

Clychau'r Cwm

Grawys Lent

2007



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Editor's Letter

Probably the thing everyone wants to know is how we got on in Hong Kong. I'm afraid there is no definite answer yet. The important thing is for us to think seriously about the future of the church because our three churches do have a future. Wherever our future lies, Akole, Rhys and I will eventually move on and that is likely to be in the next two years. That doesn't mean that Abergorlech, Brechfa and Llanfihangel will be without a priest but the vicar will probably not live in Brechfa. The main thing is that you won't be abandoned or closed down. We need to start working now to prepare for the future. We need to start cooperating with the churches around us now.

The truth is that the future of the church is in your hands, the hands of the community and congregation. The vicar can set the tone and help the church on its way but the people who do evangelism and mission are the congregations. It is kind acts and words of love and faith that attract people to the faith. Everyone needs to know the basis of the Christian faith in order to tell others about it. Thoughtless, unkind and selfish acts and words put people off the church. We are ambassadors for Christ, and like ambassadors our words need to be carefully thought out before we say them out loud. When people visit our church for Christmas, Easter, Harvest, weddings and funerals we need to remember that they are our honoured guests. We must not complain if we think they are just using the church, aren't joining in or that they are not putting enough in the collection. We need to be generous and giving just like Jesus was.

It is too easy to become depressed but the Bishop and Archdeacon are trying very hard to think of ways that this group can have a bright future. Uncertainty is always difficult - and it is difficult for Akole, Rhys, Enfy and myself. So let's all look forward with hope.

The Vicar



Diary

Mawrth 11 March

Grawys 3 Lent

9:45am	Abergorlech	Cymun/Communion
11:00am	Brechfa	Cymun/Communion
2:30pm	Llanfihangel	Gosber/Evening Prayer

Monday

10:00am Clergy Chapter and quiet day

Tuesday

7:00pm The Rectory Prayer Group

Wednesday

6:30pm The Rectory Lent Group

Nos Wener/Friday

8:00pm	Abergorlech Hall	Hall Committee
9:00pm	Abergorelch	Cwmplyn/Compline

Mawrth 18 March

Grawys 4 Sul Y Fam/Lent 4 Mothering Sunday

11:00am	Brechfa	Cymun Y Teulu/Family Communion
2:30pm	Llanfihangel	Cymun/Communion
6:30pm	Abergorlech	Cymun

Tuesday

7:00pm The Rectory Prayer Group

Wednesday

6:30pm The Rectory Lent Group

Nos Wener/Friday

8:00pm	Abergorelch	Cwmplyn/Compline
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Mawrth 25 March
Sul Y Dioddefaint/Passion Sunday

9:45am	Abergorlech	Cymun/Communion
11:00am	Brechfa	Cymun/Communion
6:30pm	Llanfihangel	Taizé

Tuesday

7:00pm	The Rectory	Prayer Group
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Wednesday

6:30pm	The Rectory	Lent Group
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Nos Wener/Friday

8:00pm	Abergorelch	Cwmplyn/Compline
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Dydd Sadwrn/Saturday

Gift day in Brechfa Church

Ebrill 1 April
Sul Y Blodau/Palm Sunday

9:30am	Llanfihangel	Cymun/Communion
11:00am	Brechfa	Cymun/Communion
	(Start with a procession from the Church Hall)	
2:30pm	Llanfihangel	Myfyrdod/Meditation
Evening	Deanary Evensong details to follow	

Tuesday

7:00pm	The Rectory	Prayer Group
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Wednesday

6:30pm	The Rectory	Lent Group
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Dydd Iau Cablyd/Maundy Thursday

Chrism Mass in the Cathedral

6:30pm	Brechfa	Cymun/Communion
8:00pm	Llanfihangel	Cymun/Communion

Dydd Gwener Y Groglith/Good Friday

10am	Abergorlech	Rhagcymundeb/Antecommunion
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Children's Workshop to be arranged.

2:00pm Brechfa Gwasanaeth/Service
followed by hot cross buns in the Church Hall.

