

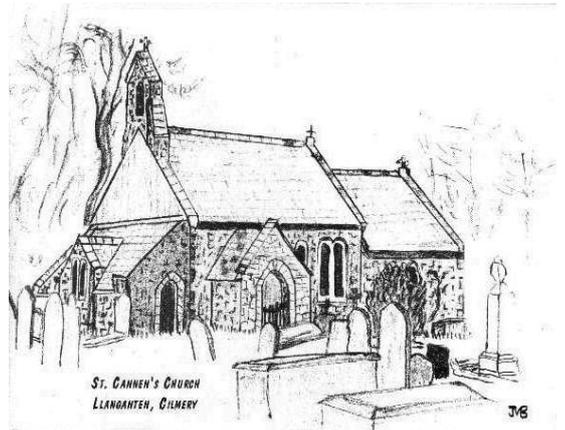
THE IRFON & WYE MINISTRY AREA

**THE PARISH OF THE IRFON VALLEY  
ANNUAL VESTRY REPORT FOR YEAR 2019**



**St. Afan's Church, Llanfechan**

**St. Cannen's Church, Llanganten**



**St. Cadmarch's Church, Llangammarch Wells**



**The Parish Church, Llanlleonfel**



## **Benefice Wardens Report 2019**

At the end of 2018 our Vicar wrote that it had been a year of “ups and downs.” I believe the same could be said for 2019.

It has been a very full year. In January we were informed that our Vicar (Revd Petra Beresford-Webb) was leaving us to move to Knighton. Thence began the need for a Parish Profile, for which a Ministry Area small working group was formed by the Archdeacon of Brecon (The Venerable Alan Jevons) in June and completed in September 2019. Benefice Warden Mrs Jacquie Brown was the Irfon Valley representative for the group and co-ordinated the Irfon Valley Parish reports from our four churches with photographs to give a flavour of our parish for applicants. The profile can be seen on the Swansea and Brecon Diocese webpage, or located via the Irfon Ministry Area webpage (see the URL at the top of this page). As Builth Wells was also without an Incumbent, it was decided that two Vicars would be sought: one for the Vicarage in Builth Wells and the other to reside in a new Vicarage to be built in Llanwrtyd Wells. There was some discussion about the Irfon Valley Parish being divided up, but this was later changed and agreed that the Blaenau Irfon and Irfon Valley Parishes would remain together, and the Upper Wye Parish would join the Buallt Benefice. The two new priests when in post will work closely together across the area. We are pleased to say that Canon Mark Beaton (Area Dean) has accepted the post of Priest in Charge of the Buallt Group and will be moving to Builth Wells Vicarage in 2020 and we very much hope that a new Vicar will be found for our two parishes in the near future.

In the meantime, everyone has worked hard across the Parish to keep the churches in good order and St Cadmarch's Church (Llangammarch) were successful in obtaining a grant in 2019 to clean the East window (originally built in 1919) for their Centenary Year. A delightful concert was held in October to a full church when distinguished artistes and pupils from Irfon Valley School took part, organised by Simon and Trudie Fraser. The church organ also benefitted from much needed repairs with thanks to the volunteers who assisted.

We are very grateful for regular Eucharist services across the Parish which have been led by a team of clerics who have travelled sometimes in terrible weather to ensure our services continue. Morning Worship and Family services have been taken by a team of Ministry Area Lay Worship Leaders of which we have two leaders in the Irfon Valley Parish living in Cilmerly, but we would be delighted if anyone would like information on how to join this Team. If so, please do not hesitate to contact one of the Benefice Wardens for further details.

All four churches have joined up as a parish for special services and festivals including Easter, Harvest and Christmas. A Lambing and All Souls Services were held at Llanfechan. The Easter Day Dawn Service held on the Epynt at 6.30 a.m. was co-ordinated by Jacquie Brown with thanks to Carol Jones and a range of readers (as well as of course the trumpet played by Simon Fraser). It was then followed by a hearty breakfast in Llangammarch Village Hall. The Easter group Service and farewell to our Vicar was held later that morning at St James (Llanwrtyd). The Ministry Area Remembrance Service in November was also held in Llanwrtyd Wells.

