

LLANCARFAN SOCIETY



LEGEND HAS IT THAT
ST CADOC WAS AIDED BY A
DEER WHEN HE BUILT HIS
MONASTERY IN
LLANCARFAN

NEWSLETTER 121

December 2004

The 'French Connection' Again

By Mary Gammon

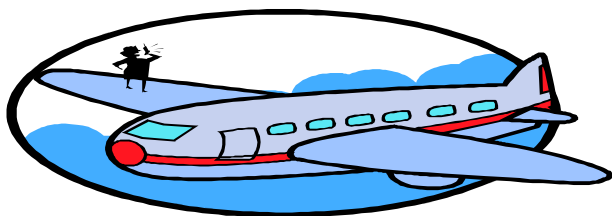
Society members are making good use of the new bimibaby flights between Cardiff Airport and Toulouse (Saturdays 1605 hours from Cardiff, returning at 1920 hours from Toulouse).

Tony and Joy Rees and their daughter Alex with husband Paul can be spotted at the airports shuttling between their homes in Llantrithyd and near Carcassonne.

Ann Radcliffe has visited Barbara Milhuisen in Ariege, and we hear that Phil and Ruth Watts did the same in September.

Barbara herself comes and goes between there and her home in Barry.

Jean Hunt recently used these flights to visit Albi, and, having travelled three times already this year, we ourselves are doing our best to keep the route solvent.



Keep up the good work everyone! We want these flights to continue and perhaps bimibaby might even be persuaded to provide more than just one flight a week.

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Petanque in Llanccarfafan by Phil Watts

The annual Llanccarfafan Society Petanque competition for the Ruth Watts Cup took place on the piste (drive) of Glan yr Afon on Sunday, 22nd June. The piste having been prepared by Phil Watts and John Gardner.

The weather (most unusually) was appalling – thunderstorms and rain most of the time – no one complained or gave up.

John Gunson made a Cassoulet and French bread (with soup for Vegetarians) and was served before play began.

The bar was run by Alan Taylor .

Ten teams took part, and play started at 2.00pm approximately and ended sometime after 7.00pm. There was keen competition, a lot of measuring and disputing of points, which resulted in a good time being had by all.

The winning team was John Gardener, Robert Hutchings and Graham Brain.

It is rumoured that the poor weather conditions prevailed because we do not have a vicar in Llanccarfafan since Malcolm retired last year. You can't get the staff these days!!!

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Permanent Petanque Piste by Phil Watts

We have been promised finance from the Reynard Group to lay a piste below the tennis court near the road to Moulton. Work on the piste will start after the refurbishment of the tennis court has been completed at the end of this year.

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Society's Annual Dinner – 27 September

The venue for the dinner being The Air Lodge Hotel, Port Road, Rhose, due to the unavailability of the Fox & Hounds Restaurant, Llanccarfafan.

A total of 63 members attended, including the usual distance travellers who make the special effort and are always so welcome to the events.

A bus was available for those who did not wish to drive.

Both our new Chairman and President, Graham Brain and Mick Mace made short speeches and the Chairman's wife was presented with the usual floral tribute.

Due to adequate space available in the dining room, member too advantage of renewing old acquaintances, etc. Ruth Watts undertook the onerous task of running the raffle, which covered all our extra expenses.

Overall, it was unanimously agreed that both the evening in general and the meal were a great success.



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News from Moulton: Mr Lynnus Price of New House Farm

It was a pleasure to chat to Mr Lynnus Price of New House Farm recently. For many years, he has been a familiar sight to everyone passing through Moulton when the family herd of dairy cattle is being driven along the lanes. There is something wonderfully soothing about watching cows wandering slowly and peacefully on their way – especially after a hectic day in Cardiff. The frenetic and often meaningless pace of life in the 21st century has to give way to the unhurried pace of “cow time”, and passers-by are forced to relax to the hypnotic rhythm of the swaying herd-unchanged throughout centuries of farming, and impervious to impatient motorists!

