



LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

Newsletter 12: July 1988

This is an early and rather short Newsletter as it is to be circulated before the Craft Fair, Sports and Car Boot Sale which will be held at Pancross Farm on Saturday 2nd July commencing at 2.00 p.m. As an encouragement to visit the Fair, one free ticket is enclosed with each Newsletter. Further tickets will be available on the gate or from our Secretary, Barbara Milhuisen.

Fairs and fetes are so reminiscent of high summer that it seems appropriate to say that we have had several weeks of the most beautiful weather which have sent us out exploring. There are a few trout in the Ivy pool, the first for several years, though nothing to compare with the shoals at Gigman Bridge on the Thaw beyond Llantrithyd. I looked for Dick Evan's bee orchid near Ford but found nothing. However there was a very beautiful one near the old lime-works at East Aberthaw. The hedge-banks are full of wild strawberries, if you know where to look, but you would have to walk a long way to pick enough for a meal! The valley seems full of woodland birds and, now and then, becomes more threatening with soaring buzzards, a kestrel hovering over the steep fields and sparrow-hawks twisting through the hedgerows. JRE

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A Village Honour

Keith Vivian Thomas, son of the late Vivian Thomas of Pancross Farm was knighted, in the Prime Minister's list of the Queen's Birthday Honours, for services to the study of history. Keith Thomas is President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford and was a former pupil of Llancarfan Primary School, Barry Grammar School and subsequently Balliol College, Oxford. His most recent book, *Man and the Natural World*, has received general acclaim while his first book, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, won a Wolfson Literary Award for History.

Thanks. Sue Evans, Garnllwyd, has lent us various documents for copying including the Poor Rate Book for 1893, when Robert Lougher of Garnllwyd was Parish Overseer. All sorts of interesting information will come from these records for future articles. Frank Jameson has been working away in the Glamorgan Record Office and has provided copies of electoral Registers going back to 1840, which will help in putting together our history of houses which is slowly coming into shape (Who knows where 'Goldoak' was? - or is it a corruption of Gowlog?). I also forgot to thank Phil Quelch for the loan of two early edition 6-inch O.S. maps which have been invaluable in thinking about past times in the Parish. Barry Webb of Llanhilleth, Gwent, wrote to me about medicinal wells in the village and in response to my reply sent me copies of various articles from which we will quote in future. JRE

Visitors.

Ray Evans passed-on a letter of thanks which she received from Cicely Tyree in Florida. Mrs Tyree was born Cicely Gunson, at Ty-to-Maen, and lived there for the first three years or so of her life. I am not sure of the date but the name Gunson appears on the 1920 Electoral Register but not 1910. Ray and Blair entertained Cicely when she visited the village, which of course she did not remember from so tender an age. It was just the right time of year: early spring with daffodils making the village seem its best. Mrs Tyree wrote: 'I think I was very fortunate to have been born in such a beautiful spot in Wales - the peace and loveliness of the valley will always stay with me.'

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Growing up in Llancarfan in the 1940's

by Mavis Coles

After I was born, my parents, Edgar and Lillian Coles made their first home at Penyrheol Cottage, Bonvilston. My father worked at Homrey Farm, St Nicholas, but we moved around a lot as he was a farm worker and we lived in 'tied' cottages. The first school I attended was St Nicholas. There is a photograph showing Penyrheol Cottage in Roy Denning's Vale of Glamorgan in Old Photographs, but the cottage was knocked down in order to widen the road in the 1930's.

We came to Ford Cross Cottages in around 1940-41, as my father started work at Penonn Farm. He joined the Home Guard and was a bell-ringer at the church. My mother had two part time jobs, one as a tutor at Fonmon Castle and one at Bonvilston. She was also Clerk to the Parish Council of Llancarfan for a while. The Palling family lived next door to us at Ford Cottages and I particularly remember Mrs Palling because she made the most wonderful faggots when they killed a pig and, although I've tasted a lot of faggots since then, I've never forgotten them as there has been nothing to equal them.

For those of us who went to Rhoose School a bus came to the Church Hall every morning to take us. We had to get there early as it circled around as far as Whitton Rosser and Llantrithyd to pick up other pupils.

There was a busy social life in the village: dances, socials and whist drives at the Church Hall and fetes and sports days. We had a lot of charabanc trips. Young Farmers Club was held in the school - I remember one debate 'Which is best in a farmer, brains or brawn?' Girl Guides meetings were held in a Chapel in Bonvilston.

Errands for my mother might include - cycling to Boverton for tomatoes; going to Bindings market garden (Ford Lane) for lettuce or vegetables; Mrs Pickett for strawberries; Mrs Sweet for apples (Beauty of Bath and Russet); Ford Farm for windfalls or eggs. Sometimes I hoed rows of swedes for pocket money.

