



## **LLANCARFAN SOCIETY**

### **Newsletter 15: October-November 1988**

Annual Dinner. This was held in Rhose Community Hall on Saturday 24th September. It was a very successful event attended by well over 100 people and our intention of making it slightly more informal than last year's dinner so that people could move about and talk to each other was fully realised. The caterers provided a waitress service for the buffet meal which made life very easy for those who might have found difficulty in the usual scramble for food at a buffet. After the meal, John Etherington gave a short account of the achievements of the first year of the Society and appealed for volunteers for some of the Committee posts - we are still waiting - particularly for someone to take-on the job of Treasurer! We would also welcome one or two additional lady members and representatives of more recent arrivals in the village. Gwynne Liscombe conducted an auction of several framed prints of St Cadoc's Church which Jim Grove very kindly gave to the Society when he and Brenda recently left Whitechapel to live in Cardiff. Together with a successful raffle and the bar proceeds, the result was a useful boost to the Society's funds - a great relief as we had been wondering whether we could afford to continue sending-out Newsletters at the present frequency! Two events like the Craft Fair and the Dinner are obviously just about what we need to be self sufficient. Thanks are due to several people whose work made the dinner a success.

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Harry Hughes. The article in the last Newsletter has attracted many interesting comments. For example, Derek Porter told me that, after Harry's death, the old Carpenter's Shop which he had used as a workshop was more or less stripped bare of anything of value. Derek, as many of you will know, is an accomplished woodworker and managed to acquire a few old tools and other remnants of earlier times which are consequently still in the village, though in some cases too decayed by time to be usable. Amongst these tools were an Archimedean drill with a fixed bit and an adjustable spoke tenon cutter (for fitting waggon-wheel spokes to the hub). Archimedean drills are no longer commonly seen but, until the coming of power tools, were used for more delicate drilling work. They were operated by sliding a wooden 'bobbin' up and down a spiral metal shaft which was thus forced to rotate clockwise and then anticlockwise. The drill bit would cut in either direction of rotation. Derek also picked up various scraps of timber from the wheelwrighting period; ash felloes (wheel rim sections) and an elm stock (hub) together with some oak ladder rungs. Many of these items date back to the time when David

Griffiths, Glan yr Afon, had the Wheelwrights Shop and his name appears on some of the tools. Les Griffiths served his apprenticeship here and has contributed an interesting short note which follows this one. Much of this timber was incorporated into a spinning wheel which Derek was building at the time: a fitting memorial to the end of an era of carpentry and wheel-wrighting in Llancarfan.

Another piece of information was elicited from the comment that glow-worms seemed to have vanished from the village during the last decade or so. Philip Quelch told me that, earlier in the summer there were several in his Penylan House garden and a few more along the road between Penylan and the school.

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A WHIST DRIVE will be held in Rhoose Community Hall at 7.30 on Saturday, November 19th. Tickets (75p) on the door will include tea and biscuits. A raffle will also be held. A

#### Carpenter's Apprenticeship by Les Griffiths

My one ambition in life was to learn my trade as a Carpenter but, due to a lot of ill-health up to the age of 21, I was unable to start my apprenticeship until 1922. I finally started my apprenticeship as a wheelwright and carpenter in the Carpenter's Shop in Llancarfan in March, 1922. It was a five-year apprenticeship, working from 8 am to 5pm on weekdays and finishing at 12-o'clock on Saturday. The weekly wage during the first year was two shillings and sixpence, rising to one pound in the last year of the apprenticeship. I finished my time in 1926, the year of the General Strike.

The work consisted of the making and repairing of wheels, building and repairing waggons, carts, milk floats and traps as well as making wheelbarrows, ladders and field gates. Most of the work was done with hand tools. We had two machines, a band-saw and a mortising machine both of which were hand-operated. The old oak spokes from waggon wheels and cart wheels were used for ladder rungs. I have spent days doing nothing else other than shaping ladder rungs. The sides of the ladders were made from larch poles split in two. The farmers used them for thatching hay and straw ricks so they had to be made long enough to lie flat on the rick which would mean a 30 or 40 rung ladder.

Our busiest time was in the spring when the farmers would be bringing their farm implements for repair, ready for the harvest. The yard would be full of carts and waggons for repair. We also had a contract for the repair of farmhouses and buildings from the Oxford College Estate (Jesus College). It was always a job if a pole broke on a mowing machine while in the middle of mowing a field of hay. We had to prepare and dress a new pole and the fixing had to be done in the field where the mower had broken-down. This might mean working until six or seven-o'clock in the evening when the farmer would continue mowing until dusk.

I went back to work in the Carpenter's Shop for a few weeks after finishing my apprenticeship to help in making a new milk-float for Mr Williams of Crosstown, after

which I became a Journeyman Carpenter, getting work wherever I could during the years 1926-37 when there was mass unemployment

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Kingfishers.