Mr Price has had a long and active farming career. Now, through frail health, he has to take life easily, but he has many memories of village and farming life as it once was. He recalls vividly the days of ploughing with two horses – exhausting work from dawn to dusk, when his feet were so painful that it was agony to remove his boots at the end of the day. He remembers too, the first tractor coming to Moulton in 1937, and the time there were two pubs run by one family in Llancarfan – not only the Fox and Houses but also, opposite, Ceffyl Dhu or the Black Horse. On Sundays, the men would go straight from Church to the two village inns!

Mr Price concluded our chat by commenting the many changes he had seen both in farming and village life. He is grateful for improvements, which have made farming less laborious, but he also spoke with regret of the passing of old friends. With a philosophical glint in his eyes, he quoted a line from Abide With Me:

“Change and decay in all around I see”

It is good that at least the old tradition of a drink after church on Sundays at the Fox has not changed – thanks to “Reynards” and Community spirit!



Mr Lynnus Price

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An Investiture at Buckingham Palace By Molly Vincent of Corner House

July 8th 2003 was a beautiful summer day. My son, Humphrey (known to family, friends and fellow Officers as Humph), daughter in law Michelle and I arrived at Buckingham Palace at 10.00am sharp; I was full of excitement. We were to attend a State Investiture and Humph, a Squadron Leader (now Wing Commander) in the Royal Air Force, was to be invested with a State Award. There were colourful groups of ladies in elegant dresses and lovely hats, gentlemen in Morning Dress and a smattering of others, like my son, in military attire. We ere quickly ushered through the Central Courtyard and into the Palace via a red carpet. Humph was quickly separated from us, he to be briefed on his investiture, while Michelle and I were escorted to a magnificent ballroom, where we were seated with the guests of the other recipients. We sat in the third row, just to one side of the Royal Dais, where we were to have a superb view of the forthcoming ceremony.

The Band of the Grenadier Guards played a selection of light music as the excitement mounted. During an interval, a Gentleman Usher (an Army General) of the Royal Household briefed us on what was about to happen. Then, at 11.00am, the National Anthem struck up and, preceded by the Queen's Bodyguard of the Yeoman of the Guard, and accompanied by her Equerry and two Ghurkha Officer Orderlies (a tradition begun in 1876 by Queen Victoria), Her Majesty the Queen entered the ballroom and took her place on the presenting dais – only about twenty feet away from Michelle and I. The Queen was dressed in an elegant lime green dress and looked lovely. When the music stopped, her Majesty said "Pleased be seated" and the ceremony began.

The Lord Chamberlain stood to Her Majesty's right and called forward each recipient by name,

starting with those who were to be knighted. There were 117 honours to be invested in all, of which ten were from the 'Military List' of the New Years Honours List. For those on the 'Civilian List', a few brief words on why the honour was bestowed were read out as the recipient approached the dais, but this was not the case for the military investees (I think that there is some security reason for this). Each individual was addressed by the Queen (a private exchange) as she invested him or her with his or her award – she smiled warmly to each individual – no mean feat when one considers how many times she had to do it!

Humph was the 55th recipient; he was invested as a 'Member of the Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of The British Empire'. Both Michelle and I felt very proud as he marched forward, then stood to attention as her Majesty pinned on his medal, a brief conversation took place, her Majesty smiled her lovely smile, Humph bowed and marched off and it was all over.

After the ceremony was over, we posed for photographers in the courtyard. The pictures have arrived and I will treasure them as a reminder of a very special day.

Later, as we celebrated with lunch at the Savoy, I felt that Humph was a little quiet for a while. We who know him, know that he seldom short of anything to say! After a few glasses of wine he admitted being more than a little awed by the few moments, he had stood before the Queen – 'A bit of humility will do me good' he said. Michelle and I both agreed!

Why did my son get the MBE? I don't really know all of the details, but is had something to do with his former appointment as Commanding Officer of the Ministry of Defence Element at the joint US/UK base at RAF Menwith Hill in North Yorkshire. Whatever it was for, I am a proud Mum.

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Eisteddfod hero

Edward Williams, better known as Iolo Morganwg, was a stonemason, poet and antiquary who invested the Gorsedd y Beirdd of the National Eisteddfod.

