



## **LLANCARFAN SOCIETY**

### **Newsletter 19: April-May 1989**

Each month I wonder how to start the Newsletter; hence the various chat about weather, wildlife and so-on. This time there is a ready-made story, not just for the introduction but almost for the whole of this number.

Llancarfan Community Hall. Villagers will have noticed that the former Church Hall, now acquired by the Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council for the use of the Parish, is showing the first signs of its forthcoming renovation. Initially, works to a total value of £15,000 are to be done, including essential repairs and connection to the main drainage system. With luck, a further substantial sum will be spent in converting the building for its new function as a Community Hall. It will then become the responsibility of the Community, presumably through a suitable Management Committee, to furnish and maintain the Hall.

At our last Committee meeting we decided that the profits from the Craft Fair to be held on July 1st should be the Society's contribution toward the fund for furnishing the Hall, once it is handed-over. We also found ourselves very hard-pressed for Committee Member's time to organise an evening Barn Dance and, rather than abandon this event, we have arranged with the Church that their annual Barn Dance should follow our morning and afternoon Craft Fair (subject to confirmation). Volunteers for all the jobs which will need to be done on or around July 1st will be needed - please contact Phil Watts.

During the conveyancing of the Hall from the Church in Wales to the Vale Council, the original Faculty by which the Consistorial Court of Llandaff granted permission for building in the Churchyard, has come to light. As the document now ceases to have any practical value the Solicitors for the Church in Wales have kindly given it to the Parish via Roger Fuller.

The Faculty contains a series of hand-written entries in a printed document of which various extracts are given below. It commences:

"John Sankey, M.A., B.C.L., K.C., VICAR-GENERAL AND  
OFFICIAL PRINCIPAL OF THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,  
Joshua Pritchard, by divine permission LORD BISHOP OF LLANDAFF,  
LAWFULLY CONSTITUTED:

To all Christian people to whom these presents shall come or may or shall in  
any wise concern, and more especially to the Reverend Alfred Thomas  
Hughes, Vicar of the Parish of Llancarfan in the County of Glamorgan and in  
our diocese of Llandaff; and to Edward Griffiths and George Lougher,  
Churchwardens of the Parish aforesaid; ---"

The Faculty then states that the inhabitants of the Parish had lodged a petition with the  
diocese on April 4th 1912. A series of numbered points follow, including the proposals for  
the erection of the Hall and various circumstances in mitigation of the consequences of its  
taking a part of the churchyard.

1. That it is proposed to erect, on the extreme South East Corner of the Churchyard,  
belonging to the said parish of Llancarfan, a Parish Room, constructed of stone and  
providing seating accomodation for 200 persons. The proposed site for the New Room is  
immediately contiguous to, and lies between that formerly occupied by an old building  
used as a School and Pauper's cottages and the Brook on the eastern Side of --- the  
Churchyard ---. The old building was demolished many years ago and the site thereof has  
since formed part of the said Churchyard. The proposed building will be erected in  
accordance with the design annexed to the Petition and the only access thereto will be  
from the roadway. The site will comprise an area of 115 square yards and 5 square feet  
(52 feet by 20 feet). ----- provision will be made for a shelter for the horses of those  
attending the services of the Church ---.

3. That the estimated Cost of the work is £300, towards which there is a sum of £47 in  
hand, and it is intended to hold a Bazaar on Tuesday the 28th May in order to raise the  
balance ---.

6. That, in furtherance of their application the Petitioners (illegible) in aid the following  
facts:-

(a) The soil of the proposed site is quite unsuitable for Burial  
purposes by reason of the proximity to the brook and the consequent wet nature of the  
ground.

(c) That the Churchyard is one acre and a quarter in extent, and with an estimated  
population of 466, the average number of New Graves opened therein during the three  
years last past has been four only, and there is at the present time at least half an acre of  
unused Burial Ground.

(d) That by a deed of Conveyance bearing date the 15th day of February, 1912, the  
Ecclesiastical Commisioners for England (being the Owners in fee simple) did ----- for  
the purposes of the Church Buildings Act 1818 to 1884, convey to Stanford Edward  
Downing of the Ecclesiastical Commission ---- the piece of land --- marked "Site of

Old Barn" and containing 195 square yards ---- and to be appropriated as and for an addition to the said Churchyard ---.