Richard Hussey and myself would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Wardens, organists and officers of various committees, including the Treasurer and finance group, the 200 Club, Fundraising Committee, Dee Marshall for the brilliant webpage and last but definitely not least Melanie Hardwick as Secretary, who works tirelessly to keep us informed, as well as organising our meetings and minutes.

Thank you for all your sterling work in 2019, for keeping us ticking over and making our churches so welcoming and in such good repair.

**Jacque Brown (Benefice Warden)**



## **IRFON VALLEY FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE REPORT**

We held a variety of fundraising events in 2019 as follows:-

- Walk in Garth around Garth House Lake by kind permission of the Wilson Family followed by Tea in Garth Hall (June)
- Walk and Tea at Tynllwyni, Cefngorwydd by kind permission of Dee & Giles Marshall (July)
- Joint Fete for the Irfon Valley Churches in Garth Hall (July)
- Concert at Llangammarch Church - this was a joint fundraising event for the Llangammarch Organ/Window Restoration and the IV Parish. (September)

The Irfon Valley 200 Club continues to go well with 4 draws taking place during the year. We decided to combine the draws with Coffee mornings so we held these in Llangammarch and Garth Halls which went well.

I would like to thank all those who support our fundraising events and thanks also to my faithful Fundraising Committee Members for their continued enthusiasm and support.

**Melanie Hardwick**  
**On behalf of the IV Fundraising Committee**



## ST. AFAN'S CHURCH, LLANFECHAN ANNUAL REPORT

In February 2019 we lost a faithful member of Llanfechan's small and dedicated congregation, Miss Mary Richards. Mary was also our organist and the backbone of our little church. Her funeral took place at EOD Beulah where her family were buried, and it was fitting to see the church so full to say a fond farewell to her.

We also said farewell to Rev Petra at Easter who left the Parish to take up a new post in Knighton. We wish her well in her new Parish.

Llanfechan continues with its 6 services for the year but sadly in 2019 we only had one service which was Eucharist.

We held a Christingle Service, a lambing service and also a Carol Service. We hosted one of the Irfon Valley Parishes Harvest Festivals which was in conjunction with Llanganten Church followed by Refreshments in church.

I would like to thank Mrs Gaynor Jones who now plays the organ for us.

We sadly had 2 funerals at Llanfechan in 2019. Mrs Annie Richards of Haulfryn Cilmerly Farm in May and in November Mr Stan Jones of Cilmerly Farm. We also had an internment of ashes of the Late Elma and Avril Grinly.

The churchyard has been well maintained and cut and my very grateful thanks and appreciation goes to Mr Bob Hardwick (My dad) for doing this. I would also like to thank all those who help with cutting/strimming and other maintenance which I also appreciate. The churchyard is a credit to them all.

Some maintenance works to the Church need to be done and these will be addressed as soon as it is possible.

**Melanie Hardwick**  
**Church Warden**  
**St. Afan's Llanfechan**



### **ST. CANNEN'S CHURCH, LLANGANTEN, CILMERY**

In April 2019 we were sad to say farewell to our Vicar Revd Petra. However she returned to Llanwrtyd Wells for the Bog Snorkelling in Llanwrtyd Wells in August when she introduced her new husband to everyone. We wish them both well in their new life and parish at Knighton and district.

Rev John Stocker and Revs Nigel and Carolyn Hall have taken the majority of our Holy Communion services on the third Sunday of each month with some services taken by Rev Andrew Tweed and Rev Paul Tarling. We are so grateful for their support throughout the year.

Worship Leaders, Jacquie Brown and Ian Baxter-Wild, have led the first Sunday Morning Prayer services throughout the year and have covered a variety of themes and subjects, culminating in our Advent Service being held in the Village Hall in December on the theme of "A-Bun-Dance!" We usually enjoy refreshments after our services. We are so grateful to our loyal organist Gaynor Jones.

Numbers for regular worship at Sunday services have mostly stayed the same. Our young members, Rhiannon and Thomas Richards have assisted us with some of our Family Services. Unfortunately, we have said farewell to four friends this year: Mrs Megan Richards (of Noyadd Farm) and our former organist and Gaynor's mother Annie Richards followed shortly after by Gaynor's husband Stan Jones (of Cilmery Farm). Ken Richards of Gelligyflog also passed away. Two other burials also took place. We still miss our former lay reader David White who passed away in December 2018. There were no baptisms at Llanganten in 2019.

