



December 2002

Editorial It seems hardly believable that winter has almost gone, and that the daffodils are in full bloom as I write. Trying to keep up with a Newsletter every six weeks, or so, certainly makes the years vanish. I couldn't help having this thought whilst sending Graham Brain a new consolidated index of all the Newsletters, to be posted on the website. Fifteen years-worth of effort, but each one seems like yesterday!

The last Newsletter recorded the remarkable interest, which had been shown in Jeff Alden's transcription of a document concerning the Davies (alias David) family of Llanbethery and *Little Mill*. John Cann has now unearthed much more of this story and tells us about it in an article on Sephora Thomas.

Our articles on Tom David, "Tom the Thatcher" and *Y Bwthyn Bach* have attracted attention again. This time it is from far flung members of a Llantrithyd family, now in Australia. I have no idea whether he was related to the Llanbethery Davids, but I'm sure we shall find out!

Local news and correspondence

DARA again After a lot of "Oh yes they are - Oh no they aren't" exchanges it seems that the Ministry of Defence have now confirmed that the new 48-jet hangar for DARA, at St Athan will be going ahead. The £77 million project, Red Dragon, will utilise 100 acres within the existing site. Sadly the state of the world will have influenced this decision. It will be good for jobs in the Vale - but what do local people think?

Earthquake in Swansea an e-mail from Councillor Ioan Richard.

A major earthquake measuring 4.8 on the Richter scale, struck in the early hours of Friday 24th January 2003 epicentered on Swansea, South Wales. Victims can be seen wandering aimlessly muttering: "How be?", "Tidy" and "Can't fault it Butt". The Earthquake devastated the area, causing approximately £30 worth of damage.

Several priceless collections of mementoes from the Balearics and Spanish Costas were damaged. Three areas of historic and scientifically significant burnt out cars were disturbed. Many were woken well before their giro arrived. Thousands are confused and bewildered, trying to come to terms with the fact that something interesting has happened in Swansea. Apparently though, looting, muggings and car crime did carry on as normal. The British Red Cross has so far managed to ship 4000 crates of Sunny Delight to the area to help the stricken masses.

A new book Gwynedd O. Pierce (2002) *Place Names in Glamorgan*, Merton Priory Press. £14.95 ISBN 1 898937 57 5 Paperback

We have often referred to Professor Pierce's book, *Place Names of the Dinas Powis Hundred* (1968), * which was based on his MA thesis. The book soon went out of print and became a sought-after collector's item.

The new book is a collection of articles, originally published in the *Western Mail* and now translated from Welsh. Readers may remember we reproduced a shortened version of one, dealing with the origin of the name *Gowlog*, in Newsletter 86, 1999.

* Newsletters 33/90; 34/90

Lost and found. In mid-February we were e-mailed by an Ethiopian PhD student, Melaku Bekele, who is studying at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden. Melaku was also a MPhil Forest History student in Bangor during 1990/92 under the supervision of Dr William (Bill) Linnard. Bill's name has appeared recently in our Web-site Newsletters when we reviewed his book, *Forests in Wales* (101/2000) and another book, *Cardiff Clocks* in Newsletter 108 2001. Melaku found these references when he entered Bill's name in a search. The long and short of this story is that Melaku had lost track when Bill retired from the Welsh Folk Museum, and the two of them are now back in contact. This is what e-mail and the Internet are all about.

Vancouver contacts: Llancarfan social services! Another re-connection story can be told of Gareth Davies of Vancouver Island. You may remember Gareth, a former Barry boy, e-mailed us seeking information about Rhoose, having found our Newsletters on the Internet (in Newsletter 106). This single e-mail has resulted in a remarkable cascade of contacts, connected with Gareth and Eileen Davies' life in Barry before they emigrated.

During the 1950s, Gareth's mother had been friendly with the Editor's mother-in-law, Mrs Netta Bowyer of Queen Street. Consequently, when we received Gareth's first e-mail the news filtered back to Queen Street and as a result, Eileen Davies re-established contact with her old friend Sheila Thursby, and her husband, still in Barry.

