



THE LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

Newsletter 105 July 2001

Editorial In Newsletter 16 (1988), the late Gwynne Liscombe published a note on the Mary Lougher Charity, with details derived from a Charity Commissioners' report of 1838. Mary Lougher left money for the poor of Llanccarfafan village in a bequest dated 1731, but a plaque in St Cadoc's mysteriously records 1745. The discrepancy of dates, Mary's reason for making the bequest and her identity have until now been an insoluble puzzle.

In this Newsletter the Charity Commissioners' report is reprinted, together with some extra information, and an exciting new article, researched by family-historian Bob Sanders, which finally identifies Mary. Bob's article is a fitting end to almost 150 years of commentary, starting when G. T. Clark wrote about the Charity in 1865: "The money --- proved a fruitful source of dispute" (*Arch. Camb.*).

Readers never grow tired of past residents writing with memories of Llanccarfafan at different times and, in this number, we have a delightful letter from Margaret Liddall (née Wheeler) concerning life at Llanvithyn during the 1940s and 1950s.

Photocopying is not the best way to print photographs, but my copy of Newsletter 104 was particularly awful. My apologies if others had printed badly. We save money by having the Newsletter printed this way and you can always see at the photos in original quality and colour when Graham Brain posts them on the website. Remember to look if you can.

Living at Llanvithyn by Margaret Liddall (née Wheeler)

Although we weren't in the village for long, about 8½ years, Ken and I were very happy there. I'm not so sure about Mum - no electric when we first went there, no bathroom or toilet. Bath night was in front of the fire in the big room in *Llanvithyn* and the toilet was a double seater around the back of the Maddocks' part by the chicken run. That is where Katherine and I told our secrets to one another.

We loved the freedom of living on the farm, from looking for bird's nests to blackberry picking; from helping with the harvesting to picking up stones - what a backbreaking job, but we didn't mind as we thought it fun.

How we all used to ride Tommy the pony, barebacked; he hated a saddle on. I remember Dad taking him to Bonvilston one night to meet Mum. It was during the winter and his motor bike couldn't get through the floods at *Abernant* and *Greendown* but Tommy did. Mum was waiting in Ritchie's garage until help arrived. Dad was one of Ritchie's first customers and when he moved to Yate with me, he would still call in for petrol when he was in the area. What a sad sight it is now.

I also remember the cricket club at Pennon where we had the old double-decker bus used as changing rooms upstairs and teas downstairs. I used to go with Dad to *Pancross Farm* to cut the pitch for Saturday games. This was usually done on Friday nights as he worked Saturday mornings.

How we used to play "fox and hounds" or paper chase in Pancross Woods in the school holidays. Clive Jenkins, Maureen Morgan, the Griffiths boys from *Top End*, the Bryans from the *Council Houses*, Pancross, the Morgans - everyone used to join in. Where are they all now? I often wonder.

It didn't seem to matter what age group you were in - everyone was welcomed at village activities.

I was in the village last summer and had a walk about. How it has changed. The school seems so small now, but they have a lot more classrooms - and toilets, not those at the bottom of the playground! A lot of cowsheds and barns have been converted into houses - I hardly recognised them.

We were sorry that the church was locked even though it was Sunday (sign of the times I suppose). I don't expect anyone cycles into the village to catch the Barry bus, leaving their bikes unlocked just inside the church gate, under the yew tree, as we did all those years ago.

The photo of myself with Tommy, the pony, and Jeff, the dog, was taken in about 1950. Can you see anything unusual about the reins? Is it the Llanvithyn ghost holding them? It was taken just above the steps at the entrance.

ONSERT PIC

Margaret Wheeler, Tommy the pony and Jeff the dog on about 1950 - Tommy's reins have not been retouched in the photo - honestly!
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World War 2 agriculture

a document from Lyn Price, Moulton

- The recent events of the 2001 Foot and Mouth disease outbreak have introduced a new generation of farmers to the distress and anger which can be generated by a government *diktat*, however justifiable the cause.

