

‘A Babe is Born I Wys’

It was Christmas Day 1944, wartime, depressing, a hard frost, but Clun in Radnorshire, had at least been spared the snow. Ruth, whose baby was due on 6th January, stayed in the cosy little cottage where she lived with her mother Margaret. Jack, Ruth’s husband, had signed up the day war broke out and had seen action as a Royal Marine in Burma, Ceylon, Crete and Egypt.

Ruth sensed that “... things are happening”. Nurse Langslow, the local midwife, who lived opposite St. George’s church, and was one of its greatest supports, turned off her Christmas dinner, and went to the cottage, to be with Ruth in her labour. As Margaret busied herself downstairs, cleaning the windows inside and out, at half past five on Christmas afternoon, Ruth was delivered of a baby, called Susan Margaret, as agreed. Nurse Langslow weighed the baby by hanging her in her first new nappy, from a hand-held brass scale.

“Eight pounds, and everything ‘s fine. I’m off to evensong at St. George’s now, but I’ll call in later,” and she was gone, leaving Ruth and her mother to offer their own private, heart-felt prayers of thanks, for their special Christmas gift. Later, they heard the strains of ‘Silent night, Holy night, wafting up from the courtyard below. Nurse Langslow had been true to her word, she had returned with members of the church choir.

And that’s why at Holy Trinity, after Christmas morning Eucharist every year, the choir stands around her seat and sings, *‘Happy Birthday Dear Susan.’*

Howard Brayton
Husband