the Rev. Roy Watson (Abertillery) will act as Superintendent and Brian Russell has kindly agreed to make himself available should there be any emergencies in the Cwmbran churches. Liz King will be at the Circuit Office (Llanyrafon) at the usual times.

If you are taking a holiday over the next few weeks, please enjoy it. If you are not, try to slow down a little, and take time to smell the roses as they say. Please remember me and my family in your prayers as we go off to visit friends and family in Jamaica. And may God watch between us until we meet again.

Every blessing,

Cathy

From Upper Cwmbran

C U at U C?

Upper Cwmbran will again provide Saturday afternoon rest, relaxation, repartee* and refreshment from 17 July until the end of August. So we **hope** that you will climb the **fair hill** to **Upper Cwmbran** and that we will c u at U C.

(Sorry, I can't work Llanyrafon in!)

* repartee is posh for chat amongst yourselves whilst you're there – it's the only word I can think of starting with 'r'!

Fairhill News

June 2010

Community Life:

We held the Messy Church training day in March which enthused several of our members. Since then we have had 2 Messy Church sessions which have gone down well with many children (and their parents) coming to the church for the first time. We have another planned for July after which we will review what we need to do next. It is hard work for those involved but we hope it will be fruitful. If you would like to know more or help in any way please contact either Gill Timm or Revd. Cathy Gale.

Property:

Unfortunately we have a major problem in that the render to the walls of the hall/classroom is coming off which will be rather expensive to put right. It seems that despite it only being 9-10 years old we have no recourse to the original contractor so will have to foot the bill ourselves. This means that we have had to put on hold any garden work. Once the walls are fixed, we will have to see what we can then afford to do.

The building continues to be used by the local community for a mixture of events/activities and we hope this will continue.

Worship

We have enjoyed the diversity of new preachers that have led our worship since the GHV circuit began. They have also found our leaflet helpful as it explains a little about how our usual worship runs, the children, and our organist (or none) rota, as well as how to find us!! On the whole we have found it's good to be challenged in how we worship from time to time as it prevents us from becoming too set in our ways.

Church Life:

The Christian Aid week quiz and family fun was well received and a total of £105 was raised towards their work.

Table Talk on Tuesday continues to run throughout the year with a very lively discussion taking place during the run up to the election! We've also considered our response to tragic events such as the recent murders in Cumbria, and looked at paintings with a religious theme. We were about to buy one for the Church when the problem with the wall occurred so that's on hold too.

We are planning to have a social event on New Years' eve which will lead into a short Watchnight service – we hope you will be able to join us, but more details will be sent around a little nearer the time. Before that we will be having our Church Anniversary in September and Harvest Celebrations, which will include a social event on Saturday 9th October. We hope you will be able to join us for that.

As this is the last of our Link editions we hope that our contributions over the years have been of use in keeping all of our friends around Cwmbran informed of our events and news. Please continue to pray for us as we try to find our role in spreading the Good News on this side of Cwmbran.

Jan Jackson
Fairhill leadership Team

Christian Aid @ Llanyrafon

The amount raised for the charity by Llanyrafon church members together with an Anglican friend in an area of Pontnewydd

during Christian Aid week this year was **£1581:68**. Unfortunately I was a little too late in asking the manager of Sainsbury's if we may collect there. He suggested that I write in February next year, so here's hoping that in 2011 we will be able to extend our area of collection.

If anyone in the Cwmbran section of our Methodist Circuit would like to help by collecting in their home area (or possibly outside Sainsbury's) next May, please let me know in good time (i.e. at the beginning of 2011) and I will arrange that you have all you will need (except for the time you give!) Thanks to all who helped raise this year's amount.

Colin Cresswell

Going Abroad? Try our French as she is spoke.

We at the LINK are aware that some of you are intrepid travellers and venture to far-flung shores of places like France or Belgium (especially when Mary organises a trip). It occurred to us that you may not be incredibly fluent in the language of such places, so we offer this brief list of words you may find useful (or perhaps not...)

