

## Memory Verse

**But the day of the Lord will come** as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

2 Peter 3:10

Young children can learn the words in bold and understand that Christians look forward to that great day when Jesus will come again, although we do not know when it will be.

## A story from Welsh history<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes the exact date when a very interesting person was born or died is completely unknown. This is the case with Rhys Prichard *Yr Hen Ficer* (The Old Vicar) who died “about December” 1644. Even the year of his birth is uncertain (perhaps 1579) so we will learn about this beloved figure from Welsh history today.

Rhys Pritchard lived at a time when the gospel light burned dim in Wales. True, the Bible had been available in Welsh since 1525<sup>2</sup> but there would be no easily affordable edition until after the Old Vicar's death. The steep valleys and high mountains made travelling difficult and communities were isolated. There was a dearth of gospel preachers who could speak the language of the people. The “Old Vicar” of Llandoverly was well aware that the people were often drunken – because when he first became vicar of Llandoverly he was exactly the same himself! It was not until after he became a vicar that Rhys Pritchard was converted but after that he was deeply concerned to make basic Christian truths known among the common people of Wales for he saw that his own flock was superstitious, ignorant and immoral. He was a learned man with a gift for poetry and he put that gift to use. He wrote verses in a simple style using the every day vocabulary and forms of the Welsh language. When a cheaper (but still expensive) small edition of the Welsh Bible was published for the first time he wrote:

*Sell your land, sell all your gear,  
Sell all your shirts, don't hold them dear,  
Sell all the goods you can afford,  
But never live without God's Word.<sup>3</sup>*

An edition of the Old Vicar's poems was published in 1681 with the title *Canwyll y Cymru* (The Welshman's Candle) and it was an immensely popular book, finding its way into almost every home.

## A mini quiz and something to read from history<sup>4</sup>

What is a lamprey?<sup>5</sup>

[a] a miner's lantern

[b] a fish

[c] a fruit

**Write your answer here before you look at the next**

**page: \_\_**



1 Information from Gwyn Davies, *A Light in the Land*, (Bryntirion, 2002) and other sources.

2 See the lesson for 10<sup>th</sup> September (yet to come).

3 English Translation from Gwyn Davies, *A Light in the Land*, p.60.

4 Adapted from *The Story of God's Dealings with our Nation* Volume 1 which is available here: <https://www.creationresearchstore.com/s/search?q=Dealings>.

5 If you did the lesson for 29<sup>th</sup> November a couple of days ago you will probably know the answer. If not, look at that lesson now to see if you got the right answer.

On 1<sup>st</sup> December 1135 King Henry I (1100-1135) died. The chroniclers reported that he died from eating too many lampreys but legend has it that he was served lampreys that were less than fresh and he died of what we would call food poisoning.

Although not quite so violent as his predecessor, William Rufus, Henry was just as greedy and selfish. He had made a thorough overhaul of the taxation system and was determined that he would not be cheated. Taxes now had to be counted out on a chequerboard and this is the origin of the word “exchequer”.<sup>6</sup> He was also concerned with the legal system of the land and created the *Curia Regis* – the King’s Court. Legal cases were tried here and fines that were imposed were paid into Henry’s treasury.

Henry I had succeeded to the throne after the mysterious death in a hunting accident of his elder brother William Rufus. Some think he was murdered by Henry. In order to gain the Duchy of Normandy, which was ruled by his other brother Robert, he captured Robert in battle and put him in prison until he died 28 years later. Meanwhile, of course, he ruled Normandy himself.



Henry’s eldest son Prince William was drowned when he crossed the channel from France in a vessel called The White Ship. He and the sailors had been feasting and drinking and the ship struck a rock. When the King heard what had happened he was grief stricken. It is said that he never smiled again.

This accident left the king's daughter Matilda as heir to the throne. Terrible wars followed on the death of Henry I as a result. His nephew, Stephen, disputed Matilda's right to the throne and they fought bitterly. Eventually Henry's grandson, Henry II became king, the first of the Plantagenets.

### Map Work

Use your atlas for this next item. Find the places highlighted in green as you go along. Do you remember reading about “drift bottles” way back in January?<sup>7</sup> On December 1<sup>st</sup> 1903, Dr W S Bruce, leader of the Scottish National Antarctic expedition of 1902-4, launched a bottle into the sea off the southern tip of Tierra del Fuego. It contained a question paper and was one of a number of bottles released at the time to help determine the direction and speed of the currents in the Southern Ocean.



Nearly half a century later, early in December 1952, the bottle was picked up off the coast of New Zealand, undamaged after its long voyage.

How far had the bottle travelled? Assuming it was picked up on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1952 can you work out its average speed?<sup>8</sup>

### Something to write

If you were launching a bottle on such a journey what questions and information would you put in

<sup>6</sup> This was the first “government department” with a professional staff.

<sup>7</sup> See the lesson for 14<sup>th</sup> January.

<sup>8</sup> I made it around 0.4 km per day which is very slow! I wonder if it got stuck somewhere en route. The calculation is very approximate because we do not know where in New Zealand the bottle was recovered.

the bottle? Design your own bottle note.

Now imagine you have found a message in a bottle. What did it say? What did you do in response to the message?

### Something you might have missed

Were you on holiday on 28<sup>th</sup> July? If so you missed an interesting lesson that included the discovery of a very ancient piece of writing. Today is the anniversary of the day when Hermann Vollrath Hilprecht finally deciphered it. If you missed the lesson go back and read the relevant part of it today.