Many of our contributors have recollected the wildlife of former times in the village and Dick Evans mentions the deterioration of the river in the letter which appears in this issue. Some of the flowers, birds and other animals are still with us but the march of time and agricultural progress has taken many others or at least made them rarer. We have talked before about the disappearance of the kingfishers but happily this was premature. Derek and Audrey Porter saw one perching by the river in the garden of their Millrace Cottage behind The Green a few weeks ago. There are certainly more fish in the river than for many years; not just the trout which have been mentioned before but millers thumbs and sticklebacks as well, smaller fish which will feed the kingfishers.

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A note from Gwladys W. Lougher, Cardiff.

In a previous Newsletter, Philip Watts mentioned William Hopkins, Pancross Farm, who had previously lived in Moulton. William Hopkins was my grandfather on my mother's side of the family. My grandmother was a Somerset person who died at the age of 37 in childbirth because no medical attention was available due to one of the heaviest snowfalls of that time, approximately February 1881 or '92. I was told that she was able to speak fluent Welsh.

There was a son and six daughters: David married Olive Griffiths of Llancarfan; Annie married John Jones of Great House; Elizabeth (known as Lil) remained single and lived in Rhoose from about 1909-10; May married George Lougher, Treguff Farm and lived in Batsley Farm, St Athan; Gwladys (my mother) married Jenkin Lougher, Garnllwyd Farm, and was married in Hawaii, November 27th, 1907 where my four brothers and I were born (brothers Edwin, Kenneth, Robert and Albert); Clara married Noel Price and lived in Hale, Altrincham; Alice married Ken Roberts, Ponthir and also lived in Rhoose. She was Registrar of Births and Deaths for the area for many years.

Grandfather, on leaving Pancross Farm, also lived in Rhoose until his second marriage to Marie, an ex-headmistress from North Wales. May, Gwladys (my mother) and Clara were good singers and would compete in the Eisteddfodau held in the Wesleyan Chapel (now Whitechapel). There was great rivalry between the Hopkins family and the Lougher family at these functions.

Notes. Phil Watt's article, in Newsletter 10, mentioned the fact that William Hopkins had

'several attractive daughters' and that he lost his first wife early in life. His son David was father of Olwyn and Gwyn, Llanbethery, whom many of you will know. That same Newsletter 10 opened with a note on the stability of families and a comment on the long association of the Lougher family with the Vale of Glamorgan. Gwladys Lougher, author of this note is daughter of Jenkin Lougher who's father, Robert (1837-1911), farmed Garnllwyd as did his father before him, another Robert (b.1786). These two Roberts were also Phil Watts' maternal great grandfather and great great grandfather. All of these dates and facts are culled from a family tree compiled by Major Edwin C. Lougher, Gwladys' brother.

A letter from Mrs Gwenda M. James concerning Pancross Farm 1919-27.

The only water at Pancross when my parents, David and Alice James, took over was rain. There was a large cistern under the ground in front of the building and a hand pump to fill a large trough from which it was carried in buckets to inside stock and horses; milking cows drank when passing. During a drought the cattle were driven down to the river by the pub and the drinking water was fetched in churns from the well in the field by Mrs Sweet's house.

The house cistern was under the orchard and inside the kitchen was one cold water tap with extension to a boiler by the side of the open fire. All meat and poultry was cooked before this fire, hung from a clockwork mechanism called a jack, fixed to the mantelpiece with a large pan underneath to catch the fat which was used for basting the joint. Bacon, kippers, eggs and tomatoes were cooked in front of this fire in a dutch pan. Outside was a copper boiler for washing and the large oven for bread, large cakes etc. The flour was ground at the mill.

The large barn and sheep dip were built during these years. All stock had to be walked to market at Wenvoe or Peterston and sometimes Ely. The butchers usually bought their beef, lambs etc. straight from the farm and took them to their own slaughter houses. Our butcher was a Mr Evan Thomas who lived in St Fagans and had a stall in Cardiff market.

To shop in Cardiff we drove in a pony and trap to the Angel Hotel where there were stables and also a large waiting room where parcels from various shops were delivered until we were ready to return home. Every shop had errand boys. All this was before the bus. To go to school in Barry we were driven to Aberthaw Station and collected at night. As the eldest of the family, when I was considered capable enough, we drove ourselves with our own Welsh pony and a very small governess car to match - we called it the Box. This and the pony were then stabled in the buildings across the road from the Blue Anchor until we returned. My father bred shire-horses and Hereford cattle and, when they were sold, would arrange for the necessary horse box etc to arrive at Aberthaw Station where the animals were loaded. The horse box was hooked on to the back of the first passenger train available. Coal arrived in the same way by the truck load and then hauled to the farm by horse and cart.

I recall a few residents (not in the village). In the Vicarage lived Mr and Mrs Thomas

Thomas and their three children. Mr Thomas was very deaf. His eldest daughter, Ceridwen, was in our time official organist in the Church. In later years I used to play when required. One Sunday evening, not concentrating, I left out a verse of the last hymn which made quite a muddle as the Vicar depended on the small congregation!