The news also spread to Eileen's former next door neighbour Lil Foley, re-kindling their friendship and resulted in Lil's daughter contacting Eileen, whom she had not seen for some 40 years. Gareth's sister Pauline, now in Australia similarly became re-connected with a Betty Weston of whom she had lost sight when she emigrated.

None of these folk are directly involved with Llancarfan (though Gareth used to visit the *Green Dragon*). Isn't it a pleasure to set-off such a pyramid of connections by just being here! It sounds just like a *Rover's Return* conversation!

Y Bwthyn Bach again Articles in Newsletters 98, 99 and 100 (2000-2001) were devoted to the little thatched cottage, built for Princess Elizabeth in 1932. A new chapter has now opened with an e-mail which arrived from Australia containing the following query: -

"I located an article about *Y Bwthyn Bach* in your web-site Newsletter 98. I am trying to find information on the Jenkins brothers, possibly of Llantryhyd, Wales, whom we believe were involved in the construction or repair of *Y Bwthyn Bach* the 'Small House' that was given to King George VI and Queen Elizabeth for six year old Elizabeth in March 1932. I have a letter from the Royal Archives that suggests they may well have been employed by a T.J. and Oscar David of *Old Mill*, Llantryhyd. Gregory McGrath, Warragul."

The Editor's nose twitched at this. Attentive readers will remember that our series of articles were started by recollections of 'Tom the Thatcher' - Tom J. David of Llantrithyd. I have sent Gregory copies of all of our articles and he has provided a copy of the Royal Archive letter, which confirms much of the story we told in the Newsletter articles.

Mrs (Beryl) McGrath (in the Archive letter below) is Gregory's mother and daughter of Alice Chard whose maiden name was Alice Jenkins. Gregory wrote: "This all started with the realisation that two signatures I grew up with, framed on our side board, were those of Albert [later George VI] and Elizabeth who apparently wrote to the Jenkins family in thanks for the Small House.

Gregory sent us this copy of the signatures of the then Duke and Duchess of York, a few years later to become George VI and Queen Elizabeth.

Not many people now remember that George VI was previously known by his first baptismal name, Albert and, it is said, changed to George in respect for his father George V.

I have no records of the Jenkins brothers who worked for the Davids, but does anyone else have an idea? They were involved the nephews of Edmund Jenkins (1866 - 1947). This was Gregory's mother's maternal greatgrandfather. Edmund Jenkins married Martha David (1867-1949). She may have been related to T.J. and Oscar David (Tom the Thatcher) in your story on *Y Bwthyn Bach*.

Can I even persuade someone in Llanccarfan or Llantrithyd to have a look at the 1932 electoral register for Llantrithyd in an attempt to find these two gentlemen for Gregory?

Y Bwthyn Bach in the news A couple of months ago, journalist Sarah Blake found our website articles on *Y Bwthyn Bach* and asked if she might use some of the information in a short magazine article. This has now appeared in *The English Home*, May 2003, if anyone is curious enough to look at it. The Llanccarfan Society is acknowledged. "All publicity is good publicity" - which I quote because the article contains several inaccuracies which were not derived from our information!

Note. Part II of John Etherington's article on the Whitton Crossroads Romano-British site is held over until New 119. No room!

In Search of Sephora Thomas

by John M Cann

In order to understand this article the reader should consult Newsletters 117 and 118 for Jeff Alden's original papers and the account of Len Williams' descent from Thomas Davies

The first part of my potted history of Little Mill, Lanvithin, appeared in Newsletter 115, and on the back page of the Newsletter, there are two statements made in 1879, found by Jeff Alden. That of Sephora Thomas claims she was born in Little Mill in April 1839 or 40 and lived there with her grandparents Thomas Davies and his wife, from then until she was 9. So you might have expected her to be at least mentioned in Part 2 of Little Mill, which appeared in Newsletter 116. But she wasn't. The reason is that no Sephora Thomas, no 'mother' Thomas, and no adults named Davies are recorded for 'Felin Fach' in the Census return of 1841. Nevertheless, the Parish Register does record a Deborah Thomas from Little Mill baptised 17 April 1840, with a father Richard a butcher and mother Anne.