Foreign

Coup de Grace

Bon

Deux

Cinq

Six

Sept

Huit

Neuf

Cheval

Chat

Oui

English

Lawnmower

Half a sweet

Waterfowl

Failed to float

Stop at once

Become solid

Cereal crop

Quite sufficient

Small spade

Conversation

Half a xxxx

Remember when...

...we published the two items below?

They appeared in December 2006, and we think they are worth repeating.

A Smile

A smile costs nothing, but gives much.

It enriches those who receive, without making poorer those who give.

It takes but a moment, yet the memory of it may last forever. A smile creates happiness in the home, fosters good will in business, and is the sign of friendship.

It brings rest to the weary, cheer to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad, and is nature's best antidote to trouble.

Yet a smile cannot be bought, begged, borrowed or stolen; for it is something of no value to anyone unless it is given away.

*Some people are too tired to give you a smile.
Give them one of yours.*

No one needs a smile so much as he who has none to give.

And perhaps to raise a smile...

In a monastery garden...

Some monks were allowed to speak only once in every four years. At the end of one four-year period, one monk said, "I don't like the porridge we get here." After another four years, another monk said, "I don't like it either." After a further four years the monastery cook said "If I hear any more of this constant complaining, I shall resign!"

News from Hope

Sunday, 20th June was a very special day for Hope. Our Supt. Minister, Rev. Cathy Gale, conducted a Service of Confirmation and Reception into Membership for four of our Ladies

in Hope. The ladies are Brenda Gifford, Beryl Smith, Gwyneth Smith and Muriel Watts. We congratulate and welcome them and wish them every blessing.

There was a time in the old Cwmbran Circuit when it seemed that the majority of the Local Preachers in that Circuit came from Hope. Indeed, that band of Preachers was also a source for Missionaries, Ministers and Ministers wives. Yet, no sooner did we lose a Local Preacher to other callings than another would step up to God's call and fill the gap. Sadly, that is not the case today. Indeed, as those who study the 35 Church Preaching Plan (a challenge to anyone), you will have noticed that another of our Local Preachers has decided to 'sit down'. I refer to Mrs. Patricia Powell. Pat came onto full plan in 1982 and has been a blessing to the band of Preachers, to our pulpits and to our congregations since then. We wish you well Pat and thank you for all your service and commitment.

Speaking of Finishing...

So this is the last of the Cwmbran 'Link' - I feel that this is a shame as it has been a way in which the four Cwmbran Churches kept in close touch and were made aware of one another's news. We never failed to produce a quarterly publication - some short and some long - but always full of news, inspiration and, on times, humour. Some thanks are due to the people who have been responsible over the years for making sure that there has been something to read. There have been the four reporters/editors - Hilary Hopkins, Peter Parry, Jim Mills and Geoff Page who have nagged, cajoled and generally tried to persuade you good folk to produce your contributions to the Newsletter, for which we thank you. A special 'thank you' to Peter and Hilary for their computer skills in making sense of the various contributions but a very special 'thank you' to Jim without whom there would never have been a 'Link'. His commitment to the 'Link' has been outstanding and

no one can ever know the time that he has given to the oversight of the printing and distribution of this very special publication. Thank you, Jim. In each of your churches you are receiving a mini-plan which gives you the preaching plan for your own church. Except for Llanyrafon's, guess who is producing those? Yes, Jim. Again our thanks.

Wordless Prayer.

Teach us, O God, that silent language which says all things. Teach us to remain quiet under thine action and to produce, in our souls that deep and silent prayer, which says nothing and expresses everything; which specifies nothing and includes everything.

Nicholas Grou.

'Go into the world and preach the gospel. Use words if you must.'

Francis of Assisi.

Wedded Bliss

Two young tourists booked into a Quaker guest house in the Lake District. The owner asked "Are you two Friends?" to which came the reply "No, we're married."

Heroic God

A teacher was talking to her young class about God. She asked one small boy "Tommy, who is God?" The lad thought for a few moments and then replied "I think God is the man who saved the Queen."

