



LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

Newsletter 9: March 1988

Nothing of dire consequence to report this month - thankfully no flooding, fires or civil disorder that we know about (or dare to write-down!). We did, however, hold a well-supported and enjoyable Whist Drive in the Penmark Community hall on Tuesday 8th March. Again our thanks go to Phil Watts as Master of Ceremonies, Gwynne Liscombe for organising prizes and Rene Jankovic, Joyce Andrews and Sue Taylor for providing refreshments.

Phil Watts placed a report of the Lllancarfan Society's activities in the local papers last month: you may have seen that the Barry and District News headlined it 'Walk Down Memory Lane'. Phil didn't write that bit! Is Michael Bartlett right? Are we overdoing the nostalgia and does anyone want more of the village now rather than the history we are delving out? If you do, then put pen to paper and we will be only too happy to publish. It would give some of the newcomers a chance to contribute as well - what do readers' think? Do we have any budding writers or poets amongst us? Artists for that matter - it would push us into thinking about improved reproduction, at least for some pages. The editor apologises for April-fooling you: the next monthly gathering in the Fox and Hounds is on Tuesday April 5th, not April 1st, as I said in the last Newsletter! See Future Events (below). There was also another 'deliberate mistake' in Newsletter 8. A pound for the first letter from an under-teenage reader telling us what it is and why it has to do with stone (deliver to Ceffyl Du). We will publish the letter next month if anyone spots the mistake.

The pheasants must be able to read. In Newsletter 8 you heard about the broken window which frightened John and Jean Williams at Old Orchard. Phil & Ruth Watts, Abernant, have now experienced the same thing, but their pheasant 'bounced-off' and Phil says he was not quick-thinking enough to chase it. I can't help being pleased about this - they are such beautiful birds - better to watch than eat! Many of the houses in the village seem to experience this problem of bird-strikes on windows, and the smaller ones usually come to grief. Fortunately, most are common birds but in the last four or five years Ceffyl Du has murdered a bullfinch, a greater spotted woodpecker (the red, white and black ones) and a goldfinch, many blue-tits, great-tits and assorted sparrows as well as concussing several blackbirds which usually survive if we can control our cat. The RSPB sells paper hawk-silhouettes which you can stick to the windows as a deterrent but we haven't tried them. Membership List. We have attached a list of members to this newsletter as it will remind many folk of friends who have moved-on and it certainly shows how this village and

parish have made lasting prisoners of many hearts. Have you noticed? - several letters and articles have come from expatriates and, in some cases from people who only spent a few childhood years in this magical place.

Readers letters

We have received a letter from Mr Albert Newton of Coychurch, Bridgend. Mrs Newton's mother, Gwladys, was a native of Llancarfan, daughter of Mr & Mrs Alfred Vincent of 'The Orchard' (now 'Crynallt') almost opposite to the Fox and Hounds Inn. Mr Newton was born in Penllyne but when he was two, his mother was very ill and he came to live with his grandparents for the next three years and attended Llancarfan School with his twin sister, Minnie. The following extracts from his letter are memories of the village in the early 1920's:

The fact that my sister and I were twins, on reflection, seemed to other children of our age, to be something special, which resulted in us being invited to many birthday parties. Jelly and cakes was the 'order of the day'.

Parties in the village, at a house near Penonn Farm (which was burned down during those years) at Pancross, Walterston, Ford Farm, The Bakery and Llanbethery.

Even at that tender age my memories of the village after all these years surprise me. We returned to my parents at about the age of five and a half having first attended the village school on the hill. I have just two memories of the school. The first is that infants were introduced to the 'slate', which was framed in wood, on which one would attempt to write and draw with slate pencils. All went well on the downward strokes but the upward stroke invariably produced a screech. To clean the slates one child, usually the same one, went around the class with a wet cloth. It was the smell of the cloth which was objectionable.

The second memory is that, during the short period we attended the school, the school concert was held and we, of course, took part on the stage. A tune or song at that time was 'Felix kept on Walking', Felix being a cat. Some little play had been produced around the song and it was not until the concert that I saw the furry cat outfit, complete with head and long tail, worn by another child. We were on stage and during the scene this 'object' climbed onto the stage. It was too much for me, I hadn't seen a cat that size and I was lifted down to finish the concert in the audience.

