

# LLANCFAN SOCIETY



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

newsletter 122

MAY 2004

## Forward: by Barbara Milhuisen

I begin the forward to Newsletter 122 with thanks to Phil Watts for asking me to do so, as I was the first secretary of the Llancarfan Society.

It was Phil who first asked me whether I would be interested in such a Society and so on Monday, 27 April 1987 at the Fox and Hounds, Llancarfan, the first meeting was convened. Twelve people attended, and a committee was formed. John Etherington's appointment as Editor of the Newsletter was such an inspired decision and I would like to pay special tribute to him. Mavis Coles was responsible for the printing of the newsletters in the early days and without her help and expertise this would not have been possible.

For the next five years I worked very happily with different Chairmen and the joy of being in touch again with friends of my childhood was unbelievable and still is. But then Llancarfan is a magical place and has always had incredible people associated with it.

My childhood heroes were all heroines. My first two teachers - Miss Connie Griffiths who became a second mother to her nephew Campbell Reed and Mrs Morfydd Watts (Phil's aunt) who gave us our first lessons in needlework and craftwork.

Mrs Bealing (John Gardner's grandmother) who was the messenger 'girl' on her bicycle for church activities. Mrs Davies of Middlecross with no children of her own but who was universal aunt to so many children in the area. Mrs Ruth Jenkins (Graham Jenkins aunt) Madam Chairman of the Parish Council the year we won the best kept village competition. Mrs Doris Watts (Phil's mother) my organ teacher, friend and the person who typifies for me a very great lady. Then there was my mother who with love, humour and a great devotion to my brother and myself single handed passed on to us a love of the village and its community.

I ceased to be secretary in 1992 but not a member of the Society. It has grown from strength to strength with new members and new ideas. I am particularly happy that three generations of my brother's family are all members living in Kent but friends with three generations of another family living locally. But I hope that is what a Society is all about. I look forward to the next May Day walk and many more dinners, meeting friends old and new either in Llancarfan or France.

I finish as I began with thanks to the editorial committee for allowing me to write a few words and the continued friendship and kindness which makes my association with the Society such a pleasure.

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## LLANCARFAN SCHOOL PAGE

Just before we broke up for the Easter holidays we had the duck race. WE have it every year at about the same time. Each child in the school sells ducks to help the PTA raise money for the school. There was a prize for the pupils who sold the most ducks. This year the most were sold by Hannah and Masie James.

Altogether we sold over 1000 ducks, so we raised just over £900. It was a good duck race. Its fun watching them coming down the stream.

The Winner was Sam Woolett's Dad, he won £50.

### School Garden

n Llanccarfafn School we use to have a small patch of grass we did not use, between the hall and the main building.

We decided to make a garden there that could be used as an outdoor classroom.

During the summer holidays some of the parents and teachers came in to dig holes, build walls and put down a path.

Before Christmas Mrs Steven's came in to school with a gardener and we planted different types of plants in the garden. These plants are starting to look really nice now. Mr Jameison has built us some benches to put in the garden so we can go and sit in there when the weather is nice.



### Yellow Pages

At Llanccarfafn Primary School we have just taken part in a recycling competition. All the schools in the Vale of Glamorgan we allowed to enter. We had to collect as many old Yellow pages as possible to go and be recycled. All the children brought them in. We asked our parents and grandparents to collect them for us. Some mums and dads got some from their works. Some of us collected them from around the village.

Out of all the schools in the Vale of Glamorgan we **WON**. We collected the most per pupil in the school, which is how they work out the winner. WE collected nearly 1200 Yellow pages. This meant that we collected over 10 per pupil.

The prize for coming first was a cheque for £300. Four of us went to the council offices with Mrs Morgan and Mr Thorne to collect it from the chairman of the council. (We also won the competition last year).

The prize money is going towards an activity trail that is being built on the school field....We can't wait.

## **Birthdays, Anniversaries, Births and Deaths**

(please contact Ann Ferris if you wish any event to be included on this page)

Congratulations to:

**Molly Vincent** on her 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday at the end of January.

**Michael Crosta** who was awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours List. (full report on page ...).

To **Molly Vincent** on the birth of her first grandson, James (called Harry) John Charles on the 12 February 2004.

**50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversaries:**

Susan and Ron Price on the 12 June

Joyce and Frank Jameson on the 24 June.