The church was well attended. Rev. Evans took Sunday School - he was a dear old gentleman but we were very unruly (or was it just me?) and used to hide behind the altar and experiment on playing the organ.

A lot of time was spent at 'the den' where we used to light a fire and produce charred potatoes which tasted delicious. Saturdays were sometimes spent exploring the village and adjoining countryside, either cycling or on foot. There was plenty to see, foxes, dragonflies, and woodpeckers were quite common. We did a lot of fishing for trout and eels. Another favourite game was jumping streams and I'm not likely to forget when I got tangled up in barbed wire and had to be rescued by Mrs Alice Rees. I've still got the scars. We also used to climb the trees and play cricket in the field opposite Dai Griffiths' wheelwright shop. Mr Griffiths used to walk up and down from his home to the field by the bridge with his cow 'Daisy'.

An event I remember vividly was the fancy dress Victory procession when the war ended. I've got more scars on my feet from that, as I dressed-up as a gipsy and wore my father's hob-nailed boots. My feet were raw when I got home and took a long time to heal. I wonder if anyone took photographs of this procession? As I grew older, I joined other teenagers in cycling to other village halls for dances - you had to have a bike. We used to meet in the village or top of Pancross Hill and go to dances at St Athan, Bonvilston, Penmark, Peterston, Pendoylan, St Nicholas and sometimes Cowbridge.

In 1945 we had a double addition to the family in the form of my twin sisters. My mother had only prepared for one baby and had knitted a carrying cape with nearly 400 stitches but she immediately set to work and knitted a second cape.

Eventually I left Rhose School and travelled to Cardiff to commercial college to learn shorthand and typing. I travelled with Heather Morgan who also worked in Seccombes. We had to get up early to cycle to Bonvilston to catch the Cardiff bus and left our bikes in Mr Thomas' shed at Penyrheol Cross. On dark nights we had to feel about for the right bike as others left their bikes too, if they wanted to travel by the bus. At the time I saw nothing unusual in this but I wouldn't like to do it these days. If we wanted to go somewhere in Cardiff, Capitol Concerts or the cinema for instance, we had to leave before the end to get the last bus, then get our bikes and cycle to Llancarfan.

It was at this time I remember a convoy of British soldiers driving through the village and American troops at Cottrell were also seen driving through. German and Italian prisoners of war appeared to work on the farms and there were some working at Pencarreg Farm who used to shout good morning to us on our way to work.

I remember the village having a lot of personalities, the list is endless and an account of their lives would make good reading. I hope someone will be able to write about them. From Ford Cross we moved to Curnix Farm where my father became farm manager for Dan Evans. I will try to write about life there for a future newsletter.

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Henry Williams, Llancarfan
Broadhayes.

by Ian Baldwin,

There is a record of a clockmaker, Thomas Williams, who lived at Llancarfan and died in 1728. There are references to the possibility that Henry may have been a son or nephew of Thomas but I have not come across positive proof. I have also read somewhere that there were at least three related Williams' making clocks in the village, but I do not have details.

From Iorwerth Peate's book, Clock and Watchmakers in Wales (Welsh Flk. Mus.) and acknowledgement to W.A.H.Fisher, the following facts emerge. Henry Williams was born in Gloucestershire and on 14 September 1753, he married Mary Davies of Llancarfan. He was described as 'A great farmer' and was buried in Llancarfan on 21 July 1790. Edward Tanner was apprenticed to him on 18 June 1771 and was recorded as having repaired the clock at St John's Church, Cardiff in 1776. John Brown was apprenticed to him on 4 March 1778 and in 1780, Brown was employed to repair the clock at St John's at 30/- p.a.

There is a fine long-case (Grandfather) clock in the dining room at the Fox and Hounds, one is owned by Gwynne Liscombe, one showing the date, moon, and high water at Bristol Key (sic) is at Pontypridd, another at Peterstone Super Ely, three in the Welsh Folk Museum at St Fagans together with a hall-marked silver watch of 1776 with vergee and fusee movement and fine pierced and engraved work. The movement is engraved 'Henry Williams, Llancarvan'.

Peate points out that most of the Welsh clockmakers in the 18th century made their own movements but in many places, so-called country clockmakers were skilled cabinet makers who bought movements from Germany or Birmingham. Certainly a man who made watches was hardly likely to be using the skills of a carpenter! It is interesting to note that although Llancarfan was Welsh speaking in Henry Williams time, the 'f' had not at that time replaced the 'v' as it was to do later in written Welsh. The clocks all have the spelling 'Llancarvan'. Other members of the Society may have much to add?