(e) That the said Old Barn has been taken down ---.

(f) That the piece of land so acquired --- and suitable for burials, is greater in extent by about 80 square yards ----.

7. That the Room will be used on Sundays for Sunday School and other religious purposes, and on week-days for the Band of Hope, Guild and Tea Meetings and Social Gatherings and for any other Meetings and for any other objects, ends or purposes having in view the spiritual, intellectual, moral or social wants of the Parishioners."

The document closes with the note that no objections were forthcoming by a decreed date and a further hand-written observation:-

"--- that the proposed building shall be designated the Church Room of the said Parish."

The Faculty was granted on 14th May 1912 and, as we know from the commemorative stone in the wall of the building, it was completed in the autumn of 1912, the stone being dated 17th September.

#### Notes

The Faculty gives us written information on older buildings, now lost to the village, and it precisely locates the former School and Paupers Cottages. The plan which accompanied the Faculty also identifies the plot of land upon which the Old Barn stood. It is marked as an elongated strip of ground in the southwestern corner of the Churchyard, close to the present site of the War Memorial and abutting the road opposite the former Bethlehem Chapel yard and the garden of Chapel House.

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The Vicar General, John Sankey, would have been a lawyer, representing the Bishop in the administration of the diocese: "--- his chief function is normally the hearing of applications for and granting of faculties etc --" (Livingstone, ed. Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church, O.U.P. 1977. I am grateful to Geoff Burrows for this information).

It is remarkable that that a bazaar could be expected to raise £253. In modern terms this would be several thousands of pounds as a working man's weekly wage was less than £5 at the time. Was the hope realised or were other functions held? See Gwynne Liscombe's article below and Phil Watts' notes.

Morris Griffiths who lived at Bridge House (now Bridge Cottage) until about 1970, recollected, as a young lad, sitting on the ridge-pole of the incomplete Church Room whilst it was under construction. Just a few years later, Morris was writing letters back to this tranquil village, from the battlefields of Belgium and France.

It has been proposed that the Faculty document should be framed and hung in the

Community Hall. As the document is a valuable item of village history it might be safer to hang a replica, the original being lodged with the County Archive.

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#### The Hall - Llancarfan by R. Gwynne Liscombe

Be it Church or Community Hall, sitting in the last meeting of the Society on the fourth of April triggered some memories of it as a Church Hall.

Whilst my memories may not be in chronological order, they are minor and major events in my life which are recollected without too much difficulty and therefore made some impression which is retained.

I remember hiding under the stage. Why, I do not know, but what is important is what took place upon that stage. Productions which had as choreographer, Jane Liscombe (nee Lougher) - before my time but referred to in earlier Newsletters. Eisteddfodau are more recent, particularly in the 1950's. These were usually organised by Tudor Liscombe and the judges were Mr Morgan of the Barry Male Voice Choir and Mr Aldred Thomas, Head Teacher, St Nicholas Primary School. The standard of entry was usually high and came from a wide area including Bonvilston. I am searching for a few entries which can possibly be included in a future Newsletter. Concerts and entertainments of a lighter nature also took place on that stage in the '40's and 50's and I recall appearing with the now Sir Keith Thomas in a conjuring double act some of which I seem to remember went badly wrong! The stage in those days was surrounded with long black curtains and the stage-lighting, made from large empty cans (Spam, Canned Beef and the like), was ultra-modern for the time. I also remember talk of Alan Rowland of Garnllwyd, and later of Sutton Fach, singing on that stage - a voice good enough for the Opera, it was said. What of Elsie Harris and Idris Lewis singing the Keys of Heaven (1930's?). These are just a few thoughts about the stage in the Hall. There must be many more memories of that opportunity to express oneself to a packed house. I think that stage did much for many over a number of decades by development of a self-confidence and an opportunity to exhibit their capabilities. I believe the stage really disappeared with the advent of television and the need to provide school dinner space and thereby income for the Church. Maybe I'm wrong but I think that was the sequence of events. Does this trigger any memories? Does the Hall need a stage again?