Born in Llancarfan, Glamorgan in 1747, he wanted to promote the literature of his home county as central to bardic tradition, and was not averse to inventing anything he could not find on his long journeys by foot across Wales.

He claimed that Welsh tradition snake back in an unbroken line to the druids and founded the Gorsedd Beirdd Ynys Prydain, the throne of assembly of the bards of the Isle of Britain, on Primrose Hill, London in 1792.

He chose London as the heart of the old Brythonic world and the best place to show the English the antiquity of Welsh culture. The ceremonies he invented were first used in the Eisteddfod at Carmarthen in 1819 and fully adopted in 1858, and they survive, with some additions, to this day.

He was a hopeless businessman who spent time in Cardiff Jail and became addicted to laudanum, the tincture of opium popular with many of his contemporaries. He died in 1826 but achieved immortality on the Eisteddfod stage.

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A poem to help you choose your winter logs

Beech-wood fires burn bright and clear
If the logs are kept a year
Store your beech for Christmastide
With new-cut holly laid aside
Chestnut's only good, they say,
If for years' tis stored away;
Birch and fir-wood burn too fast,
Blaze too bright and do not last.
Flames from larch will shoot up high,
Dangerously the sparks will fly;

But ash-wood green and ash-wood brown
Are fit for a queen with a golden crown.
Oaken logs, if dry and old,
Keep away the winter's cold;
Poplar gives a bitter smoke
Fills your eyes and makes you choke.
Elm-wood burns like churchyard mould,
E'en the very flames are cold;
Hawthorn bakes the sweetest bread -
So it is in Ireland said.
Applewood will scent the room,
Pear-wood smells like flowers in bloom,
But ash-wood wet and ash-wood dry
A king may warm his slippers by.

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St Cadoc's Church Bell Tower

By Phil Watts

It will be recalled that in 1999 a St Cadoc's Church Millennium Bell Fund was opened to secure restoration of the bells and to obtain a 50% grant from the Millennium Bell Fund.

There has been difficulty obtaining permission from the Llandaff Diocese to place the plaque and hung in the tower, it has been placed so that it can be removed at short notice.

It is the intention of the St Cadoc's Parochial Church Council to obtain permission to place a permanent plaque in the tower, in the meantime the existing one will bear record of those who contributed enabling the bells to be restored for the Millennium Year. A copy of the plaque is shown in this newsletter, also a photograph of the plaque hanging in the tower (see next page

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Whitehall Club at Fonmon

Reminiscences from Mike Crosta

In a previous Newsletter, there was a reference to the Whitehall Club at Fonmon and its reputation – it brought back distant memories.

In the 1950's, our families and friends camped for the whole summer in fields belonging to Boards Farm along the Fonmon Road. There were no houses then, of course. The entrance and farmhouse was on the corner of the Rhoose/Fonmon Road.

We had large tents with floorboards and cookers fired with primus stoves. Water was collected from stand pipes (my job) in buckets. Lord and Lady Boothby (each dressed in a jacket, cap and wellingtons) had a small van and delivered milk to each tent every morning.

The farmer milked by hand in a very small parlour. I only remember three or four cows at a time. We were allowed to milk the cows but do not know what the milking speed was.

We children wandered at will, which brings me to the Whitehall Club. We often wandered along that road and passed the pub as it was then. I remember it looking a bit rough and old and there were always old (to me) farm workers drinking outside. We always passed by quickly and never lingered.

By the time, we were young adults, the pub had become the Whitehall Club, we used to drive from Cardiff, as it was one of the few places you could dance and drink. I suppose it might have had a bit of a reputation then among the locals but only respectable people went there. It certainly was respectable later as we used it for our reception when we were married on 28 August 1967. I was articled to a very respectable Cardiff Solicitor and he attended together with our families and friends.

Even further, back than our camping days I remember that our families' favourite picnic spot was the field on the Walterstone Road overlooking Llancarfan. It was excellent for

blackberries. Little did I know that I would live in a house facing that field.



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Blankets from Llanfytin

The article, which appeared in Newsletter 120 by John Cann. Phil Watts who present stores these pieces of blanket in his garage and he stated that he would be happy to let anyone wishing to keep them for posterity – store them.

