**The Llanpumsaint Church Yew Tree speaks.**

I’ve felt I was getting old for some time but had a real shock the other day when this man came back. He’s been here before prodding around Martha Llwyd’s grave, after which this boy appeared with a saw. Was I for the chop? No! Relief! He merely trimmed a couple of my branches overhanging that grave before putting up a sign. This time the man placed a thin rope all the way around my trunk and then declared my girth was 20 ft, so he reckoned I was over 8oo years old. Well! Fancy that!

I recall some things from my youthful days. The church is older than I am and so were the saints, but I do remember some of the Welsh princes arriving to call this area Widigada. They spoke of Saint Teilo quite often inside the church but always in Latin. Planted in this wonderful spot I’ve always been able to see all that goes on around the church, graveyard and village. Back in the good old Catholic days there was a lot of fun here, young people dancing and singing in the churchyard particularly on Calan Mai and enjoying the beer next door, Ger-y-Llan was a pub then. They call it Mayday now but nobody comes to have fun here anymore, not since those Methodists put a stop to it all nearly 200 years ago.

When I was young, soldiers regularly came to trim off some of my branches, shape them into long bows and train boys to use them. Then they’d all go off to France to fight and quite a few came back. A few centuries later when they started using guns I was left in peace. I really miss the horses though, soldiers, princes, farmers, preachers, they all rode them here, and a fine pair always pulled the village hearse for the funerals. Then about a hundred years ago I got the fright of my life when a snorting snarling cart thing came hissing past and it wasn’t that train thing straying from the top new village. It was the first of what they called motor cars and more and more came to disturb the peace, and then came even bigger, noisier ones called lorries. Sadly I hardly ever see a horse nowadays apart from that smartly dressed young girl who goes regally by on one sometimes. Dogs no longer work; they just take people for walks!

People have changed too! Years ago both the church and chapel were always full and after coming out they’d chat for a long time, so I got to know all the gossip. The chapel closed for good the other day and less and less attend here in church unless there’s a big funeral. Those who come no longer gossip outside so I’ve no idea what goes on around me. In fact people no longer talk to each other as they continually fiddle with some small object in their hand, sometimes poking it in their ears. When people used to talk to each other it was Welsh but if I hear anything now it’s English. Though when the wind is right I hear them from the school, I can understand them.

Despite my age I feel in good health able to produce strong branches each year, but some things worry me. I can see right across to the Vicarage where the other day some old friends of mine got the chop. Am I on their list? Could I be next? The man who came to measure me seemed friendly enough and said something that being so old I should get a Preservation Order, whatever that means. Who can I talk to about it, because there’s no longer a Vicar here either? It’s all very worrying!

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