INSERT PIC (FAMILY CHART SEPHORA)

The first clue was in the second 1879 'statement', that of Mrs Thomas of Penllyne. She says that when her father died his father and mother came to look after them, together with Sephora, and that the grandmother's name was Gwenllian David. So Sephora's grandparents were indeed in Little Mill in the 1841 census. But where was Sephora and her mother? It turns out that they were both in Upper West Farm, Monknash, of which the household head was Elias Morgan. Ann Thomas aged 31 was a female servant and Seppora Thomas aged 1 - at Nurse. Ann Thomas is doubtless the Ann daughter of Thomas David baptised in Llanccarfan on 30.6.1810, as her age in the June 1841 census would indeed have been 31. This census also confirms that Sephora was born in April 1840, as her 1879 'statement' suggests. Again in accordance with this 'statement' she and her grandparents Thomas & Gwenllian David were living in Kenson in March 1851 - she was recorded in the Census as Sephorah, granddaughter aged 10, House Servant, born in Llanccarfan. So although she was in Monknash in 1841 when she was one, she must indeed have been born in Little Mill. Sephora is only wrong in thinking she always lived with her grandparents, she doubtless returned to Little Mill on the death of her mother, when she was two.

Len Williams, the great great grandson of Thomas and Gwenllian David, has confirmed that Sephora's mother was Ann David married to Richard Thomas a Butcher of Peterston-super-Ely. It is probable that he is the Richard Thomas aged 25, an Independent, who's mother Ann aged

50 was a shopkeeper, in the 1841 Census. He was not with Ann in Monknash. Nor does he appear to be in Peterston in 1851 (nor his mother or brother).

The variety of spellings of Sephora's name in the records is delightful. Deborah Thomas in the 1840 Parish Register entry, Seppora Thomas in the 1841 Census, Sephora Thomas in that of 1851, and Zipporah David in that of 1861. When in 1862, as Mrs Thomas of Penllyne says, she had an illegitimate child (Miriam by William Samuel a farmer in Llanbethery, *so that it is unlikely that she was pregnant when she arrived in Llanbethery*) she is in the Parish Register as Sephora David. As Zippora Kemp she was living in Porthkerry in the 1881 Census aged 39, and as Tapporah Kemp she is buried in Porthkerry, Feb 1899 aged 58.

So, why does Sephora claim to be the granddaughter of Thomas Davies, and that her mother's brother was also a Thomas Davies? I can find no evidence at all that Thomas and Gwenllian ever used the surname Davies. However, Len Williams has copies of the wills of three of their sons. Sephora's uncle, and Mrs Thomas's father, Thomas from Llanbethery calls himself 'David or Davies' in his will of 1859, though was still 'David' in the 1851 Census. Uncle Edmund in Penarth, mentioned in Mrs Thomas's 'statement' is already 'Davies' in the 1851 Census, and his will calls him 'Davies or David'. Thomas and Gwenllian's son Jenkin David, the Miller in Little Mill in 1851 is still David in the 1861 Census, though Davies in that of 1871. He calls himself 'David or Davies' in his will of 1873. While it is reasonable that Sephora called her Uncle Thomas 'Davies' it is still strange that she called her grandfather 'Davies' as she was still with him in 1861 in Llanbethery, when she was 20, and he and she were both called 'David' in the Census, as indeed she is in the Parish Register, when her daughter Miriam was baptised.

In her 1879 'statement' Mrs Thomas Penllyne gives the names of many of her siblings, the children of Thomas David of Llanbethery. All of these can be found in the Llancarfan Parish Register and the 1851 & 1861 Census returns. There is also a Catherine baptised March 1846, who is doubtless Mrs Thomas of Penllyne herself. However not all of Thomas and Gwenllian's children appear to have been baptised in Llancarfan, although all must have been born in Little Mill. Sephora's mother Ann (bapt.1810) Catherine's father Thomas (bapt.1812) and Edmund (bapt.1817) were. But then neither Jenkin nor Rebecca who appear in the 1841 Census (born circa 1820 & 1825) were baptised in Llancarfan. Neither was Sephora's Aunt Norman, who was Catherine David, born circa 1824. So where were these later Davids baptised? Len Williams has found out that Ann and her parents are all buried in Zoar, Bonvilston. Regrettably records for the relevant period do not seem to exist, but it's quite possible that Thomas and Gwenllian worshipped a Zoar from around 1820, and it was there they baptised their later children, and buried Ann, the daughter that predeceased them.