Nos Sadwrn/Saturday

8:00pm Llanfihangel Noswyl Y Pasg a Chymun
/Easter Vigil and communion

***Ebrill 8 April
Pasg / Easter***

8:00am Brechfa Cymun
9:45am Abergorlech Cymun/Communion
11:00am Brechfa Cymun Y Teulu/Family Communion
2:30pm Llanfihangel Cymun/Communion

***Ebrill 15 April
Pasg 2 Easter***

11:00am Brechfa Cymun Y Teulu/Family Communion
2:30pm Llanfihangel Cymun/Communion
3:30pm Llanfihangel Possible time for Annual Vestry
6:30pm Abergorlech Cymun

Tuesday 17th

8:00pm Abergorlech Annual Vestry

Friday 20th

7:30pm Brechfa Church Hall Brechfa Annual Vestry

***Ebrill 22 April
Pasg 3 Easter***

9:45am Abergorlech Cymun/Communion
11:00am Brechfa Cymun/Communion
2:30pm Llanfihangel Gosber

Tuesday

7:00pm The Rectory Prayer Group

Nos Wener

7:30yh Neuadd Abergorlech Drama

Ebrill 29 April

Pasg 4 Easter

9:45am	Abergorlech	Boreol Weddi/Morning Prayer
11:00am	Brechfa	Cymun/Communion
2:30pm	Llanfihangel	Cymmun/Communion.

Ystlysywyr/Sidespersons

04-Feb	Meuris Thomas and Aeres Lewis
11-Feb	Nancy Davies and Christine Hoare
18-Feb	Anita Davies and Isabel Philips
25-Feb	Jeannette Nock and Joan Jones
04-Mar	Lillian Jones and Rosie Carmichael
11-Mar	Iris Lenny and Ceinwen Johnson
18-Mar	John Price and Isabel Phillips
25-Mar	Angela/Nigel/Mark Phillips and Clive Hoare
01-Apr	Roger Nock and Dilwyn Davies
08-Apr	Rosie Carmichael and Peter Winchester
15-Apr	Cristine Hoare and Mary Jones
22-Apr	Helen Daniels and Audrey Dyer
29-Apr	Jeanette Nock and Domenic Carmichael
06-May	Meuris Thomas and Aeres Lewis
13-May	Nancy Davies and Christine Hoare

Brechfa.

*Eglwys St Teilo - Church.
There will be a Gift Day -
Diwrnod Eusen - on -
Saturday March 31st with
Refreshments in The Hall
Everyone welcome.*

Contacts

Church Officers

Priest in Charge	Gerry Sykes	01267 202389
Deacon	Lynn Chambers	01267 223052
Reader	Clive Hoare	01267 202479

Abergorlech

Church Wardens	Betty Thomas Nadine Shepherd
Secretary	Arwyn Thomas
Treasurer	D. Haydn Davies

Brechfa

Church Wardens	Roger Nock Ceinwen Johnson
Secretary	Ian Phillips
Treasurer	Ceinwen Johnson

Llanfihangel

Church Wardens	John Jones Caroline Evans
Secretary	Sheila Joynson
Treasurer	Iris Adamson

Clychau'r Cwm News

Please contact Yvonne Thomas (01267 202216) with Gwernogle and Llanfihangel News and David Haydn Davies (01558 685649) with Abergorlech News.

Other contacts

If there are other contact details or numbers people would like included in Clychau'r Cwm please let me know.

The Vicar

I have equipment for photocopying and laser printing (10p), colour laser printing (75p), spiral binding (50p) and laminating (A4 50p, A3 £1.00).



Community News

Obituaries

Edith Thomas

Edith was born on 22 January 1922 at Panterewig Farm, Felingwm. She has 3 brothers Cyril who died before her, Glanville and Ronald and one sister, Mary. Because her date of birth was 22.1.22 she had problems filling in forms and had to explain that she really was born on the 22nd day of the 22nd year.

Edith and Dewi met at a Christmas whist drive in Felingwm and they had to kiss under the mistletoe. Edith married Dewi in September 1947 at St John's Felingwm, the service started at 9am, and Edith fainted. Fainting must have been a good start because Edith and Dewi were devoted to each other; next year would have been their 60th wedding anniversary. Edith's main interest in life was supporting Dewi in all his many activities.