What of the Hall as a whole, and its memories for me? Jelly and blancmange seem to be top of the list - memories of birthday parties, Sunday School teas and other events. Coronations, Jubilees, V.E. Day, V.J. Day etc. - and what good food in all of them. Llancarfan was always tops for food. I think the Home Guard rifles came next (were they Lee Enfield 303's?) - Edward Williams, Llancadle, a sergeant I believe, would remember and so too would Lyn Williams, then at Ford Farm. Like all other platoons, Llancarfan had its mixture of weapons, as Local Defence Volunteers but the rifles came later in their big boxes, covered in grease. I well remember seeing them and thinking, at about twelve years of age, that this would see the war won. One of the boxes remained in the Hall for many years as a storage box. The upstairs of the Hall was the nerve-centre of the

Llancarfan Home Guard with its field telephones etc. and so on. The Hall also had a stable - where the kitchen is now situated. I don't remember any horses kept there but well remember Olga Griffith's motor-bike being "garaged" there for many years. Olga was Campbell Reed's aunt and sister of Morris Griffiths, mentioned above. She lived at Bridge House and used the motor-bike daily to travel to St Athan to teach.

She had all the "gear" too - leather coat, leather helmet and, if I remember correctly, goggles. She looked rather like an aviator of the day as she set-out each morning.

Moving from thoughts of war and back to entertainment, there were Whist Drives, Beetle Drives, Sunday School (when it was too cold in Church). What about Roley Watts, Llantrithyd (now Watts Coaches) and his accordion - that was always a good show then there was Billy's Band from Cardiff and Fred Walker from Rhoose. Good bands those were, for those who could dance, but there was always the problem of nails projecting through the floor of the Hall. I seem to remember accomplished dancers like Lionel Rees (New Mill), Doreen Gibbins (Old Parsonage) complaining about them. Will the floor be replaced or polished? Will there be dances? We never really had a youth club but there was the Guild. Much to do with Ernest Badcock and Tudor Liscombe. We advanced our education in the Guild in the 40's and 50's.

It was a cinema too - but who remembers the projectionists? Alf Vincent in the early days I think. Projected from the upstairs onto the front wall of the Hall - always a good show and, as I remember, no different from any other cinema in the back seats!

As we grew older we moved from from Blancmange to 21st Birthday parties and Wedding Receptions. I remember our Wedding Reception there, and that of Philip Watts and the then Ruth Groves (she organised the Cub Group there). Were they dry or wet occasions? I think maybe there was some sherry. I am sure there were other happy occasions in the Hall. Whist Drives, already mentioned, usually presided over by Edgar John, Corner House, were always happy events. Thinking of wet occasions two stalwart attenders were Grace Morgan, The Green, and Dorothy Jenkins (nee Bryer), Ty Uchaf (now High Lanterns). The last named was the mother of our Society Secretary. Both were good at laughing, sometimes at what, we knew not, but it always ended with one or the other saying "I'm wetting myself". Rarely a Whist Drive went by without that occurrence! Whether it really happened or not, I am not really sure. Twenty to twenty four tables for whist was not an uncommon but later this changed to regular Whist Drives of 8-10 tables.

I think the Hall in its years of useful existence meant much to many who lived in Llancarfan Parish and sometimes beyond. As I have said, it has many happy memories for Llancarfan folk. As the years went by it became more of a Community Hall than a Church Hall but this, I remember was a slow process.

Who remembers anything about the original fund-raising to build it? Was there really a dispute? Did all denominations contribute? Were there offers of alternative sites to make it

a Parish (Community) Hall?. I have heard these things talked about, but in distant memory I certainly could not be accurate. There is, I believe, a document to be framed and placed in the Hall when it is reopened. Some sort of history would also be welcome, I'm sure.

I hope the improvements taking place will mean a return to the Community spirit that existed, in my memory, very often through the use of the Hall for so many worthwhile activities and festive occasions.

Notes. In discussing the draft of this article Gwynne recollected that the Church Room was, for very many years, the meeting place of the former Parish Council and expressed the hope that the revitalised Hall would become the home of the Community Council.

