A community mourns the gentle shepherd

by Glenys Hammond

1,000 pay their last respects to murdered sheep farmer John Williams

The killing of “gentle shepherd” John Hughes Williams brought a terrible violence into the hills around Llandewi Brefi, a violence which may never be forgotten.

A community, a thousand people numb by his killing and still living in fear of his killer, picked silently into Bethesda Chapel on Monday for the funeral.

It was left to their ministers to give vent to their feelings.

Although as his friend the Rev. Tom Roberts, Cardigan, emphasized in Welsh, “No words are strong enough to condemn this murderous act.

“The peace of this rural community has been shattered and it will take a long time to restore it.”

Violence was on the increase, as said and John Williams, a man who did no one harm, had fallen victim to it.

“We fall as a sacrifice to the violence of our time.”

We have seen violence portrayed very colourfully on television. We have seen it from films but we knew that sooner or later it would touch us here.

Reality

“Now it is a reality within our community.”

John Williams, aged 60, was killed ten days ago while on the remote 300-acre sheep farm seven miles from Llandewi Brefi.

He was, said the Rev. Roberts, the most gentle of shepherds who loved his work.

“We sleep at home would come to any farm while he was around.

“He was a warm, gentle-hearted person, generous, Christian and kind in his friendships, and an active member of the community.

“And above all he loved Soar y Mynydd, the tiny chapel in the hills to which this devoted bachelor often rode on horseback.

“He thought the world of Soar, and Soar wouldn’t be open today but for him and others.

“One of the last things I heard him say was Soar will always be open as long as my eyes are open.”

Appealing to all those present the Rev. Roberts said to make sure the flame continued to burn on the hills of Soar.

Never had they needed it as they did now. If people were full of Christ nothing like this would ever happen.

“Boar y Mynydd is like a lighthouse on the Dewi hills,” he said.

Up in the Dewi hills the police were still searching for Mr. Williams’ killer, but some of the senior officers including Detective Chief Superintendent Pat Molloy had taken time off to attend the funeral.

“We are depending a lot on

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