'The Fox and Hounds' Public House, to me was the centre of the village, being almost opposite where I lived and invariably there was much activity there. Mr and Mrs Harris were the licencees and their youngest son Calvert was just 10 days my senior, therefore we were constant playmates. His eldest sister, Betty was at home and attended to the few cattle they had. The 'Fox and Hounds', as I remember, had flagstones with a semicircular bar with steps down to the living quarters. I recall that the son of Gowlog Farm used to arrive on a small pony and rode straight into the bar and ordered what he required on horseback. At that time I knew the pony's name but have long forgotten it.

The house at the right hand side of the Wesleyan Chapel (now Whitechapel), as viewed from the road, was occupied by a Mr and Mrs Pickett. I seem to have related men with beards as sailors and Mr Pickett wore a large white beard, but more importantly he had a three wheeled cycle and to see him setting off was an occasion. From the rear he pushed off and raised onto the saddle to start pedalling.

My father was a Farrier and General Smith in Penllyne and at that young age I must have related to the Llancarfan Village Blacksmith - Mr Joe Lewis and of course we were at his children's parties. His son was Idris but the daughter's name escapes me. The Blacksmith's Shop was at the junction in the village leading up to Pancross Cross and the Post Office was on the right in the narrow section. The postmistress was Mrs Buckley.

The water wheel was in use at the mill, at the foot of the hill which led to Llanvythyn Farm (farmed by a Mr Lougher). The mill was owned by a Mr Liscombe and, either he or his son, lived in what I regarded as a new house opposite, but higher on the hill, than the 'Fox and Hounds'. My young mind admired their 2-seater A.C. make car which had pressed steel wheels unlike wheels of other cars, which were spoked.

Our drinking water was carried from across the river at the lower ford and was drawn from a pipe of running water under the garden of a house occupied by a Mrs Lloyd who had a daughter named Rosie.

During the years we were at Llancarfan I recall that a farm between the village and Bonvilston was burned to the ground and the following morning we saw the farm and it was still smouldering. It was later rebuilt and, in more recent times, I believe has been connected with horses and stables, possibly a stud farm.

It was quite an occasion when motor cycle clubs used the upper ford as a test. The same clubs used a hill climb in Penllyne and, being older I can remember the makes of the machines and that the clubs were from Cardiff, Port Talbot and Swansea. The riders, some on combinations - motorcycle and sidecar - had to follow unknown routes which were indicated by a coloured powder --placed earlier in the day at crossroads and junctions. British motor cycle manufacturers were in attendance and to mention a few, Sunbeam, Dunelt, Rudge, Triumph, Scott 'Squirrel', Calthorpe, Douglas 'flat twin', Ariel, A.J.S., B.S.A. etc. were represented in the clubs.

Llancarfan in those days was, on occasions, subject to severe flooding. Several times I saw the flood water between the steps to 'The Orchard' and the front door of the Public House. On one occasion, part of my grandfathers garden was washed onto the roadway from the catchment area behind the house.

There were kingfishers up river from the lower ford, where the river leaves the roadside, up to the top ford.

The soccer team used a field which was reached by a lane leading upwards from near the school. I was taken there on several occasions by my uncle. The son of the farm became a one time Clerk to Glamorgan County Council.

Editorial notes.

1. George Pickett, roadman (not sailor!), lived at Brook Cottage: there is a 'cartoon' of his tricycle on the historical map of Llancarfan by R.P.Perkins (a copy hangs in Barry Public Library). 2. Joe Lewis' son Idris is now in S. Africa. Idris' sister was Dilys, now married to Gwynne Liscombe, and lives in Barry. 3. The water pipe below Mrs Lloyds house is still there, though the house has gone. It is fed by one of the many well-springs mentioned by Les Griffiths (Newsletter 4). The house was the thatched Rose Cottage which was demolished in the '30's to make way for Hollies. 4. The farm which burned down on the lane to Bonvilston was presumably Greendown. Another house, Pen Carreg, not far away, also burned down some years later. As Mr Newton also recalls Penonn Farm burning and two Public Houses, the Three Horsehoes and the Blackhorse, have also burned in the last century, it does seem that these thatched houses were prone to fire. 5. The last flood as serious as those Mr Newton recollects was in August 1968 (but see Newsletter8). 6. There were still kingfishers below Bridge House, six or seven years ago, but not on the river between the fords. The river has now suffered so much from nitrate, slurry and silage pollution that there are probably no fish for the kingfishers in the village section of Nant Carfan. 7. Richard John of Pennon Farm became Clerk to the old Glamorgan C. C.