We have received a letter from Mrs G L Whitworth of Tondy, Bridgend, stating that it would give her great pleasure to preserve a part of our village history.

Mrs Whitworth's family have a connection with Little Mill in that her grandmother was born there in 1897, around the time the blankets were woven.

She would be able to store the blanket in a camphor trunk, indoors.

Many thanks for your offer, which has been accepted by the Committee.

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Review of the Year

The year commenced with the publication of the pictorial book 'Llancarfan A – Century of Pictures'. This was considered a great success and fortunate to have lottery funding.

Our next events were the Whist Drives in February and March. We are grateful for the support of the surrounding villages of Rhoose, St Athans, St Nicholas, Wenvoe and the biggest village of all – Barry.

The AGM was held in March. A new President and Chairman were elected. Sir Keith Thomas stood down as President to make way for Mick Mace. After serving for seven years as Chairman, Phillip Gammon handed over to Graham Brain. There were committee changes as well. Derek Higgs after serving since 'day one' in 1987 resigned – Pam and Derek will continue to monitor the society mailing list. Tony Lewis and Mary Gammon also resigned. The speaker was John Gunson who gave an illustrated talk on Llancarfan and The Vale Treasures.

The May Day Walk was held at Llantrithyd Deer Park by kind permission of Mr & Mrs Anders Leijerstam who also gave a talk at suitable points on the history of the Llantrithyd Deer Park.

In June we held the annual petanque competition for the Ruth Watts Cup. The venue was Glan-yr-Afon Drive by kind permission of Phillip and Mary Gammon. An enjoyable time on a wet afternoon.

July – we cancelled our scheduled Hog Roast because of lack of support from the other village organisations. This was a pity because it has always been a big success. We felt that we needed the support of the younger people for an event, which is very labour intensive.

September we had our annual dinner at the Airport Lodge. An account is given in this newsletter.

November - another whist drive with poor attendance. We enjoyed ourselves. There always seems to be a clash of dates.

December – we had our Christmas Social Evening in the Village hall, an account in this Newsletter.

While all these events were going on, we tried to come to terms with the restructure of the production of the newsletter, which since the formation of the Society had been under the management of Dr John Etherington. President Mick Mace explains the present set up in the introduction to this newsletter.

John is a hard act to follow, there have been mistakes already and no doubt, there will be more. However, we are strong willed to succeed.

Society and newsletter ways we are at the crossroads. Not quite sure which way to go. Like leaving a motorway and not sure which road to take. Shall we go on? Shall we go back? Or Shall we stop?

We have chosen the road – we are looming for support to keep the newsletter going. We need items from you of news, folk, lore, history etc we will print almost anything – almost! They should be sent to Ann Ferris, Fordings, Llancarfan, CF62 3AD. In this newsletter, we welcome a new subscriber – Mike Crosta. There must be more of you out there with pens at the ready. Not much has been written of the recent past from the 60's to the present day. Why not tell us why you came to Llancarfan or alternatively, why you left. Tell us about your work. Share your story with our 250 members and many other readers.

On that note, I would like to wish you all:

*A Very Happy Christmas
And
Best Wishes for the New Year.*

From the pen of Phil H Watts.

Portrait and Interview ‘a batons rompus’ with Mary Neary, 9th May 2003

(Co-ordinator: Liz Hewett and Mary Neary live in house where Pam and Derek lived before moving to Cowbridge)

Interviewer : John Gunson

Llancarfan Society: **Hullo Mary, and thank you on behalf of the Llancarfan Society for your willingness to speak to us today. As Jean draws your portrait, I will ask you a few questions if you agree.**

All of us that were at the Irish evening enjoyed your helping to host that event and the dancing of the jig with your friends from the community. Can you tell us something of your childhood in Mayo, Ireland and what Ireland meant to you then and what it means to you today ?