When Dewi sold his business Edith and her friend Gwyneth went into business selling clothes. She really enjoyed this time because she was interested in clothes and was working with her friend.

Edith was a great support to the church and she gave the sanctuary carpet. In fact Edith supported all church and village activities.

We all know that Edith has been ill for a long time with arthritis and Parkinson's, and she fought against them for a long time, never complaining even though she was in a great deal of pain.

On Edith and Dewi's behalf I would like to thank Sarah Selby and the team of carers who looked after Edith in Brechfa, the staff at Brynderwyn and especially Julie, Lorna and Mr and Mrs Bagley. Thanks also to all who helped Edith in Brechfa; especially Betty Noddfa, Glenys, Derek, Joyce and Meiri-on who helped look after them and those who visited her in Brynderwyn. We should also thank Edna for all the work she has done for Edith and Dewi.

Abergrlech

Llongyfarchiadau

I ddau sydd mor annwyl i ni sef Dylan ag Anwen. Fe ymynwyd y ddau mewn glân briodas ar y Sadwrn cyn y Nadolig. Dymunwn yn dda i'r ddau, a hefyd rydyn ni yn falch iawn ei bod wedi penderfynnu byw yn ein mysg ym Mhenybanc, cartref genedigol Dylan, a hyfryd ydi meddwl am ei cyfeillgarwch yn ein cymuned ni, oherwydd mae y ddau yn boblogaidd iawn yn enwedig ym myd amaethyddiaeth. Mae Dylan wedi bod yŵ ran o Eglwys Dewi Sant er ei enedigaeth, ac yn awr wedi dod ai briod brydferth i Eglwys Dewi Sant ac i'r ardal arbennig yma. Rydyn ni fel cymuned yn dymuno yn dda i'r ddau, a gobeithio y bydd Duw yn ei bendithio a iechyd a phob dymuniad da yn eu bywyd. Byddwn yn edrych ymlaen i'ch cwmni yn fawr iawn yn yr amser i ddyfod. Hir oes a llwyddiant i'r ddau ohonoch a hefyd i "deulu bach newydd" Penybanc yn y dyfodol.

Congratulations

To two wonderful people, namely Dylan and Anwen. They got married just before Christmas and are now living at Penybanc. We are so proud of them, and so pleased that they will be living amongst us, and taking part in all our community events. They are both well known to us, Dylan having been a member of Eglwys Dewi Sant since a child and now bringing his beautiful bride along with him to Eglwys Dewi Sant has certainly made us "young" ones so proud of them. May their lives be blessed with good health, wealth and "little ones" in the future. Pob bendith o waelod ein calon i chi Dylan ag Anwen.



Newid Cartref

Nawr wedi dod i oedran ymdeol mae Arwyn, ein ysgrifenydd yn Eglwys Dewi Sant, a Betty, sydd yn warden y Ficer, wedi symud o Benybanc i Llety'r Bugail yn Nantgaredig. Dwn i ddim sut mae Arwyn yn medru cyfarwyddo peidio â cheisio chwilio am y stâr i fynd i'r gwely, oherwydd mae yn byw mewn "bungalow" newydd hyfryd yn awr, a daellaf fod y ddau eisioes yn hoff iawn iawn o'u cartref newydd. Pob bendith ar y ddau ohonoch, a hyfryd yw nodi fod y ddau yn mynd i barhau i ddod i Eglwys Dewi Sant, yr eglwys fach sydd yn agos agos iawn at eu calonnau, ag wedi bod yn Drigfan Grefyddol i sawl cenhedlaeth o deulu Penybanc yn y gorffennol.

Carol Service

Our joint Christmas Carol Service with Capel Newydd was held on December 17th last at St. David's Church. It was well attended with the children in good voice, which really made us proud to be at Church that evening. Really, it makes one think of the non-church goers, what they are missing. However, the Carol Service was a wonderful introduction to the Birthday of our Saviour and friend the Baby Jesus on Christmas Day. The collection at the service went to S.P.C.K. (The Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge). Do invite your friends to the next Christmas Carol Service which will be held at the Chapel, the date to be arranged in December.