In an earlier correspondence with Phil Watts Mr Newton also wrote:

My grandfather, Alf. used to work at Cliff Farm for a Mr Lougher who had a threshing machine and tackle. My grandfather drove the traction engine around the farms threshing the corn. Not only was he named Alfred - the second son was also Alfred and in his teens worked for Wilkinsons of Llantwit Major who also had a threshing machine. The elder son was Charlie, who had a leg amputated in the First World War.

When the editor wrote asking Mr Newton to approve the draft of this article, a comment on his obvious interest in cars and motorbikes, even at his then tender age, drew the reply: '--- I must have been influenced, when in Llancarfan, by my uncle Alfred, who was living at home with my grandparents and was a motor cycle enthusiast. An old motor cycle outside our adjoining outhouse was my 'plaything'. At the age of 17 years, I passed my driving test without any tuition and in the last war had my own transport section, and later, after several years on general duties as a Police Officer I became a Motor Patrol Officer and my last 17 years in the service was as an Instructor at the Police Driving School ---'.

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A note from Dr Evan Thomas, Tyla Rhossyr, Cowbridge.

Dr Thomas, whose recollections of the village were printed in the last newsletter, has written to say that the article on the Cowbridge and Aberthaw Railway revived some other memories of the 20's. He used to walk from Llanvithyn to Llanbethery Halt, taking a short-cut past Gowlog, to catch the train to Cowbridge. He also recollects Sunday School

excursions from Cowbridge to St. Athan for picnics at the Leys or even Fontygary. At that time the railway was the only easy way for Cowbridge, and other local people to reach the sea.

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A letter from Herbert R. Thomas of Brocastle, Bridgend.

Mr. Thomas' name will be familiar as the senior partner in the firm of Herbert R. Thomas, Son and Edwards, Chartered Surveyors, Cowbridge. Herbert Thomas has family connections with Llancarfan which extend back well into the 1800's, and his wife, who also came from the village, is a member of the Lougher family with one of the longest lineages traceable in the Vale. The letter contains memories of the village from the 1870's and the early decades of this century: extracts are reproduced below:

My father was born at Broadclose Farm, Moulton and lived there until 1870 when my grandfather moved to Llwynhelig Farm, Cowbridge. My father went to school in Llancarfan and he used to like to relate how he jumped into the river during a chase in the school luncheon hour. He went to a cottage nearby where he was stripped, wrapped in a blanket and dried off.

Audrey came to Cowbridge in the latter part of 1919 to work in your grandmothers baker shop opposite the old post office. She was not here long and I started visiting Llancarfan regularly in the early 1920's, and continued my visits until October 1926 when we got married.

The village hall was going strong in those days with whist drives, dances etc. There were also social evenings when one of the locals came home on leave from the services. We also had concerts and a concert group was formed under the leadership of Madam Corelli. Audrey was a member of the party, and they went around the various villages singing.

The post office, with Mrs Buckley as Post Mistress, was very much in the centre of things. I used to telephone there and leave messages for Audrey. Of course she went to Llancarfan school and ended up in Barry County School.

Llancarfan was one of the Head Quarters of the Llancarfan Ploughing match. I was secretary for many years and I have recollections of the Committee meetings which were held in the Fox and Hounds. There was a cow shed adjoining Cross Green House where I spent many a winter's evening. I suspect it has gone now.

Mr Bill Griffiths, Broomwell, was a first class sheep trimmer in preparation for shows and I was in Llancarfan often before 8.00 clock in the morning to fetch him to trim some of our sheep.

Notes. 1. Present school not open in 1870 - he must have attended the Church School (see further note, below). 2. Audrey (nee Lougher - Herbert's wife) lived in Crossgreen with mother Margaret and father Jack, local slaughterman. Margaret was one of Garnllwyd girls. Marriage between two branches of the family explains same name - Jack (John)

Lougher was a butcher in Canton at the time of his marriage. 3. '--- your grandmother---' was Jane Liscombe (nee Lougher - also of Garnllwyd - Phil Watts grandmother). 4. Madam Corelli? anything more known of her? 5. The post office was in a part of Hillside. Telephone had not been there long - proposed at Parish Council meeting in 1914. 6. Can any members recollect ploughing matches? Phil Watts remembers one before Wally Lougher ceased to farm Llanvythin in 1936. 7. Herbert doesn't say what he was doing in the cowshed?! 8. Bill Griffiths, Broomwell, locally known as Billo, brother of Tommy, Pembroke House. He would be stepfather to Danny Phillips, present occupier of Broomwell.

