



## **LLANCARFAN SOCIETY**

### **Newsletter 18: March 1989**

What a strange winter it has been, or more accurately hasn't! It is almost impossible to believe that there have been other years in which the daffodils were not ready for St David's day, or that I had a month off school in 1947 as a result of arctic conditions which did not even begin until the end of January! Walking the dogs during the second and third week of February we saw wood anemones and violets, including the lovely white variety of sweetviolet; the celandines and dog's mercury have been flowering since midJanuary and some hedge-parsley has appeared - usually an early summer flower. The hawthorn hedges are beginning to come into leaf, easily a month early. Oddly, where it is in the very old mixed hedges of the valley bottom, or along the narrow lanes, the hawthorn buds are only just bursting but wherever it has been replanted in the last few years it is much earlier - places where the gas pipeline cut the old hedges or the widened part of Five-Mile Lane by Blackland and Redland Farms. Whether this is to do with the disturbed soil or whether the seedlings raised by the commercial nurseries are different, who knows?

Two days after writing this, driving through Twyn yr Odyn to Cardiff, the ridge of Craig Llanishen was white with snow, a backdrop to the clearest view over the city that I have ever seen. The cold snap did not last or do any damage and we are back to spring weather again.  
JRE

#### **Future Events**

May Day Walks: on Monday, 1st May we shall be repeating last year's guided walks to view features of interest in the village. Joyce Andrews, landlady of the Fox and Hounds, has very kindly offered coffee before we start. We shall assemble in the Fox and Hounds at 10.30 am for coffee and commence the walks at 11.00, with two or three leaders as last year. We aim to return to the Fox and Hounds sufficiently early for those who wish to have a pub lunch. Please complete the enclosed booking-slip and return to John Etherington, Ceffyl Du, Llancarf, CF6 9AD,

Craft Fair, Boot Sale and Sports. Last year this was a very successful event, held at Pancross Farm by the kindness of Tony and Joan Thomas. We hope to arrange a repeat performance on Saturday 1st July and to include not only better weather but also, possibly, a Barn Dance in the evening. Early days yet, but we shall need helpers. All volunteers will be welcomed with open arms. Please contact Phil Watts.

Contributions to the Newsletter: Last month, in a letter to the editor, Phil Watts asked readers to continue supplying us with articles, notes and letters. This is important for the continuing health of the Newsletter. If you look through this one, you will discover that almost everything was either written or compiled by the editor. I don't mind doing it - indeed compared with the amount that I have to write in my working life, it isn't a lot. However, a community enterprise like this should not be so inbred and just because I am editor I feel some inhibition about writing on more controversial subjects, for example planning-permissions, appropriate development, different views on 'industrial' farming in the countryside, driving on country lanes, dormitory villages and so on. I do have strong views on some of these things but so must many of you, the members of the Society about a letter or two on these current problems of rural life. Write to us and add some spice to the 1989 Newsletters. We will print anything that is not libellous, obscene or anonymous!

One part of the preparation of Newsletters is a bit of a problem and that is the final stage: copying and stapling. So far we have relied on goodwill of one or two organisations to allow us the use of xeroxing facilities but this sometimes causes long delays between completion of the News letter and its circulation. We are looking into the possibility of having it done commercially but if anyone has any other suggestions please send them to John Etherington. The primary copy is either clean typescript, for copying, or word-processed text on an MS DOS floppy disc.

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Sea trout Just before Christmas, Derek Porter showed me a very large fish in rather poor condition, obviously spawning in the shallow, gravelly run of the river beside Millrace Cottage. Not being fishermen we immediately jumped to the conclusion that it was a Salmon but, when more fish arrived, Derek called the Water Authority. The Fishery Officer identified them as Sea Trout (Salmon Trout), which had been running in some numbers up the river Thaw. Nant Carfan has always had a population of Brown Trout which remain in the river but travel upstream to spawn. The migratory variety, Sea Trout, spends some of its life in the sea and has certainly not been seen here in recent years on its winter spawning journey. What about you fishermen who have told us before of the Trout and Eels in the brook? Did the Sea Trout run up Nant Carfan to spawn, every year, in days past?