Cultivation of land in Llancarfan has ebbed and flowed since well before the Roman Conquest. During the Roman and early Medieval period, the extent may have rivalled anything which followed, but during the Middle Ages, waste and uncultivated land advanced again. Later, during the Napoleonic Wars and again during the Crimean campaign, much grassland was ploughed up throughout Britain.

It happened again at the beginning of World War 2, with all the force of law behind it, as the following transcript shows.

COUNTY of GLAMORGAN WAR AGRICULTURAL EXECUTIVE.DEFENCE REGULATIONS 1939.THE CULTIVATION OF LANDS ORDERS, 1939.

To Messrs. L. Price & Sons of *New House Farm*, Moulton, Rhoose, Glamorgan in the County of GLAMORGAN or other the occupier of the land described in the Schedule hereto.

THE Glamorgan WAR AGRICULTURAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE being the body authorised to exercise on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries within the administrative County the powers in that behalf conferred by Regulation 62 (1) of the Defence Regulations, 1939, hereby direct you to carry out in respect of the land described in the Schedule hereto the works of cultivation specified in the said Schedule.

Failure to comply with this direction or any part thereof is an offence under the Defence Regulations.

Dated...24 JAN, 1940 By Order of the Committee [signed E. H. Harry]

Plough before March 31st 1940 and carry out other necessary cultivations and acts of husbandry to raise and secure an adequate approved arable crop for the harvest of 1940

[then followed a schedule OS map references to pasture-land totalling 21.1434 acres, in the parish of Llancarvan (*sic*)]

Owners: - The Senior Bursar, Jesus College, Oxford

The Mary Lougher Bequest revisited compiled by John Etherington

Many years ago we published an article on the Mary Lougher Bequest, and its subsequent fate at the hands of Robert Jones III and IV, *Fonmon Castle* (Gwynne Liscombe, in Newsletter 16, 1988). The bottom line was that Robert Jones IV pinched the money to repair the road near his castle!

Gwynne's article contained the following extract from the Charity Commissioners' Report of 1838: -

Parish of Llanrhydd. 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 1890, 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 Tremablwydon, 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 wanually 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.

At the time we were unable to discover Mary's identity or why she left money to the Parish. There was also a second puzzle concerning dates on a plaque in St Cadoc's which reads: -

Thomas Lougher^{Gent} of Pyle who with other deeds of charity left 50 shillings yearly to the poor in bread April 1745

In memory of Mary the relic of Thomas Lougher of Pyle who with other deeds of charity left 59 shillings yearly to be given in bread to the poor of this parish from April ye 8th 1745 forever

(Transcripts: Glamorgan Family History Society 1984)

According to the Charity Commissioners' Report, Mary's will was dated 2nd June 1731, some 14 years before the dates on the church plaque. Why is there this strange discrepancy of dates?

The first enigma is partly addressed by further documents found by Irene Jankovic in Cardiff Central Library: -

MARY LOUGHER by Will dated 2nd June 1731, gave the interest of 50L [£50], for distribution in bread, several times a year amongst the poor of Llanrhydd.

The above sum is now secured, at 5/- per cent interest by a deed poll (No 4.) from the Trustees of the Rumney Bridge Turnpike Act, and is regularly paid on 25th January, and distributed by the parishioners in a vestry assembled, together with the income of the following charity, to poor parishioners, in sums, varying at discretion from 3s to 13s. A regular account will in future be entered in a book, which has not hitherto been the practice. [Date unknown]

Irene noted that there were other bequests, from Mary Lougher, to Bonvilston, Llanharan, Penmark, and other parishes. Thus Mary Lougher had a soft spot for the Vale as a whole, not just Llanrhydd. She and Thomas must also have been fairly wealthy!