Mary Neary: I was brought up in a town called Claremorris, which is in County Mayo in the west of Ireland, and it is only seven miles from Knock. You may have heard about Knock, it is a holy place a little bit like Lourdes. It was where the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1879 appeared to eight ordinary people. She did not say anything in particular but it is now a place of worship and a lot of sick people get cured. When I was younger, we used to go to church there. I spent most of my time in a school called the Convent of Mercy, Claremorris, which was run by the mercy sisters and I can assure you that they certainly were not, there was no mercy in those nuns and I have no wish to go back to see them. I have no wish to even think about them so let's move on. But I also went to school for a short time in a wonderful place called Kylemore Abbey which is in Connemara which is on the borders of Mayo and Gallway. It is an idyllic place owned by the Benedictine sisters with a famous lake. At school I spent most of my time in the corridor standing outside of the classroom (*laughs*) because I was forever talking and I still talk, we know that, and I just have to accept it – that is either a strength or a weakness of mine ...it could be a strength ... whatever. I remember I was being punished once by these particular nuns at Kylemore because I had talked too much and I had asked too many questions which was my wont at that time, so they put me in a boat and made me row off to the middle of this lake. I had to vow that I would not

even talk to myself (*laughs*), which was very difficult. But I loved it, I was there for two hours and it was wonderful, idyllic, surrounded by mountains, by trees and oh, it was just beautiful. It now has become a great place for tourism. It is still a convent, still a school.

My childhood was idyllic. I was brought up by an Aunt, an elderly Aunt, who adopted me. She actually came from New York. So when I was very little I had her accent and I was known as the little Yank (*laughs*). It didn't take long to lose that accent once I went to school. She was a wonderful lady and she was also called The Lady because she was a very gentle lady, very beautifully dressed. I have got very fond memories of her but I also have memories of her being very strict and a staunch Catholic. And it has left me with a lot of questions about what it means to be an Irish Catholic today. So again, we'll leave that one for now ...

And Ireland today?

And Ireland today... well I go back to Ireland quite a lot and I was there last week and I'm going again next week. The thing that impresses me about Ireland today is how it has progressed. It is no longer the poor poverty stricken Ireland that people talked about. It is still an idyllic country. The most beautiful country to go to if it didn't rain so much (*laughs*)... What I notice about Ireland is the younger generation, how confident they are, how self-assured they are. They question more and they are allowed to question. They are more challenging than I was at that age. And I think that is a very good thing. And they are no longer dominated by the church or the school. They are no longer dominated by the fear caused by the indoctrination that went on years and years ago. And I think that is a great thing. We still have the old codgers wandering up the road with their bicycles, falling about after a few pints .. that hasn't changed that much. Kay (Mrs Kay Brain the wife of our Chairperson) and I were chuckling about this recently. And also we see the horse fairs and the cattle fairs that still go on in the middle of the market towns. I mean the bartering that goes on, the spitting on the hand and the clapping of the hands when a sale is agreed. I think that is just wonderful. I wish I

could capture that somehow in either painting or writing. It would be wonderful because that's Ireland to me.

Llancarfan Society : **Many of us are aware that both you and Liz are important to Nursing in Wales and abroad. You are on the Academic and Research staff at Cardiff University, and you are visiting Professor to a University in Finland. You also have freelance activities for other Higher Education establishments and have published several books and academic papers. Can you tell us something of your professional life and your appreciation of the Nursing profession as it is practiced today ?**

Mary Neary : I think we need to go back a little, again back into my childhood. From being very young for some reason, I always wanted to be a nurse. That was the only thing I wanted to do. I did not know then that I would also have a second profession in teacher education. I'll just tell you a little story. When I was about five years of age my cousin Jim came from England. He was helping in the garden one day and he cut his finger. And I immediately wanted to do something to stop the bleeding. I had no idea what, I was only five. But I knew that it needed to be bandaged. So I ran all the way up to the house, took the best linen pillowcases that I could find and made little strips of (*laughs*) pillowcase and I wrapped one of them around his finger. But I got so enthusiastic about bandaging his finger that I wanted to do more so by the time I finished, every strip of pillowcase that I had torn was around his hand. Now I can tell you that about half an hour after that my Aunt discovered that I had only taken one of the best linen (*laughs*) (Irish of course) pillowcases and I think I had a little trouble sitting down for a few days ... So there it was just instinctive; to nurse, that's what I wanted to do.