This bit from Phil Watts:- When children's parties were not a normal practice, Gwynne's mother and father had promised him a party when he was about 7 years old. The party was to be held at home in Woodlands but Gwynne "jumped the gun" on invitations and asked everyone in school, the neighbourhood and anyone he saw - including men digging the pipe track for the newly introduced water supply. Hence he has fond memories of eating trifle and blancmange in the Hall after an emergency booking had to be made to accommodate all of the people. Games played at such parties would be Bobby Bingo, Spinning the Tray, Pass the Parcel and Sergeant Major Says.

Gwynne's father, Tudor, was leader of the local Home Guard and I remember stories of the night when, under his leadership, the Llancarfan platoon attacked the Rhoose headquarters just to keep them on their toes.

Your editor remembers an excellent production of "Toad of Toad Hall", in the late 1960's, directed by Norma Hughes (Fordings) - this was probably the last use of the stage before it was removed? The Licence for school meals in the Church Hall was made in March 1952 - was the stage then stored?

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A letter from Phil Watts

Having had a preview of the Newsletter relating to the Village Hall, Church Hall or Church Room I recollect a few things that have been related to me by parents and older parishioners on the building of the Hall that I can pass on; but I must stress that it is open to correction and I may not have taken sufficient notice when being told.

It seems that there was a public subscription toward the cost of building the Hall. Local farmers offered the use of labour and wagons for transport of the stone for building. The stone was taken from farm quarries in the parish, farms which were owned by the Church authorities.

Does the £47 relate to the public subscription? Is it possible that the owners of the wagons were also strong churchgoers, hence the Hall becoming church-dominated? I am told that a builder of good quality was used and the hall was not built by local labour as sometimes

stated. Wonder what his name was?

Since the Reverend Alfred Hughes name is on the stone in the roadside wall, perhaps it would be an idea to hang a photograph of him in the new Hall. I have photographs of Alfred Hughes and his wife, of which any future Hall committee may have the use.

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#### Obituary - David James Phillips of Pennant

In some ways the farmers and their families are the only "real" residents of the village for they earn their livings here, where most of us spend only our leisure time. Their daily comings and goings are part of the village routine and, since his serious illness we have all missed Dai Phillips on his Landrover journeys from Pennant Farm at Ford Cross, and before that from Penonn where he farmed for so many years after coming to Llancarfan from Cardiganshire. Dai was a friend to all of us, never too busy to stop for a word and part of a quieter way of life which is going for ever from the countryside. His sudden passing, after a short illness, is a sad loss and our thoughts are with Mrs Phillips, Nia and Myrfin.

#### Agriculture and Ernie Badcock's diaries

Some of the queries which accompanied the article have been answered. Crooks are lengths of branch used as anchors in hedge-laying and: the name is descriptive of the crooked end made by cutting at the junction with a smaller branch. Clipping refers to cutting turnips and mangels for cattle feed. More next month.

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#### Village notes.

After spending most of his working life in Llancarfan School, Enoch Lewis remained in the village when he retired in 1974. At long-last he and Mrs Lewis have left Maes yr Afon for Llandaff and we wish them well in their new home. Most of the older village residents remember him, either as teacher, or teacher of their children. We are all greatly in his debt.

Other departures are Ian Newsham and family (Bluestones) and Colin and Maureen Scargill (Pennymead). Good luck to you all.

Have you noticed the marvellous job Mike Jankovic has made of renovating the two seats in the centre of the village; they commemorate the late Marjorie Jones, formerly of Brook Cottage, and the winning of the "Best Kept Village" award in 1963. The latter seat actually looked like a flower arrangement, so much moss and lichen had it grown! Thanks



Mike.

Advertisement: Phil Watts has various wine and beer making equipment which he wants to dispose-of at half price - contact him at Abernant (Bonvilson 336).

Future events: Please remember the Craft Fair and Sports on Saturday, July 1st at Pancross Barn, together with the Church Barn Dance in the evening. Helpers and organisers welcome. Volunteers to Phil Watts, Abernant.

Election quip: "The first candidate to get to Broomwell has our vote!" (Overheard in the pub by Phil Watts. Apologies for pinching the joke).