The Bonvilston bequest is recorded in Charles Shepherd's article in the *Vale of Glamorgan Series* vol. 3 (1961): -

Mrs Lougher, by will gave £50 to the use of the poor which sum is invested on security of tolls arising from Cardiff Turnpike District (Deed Poll No. 8, dated 28th August 1764) deposited by John James Basset, Esquire and producing a sum of £2 10s. 0d. per annum. [The Parish record is dated 1678 in the article. This must be an error – probably 1778]

Philip Jones III, of *Fonmon Castle*, is known to have been financially troubled: indeed he fled to France at one time, to escape his creditors. Hardly surprisingly, he also misappropriated other charitable incomes, as evidenced by a third document that Irene found: -

SEYS AND NICHOLL'S CHARITIES The Parliamentary Returns of 1786 state that MARGARET SEYS, in 1700, bequeathed £200 for teaching 10 poor children, and apprenticing one poor child, and that ILLTID NICHOLL bequeathed £20 to the use of the poor. The former donation is there stated to have been with-held by Robert Jones and his predecessors for upwards of 30 years; and the latter (stated to be vested in William Nicholl) not to have been paid for upward of 50 years. Nothing has been paid since the date of the returns. [Date unknown]

I am grateful to the late Gwynne Liscombe for the original article and to Irene Jankovic for showing me that Mary Lougher made bequests to other villages.

Alan Taylor photographed the memorial plaque.

Who was Mary Lougher? Research by Bob Sanders, text by John Etherington

Mary Lougher was the wife of Thomas Lougher of Cornelly, Pyle and Kenfig, evidenced by their names appearing as husband and wife in a Deed of Settlement, dated 1720.¹

Mary Thomas had been christened at Llantrithyd in 1692, her parents being Christopher Thomas of Llancarfan and his wife Ann (née Gibbon of Trecastle). Her brother, also named Christopher, was baptised a couple of years earlier, also at Llantrithyd.

Mary was probably in ill health (or pregnant?) when she made a will in June 1731, which was proved at Llandaff in 1732. She was well off in her own right but there was no bequest to children as she had none.² She left land and property in Bonvilston and Llancarfan to "my loving husband Thomas and his heirs forever." She also left £50 each, to three members of the Thomas family, including James Thomas of Llancarfan.

The charitable bequests were: - "the interest on £50 to the poor of Pile and Kenfig" and "the interest on £50 between the poor of the several parishes of Newton Nottage, Llantrithyd, Bonvilston, Llancarfan and Llanharry, each to be distributed six times a year within six months after my husband's decease."

Though the church tablet records Mary as "the relict of Thomas Lougher" she in fact died 12 years before him.³ When Thomas Lougher died in 1744, his will honoured the conditions of his wife's bequests, thus explaining the discrepancy between the 1745 on the tablet and the date of 1731 in the Charity Commissioner's report, with which Gwynne Liscombe initiated this research.⁴

Mary's reasons for the bequests were all related to family connections. Pyle and Kenfig were places where she and Thomas lived. Her brother Christopher had been the rector at Newton Nottage. She was born at Llantrithyd and held land at Bonvilston; Llanharren was her mother's parish and, in Llancarfan, she held land and her half-brother was vicar.⁵

Mary and Thomas are buried at Newton Nottage.

Notes to text.

¹ The 1720 Deed of Settlement is in the GRO Trecastle Collection - it also identifies land at Llancarfan and Leech Castle (43 acres) and Bonvilston (14 acres) which later passed on by Mary's will.

² There were no children of the marriage though Thomas Lougher had two "on the wrong side of the blanket."

³ Her prior death was a source of confusion: The Editor wrongly assumed that Mary was the widow of Thomas Lougher.

⁴ It was not until 1882 that the Second Married Women's Property Act allowed wives to control and dispose of their own property with the same legal powers as men. That Thomas carried out the provisions of Mary Lougher's will, some 12 years after her death, is a testament to their good relationship. She judged well that Thomas was a "loving husband".

⁵ Mary's half-brother was John Thomas, Vicar of Llancarfan, from her mother's second marriage to John Thomas s^r of Slade.