Once again, our Churchyard has looked stunning throughout the year thanks to our Warden Richard Davies and the Churchyard Team for keeping the Church grounds in such good order.

There were no Christmas or Easter Day services held in St Cannen's in 2019. We joined together for Harvest Festival at Llanfechan in October. The Advent Carol Service led by Ian Baxter-Wild took place in the village hall on the third Sunday in December with refreshments served afterwards. Carols in the Prince Llywelyn Inn arranged by Jacquie Brown was well attended on Christmas Eve. Thanks are extended to Simon and Alison for their warm welcome. We have supported Irfon Valley Parish joint fundraising events over the year, but unfortunately the Pamper Evening planned to take place in Cilmery in March could not be held in 2019 due to a clash of dates,

We have some urgent repairs to be carried out to the Church fabric in 2020.

We are doing our best to keep the Church and its activities running during the Interregnum, but we sincerely hope a new Vicar will be found to lead us forward soon.

**Jacquie Brown, Warden**



## LLANLLEONFEL CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT

Services have continued on the usual pattern on the first Sunday of the month. Through the interregnum we have been lucky to have Andrew Tweed to take Eucharist. There has been an odd Sunday that all parishioners were away and the service had to be cancelled.

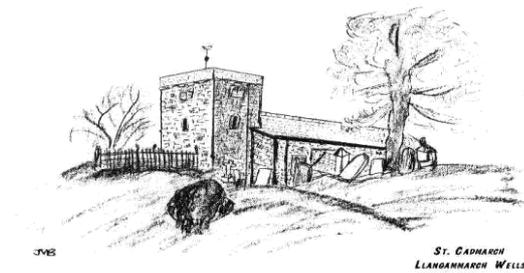
Due to the churches Wesley connection we have had organised trips call to have a look around the church and listen to short talks on Charles and John Wesley.

In June we held a Garth walk and tea, all enjoyed a walk around Garth House Lake and back to the village hall for tea.

This year we managed to engage a contractor to cut the churchyard which was a big improvement. This was paid for by private donations.

There have been no major problems with the building although the ceiling may require further work to the plastering to maintain safety.

**Chris Fairhurst**  
**Warden**



## ST. CADMARCH'S CHURCH, LLANGAMMARCH ANNUAL REPORT

The year was marked by the departure of Rev Petra Beresford who had been Priest for the Irfon and Upper Wye benefice for over 3 years. She has moved on to be Priest in Charge in the Knighton parish and she took her last service in the benefice on Easter Sunday.

Since then Canon Mark Beaton Area Dean has been responsible for overseeing the Interregnum.

### **Services**

These have been advertised through the Benefice website and we are grateful to Dee Marshall for keeping this updated.

Throughout this year we have maintained our pattern of one Eucharist service and one Morning Worship a month. The congregation has remained small, but there has been an increase in the average attendance and we have been very pleased to welcome 5 new regular worshippers in the course of the year.

We have been fortunate to have had a number of retired clergy supporting us with Eucharist services including Rev Andrew Tweed, Rev Nigel Hall and Rev Caroline Hall and Rev John Stocker

Easter celebrations included the customary Easter Sunrise service on the Epyynt, which this year was led by Lay Reader Carol Jones and Worship Leader Jacquie Brown. This service was very well attended on a stunning Easter morning and was followed by breakfast in the Alexandra Hall.

This year we joined with Llanleonfel church to celebrate our Harvest. Rev John Stocker officiated at the service in October which took place in Llanleonfel church. The harvest lunch took place in Garth Hall. Rather disappointingly this service was attended by very few people.

This year we held a Christmas Eve service at 6pm which was conducted by Rev Nigel Hall and which was well attended.

We are grateful to Carol Jones and Yvonne Parker Lay Readers and to Worship Leaders, Rob Thomas, Jacquie Brown and Mike Perrett for leading our Morning Worship services throughout the year and to Mary Reynolds for her commitment as Eucharist Assistant.

Some church members in the community who find it physically difficult to attend church continue receiving communion at home. We are grateful to Ann Stocker and Yvonne Parker who enable this to happen.

We have had no baptisms or confirmations this year.

There was one wedding in August 2019 between Adrian Davies and Sara Davies at which Rev Philip Morris officiated.

