



LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

Newsletter 16: December 1988

This Newsletter will reach you shortly before Christmas and it comes with the wish that it may be a very happy one, followed by a peaceful and successful New Year. Already the Christmas lights have shone in the town shopping centres for several weeks and preparations are under way for the erection of our own Christmas tree by the ford. A sterling effort by Graham Brain and Mike Higgs has provided a permanent base for the tree and an easier task for future years. As last year, Derek Higgs has kindly supplied the electricity. The lights will be switched-on at 6.30 p.m. on Wednesday 14th December with carols around the tree: try to come along and make it a village evening.

Another year has slipped away, it seems almost without our noticing it, bringing us to last month of the first full-year of the Society's existence. Sad to say, subscriptions will be due in January and a renewal form is enclosed with this Newsletter.

A successful Whist Drive was held at Rhoose Community Centre on Saturday 12th November, attended by about 40 members. Thanks are due to Phil Watts for acting as master of ceremonies, to Gwynne Liscombe for organising the prizes and to Derek & Pam Higgs and Barbara Milhuisen for supplying and preparing refreshments.

Village Hall: Some of you will have seen the announcement, on the village notice-board, that the Vale Borough Council have now completed the purchase of the former Church Hall from the Church in Wales for the sum of £20,000. The renovation work which has been planned for so long will now go ahead and the hall will become a village community centre.

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A note from Barbara Milhuisen (nee Jenkins)

In 1958, when preparations were in hand for the new Post Office, all furniture, fixtures and fittings had to be provided by the incumbent. Charlie Bryer was ever-resourceful and the post-box was obtained from the Athlete's Village at St Athan when the Empire Games were in Cardiff. Inside the Post Office, our old dresser lent itself very well for a new purpose in housing documents as it has numerous drawers and spaces, but a sign was also needed to announce that Llancarfan again had a Post Office. At the end of the war two strategic notices had been placed in the school grounds, one at the lower end and one at the top. The notices read 'Trespassers will be Prosecuted'. One of these notices fell down. The wood was good; it was only the post which was rotten. Charlie Bryer and Harry

Hughes knew that there was someone more agile than themselves who knew every inch of the school ground and would be happy to provide them with a flat board. A sign appeared in the post-office with a black background and white lettering: 'Llancarfan Post Office'. P.S. Please keep it safely until we have another Post Office.

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A letter from Dr Evan Thomas.

Evan Thomas is one of our most faithful correspondents and wrote again to express his appreciation of the last Newsletter and in particular the memories brought back by Mrs Gwenora James' article on Pancross '-- as the five James children were amongst my greatest friends -' The Model T Ford which Mrs James mentioned belonged to Evan's uncle Wally Lougher, Llanveithin: '--- Uncle Wally's Ford T saved many hours travelling to Barry in the pony and trap, drawn by 'Joker', to do the shopping and deliver the butter on Fridays. One sad note is that my Grandfather, William, one of the Garnllwyd brothers, died suddenly by the garage doors as he was seeing them off one day'.

Evan also suggested that it would be most interesting if one of the farmers from that early time could write something on farming methods which have changed so much since those days. This is a good idea and, by chance, the next contribution from the Ernie Badcock diaries will be one on the farming year. Well, we do have some farmers amongst our members. What about an article or at least some notes which we can write-up as a piece for the Newsletter? Any volunteers?

Editorial notes. Apologies to Mrs James for getting her christian name wrong in the last Newsletter. After seeing Gwenora James article, Phil Watts has rummaged-out a photograph of Uncle Wally Lougher with the Ford. One day we hope to publish some of these old photo's of the village. This reminds me that no one volunteered any pictures of the Cowbridge-Aberthaw Railway; I wonder if any exist?

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Comments.

Evan Thomas' letter (above) makes me realise that the last Newsletter has stimulated more than the usual amount of comment. One of the Fox and Hounds regulars said that it was 'the best yet' but I also had the criticism that it was backward-looking. This is difficult to answer, as the majority of our members, including the editor, have passed the half-century, and a few boast 75 years or more. Not a bad thing either, when you total the account of wisdom and tolerance! However, what about our younger readers? How do you see the village today? It is very different from the self-sufficient times which ended after the Second World War, but the change has come to most villages, particularly those which are close to large towns and cities all over Britain. Llancarfan is not unique in losing its own cottage industries and gaining the commuter; indeed in a village 200 miles away from Llancarfan, the wheatfields where I played as a child have vanished under brick and concrete, the forge has become a builder's yard, the village shop is now a superstore and

many residents travel for three or four hours a day to London offices.

At least one of our members maintains that village social life would be very different if Llancarfan contained a modicum of low-cost housing. This is almost certainly both true and desirable, but what has happened to the council-houses which we did have? All have become private residences, of which the value has rapidly caught up with the prices asked for the new houses commented-on by Dick Evans in the last Newsletter. There cannot be a property in the village valued much under a hundred thousand pounds and, except for limited replacement of agricultural buildings there is no possibility of buying a building plot. This is the recipe for ending the family stability which we wrote about in Newsletter 10. How many children of this village will remain as adults? This is a social and political problem for all of rural Britain; it is not unique to Llancarfan nor to Wales; it cannot be solved by planning restrictions or violence. It reflects the radical change in our attitude to property ownership since the beginning of the century when almost every house in this village, including many of the farms, was tenanted rather than owner occupied. Property in the countryside first came on to the open market after the demise of the rural industries and reduction in farm labour-needs between and after the wars. What about one of you younger readers (at least under 40!) telling us what you think. How do you see the prospect at the present day and for the years taking us up to the end of this century?