Obituaries

Many of our friends have passed on lately and the medium of this little booklet "Clychaur Cwm" would never be adequate to record our sorrow and our sympathy to the families involved. "Ti a wybod beth ddywed fy ngalon" is a well known quote that really says everything that is "You know what my heart says", but to Welsh Learners amongst us you know that the Welsh Words portray somehow, much deeper feelings of sincerity and sympathy. I know that all the readers of Clychau'r Cwm join with me in expressing our sympathy and may God receive our friends into his beloved eternal kingdom.

Our Church P.C.C.

The Parochial Church Council met on Thursday evening at the Village Hall. The two main items on the agenda were the forthcoming Drama Evening and the Flower Festival. Look out folks for the posters. These are going to be two grand occasions in our annual diary. Remember last year's Drama

Evening, people came from as far as Cardiff and Bridgend to be with us, and what an enjoyable evening. Tickets will be amongst us soon, so be sure to get one before they will all be sold. Certainly I have booked my seat already. Whether you be a Welsh speaker or English, German, Italian or any other speaker you could never be disappointed with the plays that are presented in our Village Hall. Yes, they are Welsh plays, and with so many Welsh learners amongst us we can't help but have a wonderful evening.

Then we look forward to our Flower Festival at the end of May. It is now 10 years since we put on a Flower Festival in Abergorlech. Remember that one? With the Church adorned with flowers, with all the windows giving each a different story. Well guess what's coming. Also at the Village Hall we will be showing masses of our photographs of by-gone days when the village had so many crafts people. Some of the machinery they used will also be shown, and of course by this time you will want a cup of tea. Yes, that will be available also, and the ladies have told me that there will also be "Welsh Cakes". The jam production lines are busy, the famous Abergorlech Cake Stall (and we know how popular that stall is) will be there for your delicacies, and to round off the same week-end there will be a grand "Gymanfa Fodern" in other words a grand Modern Singing Festival for your enjoyment.

TIP-IT Match

This much awaited match took place at the Black Lion, Abergorlech on Friday February 23rd. Eleven teams took part, and the competition was of a high standard. It was organised by Guy and Michelle who donated all the prizes for the match and for the raffle, the proceeds going to the Village Hall Fund. After a very competitive encounter the final winners were Eirian George, Dylan and Anwen Thomas with Gary Jones, Donald Davies and Nancy Evans coming worthy runners-up. The Hall Committee wish to thank everyone who contributed to the success of the evening when £140 was raised for the Village Hall Funds.

D.H.Davies



Drama Abergorlech

Mis Ebrill 27 yn Neuadd Abergorlech am 7:30 yh.

7:30pm in Abergorlech Church Hall on April 27th.

Abergorlech Church Annual Vestry

8:00pm on 17th April in Abergorlech Hall.

Abergorlech Church Flower Festival

May 26th to 28th more details to follow in the next issue.



Ysgol Brechfa School

Plant Sale

19th of May in Brechfa Church Hall

If you have spare seedlings, cuttings or plants please bring them. This is an important fund raiser for the school.

Brechfa Annual Vestry

7:30pm Friday April 20th at 7:30pm.

Dydd Gŵyl Dewi

Heddiw roedden ni yn dathlu Dydd Gŵyl Dewi. Aethon ni i Gaerfyrddin i ganu a dawnsio yn Sgwar Nott. Pan roedd pawb wedi cyrraedd dechreuon ni gerdded i Sgwar Nott. Ar y ffordd cafon ni blasu cacen gri oddi wrth pobl ar y stonidin. Roedden nhw yn flasus iawn. Pan gyrhaeddod ni roedden ni wedi gweld llawer o ysgolion eraill yn perfformio. Roedd rhaid i ni aros am sbel a gwranddo ar ysgolion eraill yn canu a dawnsio. Pan o'n ni yn tynnu ein cotiau a paratoi gwelon ni ddraig goch a merch mewn gwisg gymreig ar stilts yn cerdded o gwmpas. Pan oedd hi yn amser i ni ganu aethon ni mas i sefyll yn ein lle yn barod. Fe ganon ni Curwn ddwylo, Mis Mawrth unwaith eto a

Amarillo yn gymraeg. Wedyn aethon ni i sefyll yn barod i ddawnsio. Aeth y dawnsio gwerin yn dda gyda pawb yn cymeradwyo ar y diwedd. Wedyn aethon ni yn nol i'r ysgol yn barod i gael cawl a tarten afal a cacen gri blasus iawn! Fe brynodd Mrs Jones wyau pasg i bawb achos roedden ni wedi canu a dawnsio mor dda.

