

BBC Radio Wales - Thought for the Week – Monday 28th August 2023

Dr Heather Payne consultant Paediatrician

LINK: It's time now for our Thought For the Week, and today I'm joined by Dr Heather Payne, who's a consultant Paediatrician. She has a responsible job, but today it's fair to say she's definitely in holiday mode!

August Bank Holiday Monday! September on Friday! Quick let's get that last holiday in before we all move back into work/school/college. And I don't mean spending time and enlarging carbon footprint queuing for a plane- these last few days of summer are great for day trips close to home - to the beach, or country walks, blackberrying, hopping on a bike or bus, or just walking locally, exploring roads we don't usually travel.

We're well blessed with places to visit in Wales- countryside, beaches and mountains- where we can go for a family day out and picnic. Even our museums and libraries are free entry. I often think that if people had to fly for hours and trek for miles to see places like our waterfalls, forests, parks and castles, they would rave about the wonderful places they had been- and here we have them on our doorsteps. And have we forgotten how much better we feel when we're close to nature? Even a walk to the nearest park or river is enough to get a change of scene and perspective, soothe the soul and take a mental break. It's often tempting to just press on with our tasks or duties- but taking a break is always good for us- one of those things maybe we need to rediscover.

Our 7 day week echoes the ancient creation story found at the very beginning of the Bible – God starting with the darkness and taking 6 days to create light, sea, sky, earth fish, birds, crops, animals and humans. No wonder He needed a rest on the seventh day. Now I'm no biblical scholar, but I think it's safe to say that the creation story is generally taken as an allegory rather than literally, although the stages of earth's development are actually quite accurate, especially when you consider that was written about 3000 years ago- well before our modern understanding of science. The main point of the story for me, though, is the pattern of taking a break from work, having a good rest – as a really important thing for all of us. Even Jesus used to go up to the hills, or walk in the garden, or head out on a boat, to get away from it all and focus on his real purpose.

So there's just time to make the most of these last few days of August- it doesn't have to be an exotic location or a holiday long enough to forget all your passwords- or even need anyone to say 'are we nearly there yet?' Let's get outside and holiday!