New words for old tunes

The songs below were written by our former minister, Reverend Dennis D. Sanders. He made singing these words very easy by setting them to two very well-known tunes (OK, very well-known to the over-50s!)

This is to “When Irish Eyes are Smiling”

I have a friend called Jesus
And He means the world to me.
For He took away my blindness
And He gave me eyes to see.
He spoke forgiveness to me
And He took away my shame.
Can you wonder that I love Him
And I praise his glorious name?

He is the friend of sinners
And He turns no one away.
He’s the light upon our darkness,
He’s the sun that makes our day,
He’s the food that keeps us going,
He’s the help that keeps us strong.
Can you wonder that I love Him
And greet Him with a song?

He is there in all our neighbours,
In the people who pass by,
In the man who calls for justice,
In the hungry children’s cry,
In the homeless and the lonely,
In the soul that’s sick with shame.
We can show how much we love Him
By serving in His name.

Revd. D. D. Sanders

And to Beethoven’s “Hymn of Joy”

I believe in God the Father,
I believe in God the Son,
And the gracious Holy Spirit,
The eternal Three in One.

I believe in full salvation
Won by Christ upon the tree.
I believe God raised up Jesus
And He ever lives for me.

I believe that He will keep me
Day by day through His great Grace.
I believe that He will guide me
To my own appointed place,
And He never will forsake me,
But surround me with His care,
And whatever life holds for me
He will constantly be there.

Praise to God the great and glorious,
Praise to Christ the living Son,
Praise to power immense, victorious,
Praise the ever-present one.
He will never sleep nor slumber
But will always be the same.
His great love endures for ever –
Praise and glorify His name.

Rev. D. D. Sanders

Letter Home to Mum

Our Camp Leader told us to write to our parents in case you saw the flood on TV and got worried. We are okay. Only one of our tents and 2 sleeping bags got washed away. Luckily, none of us got drowned as we were all up on the mountain looking for Adam when it happened.

Oh yes, please call Adam's mother and tell her he is okay. He can't write because of the cast. I got to ride in one of the search and rescue Jeeps. It was great. We never would have found Adam in the dark if it hadn't been for the lightning. Leader Ted got mad at Adam for going on a hike alone without telling anyone. Adam said he did tell him but it was during the fire so he probably didn't hear him. Did you know that if you put gas on a fire, the gas will blow up? The wet wood didn't burn, but one of the tents did and also some of our clothes. Matthew is going to look weird until his hair grows back.

We will be home on Saturday if Leader Ted gets the bus fixed. It wasn't his fault about the crash. The brakes worked okay when we left. Leader Ted said that with a bus that old, you have to expect something to break down; that's probably why he can't get insurance. We think it's a super bus. He doesn't care if we get it dirty, and if it's hot, sometimes he lets us ride on the bumpers. It gets pretty hot with 45 people in a bus made for 24. He let us take turns riding in the trailer until the policeman stopped and talked to us. Don't worry, Leader Ted is a good driver. In fact he is teaching Horace how to drive on the mountain roads where there aren't any cops. All we ever see up there are huge logging trucks

This morning all of the guys were diving off the rocks and swimming out to the rapids. Leader Ted wouldn't let me go because I can't swim, and Adam was afraid he would sink because of his cast (it's concrete because we didn't have any plaster), so he let us take the canoe out. It was

great. You can still see some of the trees under the water from the flood.

Leader Ted isn't crabby like some camp leaders. He didn't even get mad about the life jackets. He has to spend a lot of time working on the bus so we are trying not to cause him any trouble.

Guess what? We have all passed our first aid merit badges. When Andrew dived into the lake and cut his arm, we all got to see how a tourniquet works. Steve and I threw up, but Leader Ted said it was probably just food poisoning from the left-over chicken. He said they got sick that way with food they ate in prison. I'm so glad he got out and became our leader. He said he worked out how to get things done better while he was doing his time.