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Further note on buildings in the churchyard - mid-1800's. The school was held in the Church House which stood roughly where the Church Hall was built. According to Clark (1865 *Archaeologia Cambrensis*) this was a two story house with external stair. Another building on the south-west side of the churchyard was the rectorial tithe barn. In a later Newsletter we shall talk about 'lost buildings' amongst which these two will feature.
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A letter from Frank Jameson, Culvery. Frank has written to volunteer his services to do some archive research. We are very grateful for this. He also wrote, in response to the note on wells in Newsletter 8: '--- do you know anything of the old Victorian parish pump situated in a concrete emplacement (incorporating a shallow 'sink' that seems as though it was for washing clothes) in the middle of a small stream at the bottom of the valley immediately to the west of Llanbethery. If it was the only source of supply they must have been very fit people!' Does anyone have the real answer to this - editor has it on hearsay that it was the only water supply. Indeed, the shortage of water 'up by Pancross' is the reason why the Church Commissioners installed the ram. Some local houses had cisterns which collected rainwater from the roof - there is (or was) one at Treguff Cottages. Any others known?

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Dick (R. W.) Evans has written again from Leicestershire and his memories of 1914-41 will feature in a later Newsletter. Dick lived at Ford Cross (now Dai Phillips' Pennant Farm). In his letter he also listed some wells, other than those mentioned in Newsletter 7: 'Kings Evil' Well at Broomwell; a sulphur well in the grounds of the Old Bakehouse; a well in the garden of Ford Cross with a pump in the kitchen and another between the School and Ty Uchaf (High Lanterns). This last one must be the spring which gave Russel Grant so much trouble when he recently built Cwrt y Cadno, behind the pub car park. Dick's letter said that he 'never knew the wells dry up, even in a hot summer'. Most of the wells are sulphurous and iron-rich, being fed from the clayey layers in the Liassic limestone which are full of iron sulphide. Traditionally this is good for skin complaints. King's Evil or scrofula is a form of tuberculosis for which even the most potent well-water could hardly be a cure, though bathing may have calmed-down the skin eruptions which were a symptom. The 1900 OS map shows this well as Ffynon y Clwyf

(Disease well) but Clwyf y Brenin is given in older Welsh dictionaries as 'Kings Evil' so the map name was probably abbreviated by the English surveyors.

By the way, the rag-well in Breach Wood is Ffynnon Fflameiddan and the Welsh word for inflammation is Fflameg. Do any of our Welsh-speakers' have a precise translation or derivation for Fflameiddan? The other named well, at the far end of Garnllwyd Wood above Abernant, is called Ffynnon Dyfrig on the OS map. This part of the wood is Coed Ffynnon Dyfrig. A mid-19th century writer called it Ffynnon Dyfry and said that the name is derived from Dubricius, a sixth-century saint and contemporary of St Cattwg (Cadoc), whom some regard as the founder of the monastery.

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Future Events

The next Monthly Gathering will be in the Fox and Hounds on Tuesday, 5th April. We shall organise a Quiz, based on Newsletters to date, and local general-knowledge. John Etherington has agreed to be quizmaster while Derek Higgs and Phil Watts will provide teams drawn from a group including Ken Walls, Frank Jameson, Dilys Liscombe, Jim Groves and others. Come along and see how much you know - or how much the teams don't! Meet at 8.00 p.m.

As announced in the last Newsletter, we shall hold a Morning Walk on Monday, May 2nd (Early May Holiday), starting from the Fox and Hounds car park at 11.30 a.m. and returning in time for lunch. Nothing very strenuous, just a stroll with a guide to look at some of the places which have been mentioned in the Newsletters. It will be most useful to know how many will be coming. Please can you fill-in and return the slip which accompanies this Newsletter if you intend to join us. If the weather is really wet we shall cancel the walk.