Kenson Cottages

The Society's splendid *Llancarfan A Century of Pictures* shows, on p. 25, a cottage by the stream on the Llancarfan side of the Kenson Bridge that straddles the boundary to Penmark. This is where Thomas and Gwenllian David took the young Sephora in 1848.

INSERT PIC

There were two Kenson cottages on the Llancarfan side. (The modern day Kenson Cottage on the Penmark side was probably a blacksmiths in 1841 and a public house in 1851.) A second Llancarfan Kenson cottage was a short way up towards Cliff on the other side of the road. In this there was another family of Davids, John a labourer in 1841, a pauper in 1851, his wife Margaret, their daughters Catherine and Elizabeth, both sempstresses in 1841, though Elizabeth had moved up market to a Dressmaker by 1851, and a son William, a male servant in 1841 and an agricultural labourer in 1851. John and Margaret David had been in Kenson since at least 1814 when Elizabeth was baptised in Llancarfan. Thomas and Gwenllian joining them suggests that they may have been relations.

Many thanks to Maureen Bullows of the Family History Society for her considerable help in seeking out Sephora in the FHS census CDs and their Parish Register Indexes.

Everyone is related to everyone else!

During the research for this article, local historian, Brian James wrote to John Cann with various bits of information about the David/Davies family. Brian's letter included the following sentence: - "Mrs Catherine Thomas of Penllyn (by the way) is a great great grandmother of Tony Thomas of *Pancross*". This is explained more clearly by the family tree below

INSERT PIC (FAMILY CHART PANCROSS CONN)

Obituary R.E.Thomas by Phil Watts

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Ronald Edward Thomas husband of Mary Thornas (née Watts) just six weeks after the death of Mary. Ron first came to Llanarfarn in the summer of 1944 to meet his intended mother and father in law Doris and William Watts at *Abernant*. At that time he was a Petty Officer in the Royal Navy serving on a destroyer in and out of Plymouth. Mary and Ron married in Plymouth October 5th 1944. The highlights of his naval career was to witness the D-Day landings in 1944 and to serve as Chief Telegraphist on *H.M.S.Vanguard* and to the Royal Party on King George the Sixth's Tour of South Africa in 1947. He joined the Portsmouth Police in 1949 and served as a Detective Sergeant until his retirement in 1974. He enjoyed his yearly visits to Llanarfarn and the hospitality of the *Fox and Hounds* where he made many friends. His ashes are to be placed along side that of Mary in the Llanarfarn Churchyard at a later date.

Llanarfarn Summer Sports - Saturday 19th August 1922 by John Etherington - Dilys Liscombe's kindness in lending the records is acknowledged.

This Sports' day might well have vanished unacknowledged into the mists of time. However, the minutes of its Committee were kept in a notebook, mainly written by Committee Secretary, R. Stuart Gunson, and then accidentally preserved down the years by a series of unrelated events. The minutes present an entrancing picture of village life at the time, and a rich source of reference to people and their homes.

The Chairman of the Sports Committee was Tudor Liscombe, of the *Woodlands*, father of the late Gwynne Liscombe. I suspect Tudor of being a squirrel - I know from Gwynne that other historical items survived in his father's hands. The notebook was stowed away in the attic of *Woodlands* where it must have remained undisturbed for the best part of 60 years.

When Tudor's widow, Mabel Liscombe finally left the house in the 1970s, it was sold to Dr Mike Morris, a lecturer in the Department of Applied Mathematics, University College, Cardiff (and thus, a colleague and friend of the author). For a while Mike shared the house with Anne Murcott, a Sociology lecturer who became quite well known as a local broadcaster, often with Vincent Kane in "Meet for Lunch", during the 1980s. When Anne moved on, a little later Mike's new girlfriend Alyson Russell came to live at the *Woodlands*.