General notes Bob Sanders' research may have established the link with the *Garnllwyd* branch of the Lougher family. Bob found a Philip Lougher, of Coychurch, mentioned in relation to property at Bonvilston (1720 Deed of Settlement). Major Edwin Lougher's family tree of the *Garnllwyd* Loughers includes a Philip (1707-88) who, by his second wife Catherine, had a son Philip (1747-1807). The first of these two may be one and the same? He was of *Tregroes Farm*, Bonvilston and was the grandson of Morgan Lougher of Tythegston. Bob Sanders' original research is much more detailed than this article. A copy of his MS Word file can be sent by e-mail if required.

More on Duncan McGill An e-mail from Xena Morgan (née Ould)

Further to the article in Newsletter 104 regarding Uncle Jo's memory of the flight by Duncan McGill, in a Tiger Moth over Llancarfan. Sometime between 1935 & 1937 I can remember my father W.J. (Bill) Ould and I waving to Mr. McGill as he circled his plane over our house in Lisvane. You may wonder at the connection. The passenger waving wildly back at us was my mother who was better known as Mary Price, *Middlecross*. I remember that it was over lunch that Mr McGill asked Mum if she would like to go up for a "spin". They arranged a date for the following week and he collected her by car while my father and I stayed home and watched the skies. Very exciting for me at about 9 years of age.

Editor's note: A week or two ago, the HTV series *Wings over Wales* mentioned a flying display for Empire Air Day in 1938 based at Pengam Airport, Cardiff. Was this by any chance the same event or was there a yearly Empire Air Day?

A recent article in the West Wales *Western Telegraph* has put me in contact with an 80 year- young lady who, amongst many other accomplishments, is the Secretary of the Blenheim Society which maintains the last air-worthy Blenheim fighter-bomber. Betty George lives in Haverfordwest and has promised to enquire further into the aircraft-carrier landing with which Duncan McGill is credited.

Agricultural terms and harvest-customs

So far the only response to the appeal for antiquated terms has come from David Evans in France who wrote "when we would trim the hedgerows and banks, often on cold winter days, we would be **trashing**. Expect that it was a generally used word, but it seemed sensible to mention it." The *O.E.D.* gives one definition of 'trash' as twigs or cuttings, lopped from a hedge, but does not comment on the geography of the word. Does anyone know how widespread is its use?

Also from the last Newsletter, the term "scuffle" is defined by the *O.E.D.* as a horse-hoe used for weeding, for example in rows of turnips. The word also means a gardener's Dutch hoe.

Harvest customs In S. Pembrokeshire these included cutting the 'neck' or 'knack' (known to editor by the English term, corn dolly). In N. Pembrokeshire it was the more sinister 'wrach' (W. *gwrach* - witch). Once cut, the harvesters had to get it into the farmhouse without a wetting from the domestic staff and girls (*Pembrokeshire Antiquities*, 1899). I have never heard any of this mentioned within living memory in the Vale, though I know it happened in the more distant past. Does anyone remember or know?

1914-1918 Llancarfan at War - Henry Charles Gainey, licensee's son

The Electoral Registers show that Augustus Samuel and Margaret Gainey lived at the *Old Post*, Bonvilston, between c. 1916 and 1925. No one has referred to the family in the Newsletters and there are few written records of them except for the tragic memorial to their son Henry, who died a few days after the battle at Mametz Wood in the Somme Valley, names that will echo horror through all time.

The Somme offensive began on 1st July 1916 and, four days later, the 38th (Welsh) Division, Lloyd George's "Welsh Army" of 20,000 men was ordered to the front. The 7th Division, including the 8th Battalion of the Devonshires was also involved. The battle for Mametz Wood started on July 7, lasting for several days, and finally the Wood was captured. Between 1st July and an action at Bazentin le Grande Wood on the 14th, Henry's 8th Battalion lost 171 men.