Sophie a Kelly



Articles

Trip to Hong Kong Part 1

Akole, Rhys, Enfys and I were privileged to go to Hong Kong in January and attend the enthronement of the Bishop of Hong Kong Island, the Rt. Revd. Paul Kwong in the St John's Cathedral. Akole started thinking about packing just after Christmas and would put this or that on one side in preparation for the journey. I investigated the best way to get to Heathrow, and in the

end decided that with the children and luggage the best way was to go by car. There was a bewildering array of possible car parks to choose from and eventually I picked a relatively cheap one with a shuttle bus to the various airport terminals.

In this electronic age we checked in on line at home before starting for Heathrow. That meant that when we arrived there was hardly anyone in the queue in front of us and we got through check in about 10 minutes. Then things got more difficult. It was easy to see why they now recommend arriving 3 hours before the flight. The queue for security was horrendous. It must have taken us at least an hour to go through. This wasn't a picnic with a six year old and a toddler. Fortunately we had decided to take the pushchair with us and Enfys was strapped in for a lot of the wait. The London bombings and other security alerts had had their effect. By the time we were through there was only about 20 minutes before we had to start walking to the departure gates.

In-flight entertainment had improved even in the two years since we went to India. There was a wide range of films, TV programmes and even some games of the screen on the back of the chair in front of us. It hardly seems any time ago that there was just one film projected onto a screen in the aircraft cabin - take it or leave it. The entertainment was good for us because it kept Rhys amused for a 12 hour journey. The only problem was that he didn't really want to stop watching and go to sleep and it was already way past his bedtime when the plane took off. The food, I'm afraid, hadn't improved.

Arriving in Hong Kong airport was a definite contrast from the make do feel of Heathrow. In London it is very difficult to get around with children and luggage. The underground and train stations have escalators but not obvious lifts, even in Heathrow. If there are two adults you still have to leave some of the luggage while you take the children up or down the escalator and then go back for the rest. Sometimes, if you are really lucky, someone will give you a hand. Everything looks grubby and is not obviously child or disabled friendly. Hong Kong airport was shiny and new. It was not crowded and it was easy to get around. A subway train took us from the terminal to immigration. The train side of the subway was all glass with automatic doors to prevent people jumping onto the track. Another thing I noticed were

infra red cameras to scan passengers to see if they had a temperature. The dangers of bird flu are taken extremely seriously in Hong Kong.

Fr Desmond from Australia, one of the chaplains at the cathedral, was at the airport to meet us. We had set out at 9pm on Monday, but due to the flight and time difference it was now 8pm Tuesday. For us our body clock was telling us that we should be wide-awake, but we were also very tired. We got our first view of Hong Kong at night as we travelled to the YWCA on Hong Kong Island. Possibly Hong Kong is at its most spectacular at night with all the high-rise buildings lit up. We went across the Tsing Ma bridge, the longest suspension bridge in the world again all lit up with bulbs. Fr Desmond and the other cathedral clergy were very busy as many visitors were arriving for the enthronement of bishop Paul. Once we were installed in the hotel he left us to recover, but I think he had other duties. We went to the restaurant for our first taste of real Cantonese food. It was similar to the food in Chinese restaurants in the UK but different on many ways. It was certainly much less salty and not a bean sprout in sight (I think we only had bean sprouts twice in our whole stay). Nor was it as sweet as many western style Chinese restaurants.

We were of course worn out and washed and went to bed as soon as possible. Rhys slept well but Enfys was defiantly on UK time. She was wide awake at 2am (6pm in the UK) and for that matter Akole and I were also wide awake. It was interesting to look out of the hotel room at the empty streets and across to the park over the road.