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Broomwell. In Newsletter 15 Dick Evans asked about the sandy soil at Broomwell. If we are both talking about the same thing, I think the 'sand' is limey material deposited on soil grains and tiny pebbles wherever the meandering stream has dropped layers of sediment in the valley bottom. The badgers dig it out not only as the white sandy grains but also bits of ancient twig and other vegetation, all petrified by the lime deposit together with lots of tiny snail shells. Another place where the same thing happens is in the little streamlet that comes down through the small wood on Ty to Maen land, a little further up the footpath

past the mill dam. The stream bed is full of semi-petrified twigs and where it forms a waterfall the stream tumbles over a solid bank of the same sort of limey material. Geologists call it tufa and it is deposited from the very hard water which has dissolved lime from the limestone which underlies all the soils in this valley - you can also see it where springwater gushes out of the wall opposite the Fox and Hounds. There is a huge bank of tufa exposed in the cliffs at the seaward end of Cwm Nash near Southerndown. In places where it is really hard, gardeners used to collect tufa and use it for growing alpine plants - in some places in Yorkshire a great deal of damage was done in the name of horticulture.

Talking of badgers there seems to be a lot of activity at the moment - tracks everywhere in the countryside as well as spring-cleaning at the setts. Ian Newsham saw one as he drove past the Talbots one evening early in the year. Being very shy this is fairly unusual - they scuttle through the hedges the moment they hear a car coming, though sadly not fast enough on some main roads. Unfortunately, also, there is too much evidence of attention by badger-diggers where the location of setts is well-known. This, despite a maximum fine of £1000 per badger, as well as a law which presumes the trespasser in badger-land to be guilty of committing an offence unless he can prove otherwise.

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Agriculture in the late 1920's: Ernie Badcock's Diaries  
compiled by John Etherington

"It is easy to be nostalgic for a past you did not have to live through."  
Neil Philip

"If they did not work on they would not be paid; so they worked on. ---- the rain had no occasion to fall, but raced along horizontally on the yelling wind, sticking into them like glass splinters till they were wet through. Tess had not really known till now what was really meant by that. --- to stand working slowly in a field and feel the creep of rainwater, first in the legs and shoulders, then on hips and head, then at back, front, and sides, and yet to work on until the leaden light diminishes and marks that the sun is down, demands a distinct modicum of stoicism, even of valour."

*Tess of the D'Urbervilles* - Thomas Hardy

The internal combustion engine came later to agriculture in Britain than it did to road transport, but unlike the bus service, it has continued to increase in importance on today's mechanised farms. Any country person over the age of about fifty will remember the last of the horse-drawn implements: one or two furrow ploughs, cultivators, mowing machines, hay rakes, reaping machines and devices such as the pitching-pole which Philip Watts described in Newsletter 13.

Prior to the Second World War a few rich farms owned metal-wheeled tractors but the pneumatic tyred version, introduced in 1932, was only becoming at all widespread as the War disrupted the fortunes of society. Even the three-point linkage, now universal on all

tractors, dates back only to Ferguson's invention in 1920. The blue and red Fordson and grey Ferguson tractors which appeared in quantity after the War began a long revolution which is still going-on. Tractors grew in size, combine-harvesters became widespread in the late 40's or early 50's and the hay harvest was revolutionised by the introduction of the pick-up baler.

Ernie Badcock of Great House, Llancarfan was born in September 1902 and died in 1987. He served this Parish in public office for almost 40 years becoming Clerk to the Parish Council on July 14th 1949, continuing through the formation of the new Welsh Community Councils and on, almost to the end of his life in 1987.

Ernie kept a diary from January 26th 1926 until the last year of his life, missing but a few days here and there. Peter Badcock and wife Joan, of Great House, Llancarfan, have very kindly allowed us to consult the diaries as a recent record of village history. The first article which appeared in Newsletter 6 was put together as a sequence of 'Winter' entries, starting with that first January entry so long ago and continuing forward for 60 years on the same day, to 1986. Ernie did not live in Llancarfan when the diary was started but worked close-by at New Wallace farm near Dyffryn.

The early entries go back to a time before the tractor when almost everything on smaller farms was done by horse- or man-power except for the help of the steam traction engine in threshing and for steam winch-ploughing (though there seems to be no mention of the latter in the diaries). It was a time when work was hard and hours long but despite our modern distaste for such physical labour it was also a time when all had to work together, for example during harvest, generating a community spirit which seems sadly lacking from life today except, perhaps, in the more deprived areas of inner cities and the poorest, most remote areas of the Celtic fringe.