It is appropriate that we remember Henry this month, the 85th Anniversary of the Somme offensive for human memory has now become history. Evan Davies, the last known survivor of the "Welsh Army" died last November in Maesteg, aged 102.

IN MEMORY OF HENRY CHARLES GAINEY SECOND LIEUTENANT 8TH BN., DEVONSHIRE REGIMENT WHO DIED ON FRIDAY, 14TH JULY 1916.

Son of Mr. A. S. and Mrs. M. Gainey, of "Old Post" Inn, Bonvilston, Cardiff.

Flatiron Copse Cemetery, Mametz, Somme, France, ten kilometres east of Albert.

Historical Information: The ground was cleared by the 3rd and 7th Divisions on the 14th July, 1916, and an Advanced Dressing Station was established at the Copse. The cemetery was begun about the 20th July, and it remained in use until April 1917. It was used again for two burials in August 1918; and after the Armistice, 1,149 graves were brought in from smaller cemeteries and from the neighbouring battlefields. Almost all the concentrated graves are those of men who fell in the summer and autumn of 1916. There are now over 1,500, 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site. Of these just under 500 are unidentified and special memorials are erected to 36 soldiers from the United Kingdom known or believed to be buried among them. Other special memorials record the names of nine soldiers from the United Kingdom, buried in Mametz Wood Cemetery, whose graves were destroyed by shellfire.

*Today I found in Mametz Wood
A certain cure for lust of blood*

The poet Robert Graves, who wrote these lines, survived the slaughter and lived, to die peacefully 69 years later, in Majorca. Henry Gainey, landlord's son from the Vale of Glamorgan, never returned from the treacherous soft landscape of doom-laden Picardy.

Historical information: Commonwealth War Graves Commission, *British Battalions on the Somme*, Leo Cooper (1994) and *Western Mail*, 3 July 2001.

Announcements and future events

Membership and subscription. We flourish in 2001 with 253 postal addresses for the Newsletter (Llancarfan postal area = 100; Barry postal area = 20; Wider postal area = 122; Overseas = 11; Free copies = 6). Copies to MEMBERS WITH UNPAID 2001 SUBSCRIPTION = 29!!! If you are one of the 29, you will receive a renewal form with this edition. Please complete it if you wish to continue to receive Newsletters!

Summer Barbecue (substituted for Hog Roast). Sunday July 22nd at 1.00 p.m. Consequent on F. & M. restrictions, note that the venue has been changed again. It will definitely be held in the field above the tennis court. Attendance will be limited to 200, so first come first served. Tickets available from Sheila Mace on 01446 750691 Adults £5.00, Children £3.00.

Annual Dinner. Please reserve your tickets for the Society Dinner ASAP using the form in Newsletter 103. Saturday September 22nd in the Village Hall. Tickets available from Ann Ferris (01446 7781350) *Fordings*, Llancarfan, price £12.50. Again numbers restricted to 80, so first come first served. Last orders mid-August.

People and places

90 years old Several articles by Alfred Mills of Barry have appeared in our recent Newsletters, reproduced from his book *Memories Immune to Time*, or his popular articles in the *Gem*. Like the best antiques, people gain value and polish with age. Congratulations to Alfred on his 90th birthday and we look forward to more articles before the 100th!

LYNNE E. N. SMITH Lynne's parents and sister Julie would like to thank all the villagers, parents and children of Llancarfan for the support we received during our sad loss. We shall always remember the efforts put in by so many, in so many different ways.

The donation made to Tenovus was £1,380 and to Cancer Research Wales £980.80 a total of £2,360.80 - a wonderful tribute to Lynne.

Our sincere Thanks to all,
Lynne and Bert Smith & Julie

Aberthaw Almost immediately after we after featured Aberthaw Power Station in the last Newsletter, *HTV News* of 21 June announced that new EC pollution control measures might threaten the station with closure. The estimated cost of £100M for the upgrading may be uneconomic. There would be a serious impact on local employment and a knock-on effect to Tower Colliery, which supplies anthracite to Aberthaw.