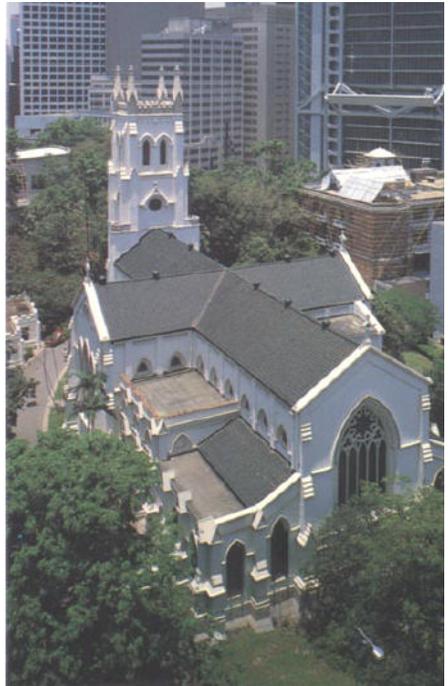
Wed Jan 10th

We got little sleep that night, the problem is that our bodies were just getting ready to sleep when everyone else was waking up. Though I am normally adventurous about food and I'm quite happy with curry for breakfast in India, I didn't really fancy noodles for some reason. We all had a western breakfast and took our first look at Hong Kong in the daytime.

We didn't know it then but you could just see the cathedral tower peeping up about the trees. There was also a massive computer display on the top of

the AIG building which was quite fascinating to watch during breakfast.

At 9 the Dean of St John's, Andrew Chan came to meet us. He took us by car to the cathedral, it is actually only 10 minutes walk but on the first day he thought it would be easier to use the car. Sharon, another of the chaplains, looked after Akole Rhys and Enfys while Andrew gave me a tour of the Cathedral. The Cathedral might not be as ancient as some of ours but it was still an impressive building. One place in it that struck me was the St Michael's Chapel. This is now a place of private prayer but was in the place of the original organ case. During World

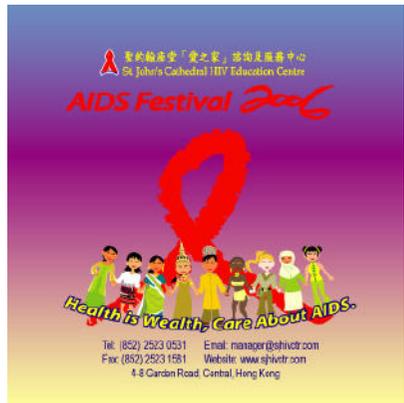


War 2 the Japanese officers had used the cathedral as a club and stripped out the old organ. After the war they decided not to rebuild the pipe organ and they turned the St Michael's chapel. During the war the spiritual life of the cathedral was kept alive. In the internment camp for the military personnel at Shamshuipo the chaplains of the armed forces conducted regular services in an ad hoc chapel. The wooden reredos they made in the camp is kept in St Michael's chapel is a memento of these times.

In the afternoon I had the chance to see some of the outreach work of the cathedral. The cathedral runs five projects, they are varied ways of reaching out and helping the community.

First Fr. Matthew (one of the chaplains) took me to see the counselling service. This is run in offices a little way from the cathedral so that those visiting have more privacy. The St John's Counselling Service has a small suite of offices and counselling rooms where it can offer western counselling. They offer professional help for people with a wide range of emotional difficulties such as grief, trauma, stress, depression, anxiety, communication difficulties, sexual difficulties, relationship issues, life goal planning, alcohol and/or substance abuse and child behaviour issues. The fees for the service vary so that the better off help those who can't afford to pay as much. If you want to read more about the service is on the website at www.stjohnscathedral.org.hk/counselling.html .

Next Fr. Desmond took me to the HIV education centre. This is the first (and so far only) faith based organization to undertake a faith based AIDS ministry in Hong Kong. In truth, it is a world leader in faith based HIV/AIDS ministry and has assisted in both faith and secular organizations that work in the field around the world. It is unfortunate that Christian and other faith communities often marginalize HIV positive people and part of the work of the St John's centre is to counter this.