During those early years, in the late 1920's, when he worked for New Wallace, many of the diary-entries refer to the day to day events on the farm, some of which have their counterparts in mechanised agriculture now and some others which have gone forever. I have used the first year of the diaries to assemble a patchwork of information on the farm year. Here and there I have included quotations from Thomas *Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles* which vividly embody the life which Ernies diaries record. Tess was written as a magazine serial in the 1890's and re-edited as a book in 1912, not long before the diaries start. The Wessex of the novels was but a few miles away, across the Channel, and not unlike Glamorganshire with its rich agricultural lowlands so close to the poorer farms of the acid-soiled uplands. There are also one or two quotations from other novels by Hardy, and less well known publications for which I acknowledge J. C. Brown's *Figures in a Wessex Landscape*. I have also included some notes of my own and questions which today's farmers or some older readers may be able to answer.

The diary entries are presented below. The days are in sequence, separated by semi-colons. Only farming entries are recorded and bracketed notes show uncertainties of various kinds. One or two abbreviations have been expanded for clarity, I hope without

incorporating mistakes:

January 1926.

Fetches mangels from yard; killed pig; load rails and posts Pencotre (sic: Pencoedtre?);  
200 Crooks from yard.  
[What are crooks?]

February.

Bent Orchard Hedge; Shorns from Old Wallace; transplant current and goosberry trees; 3  
lambs to date; commence ploughing turnip ground; lay hedge 1/2 mile field; wet - stopped  
ploughing; commenced mangels; 4 sacks barley (8 cwt) from Llanbethery; killed pig;  
fetched 3 1/2 cwt oat seed from Lougher, The Cliff, Penmark; chaffing; thorns from  
Goldlands wood.

[Goldsland Wood - between Dyffryn Gardens and Wenvoe Castle.]

[See note on mangels, turnips and swedes - October. Chaff cutter was a hand-turned  
machine which sliced straw into 'chaff' as animal feed.]

March.

Recommended ploughing turnip ground; rain stopped ploughing; Buttercup slipped calf;  
wet; wet - chaffing; commenced laying hedges 20 acres; Blackberry to bull; recommended  
ploughing - finished turnip ground; commenced ploughing last-year's mangel ground (2nd  
plough); ploughing; finished ploughing mangel ground; started this year's root ground;  
ploughing; commenced dragging wheat (where failed); dragging for oats by Mas(?) hedge  
(3-horse drag) by the wood; cultivating same; sowing oats by Mas hedge (Hamstead?  
drill); sowing oats by lane (where wheat failed). Daisy calved; hauling hay; rolling oats by  
Goldsland Wood; 3 cattle to Ely but not sold. Withdrawn at £18; rolling mangel ground.  
cultivating for barley on top of winter oats (where failed);

Crop failure seems to have been fairly common, in particular for winter cereals sown in  
autumn. Even today this can be a problem in wet or cold winters - what do our farming  
readers have to say?]

April.

Ploughing and cultivating for mangels; ploughing; ploughing; ploughing; ploughing  
(mangels); ploughing; Vaccinated calves (except smallest lot). Castrated calves. Hereford  
heifer slipped calf. Drilling and hauling dung for potatoes; drilling for mangels (49 drill);  
sowing mangels; chainharrowing 17 acres; chainharrowing 19 acres; chainharrowing 20  
acres; working ground for barley; wit?? chain 20 acres; chain; chain; sowed barley.

"The fresh harrow lines seem to stretch like chanellings in a piece of new corduroy ----  
taking away its gradations and depriving it of all  
history" *Jude the Obscure*

[See notes on mangels - October.]

May.

(Monday 3rd General Strike commenced); ploughing swede ground; commenced rolling oats - lane; fencing; kicked by Blossom. 22 ewes & 25 lambs from Ely; rolling oats (lane) finished; cultivating for swedes; drilling for swedes; swedes sown (52 drills). Scuffled March swedes. Chainharrowing potatoes; rolling swedes. Ploughing for fresh swedes; sowed seed in winter oats; washed sheep; ploughing; shearing; sheared ours and Burdons (87 + 107); hoeing swedes. Rolled barley. 1929

May 1st - all at Cowbridge Races; put barbed wire right round 17 acres; chain harrowing barn fields; chain bottom field towards Brynhill; chain long 8 acres; Scuffling: Horse-hoeing. Hand hoeing includes singling as well as weeding

June.