On July 5 the *Barry and District News* reported Jill Evans, MEP, as saying there was no threat, but Assembly Minister, Jane Hutt, is arguing for Aberthaw to be exempted from the pollution control scheme. Who do we believe?

Slippery ford A couple of issues ago (Newsletter 103) we recalled the various disasters which had befallen drivers when attempting to cross Llancarfan ford in times of high water. Yet another danger is described in a recent letter to *The Gem* from the Rev. Dr David Hutton of St Lythan's, complaining that he had fallen from his motorcycle whilst crossing the ford.

Many of us will recall the immense fun of Boxing Day tug-of-war contests across the ford, and the fact that the concrete bottom was often more like a skating rink than a riverbed! Part of the strategy (forgetting about hitching the rope to a parked car!) was to lure the other team onto one of those slippery places and then heave.

It's a river, for goodness sake David! Our world is already full of warnings, which no one reads: pre-packed food labelled "Ensure that wrapper is removed before eating" or sleeping tablets that " may make you drowsy." That little road sign, which reads "Ford", tells you there will be water weed and algae coating the bottom. To prevent this would need almost daily scrubbing and chemical treatment - perish the thought. Anyway, it *is* possible to push a motorcycle across the footbridge or just as easy to drive round the other way - I almost never took my car through the ford when I lived in Llancarfan.

On a more serious note, the ford was not slippery when it had a shingle bottom, in the distant past, but we have motor traffic to blame for that. Nant Carfan is also much more weedy and green since modern agriculture started to tip inorganic fertiliser on silage land at hundredweights' per acre. The fish have noticed as well.

Book review: *At Cowbridge Grammar School, 1949 - 1966*

The Cowbridge Record Society publishes Peter Cobb's book. It is a collection of his reminiscences of the period when he taught at Cowbridge Grammar School prior to entering the Church. Some Society members will recollect that Peter then became Vicar of Penmark and Porthkerry, for a short time, before he moved to the Monmouth diocese. He has now retired to N. Monmouthshire. The book will interest all who knew the school in earlier years, are curious about Cowbridge or simply have an interest in Welsh educational history.

It is available by post from the Cowbridge Record Society, 8, Mill Park, Cowbridge, CF71 7BG at £6.00 (UK), £6.35 (Europe) or £7.40 (Rest of world). Cheque to: Cowbridge Record Society, or £4.95, cash, from The Cowbridge Bookshop, Keith Brown the Printer or Davies's the Newsagent.

An agricultural proverb from Iolo Morganwg of Pennon and Flemingston

Three things will prosper in hot weather; bees, and wheat, and acorns. / Three things will prosper in rain; chickweed, and thistles, and elder. (*Iolo Mss.* (MDCCCXCVIII). Gardeners take note!

Chess by John Etherington

Shortly after coming to live in Llancarfan it became apparent that chess was really quite a pastime in the school, greatly encouraged by then Headmaster Enoch Lewis. In response to an enquiry, my daughter Clare (Llancarfan 1968-72) wrote: "We used to have a chess tournament every term, I think. There were sheets of old draws but I don't believe they went back to before Mr Lewis' time."

This was new to me. I don't think I had even heard of chess until I was 11 or 12 and then only because I was curious about a chess set owned by Mum and Dad. As a result, I was interested to find the following extract in Richard Fenton's *A Historical Tour through Pembrokeshire*, (1811).

- But the thing most worthy of note is, that from time immemorial the inhabitants---- were expert at the scientific game of chess; for George Owen says, 'In ancient times in this parish [Whitechurch in Cemais, Pembs], the meanest and simplest sort of people, yea, the plain ploughmen were skilful at chess play, and being altogether Welshmen of language, had proper names for the chess board and the several sorts of men. The play they called *Fristiol Tawlbwrdd*; the kings and queen by their usual names; the bishop they termed *Elphin*; the rooks,

Brain Owen ap Urien; the pawns, merely a corruption of the French *Paons*, they properly called *Y Paenod bach*, the little peacocks; they also knew the motions of every sort of men, and would artfully manage the game, they never being dwelling out of their parish, but unilliterate and brought up at the plough and harrow altogether. There are living at this day a few old men that are most skilful therein, and I have seen in my time very many."