The story then took a disastrous turn. Mike was a mountaineer and shortly after becoming engaged to Alyson he departed on a summer climbing expedition to the Himalaya (I believe with the Cardiff Climbing Club). Troubles beset the expedition, culminating in Mike's disappearance in bad weather, together with another climber. They were never found, and ultimately were presumed to have died.

In 1984, during the clearing of the *Woodlands*, before she left the house, Alyson found the notebook. Twelve years later, when she was working at an Outward Bound Centre in Cumbria, Alyson posted the notebook to the *Fox and Hounds*. Her covering explained its history and asked that it might be returned to someone who had an interest in it and would "give it a good home".

I first saw the book after it had changed hands again, having been given to Gwynne Liscombe by Mike Ashmore, than landlord of the *Fox*. I commented that it might make a good story for the Newsletter and, as a result, Gwynne wrote some notes in Newsletter 75, 1996. I then forgot the whole episode - as one does. Dilys Liscombe has now rediscovered the notebook while clearing-out old papers, and has lent it to me, thus prompting this article.

The first Committee meeting was held on 14th July 1922 just over a month ahead of "The Day". Elected were Mr Tudor Liscombe, Chairman; Mr Richards, Treasurer; Mr R. S. Gunson, Secretary; and Committee Members: Messrs. Davies (*Whitton*), Edwin Morgan (*Walterston*), G. T. Lougher (*Treguff*); James (*Pancross Farm*); D. P. Griffiths (*Glan-yr-Afon*); C. A. Vincent (*Llancarfan*); Bedford Griffiths (*Llancarfan*); Morris W. Price (*Middle Cross*); Alf Lougher (*Cliff*); Rowlands (*Garnllwyd*); Hopkins (*Pennon*); Harris (*Fox and Hounds*); Davies (Schoolmaster) and Gibbon (*Middle Hill*).

[A biographical appendix is presented at the end of this article, as the book contains an interesting collection of well known names, which have often appeared in our Newsletters, either as historical references or sometimes in person, as descendants and relatives of this other 22-Committee!]

We don't know where the Committee meetings were held but, for the 1924 Summer Sports, it was definitely at the *Fox and Hounds*. There is a surviving minute in the same notebook. Slight deterioration of the handwriting, as meetings progressed, may tell a story!

It was resolved that the sports should be held on 19th August in a field at *Pancross*, lent by Mr James, and should commence at 2.30 p.m. Further, it was resolved that "representatives should be appointed" to take collecting books round the various parts of the parish (our Society raffles have a long pedigree!). Another name appeared here - Mr T. Griffiths (*Caemaen*). Funds in hand, presumably from previous sports, were £7-17-8. The next meeting was set for 25th July at 8 p.m.

The minutes of the second meeting, chaired by Tudor Liscombe, suggest that it was a more perfunctory affair. It opened with the cryptic entry "Programme". I think this must have been on another sheet of paper and never transcribed into the minutes (however, there was a loose-sheet Programme with the notebook book, but as the handwriting is not that of R. S. Gunson, it may be from another year).

Matters resolved at this meeting. The tug-of-war was to charge an entry-fee of 2/- per team. The entry fee for "Musical Chairs" was set at 2/6d. with prizes of 30 shillings and 10s. It was decided to have a band (was this related to musical chairs?). The Football Club 220-yard scratch race offered prizes of 5/-, 3/- and 2/-. All open events were to have an entrance fee of 1/6d.

The next meeting, held on 1st August, added that all open events should be "scratch" and that all children's' events should have a third prize. The Barry Silver Band was willing to attend and would charge a fee of £8.00. Mr Edwin Morgan (*Walterston*) was to be asked for hurdles "in the event of Mr James (*Pancross*) being unable to provide them."

There followed a list of ladies "co-opted" to a committee to arrange refreshments! Again the names and residences make interesting reading.

Mrs James
Miss Thomas
Miss Evans (*Llanbethery*)
Miss Richards (*Whitton Rosser*)
Miss Lougher (*Treguff*)
Mrs Liscombe (Mabel)
Mrs Rowlands (*Garnllwyd*)
Mrs Price (*Middle Cross*)
Miss Davies (*Whitton Bush*)
Mrs Lougher (*Llanvithyn*)

Mrs Thomas (*Vicarage*)

The Committee gathered again on 11th August, this time chaired by Mr Gibbon (*Middlehill*).