Flagstones to Wenvoe. Harrow from blacksmiths; scuffling mangels; hoeing mangels (2 days); scuffling swedes and fencing clover; cultivating for swedes (last lot); dragging and rolling for swedes; Charlie - shoes removed (Wenvoe); drilling for swedes; sowed swedes; scuffled 20 drills of swedes down and sowed them again. Lambs in all night for dosing; dosed lambs with Santovin (2oz per lamb for tapeworm). Scuffling; clover judged for Cardiff show. Hoeing potatoes. Lambs in all night for 2nd dose; finished hoeing potatoes. Second dose Santovin to lambs (2oz per lamb); hoeing swedes; earthing-up potatoes and cultivating headlands; hoeing; 3 cattle sold Ely £27.10. 5 cattle bought St Fagans £11.00; scuffling; hoeing. Maggie to bull; commenced hay. Cut clover; hoeing swedes; cut bottom meadow; carrying clover; finished carrying clover.

[Clover is not so frequently grown today as a single crop, but in a mixture with ryegrass.]

"They looked for some shelter ---- and thought of the barn hard by --.

It was closed save as to one of the usual pair of doors facing them, which had been propped open by a hurdle-stake, and for this opening they made. The interior had been cleared by a recent bout of threshing except at one end, where there was a stack of dry clover." *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

"The majority of the animals were lying down, and could not be stirred ---- Many of them foamed at the mouth, their breathing being quick and short, whilst the bodies of all were fearfully distended." (Bathsheba's sheep had broken into a field of young clover)

*Far from the Madding Crowd*

July.

Commenced carrying bottom meadow; finished carrying meadow; commenced cut 20 acres; finish cut 20 acres. Bought two calves Merthyr Dyfan (John) £5; 2 cattle sold Ely £51; scuffling. Lambs to slaughterhouse; carrying 20 acre; carrying 20 acre. Yearling died; carrying 20 acres (rain stopped carrying). Cut clover under wood; cutting bottom 12 acres; cutting and carrying; finished carrying 20 acres; carried clover under wood; carrying bottom 12 acres; carrying bottom 12 acres finished. Cut field under Brynhill; Broughton to



calve. Broughton calved; carried field under Brynhill; hoeing; scuffling; scuffling; dipping sheep; commenced hauling dung to clover field under Brynhill; scuffling; scuffling; scuffling; cut hay 17 acres. Commenced cut winter oats.

August.

Cut winter oats; carried hay; cut spring oats; fencing etc.; 10 lambs Ely; cutting thistles; cut barley; cutting wheat; carrying winter oats; cutting wheat; cutting oats; cutting oats; finished carrying winter oats; hauling dung. Carried wheat; carrying oats. Hauling dung; carried barley; cutting 2nd crop clover. Carried barley rakings; finished cutting clover; carried oats; 2 cattle Ely.

"--- two broad arms of painted wood, --- rose from the margin of a yellow cornfield ---. They, with two others below formed the revolving Maltese cross of the reaping-machine - --- . The field had already been 'opened' - a lane a few feet wide had been hand-cut through the wheat along the whole circumference of the field for the first passage of the horses and machine. ---- Along one side of the field the whole train went, the arms of the mechanical reaper revolving slowly ---." *Tess*

September.

Commenced ploughing stubble (skimming); ploughing; skimming; ploughing oats stubble for wheat (lane); ploughing; ploughing; ploughing; ploughing. Mr Thomas away buying sheep (45); ploughing; ploughing; ploughing; ploughing; ploughing; finished ploughing. Cultivating and skimming; cultivating, dragging and skimming; harrowing and skimming; moved store cattle to long 8 acres; picking catch off skimming; cultivating same. Lifting potatoes.

[Proportionally, ploughing must have taken more of the farmer's time before the tractor replaced the horse.]

[Skimming - cultivating just below the surface - allows the weeds and stubble to be raked-off the surface.]

[Dragging - in eastern England this was done to break-up soil clods. A heavy timber baulk, weighted with stones, was dragged over the surface, Was it the same in the Vale?]

[Hardy wrote about picking catch (couch grass) off skimmings: "Farmers and horticulturalists know well that it is in the nature of a heap of couch-grass, when kindled in calm weather, to smoulder for many days, and even weeks, until the whole mass is reduced to a powdery charcoal ash ---".]

October.

Hauling dung; hauling dung. Threshing machine arrived; threshing. Duckfooting for wheat down lane; threshing; put straw in barn; dragging and rolling; dragging and rolling; dung spreading; dragging for wheat; wet. Liming; dragging for wheat. Thorn form Old Wallace; sowing oats (lane); sowing wheat (lane) commenced mangels but turned wet; 6 cwts

potatoes to Barry; hauling mangels; cleaning rickyard; commenced ploughing quarry field; ploughing; ploughing.