Notes - 1. George Owen was time of Eliz. 1st. 2. Urien was king of North Britons 570-90. 3. Owain map Urien was king of Rheged (just below Carlisle) 4. Brain is an Anglicisation of Brân = rook. 5. *Fristiol Tawlbwrdd* both words are given as "chessboard" in *Y Geriadur Mawr*. 6. *Elphin* - meaning unknown - proper name?

Can anyone add more? This suggests that chess was a popular game from early times in west and south Wales. Was it played in Llancarfan school before Enoch Lewis arrived in 1953 or did he simply carry on a previous tradition?

A distinguished visitor by John Etherington

Various early visitors to the parish have left either documentary proof or circumstantial evidence of their visits. Most of the latter travelled by the medieval Portway, from Cardiff's Ely Bridge to the Ogmore river crossing and inevitably passed through that part of our old parish which extends northward beyond the modern A48.

Amongst these visitors was Archbishop Ussher of Armagh, the man who calculated from biblical records, that the world was created in 4004 BC.

The Archbishop was en route from Cardiff to St Donat's when he was waylaid and robbed. He sought refuge with Sir John Aubrey of *Llantrithyd Place* who gave him shelter. The year was 1645. (Reference, B. Ll. James. *Vale of Glamorgan Series*, vol. 3)

The Tumble or Tumbledown Dick (Newsletter 104) Eric Delderfield says this name is not derived from Richard Cromwell (Oliver's son) but was the name of an energetic 18th century dance, at least in the naming of inns (*British Inn Signs*, 1969).

Llancarfan fossils: Devil's toenail by John Etherington

Fossils of "Devil's toenail", an oyster-like shellfish, occasionally turn-up as rounded "pebbles" in topsoil throughout southern parts of the parish. For some reason they become detached very easily from the Liassic limestone rock in which they were embedded, and then weather away until it is quite difficult to see the original fossil shell. Much better specimens can be seen on the nearby coast, where the horizontal layers of the Lias fall from the cliffs as slabs. Occasionally the whole surface of the slab is a bed of the fossils (see photograph).

Fossils have always been objects of curiosity and folklore grew up around those commonly found by gardeners and ploughmen. This was often reflected in the vernacular names. Devil's toenail is the most usual one for this ancient oyster, but they have also been called Crouching Stones, Cuckoo Shells and Milner's Thumbs. The last name is presumably a corruption of Miller's Thumb (as in the name of a similarly shaped freshwater fish). Crouching Stone is particularly apt, as they do look like a hunched and shrouded figure.

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Six Devil's toenails (photo: John Etherington)

Such things have magical and healing properties. Burnt and powdered Milners Thumbs could cure the sore back of a horse in 2-3 days according to a 1696 diary. Whether you sold your soul in exchange for the cure is not quite clear, but perhaps the "Old Man" had already abandoned claim to his nail clippings?

Two Devil's toenail shells appear on the Scunthorpe coat of arms, celebrating the wealth produced from the local Jurassic ironstone quarries, a rich source of the fossils.

The proper name for these shellfish is *Gryphaea arcuata*. It is an extinct genus of bivalve mollusc, which lived from the Jurassic to the Eocene period (between 208 million and 37 million years ago). Related to the oyster, *Gryphaea* is characterised by its distinctively convoluted shape. The left valve, or shell, was much larger and more convoluted than the flattish right valve. Fine markings extended across the shell at right angles to the direction of growth. In some mature specimens, the coiling of the shell became so pronounced that it is unlikely that the shell could be opened at all, at which point the animal must have died.

(Reference: *Geology Today* 14(4), 1998).