It was agreed to have the Barry Band at £8.00 and to "endeavour to arrange transport from Barry top." A collection for the Band would be held on the field.

Refreshments. "Decided let ladies have full control"! Mr Morgan suggested a raffle, seconded by Mr Morgan. "Get tickets immediately." Tickets "should be 6d." Prizes offered were: Mr James - pig; Mrs Gunson - Michaelmas goose; Mr Gibbon - fowl; Mr Saunders - pair cockerels.

The following officials were appointed: - **Judges** - D. James, T. Lougher, D. Hopkins, J. Griffiths and Mr J. Lewis. **Starters and Handicappers** - Messrs D. P. Griffiths, J. Lougher. Messrs. I. Lewis & Connie Griffiths. **Field Committee** - T. Lougher, D. Griffiths and R. S. Gunson, D. Hopkins, J. Lougher, Richards, Mr E. Morgan and Mr Gibbon. **Band MC** - Mr Jones

Arrangements were put in hand for supply of materials: - **Musical Chairs** - ask vicar re chairs. Mr Morgan to bring posts. **Ring** - Mr James - posts. Mr Morgan - binder twine. Mr Gibbon - pegs. **Jumping** - Dilwyn Griffiths supplies poles. **Tug of War** - Mr James rope. **Egg and spoon race** - self [R. S. Gunson]. **Sack race** Mr James

Field Committee to inspect the field on Monday night (August 14th) at 7 p.m. Friday night (18th August) at 6.30 meet - arrange field.

And then came the great day.

Biographical details

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These are some very brief details of people mentioned in the notebook. I shall be grateful if anyone can amend, correct or add to these. Doubtful points indicated by question marks. Places of residence have generally been confirmed from the 1920 electoral register. Don't use for family history purposes without consulting editor.

Davies, Idris, (schoolmaster - his first year of service); Davies, Ivor & Samuel (*Whitton Bush*); Miss Margaret? Davies (*Whitton Bush*); Miss Evans (Llanbethery); Gibbon, (Danny or son George? *Fox and Hounds* - later *Middle Hill*); Griffiths, Bedford (*Caradoc Cottage*), brother of Llewellyn and the late Les; Griffiths, David Price (*Glan-yr-Afon*), the wheelwright/blacksmith family; Griffiths, Connie, schoolteacher, remembered by many older members (*Bridge House* family); Griffiths, Dilwyn (*Parsonage* later *The Talbots*); John Griffiths, father of Bedford, above (*Caradoc Cottage*); Griffiths, Thomas (probably of *Caemaen* family but there were two other Thos at the time); Gunson R. Stuart (*Ty To Maen*) - see John Gunson's article in Newsletter 116; Harris, David (*Fox and Hounds*); Hopkins, David (*Pennon Farm*); Mrs Alice James (*Pancross Farm*); James, David (*Pancross Farm*); Jones, John (*Great House*); Lewis, Ivy (*Broadhayes*) Graham Jenkins' mother - later *Cross Green*; Lewis, Jehoiada (then at *Chapel House*) blacksmith; Liscombe, Mabel (*New Mill*); Liscombe, Tudor (*New Mill* later *Woodlands*); Mrs Maud Lougher (*Llanvithyn*); Miss Lougher (*Treguff*); Lougher, Alfred (*Cliff Farm*); Lougher, George (*Treguff* or *Cliff* - two Georges); Lougher, John (butcher, *Cross Green*); Lougher, T. (*Treguff?*); Morgan, Edwin (*Walterston Farm*); Mrs Lettie Price (*Middle Cross*); Price, Morris W. (*Middle Cross*); Richards, J. (*Whitton Rosser*); Miss Richards (*Whitton Rosser*); Rowlands, Evan (*Garnllwyd*); Mrs Elizabeth Rowlands (*Garnllwyd*); Saunders (untraceable); Mrs Thomas Thomas, the vicar's wife (*Vicarage*); Thomas, Miss (Vicar's daughter?); Vincent, C. Alfred (*Orchard Cottage* now named *Crynallt*)