They work closely with other faiths, when I was there they were translating educational material for the large migrant Indonesian (mainly Muslim) community in Hong Kong The centre has projects for Women, youth and

migrant workers. Visit www.sjhivctr.com/index.htm for more information about the project.

My next port of call was with the Helpers for Domestic Helpers (HDH). There are well over 100,000 domestic helpers in Hong Kong, many from the Philippines but a growing number from Indonesia but there are also workers from Thailand, Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh. Akole and I have friends from Nepal that have worked in Hong Kong although Nepalese are no longer able to get visas to work there. We heard of one woman who was qualified as a teacher at home but could earn more money as a domestic helper in Hong Kong. HDH mainly provide legal advice and assistance for domestic helpers. A lot of their work is to persuading the Immigration Department to allow a terminated helper to take up new employment where permission to do so has been initially refused. They may get involved because a domestic worker wants to leave their employer because of mistreatment and then the employer accuses them of theft. The police are not on the side of domestic workers in these cases. While I was there the police came looking for one woman who was being helped by HDH. There is more information on the website www.stjohnscathedral.org.hk/domestic.html.

I called at the Mission for Migrant Workers (MFMW) next. This is related to the HDH in that they both deal with workers from abroad. migrant workers keep it clean. The MFMW is concerned with "migrant in crisis" through human rights violations, physical and sexual abuse, and unfair labour laws and practices but also by the vulnerability and potential distress that comes with the very nature of being a migrant worker. Migrant workers have had to leave their families because of unemployment and poverty at home and many of them are employed in



Migrant Workers Gather for a Court of Appeals Decision on the Judicial Review of Levy and Wage Cut

3D (difficult, dirty and dangerous) jobs. Hong Kong is extremely clean but that is because of an army of migrant workers.

The MFMW provides help for those in difficult situations but it has a longer term aim of helping migrant workers help themselves. I met Fr. Dwight at the MFMW,, he is a priest from the Philippines who has an extensive ministry with the Filipino community.

The MFMW also run a hostel for migrant and domestic workers who need somewhere to stay while the legal processes are being gone through. More information on www.migrants.net/index.htm .

My final visit of the day was to the bookstore. This isn't just about selling books it is 'to provide "welcome, education and nurture" to all who pass through our door'. As well as books they are also active in promoting fair-trade items. The Bookstore has the widest range of religious books in Hong Kong and they can also order books. They are also a port of call for anyone wanting information about the cathedral times of services, opening hours and general information.

www.stjohnscathedral.org.hk/bookstore.html .

Fair Trade Diocese

Rt Rev Carl Cooper, Bishop of St David's and Amelia Gardner, part of the Fairtrade group in St David's received the Fairtrade Diocese certificate, appropriately enough, on St David's day!

The Bishop said "St David's last words to his followers were 'Do the little things'. Buying Fairtrade may seem a little thing, but if we all do it, it adds up to a very big thing indeed."



Shailesh has travelled from India to bring a message to Wales that is simple but powerful:

"Cotton farmers in India have to buy their seed and fertilizer from local traders. When they harvest their crop they have to sell it back to those

local traders. In many cases the price they receive for their cotton is less than they paid for the seed and fertilizer. In some areas of India 3 farmers are committing suicide every day because they have no way out of this debt. In other cases children are being sold into bonded labour to pay back the debts."

Cotton is produced in many countries around the world in Asia, Africa and America. In Africa alone 10 million cotton farmers live in desperate poverty. These farmers are unable to afford to send their children to school, and child labour in cotton fields is common. Over a million children work up to 14 hours a day in cotton fields in India. Many of them are only five years old, working in bonded labour to pay off family debts.



According to Shailesh the good news is that Fairtrade is providing an opportunity for more and more farmers to trade their way out of poverty.

"Fairtrade provides a stable and fair price to all farmers. That's probably the most important thing. But we also receive a social premium, that's extra money for community development. Farmers in my community have used this money to provide drinking water at the local school, and all our children are able to attend."

Adapted from an article by Mark Richardson, Wales Fairtrade Forum

Thanks to Nadine Shepherd for typing the Abergorlech news, to our correspondents in the villages and to the staff of Brechfa School.