When I took my leaving cert and I was now coming up to eighteen years of age, I did summer jobs in a hotel, a bank and even worked as a cook in the local college for a while. But I still wanted to be in nursing and I wanted to go to England. The family were not very pleased about that because they would have preferred if I had actually done my nursing in Ireland. They were actually very worried about me going to that pagan country where I might lose my faith

(*laughs*) they were right. Anyway I did eventually with a lot of difficulty get away from home.

I started off in Manchester and then I did a number of different trainings. I was in General Nursing (now called Adult Nursing). I was in Psychiatric Nursing (now called Mental Health). And I went into what was also known as Mental Handicapped (now called Learning Disabilities). So here immediately you see the changes that have occurred over the years in the different names and terms that we give to the different branches of nursing. I did a little bit of District Nursing (now called Community Nursing) but I didn't care very much for that so I went back into General Nursing.

In 1974 it was decided for me (by my mentor and tutor) that I would be pretty good at teaching and two years later, now a qualified Nurse Tutor, I set up in Leicester Royal Infirmary one of the first Accident and Emergency International Courses. We had a lot of nurses from places like Africa, Australia, New Zealand. It was a brilliant time. That was a brilliant time then because there were changes coming for the better. The nursing profession was beginning to question what Nursing was about. People were beginning to look at the management structure and styles. Sadly, a lot of people were adversely affected by the changes and some lost their jobs and/or were made redundant. But those of us who were lucky and given the chance, we began to see that changes needed to happen. And we were involved. Very much involved. We also had at that time unique ideas. Liz came from Edinburgh in 1980 to Leicester. She came as a Senior Sister for Accident and Emergency but very quickly became a manager in the Leicester Royal. She was the manager and I was the educationalist. For the first time we had a partnership, where we merged management and education and that was unique at that time. It was very exciting. The sad thing was that we weren't aware of how unique it was. We should have written about it. Because today that's what it is all about.

You asked me about what is nursing like today. Well as I said there are a lot of changes and a lot of people would argue that they are not for the

better. We did have what was commonly known as Project 2000 in 1986 in England (1990 in Wales). The idea was that nurse education should be at university level, that it should be an all-graduate profession. The problem of course was that we didn't get the balance right. In the old days, we had too much practice and not enough theory. We relied too much on medical science. We switched over to being too academic and not enough practice. Just now, there is a new curriculum called 'Fitness for Practice' which is the result of the Peach Report (1999). The object is to get the balance between education and practice. In Wales, this is called the All Wales Initiative and Improving Health in Wales (2002). You can see from this the political influence. We have to wait and evaluate that and see what happens in terms of the experiences of the new generation of nurses, of which Lucy (*co-ordinator* Angell, from Beechcroft) will be a part. Certain things in nursing had to change. We could no longer be the handmaidens of the doctors. We had to become more professionally independent. We had to become recognised as a profession in our own right with our own theories, with our own knowledge. We had to develop as autonomous practitioners. We had to become a research-based profession. In nursing, we are still very slow in researching the right things. We tend to concentrate more on the academic and theoretical aspect. There needs to be more research into nursing care, patient and client care, I think. The question we need to address is: 'what do patients/clients need and how can nurses deliver a quality care service'?

Llancarfan Society: **Of course to us here you are happy to be 'just' Mary and we would rarely address you as Doctor Neary. You can be often seen walking Ben (the collie from the Fox and Hounds) and Marcus, a golden retriever (sometimes linked together to stop younger Ben bounding ahead). One of your favourite walks is to Moulton, cutting across off-road to Walterston and then back to Llancarfan. What does the countryside and living in this part of the Vale of Glamorgan mean to you?**

Mary Neary : For me, Llancarfan itself is such a beautiful, peaceful and yet paradoxically busy village. And there are many aspects of it that remind me again of my childhood, especially the forest and the hills, well there aren't so many

hills, but the river, the fields and in the morning looking at those cows running up and down chasing – they spend a lot of time running up and down fields, those cows, don't they? (*laughs*) There was a rabbit in the garden the other day. Oh, gosh how much that reminded me of when I was a child!