I have to go now. We are going to town to post our letters and buy some more beer and ammo. Don't worry about anything – we are fine.

Your loving son
Orson Kart

The Poem

I knelt to pray, but not for long – I had too much to do.
I had to hurry and get to work for bills would soon be due.
So I knelt and said a hurried prayer and jumped up off my knees.
My Christian duty was now done, my soul could rest at ease.....

All day long I had no time to spread a word of cheer
No time to speak of Christ to friends – they'd laugh at me, I'd fear.
No time, no time, too much to do, that was my constant cry,
No time to give to souls in need but at last the time, the time to die

I went before the Lord, I came, I stood with downcast eyes.
For in his hands God held a book; it was the book of life.
God looked into his book and said "Your name I cannot find
I once was going to write it down... but never found the time."

THE BRICK

A young and successful executive was travelling down a neighbourhood street, going a bit too fast in his new Jaguar. He was watching for kids darting out from between parked cars and slowed down when he thought he saw something. As his car passed, no children appeared. Instead, a brick smashed into the Jag's side door! He slammed on the brakes and backed the Jag back to the spot where the brick had been thrown. The angry driver then jumped out of the car, grabbed the nearest kid and pushed him up against a parked car shouting, 'What was that all about and who are you? Just what the heck are you doing? That's a new car and that brick you threw is going to cost a lot of money. Why did you do it?' The young boy was apologetic. 'Please, mister...please, I'm sorry but I didn't know what else to do,' He pleaded. 'I threw the brick because no one else would stop...' With tears dripping down his face and off his chin, the youth pointed to a spot just around a parked car. 'It's my brother,' he said 'He rolled off the curb and fell out of his wheelchair and I can't lift him up.'

Now sobbing, the boy asked the stunned executive, 'Would you please help me get him back into his wheelchair? He's hurt and he's too heavy for me.'

Moved beyond words, the driver tried to swallow the rapidly swelling lump in his throat. He hurriedly lifted the handicapped boy back into the wheelchair, then took out a linen handkerchief and dabbed at the fresh scrapes and cuts. A quick look told him everything was going to be okay. 'Thank you and may God bless you,' the grateful child told the stranger. Too shook up for words, the man simply watched the boy push his wheelchair-bound brother down the footpath toward their home.

It was a long, slow walk back to the Jaguar. The damage was very noticeable, but the driver never bothered to repair the dented side door. He kept the dent there to remind him of this message:

'Don't go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at you to get your attention!'

God whispers in our souls and speaks to our hearts. Sometimes when we don't have time to listen, He has to throw a brick at us. It's our choice to listen or not.

Thought for the Day:

If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it. If He had a wallet, your photo would be in it.

He sends you flowers every spring. He sends you a sunrise every morning. Face it, friend - He is crazy about you!

God didn't promise days without pain, laughter without sorrow, sun without rain, but He did promise strength for the day, comfort for the tears, and light for the way.

If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it.

THE LINK

As this is the final issue of **The Link** we feel that we could not let it pass without expressing our personal appreciation of all those who, over many years, have devoted so much time and effort to its production. The news items, reports, jokes, poems, thoughtful quotations and allegorical homilies have always been refreshingly stimulating. Not least, of course, has been the letter '**From the Manse**' written by succeeding ministers and latterly by Cathy. These have always been thought-provoking and inspirational and have gently guided our minds to understanding why we are 'of the church' at Llanyrafon. We are sure that everyone will miss 'The Link'.

Peter and Kay Morton

End of the Chain

As mentioned elsewhere, this edition is the last LINK. The four editors wish to thank all those who provided us with items for inclusion in LINK – we've even had items from Canada! – and all those who took the time to read each issue. We hope you have had a smile and also been given food for thought on occasions. Thanks also to those who have expressed their appreciation of our efforts.

Fairhill's Future Features!

Church Anniversary
Sunday 12th September
10.55am

Harvest @ Fairhill

**Saturday 9th October
Social and Supper
6.30pm**

Harvest Thanksgiving
Sunday 10th @ 10.55am