



## **LLANCARFAN SOCIETY**

### **Newsletter 4: September 1987**

This newsletter is the first indication that we are actually doing something! A very short account of the first of the two inaugural dinners is followed by recollections of life in the village, almost 80 years ago, by Les Griffiths who lived at Fern Cottage until his recent move to Barry. Les is amongst our oldest members and recollects much that has gone for ever. He was a very welcome guest with his family, at the first inaugural dinner a few days before the writing of this letter. His article appears, virtually unedited, and may I pay him the compliment of saying that his handwriting is better than that of most of my twenty year old students!

All contributions to newsletters will be acknowledged in print and I shall not edit anything without approval of the writer. I shall add an editorial footnote when access to Society records adds useful information. JRE

#### **First Inaugural Dinner**

The dinner was held in the restaurant of the Fox and Hounds on September 14th. We are grateful to Edgar Balchin and his staff for a splendid meal. Phil Watts gave an introductory address. Derek Higgs explained the financial background, in particular the need for a subscription to cover newsletter printing and postage costs while John Etherington outlined the intentions of the Society concerning newsletters and the recent history of the village. No one dissented from the proposals for continuation of the present committee members or the suggested membership fees. Joyce Andrews, Rene Jankovic, Andrew Griffiths and Gwynne Liscombe were nominated as additional members of the committee. Several guests asked to speak. They were Mrs Hamber, known to older residents as Megan Collier from her pre-war visits to the village as a piano teacher. At least one of her pupils from those days, Dilys Liscombe (Lewis) was present at the dinner. Mrs Hamber's father came from Fern Cottage and her cousin, Mrs Weight, lived for many years at Chapel House where the piano lessons were given. Gwynne Liscombe not only spoke but also brought a display board of Llancarfán memorabilia which attracted much attention. David Harry who ran the Fox and Hounds 50 years ago also said a few words. At the end of the dinner Christine Neagle expressed thanks from newcomers to the village.

JRE

Llancarfan before the Great War  
by Les Griffiths

My mother was born and brought up in Llancarfan. I was five years old when my parents returned to Llancarfan to live in Caradoc Cottage in the spring of nineteen hundred and ten.

At that time there were seven thatched cottages in the village, Caradoc Cottage, The Green, Rose Cottage, Brook Cottage, Tyuchaf, Cornerhouse and Fern Cottage. They have all been rebuilt or renovated during the intervening years between the two world wars. Every cottager in the village kept pigs and poultry. There were also a number of smallholdings consisting of ten or fifteen acres which would support three or four cows.

The village boundaries stretched from Ty-To-Maen to the foot of Pancross Hill, Pennon Hill and Crossgreen Hill. Within these boundaries there were twentyseven dwelling houses. The population would be about a hundred and six to a hundred and ten.

The only sources of light during the hours of darkness were paraffin oil lamps and candles. Drinking water had to be carried from springs and wells which were very plentiful in the village. We were using water from springs and wells for all domestic purposes. When the water mains were laid on to Llancarfan, notices were fixed on the three wells most in use (unfit for drinking).

In those days the old fashioned bread oven was very much in use. These were built into the side wall of the fireplace. Made of fire brick and clay, there are still a few in existence in Llancarfan but not in use. The finest example of a clay bread oven is to be seen in the museum at St Fagans. It was taken from an old fireplace in Garnllwyd in nineteen twenty five. I was in the fourth year of my apprenticeship as a carpenter working on repairs at Garnllwyd when it was taken out.

The three places of worship were well attended, with services morning, evening and Sunday school in the afternoon. (There were) A post-office, grocery and sweet shop, and a blacksmith's shop which kept three or four blacksmiths working full time. The postmaster was also a shoe maker; he had a workshop in the grounds of the adjacent post-office where he carried out his trade making and repairing boots and shoes. The blacksmith's shop, carpenter's shop and shoemaker's shop were hives of industry. The post-office at that time was the building now known as Hillside.

The Council School was the only building where Parish Council Meetings, Concerts and Whistdrives could be held. The Church Hall was built in nineteen thirteen and eventually became the centre for all entertainment in the parish. The stone used in the building of the Church Hall was quarried locally; a quarry was opened up in a field belonging to Middle Cross Farm just off the road on the right hand side as you walk from Pancross to Middlecross. The stone was hauled to the site by farmers living in the parish; it was mostly voluntary labour. A public subscription was made towards the cost of the building.

The head master of the Council School during my schooldays was Rhees Davies, resident in the village, taking an active part in the social life of the parish. He was a

very strict head master, revered and respected by all who knew him. Punctuality and discipline were his strong points. There was no restriction on the use of the cane in those days, 50 or 60 years ago. There was a strict code of conduct with parents, teachers and neighbours working together to control children and instil respect. Editorial note: Rose Cottage was demolished to make way for the Hollies and Tyuchaf is now High Lanterns. The Blacksmith's shop was adjacent to Hillside at the foot of the steps from the Baptist Chapel (now Capel-yr-Efail). The wheel-banding plate of the shop may be seen embedded in the pavement at this spot. The Carpenter's shop was demolished when the garage of Pennymeade was built. Any offers of further short articles will be taken-up gratefully.

#### Future events

There is, of course, a Second Inaugural Dinner on November 9th. This is now fully booked and we apologise to anyone who failed to get tickets for either dinner. We hope to organise a barbecue or informal buffet in the spring which more people can attend and perhaps have a better chance of talking to each other. We also propose informal gatherings in the Fox and Hounds, from about 8.00pm, on the first Tuesday of each month starting on October 6th. Gwynne Liscombe has promised to bring the display board which many people did not have time to look-at. We would like this to become a monthly occasion on which members would know that some of their fellows will be gathered in the Fox and hope that other people may volunteer displays of records, photos or other items.