The main thing about Llancarfan is the people themselves. They are so accepting. They are always willing to help without being intrusive. They seem to have a canny way of knowing when you want to be interrupted, when you want company or when you want to be left alone. I have never ever had anybody refuse me any help. People are just amazing. When we first came to Llancarfan, we were amazed that on the second day of us being here, Audrey Baldwin, who is our wonderful neighbour, walked down the drive with a cake in her hand and that did it for me. Absolutely did it for me. It just reminded me of the old tradition of Ireland when someone moved in next door. And it still goes on, even now John, yourself; you come in with a cake (*laughs*). It's a wonderful tradition.

When I'm walking, I do my best thinking. I'm usually thinking about a paper that I am writing for teacher education (which is what I am involved in now), or thinking about the next chapter of a book. I am also thinking about the countryside. I am at such peace with the countryside. And I look across those fields and I again I have to say they remind me of Mayo. Is it to do with the monks who were in this village? There is a certain peace, a certain tranquillity. My mind gets uncluttered of all the everyday things and busy-ness that goes on in the world and in my work. And I am somehow able to just empty my mind and just think of wonderful things, listening to the birds, the peacefulness. Talking to Ben or Marcus, often telling Ben off because he won't behave and Marcus who is, you know, the old mentor trying to put some sense into Ben, I don't know if it works, we'll have to have a word with Sue about that. It's the peacefulness and something about the caring attitude that the people in the village have. And the instinctiveness that they have about individuals, their needs and their needs for privacy.

Llancarfan Society : We know that you like travelling when your schedule permits. You have a home not so far from Cork in Ireland. Also that you go farther afield to the Carribean (this has become so routine that you recently forgot you were going there and had to be reminded?!). What have you learnt from these travels and which are your favourite places to visit?

Mary Neary : I think I have a gipsy gene in me because I have no problem in packing up and going to places. Ireland is still one of my favourite places and we have a home on the Beara Way in a place called Glengarriff which is West Cork and that is again just idyllic. Any of you who have never been there, you don't know what you are missing. Forget about the rainy days and the gentle Irish mist (if there is such a thing) it appears in the morning or in the afternoon. But it is not there all the time. And it is a most peaceful and beautiful place. I have travelled quite widely on holidays and for work. As you know John, I have been to places like Pakistan, Malaysia, China and so on. That has always been to do with my work. What I have learnt from those places, which has really struck me immensely, is the way that the poorest and oppressed people that I have come across have a sheer want to learn. They want to gain so much, they want to learn so much from you. And it can take a lot of energy working during these trips. You can meet them in the morning and they can be up at six o'clock but they are still there at ten and eleven o'clock at night. It's just amazing people looking for knowledge, looking for ways to improve their own lives. Particularly when I was in Pakistan, the area that I was looking at was health and education. We were setting up new courses in nurse education and teacher training. We were helping to set up courses on health for women. We were looking at how we could educate the Pakistani women to help themselves, their families, and their community in both health and education. I have visited as you quite rightly say most of Europe: Italy, Finland, France, you name it. All of these wonderful places.

The Caribbean is the one area that I know that whenever I go there I'm going to get sun. There is no doubt about it. So, you never have to worry about what time of year because the temperature is always the same. We go to Antigua and one of

the reasons we go to Antigua is because Liz and I have mutual friends called Olive and Leroy. And they were living in Leicester when we were living in Leicester. Olive was a Senior Sister in the Coronary care unit in the Leicester Royal Infirmary. Liz was her boss at one time. And as Olive said to us the first time when we went to Antigua to visit her 'Liz you sharpened your management teeth on me' she said 'and you were stubborn but I was as stubborn as you, Liz'. And so, they laughed and remembered the old days. And of course, Liz was much younger then. Being a manager and having someone like Olive who was older and an excellent nurse was a challenge for Liz. Olive knew a lot about nursing and coronary care. Liz had learned from her. The beaches are wonderful, the swimming, and the laughter in that house with Olive and Leroy, it is just fantastic. They have a beautiful home that looks over what is called the English Harbour near Nelson Bay and they have their own private beach distant from the house, not known by the tourists. Leroy and I have to climb over mountains at five o'clock in the morning. We go to this wonderful beach and then we return to breakfast. By that time Olive and Liz are probably out of their beds – oh no I shouldn't say that (*lots of laughter*).