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Bethlehem Baptist Chapel, Llancarfan by L. H. Griffiths

The Chapel was built in 1823 and rebuilt in 1870. At one time during the early life of the church the number in membership was a hundred and forty. Before the church was rebuilt in 1870, there was no Baptising pool in the Chapel Building, for anyone wishing to become a member and go through the waters of Baptism, the Baptismal service was carried out in the river. When the church was rebuilt in 1870 a Baptising Pool was incorporated in the new building.

My mother was born and brought up in Llancarfan and died in March 1966 aged 92. She was well versed in the history of the Baptist Chapel.

The following are my recollections of the church as I knew it from 1910. The centenary celebrations were held in June 1923, with a week of preaching services, tea provided in the Vestry for visitors. A concert was held in the Council School on the Friday evening to end the week of celebrations. The number in membership at that time would be from forty-five to fifty, with a strong Sunday School of thirty or more children on the school register. Three services; morning service at 11 a.m., Sunday School at 2.30 p.m. and evening service at 6 p.m. Communion was held on the first Sunday in the month and mid-week, a prayer meeting. The Vestry is the building north of the Chapel with stabling underneath, which was in use for many years when people drove to the Chapel on Sunday in their horse and traps. The Vestry was also the meeting place for the Sunday School. The Sunday School tea and entertainment was held every Boxing Day. Tea was provided in the Vestry, the entertainment and prize-giving in the vestry.

The Baptist Church in my time wasn't strong enough to support a full time minister, we had to share a minister with Sister Churches in the Vale. We had a joint ministry with Aberthaw Baptist Church for several years, finally a joint ministry with Bethel Baptist, Llantwit Major, including visiting ministers from the Baptist Churches in Barry.

I was made a Deacon and Trustee in the mid-thirties, Secretary in 1943, also organist from 1947 until the church had to close in January 1980. I placed all documents, letters etc., in the archives in Cardiff, some of them dating back to the early years of the life of the church, which would take you much deeper into its history.

Before I bring this letter to a close I wish to pay tribute to Mr Jehoida Lewis, born and brought-up in Broadhays, Llancarfan, Blacksmith and Farmer. A Deacon and Trustee of the Baptist Chapel he was the mainstay of this Baptist Church for many years until his death on October the 5th, 1977 age 86. Faithful unto the end.

Holy Wit

The child who heard the story of the prodigal son for the first time: 'In the midst of the celebrations for the prodigal' said the teacher, 'there was one for whom the feast brought no happiness, only bitterness. Can you tell me who this was?'

'The fatted calf' suggested one little lad!

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A moral tale or 'It's the Rich what gets the gravy'
Archive research by
Gwynne Liscombe

Parish of Llanrhyddan. Lougher's Charity. Mary Lougher, by Will, dated 2nd June 1731, gave, for distribution in bread amongst the poor, at five several times in the year, the interest of £50, which, with an accumulated interest of £30, was paid many years after the death of the testatrix, and lent by the parishioners in the vestry assembled to their landlord, Robert Jones, esq., of Fonmon Castle, at 5 per cent. interest which appears to have been paid down to 1810, when Robert Jones, esq., the son and representative of the preceding, agreed to repay the principal upon an express stipulation that it should be laid out in repairing that part of the road, called Tremabllwydon, which passed near Fonmon Castle. The road was completed, under the superintendence of the surveyor of the roads, during the years 1810 and 1811, and the total expenses, amounting to £76 14s. 1d., were paid by Mr Jones, who thus applied the charity money to repair of the road for his own private accommodation. From this time the sum of £4 was annually paid out of the poor's rates, in respect of interest, down to 1833, when the parish refused the claim, as they had derived no benefit from the outlay. The subject was lately brought under the consideration of a vestry specially summoned for that purpose, when, being equally divided, the one party being in favour of

the payment, and the other party opposed to it, the meeting separated without coming to any resolution.

The interest, when received, was distributed among the poor on Good Friday, according to the discretion of the minister, churchwardens, and overseers.

Extract from Charity Commissioners'

Report, 1838.

Postscript: The Roberts Jones. At the beginning of the 19th Century property in Llancarfan was extensively owned by the Jones' family of Fonmon Castle. Two Roberts are mentioned in the Charity Commissioners' report transcribed above: these were father and son, but the preceding history of the family is of considerable interest and, as given here, is derived from Stewart William's article entitled 'Fonmon Castle' in his Vale of Glamorgan Series, volume one, History on my Doorstep. In 1656 the castle was sold to pay debts incurred by the Bolingbroke family who fought for the Royalist cause during the Civil War. The purchaser was Colonel Philip Jones, Controller of Oliver Cromwell's Household. When Philip died in 1674 he was succeeded in quick succession by his third son, John, followed by the younger brother, Oliver. The first of four generations bearing the name Robert, was Oliver's son. He held the castle until 1715 being succeeded by his son, Robert II, who lived on only to 1742. It was this Robert Jones II who became friends with the brothers Wesley. Robert II's wife was left to cope with the high-spirited and difficult son, Robert III, who later made extensive alterations to the castle. By the time of his death in 1793, this Robert had incurred extensive debts and for a while had fled to France to escape his creditors. His son became the fourth Robert to own the castle and died unmarried in 1837 when the property passed to his brother, another Oliver and it was through this part of the family that the castle ultimately became the property of Lady Boothby, mother of the late Sir Hugo Boothby.