The postman came from Cowbridge, through Llantrithyd and Treguff, walking all the way. The Western Mail (one penny each) always came by post. At Treguff Mr Tom Lougher had a hunter called Sunbeam who won many races at point to points. The Glamorgan meetings were then held at the 'Three Ashes' ('Three Horseshoes?'). Two brothers, Jones, both roadmen from Llanbethery, kept the roads around Llancadle, Llanbethery and Carmel Chapel like a country park. Mr and Mrs Evans had the Green Dragon at Llancadle and Mr Kem Harbottle and his wife, Lower Llancadle Farm, walked to church unfailingly every Sunday morning. The two cottages at Pancross were homes for the cowman and the shepherd.

In those days Llancarfan had a cricket team and they played on the field next to the cottages on the Llancadle side. When my parents left Pancross the cricket team presented them with a silver tea service in appreciation for all their kindness. There was also a Llancarfan and District Ploughing Match with a Produce Show held on Pancross land. Produce prizes were for every kind of dressed poultry, brown and white eggs, bread, cheese, butter and also apples, pears and potatoes.

Mr John Jones lived in the house where Ernie Badcock lived. He was Blodwen's father and was head of the village Sunday School. The children from the two chapels and the church all met together in the Wesleyan chapel. A wonderful idea, we had lovely Christmas parties and books for good attendances. Food was always provided by the ladies of the village. Our summer outings were to the Leys for sports and again, wonderful teas. One Sunday Mr Pickett's bees swarmed in an apple tree in his garden (now Brook Cottage) so instead of Sunday School we sat on a wall and had a lesson on beekeeping.

Mr Lougher, Llanvythin, was the proud owner of the first car in Llancarfan, a Ford Model T. One Sunday during the service in the chapel the car engine could be heard running during the sermon. Mr Lougher dashed out to see, but although there were many boys around the village and the car at the time no one knew how it got started.

There were village concerts in the School or Hall. Mr Jones (Sunday School) produced the plays and Mr Alan Rowlands and his sister from Garnllwyd sang. They both had lovely voices. There were also evening classes under the Glamorgan County Council for poultry keeping, another for dairying and last, but not least, cookery. I owe much to three teachers, Miss Edwards, Miss Bowen and Miss Forsdyke and also my parents for all they taught me.

Note. Mrs James also listed a number of other people that she remembers; these have been included in our 'houses and people' list for future use.

A note from Dick (R. W.) Evans (Ford Cross Cottages 1915-40)

I had a stroll down 'memory lane' the other afternoon, through Llancarfan village, and felt a little sad. During the couple of hours I spent there I had to admire the lovely houses which have been built (although some, I thought did not fit in with the surroundings), but it was sad to find no life in the Ivy Pool, no animals apart from a dog, only two boys on cycles and only a gaggle of geese. It did not match up to the bustling ways of village life. There were no noises from the old blacksmith's shop or local people going about their daily chores but this I suppose is 'progress'??

Phil Watts asked if a pitching pole in by-gone days could be put up by one person. Mr Williams of Ford Farm did this every year, which I witnessed on several occasions. A hole was dug to receive the end of the pole, at the side of the rick. The waggon, half filled with hay, had the pole strapped to it at the front, complete with guy-ropes set out at approximate lengths needed. The pole was then released from its lashings and its end slid into the hole. The waggon was then backed up, pushing the pole to an upright position and the guy-ropes secured (simple!).

On reading in one of the Newsletters about Mrs Palling's faggots I remembered that my mother showed her how to make them. My father was a butcher by trade, so my mother was skilled in making faggots, black pudding and all delicacies connected with pigs. She was also noted for making Stilton Cheese, dressing poultry for Christmas, making elderberry and parsnip wine, and small potato gin (the potency of which Bill Watts would vouch for).

Tom Shanks' name is often mentioned in the Newsletters. I was taught by him to snare rabbits, foxes, stoats, weasels and moles. On one occasion, to avoid getting caught by Mr Bowen of Penonn Farm, he set rabbit snares under the hedge at the top of the hilly field by Ford Cottage, but instead of using pegs to secure them he tied the cords of the snares to round stones causing the rabbits, on hitting the snares, to dislodge the stones so that the rabbits were carried down to the bottom hedge by the rolling stones. Tom then walked along and picked them up without being seen!

I wonder if anyone could enlighten me regarding the sandy soil at Broomwell? (where the foxes' and badgers' earths are). There seemed to be the same sandy soil in the corner of the field where Billo Griffiths had a garden, but across the little stream from there, the field of Penylan opposite had no signs of sand nor is there sand anywhere else in the valley (to my knowledge) so why only Broomwell?

Sorry about my comments at the beginning - Llancarfan is still a beautiful village.

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The LATCH cycle marathon. On the same day as the Annual Dinner, Graham Brain and some of his working colleagues completed the 133 mile ride from Birmingham to Llancarfan. Graham was accompanied by Mike Higgs who rode from Birmingham as far

as Chepstow and for an earlier part of the route by Andy Mansfield. Graham and his friends will have raised well over £2500 pounds from their sponsors' for this most deserving children's charity and they should be congratulated for their determination in the face of continuous rain and wind.

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