Llancarfan Society: Many of your neighbours have seen you rolling up your sleeves when there is a crisis and you are a special friend to many of us. You have a gift of really paying attention to other people, of being truly present. This is almost old-fashioned in 2003. What does friendship and community spirit mean to you?

Mary Neary : There is a 'spirit' in this community and in the neighbouring villages. There should be nothing old-fashioned about caring for your fellow humans. There's the giving and the taking. You know in this village as I have said before people are so intuitive into the needs of others. I'm sure that there are village politics and I am aware of some of them but I try to avoid that. You need to be politically aware so that you don't make mistakes and you don't say the wrong things to the wrong people. The fact that I don't get involved in the village politics doesn't mean to say that I'm not aware of it. But I try to get the balance right; I try to be the same with everybody. I try to listen to people and they listen to me. It's getting that balance

between listening and giving, listening and responding when the right moment arises. Also, it is very important that one keeps one's own counsel. Because people do tell you things, people sometimes tell you their secrets: some of the difficulties they may be having concerning relationship, work, or health or so on. But for me the important aspect of any community life is keeping your own counsel. And I think if we do that and respect each other's privacies then I think that we can live together in a very harmonious way.

Llancarfan Society: **What would be the ten things you would like to have with you if you were to be shipwrecked on a desert island? And if I can be cheeky, apart from a glass of your own homemade sloe gin or pirated rum to which we know you are partial on special occasions ...**

Mary Neary: Oh wonderful! Well the rum and the sloe gin of course (*laughs*) that's two of them already. Don't forget my Jamiesons, I have to have my totty. I can't go without my totty so that is my three bottles that I would take with me. How long am I on this island for? (*gales of laughter*). I'd have to go to Antigua first to get the rum because it's so cheap and you can get a litre and a half for five pounds. Yes, the desert island would have to be somewhere near Antigua so that Trevor and Fran (*co-ordinator* Winterbottom, who for many years have donated the Christmas tree to the village) could occasionally drop me off some of these drinks when they are there for the cricket. Even the Jamiesons is cheaper in Antigua. The other thing that I would have to have with me is the complete works of Oscar Wilde. I just love his quotations and they are so witty. I have never read the complete works. I have the book already for when I retire. Put me on a desert island and I would be very happy with that.

I would have to have some music. You said earlier on about doing the jig and reel. I need this music to practice so that I can help the Llancarfan Ladies Irish dancers to get it right on the night. So some of that music would have to be Irish music. But I am a bit of a gipsy when it comes to music. I like all types of music. I listen to the classics, Classical FM when I am at home or in the car. But I also like Country and Western. I

love food so you know you'd have to give me a fishing rod. Fish is one of my favourite foods. And of course, I like chicken. I don't know if you are going to put any chickens on these islands. But I wouldn't have any problem in killing a chicken - I was brought up in Ireland for goodness sake! So we learnt how to wring the neck of a chicken but perhaps I'd be squeamish nowadays. But certainly, I'd need a rod in order to do my fishing. Any fish would do. I'd need to have some matches because I would certainly barbeque. I'm presuming that the island I'm on is going to have sunshine and is beautiful. I could always gather the sticks around to make a fire. I would have to have some sort of ingredients so that I could make a nice sauce. Or if I couldn't make a sauce at least put some sort of herbs. I'd have to have something like that, herbs or ingredients to make a sauce to go with the fish. What else would I want? Well I like to be comfortable. I like to be able to sleep in comfort. I couldn't sleep on a hard beach so I'd have to have some form of a mattress. Am I allowed a nice soft mattress? I'd like to have that with a very comfortable pillow. I'm very fussy about my mattress and my pillows. I would have to have a tape recorder because I can guarantee you that if I was on a desert island on my own I would want to talk. I would want to talk to something (*laughs*) and listen - maybe it would be another book who knows (*gales of laughter*).

Llancarfan Society: **Mary, thank you very much for telling us more about yourself and talking to our readers.**

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