"---Close under the eaves of the stack --- was the red tyrant that the women had come to serve - a timber-framed construction, with straps and wheels appertaining - the threshing machine. A little way off there was another indistinct figure; this one black ----. The long chimney running up beside the ash tree, and the warmth which radiated from the spot, explained --- that here was the engine which was to act as the primum mobile of this little world."  
*Tess*

[Duckfooting - using a cultivator with flat, horizontal tines drawn through the soil just below the surface].

[Mangels, turnips and swedes demanded an enormous amount of hand labour starting with the repeated ploughings which Ernie noted in the early months of the year and followed by rolling, harrowing and dragging. The seeds were sown in drills, usually made with a ridged roller and the field then rolled again to bury the seed. Each 'seed' is actually a cluster of separate seeds and so the next task was hand singling of the seedlings and repeated hoeing. These roots were lifted by hand and hauled to a clamp where they were stored until used.]

"---- a long mound or 'grave', in which the roots had been preserved since early winter. Tess was standing at the uncovered end, chopping off with a bill-hook the fibres and earth from each root, and throwing it after the operation into the slicer. A man was turning the handle of the machine, and from its trough came the newly-cut swedes, the fresh smell of whose yellow chips was accompanied by the sounds of the snuffling wind, the smart swish of the slicing blades and the chopping of the hook in Tess's leather-gloved hand."

*Tess*

November.

Dung hauling; ploughing and swede hauling; ploughing; ploughing; ploughing; ploughing; 4 cwt potatoes to Barry. 1 bag to Cardiff by passenger train; ploughing; ploughing; ploughing; clipping; clipping; clipping; ploughing; ploughing;; Ely Mart. Sold 5 ewes for 7/- each.

[What was clipping? Anyone know? Too late for shearing? Was it hedges?]

"The wide acreage of blank agricultural brownness, apparent where the swedes had been pulled, was beginning to be striped in wales of darker brown, gradually broadening to ribands. Along the edge of each of these something crept upon ten legs, moving without haste and without rest up and down the whole length of the field; it was two horses and a man, the plough going between them, turning up the cleared ground for spring sowing."

December.

Hauling swedes; clipping;



As the diaries proceed into the 1930's, entries related to agriculture become fewer and begin to relate more to life in Llancarfan. Our next set of extracts will be entitled Summer in Llancarfan.

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Wills and documents.

Many people have researched their family history's or the history of the house which they live in. All sorts of documents and extracts have been collected. This one is from a sixteenth century will, pertaining to Crosstown. Peter Mathias kindly provided this copy from the Prerogative Court of Canterbury - Wills:

John Giles of Crostonn. 3 Febuary 1564/5. Soul to almighty god; body to be buried in the Trinity Yeld of the parish church of Lancarvan. To the church of Landaphe 12d. To the vicar of Lancarvan for tithes forgotten 2s. To Agnes Gyles and Elizabeth Gyles my daughters 19 kine and bull with all corn now growing in Krenghill or shall follow this year, with all the oats that shall be sowed in the Wellclose, and my daughters to have as much ground and grass as shall feed the bull and kine for one whole year next after my decease, and that shall be delivered to them equally forthwith after my decease. To every of my daughters a featherbed of the best and six silver spoons between them both. To William Rees £3 6s 8d. To Joane Rees two heifers of two years of age. To John Gyles my son my black horse, saddle, bridle, boots and spurs with one half of all the lands that I hold by lease in the parish of Penmarke. To John a featherbed. To William Gyles my son the lease with all the years that be yet to come upon the house of Chrostonn, with all the rents and lands to the same belonginge, the which I hold of my brother John Gyles of Gylstonn. To William half the lands in Penmarke. William shall pay to Rees Vaughan £44 within three years after my decease. Residue of goods and chattels to son William Gyles, whom I make executor. I make my brother John Gyles of Gilestonn overseer, to whom 20s for his pains. Witnesses: John Giles, William Giles, Robart Jonnes alias Davis clerk. William Badger, Richard Badger, John Deere, Thomas Gryffyth, Jenkin Griffith with others. Proved 2 April 1565 by William Giles, executor.

Note: the idiosyncratic spelling has been transcribed exactly - in particular different spellings of the same word! (usually names or place-names).

In the same copy there appears an entry which reads "To my ghostly father for tithes forgotten 2s." This seems much more apposite than our modern use of "late"!

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Half-price offer. Several times during the last year we have mentioned Roy Denning's The Vale of Glamorgan in Old Photographs Volume 1. This Christmas brought the editor a second copy accidentally purchased as a 'stocking filler'. Available from John Etherington at Ceffyl Du: £3.75. Sadly it has only one photograph of Llancarfan.