There were three funerals held in the church this year two of which (Susan Price and Ann Gerrard) were conducted by Rev Philip Morris. The other for Annette Brown was conducted by Rev Lucyann Ashdown.

Susan Price was buried in her family grave and Annette Brown's ashes were interred.

There was also one burial in the churchyard this year of Cledwyn Davies at which the Minister Brian Reardon officiated.

### **Church Maintenance**

With a small congregation it is an increasing challenge to maintain the fabric of the church.

We are grateful to Giles Marshall for keeping a check on maintenance and ensuring the overhead lights and heating are functioning.

Following the Quinquennial Inspection of the fabric of the church which was received in December 2018 we have noted the work that needs attention.

We have cleared the guttering and rainwater goods and repair work to guttering is in progress.

Some discussion took place in the PCC about investigating the possibility of installing a toilet in the church and this idea is being explored. However there are now immediate issues about water coming into the tower space so this needs to be attended to as a priority. Again this is being investigated.

Thanks go to all those who help to keep the church clean and the brass polished.

We are grateful to Simon Fraser for playing the organ regularly.

A major project in 2019 was to clean the east window in St Cadmarch's and to renovate the church organ. Both of these projects were achieved with grant assistance from the Powys War Memorial Fund and with generous donations from the community including a very large donation from the family of Susan Price following her funeral.

We are very grateful to volunteers who assisted in the renovation project and also to the children from Garth School who became involved in the project under the direction of Simon Fraser.

A concert took place on September 20<sup>th</sup> 2019 to celebrate the completion of the projects and to commemorate those who had lost their lives in past conflicts.

The organ featured prominently in the concert but also local singer Shelley Hughes and a choir of pupils from Irfon Valley School took part. The church was full and it was a most memorable occasion. Thanks to all who supported this event in any way.

The churchyard continues to be maintained magnificently through the efforts of a group of volunteers and the appearance of the churchyard is greatly admired and valued by everyone in the community.

**Trudie Jordan**  
**Warden**

## **Centenary Project**

### **St Cadmarch's Organ restoration and the Cleaning of the East Window**

St Cadmarch's church in Llangammarch was built during the Great War 1914 - 1918. The organ made by Vowles, a reputable maker, was dedicated with a recital on August 14th 1918 and the east window made by Horace Wilkinson was dedicated as a Memorial Window in 192.

The organ has been in need of restoration work for some time and the fundraising endeavours to repair it began in 2018.

In 2019 with funding from the Powys War Memorial Project and helped by very generous donations from the community we were able to engage professional conservators to clean the East window and organ restorers to refurbish the organ. Local volunteers assisted in cleaning the organ.

The culmination of the project was a special concert to celebrate the renovations. A packed audience was treated to a wonderful and varied programme of music. Organist Aeron Preston played solos showing off the improved range and richness of the organ. He was joined by cellist Jan Joris Boon with duets for organ and piano with cello. There were songs sung beautifully by Llangammarch contralto Shelley Hughes and the Irfon Valley School choir.

The programme included two songs by a famous local composer John Price, Beulah who was busy composing and conducting one hundred years ago. "Oh that I had Wings" was sung by the choir and accompanied by a string quartet. Shelley and Aeron sang the duet "Cradle Song".

A memorial piece entitled "East Window" specially composed by Simon Fraser for the occasion featured handbells, organ, wind machine and lastly voices, with the children intoning the names of the fallen from different parts of the church.

There was a Souvenir Programme, copies of which are still available in St Cadmarch's.

The Centenary Project also included a new oak interpretation lectern for the church and a book of photographs showing close-up details of the remarkable stained glass, newly cleaned to its original brightness.

### **Simon Fraser**

**Photograph of the Window Restoration**



**Photograph of the Organ Restoration**



**Some Photo's of Parish Services and Activities in 2019**



**Carol Service at Llanfechan (Dec 2019)**



**Messy Easter 2019 (Easter Saturday 2019 in St. James Llanwrtyd)**



**Rev. Petra's Last Service at Llanganten Church, Holy Week 2019**



**Lambing Service at Llanfechan Church (April 2019)**



**Garth Walk around Garth House Lake (June 2019)**



**Rev. Petra's Leaving Lunch – Easter Sunday (April 2019)**