**Birth: To Paul and Joann Jenkins, twin sons on 21st October 2003, Lewis and Rhys – Grandsons for Clive and Brenda Jenkins (Barbara Milhuisen's brother).**

**Sending** our best wishes to Joan Thomas for a complete recovery, following her stay in hospital.

Deaths:

Nesta Elvira Hughes on 24 December 2003

Richard Ferris on 16 January 2004

(obituaries on page 6)

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Announcements, Local Events, Reminders:

Subscriptions were due in January, if you have not paid and wish to continue as a member of the Society, please send your cheque to John Gardner, The Willows, Fonmon, Rhoose, Vale of Glamorgan. CF62 3BJ. The amount is £5.00 per mailing address. If you are a senior citizen, living alone it is reduced to £2.50.

Society reminders:

**20 June** Annual Petanque at Llanythin by kind permission of Mr & Mrs Williams.

**9 July** Walking Treasure Hunt around Village

Llancarfan and District Community Assoc.:

**4 July** As well as being American

Independence day will, this year, have a new

reason for celebration. The LDCA (the committee looking after the Village Hall) are organising a Summer Picnic at Castle Lodge Farm (by kind permission of Mr & Mrs A Studley). There will be a performance by the Bedwas Trethomas & Machen Brass Band, who have played at many international occasions at the Millennium stadium).

## **Llancarfan Charity Walk**

**Sunday, 13 June      In aid of Diabetes UK.**

The walk starts at 10.30am and is approximately 7 miles. Walkers to meet at the Fox and Hounds, Llancarfan 15 minutes before walk. Contact: Patsie Smith 01446 751445 or Fran Winterbottom 01446 781412.

**Marjorie Hobbs** would like to thank all the very kind friends and relative who joined her on the 2 January, to celebrate her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, and also for the many lovely gifts that she received.

### **It is a small world by Mike Crosta**

In October/November 2003, Jan and I went on a tour of New Zealand and Fiji. In South Island, we left our tour party in a small town called Kaikoura to go on a whale watching boat trip. On the bus to the boat we heard a Welsh voice in the seat directly behind us. We turned to discover a familiar face.

During the years 1973 to 1981, our children Andrew and Alexandra attended Llancarfan Primary School. During part of that time, the Head teacher was Derek Evans. We had not seen him of course for many years and he was retired. It was he and his wife who were sitting directly behind us also on a tour but with a different company. This was quite a surprise to all of us but a very pleasant one as we reminisced.

We all enjoyed the whale-watching trip. There were three sightings of sperm whales. One surfaced just twenty metres from the boat stayed with us for a while then dived showing the famous tail silhouette. He obligingly repeated this a few minutes later. There was then another one close by which "performed" even better. He put his large domed head above the surface and we could see his small-toothed lower jaw clearly chewing on a fish. It is quite rare to see this behaviour. Tour over we and the Evans parted company to rejoin our respective tours.

The following day we boarded the Transalpine train to Franz Joseph Glacier, which stopped en route for a photo opportunity of magnificent snow-topped mountains. From another carriage stepped the Evans. Time for another chat. That evening at our hotel, we went to dinner to find the Evans eating in the same dining room. One could plan such meetings without any hope of them working out.

Two days later in Queenstown, there they were again in the harbour area.

The next day we were staying at a remote town called Te Anau. After a long day travelling through spectacular mountain scenery, we went for a walk after dinner along the lake. There was absolutely no one about except coming towards us on the same path were the Evans. We were all still impressed with the tour so far not least the extraordinary fact of our meeting all the time.

We didn't actually see them for a while – not at fabulous Milford Sound, Scottish Dunedin or Mount Cook National Park. However, it had to happen. On our last day, which was in Christchurch in Cathedral Square there they were and we enjoyed exchanging notes of our visits to places where we had not actually bumped into them.

It was a lovely set of coincidences (six in fact), which astonished Andrew and Alexandra when we told them. We have actually planned our next meeting – for a drink at the Fox and Hounds in the New Year.

--ooOoo--

## **A little tale (tail) by Dick Ferris**

A German tourist walking with his dog through the village of Llancarfan during the last seven days was seen by a local to slip and fall into the river with his dog. Immediately, the villager jumped into the swollen river and pulled out the German man.

After thanking him, the tourist said never mind me, save the dog he cannot swim. So, the villager jumped into the river again and managed to catch the dog that seemed to be dead.

However, the villager did not give up but proceeded to give the kiss of life to the dog. After about five minutes, the dog revived.

The German tourist was profuse in his thanks and said to the villager "are you a Vet"? The villager replied, "No – I'm b..... soaking".

## **Christmas Cards by Phil Watts**

Sam Smith's note in the Gem saying that a number of people in the Llancarfan area this year were donating a sum of money to charity instead of sending Christmas cards came too late for Ruth and myself. Most of the cards had already been written.

This is a very good idea, our card list has grown to gigantic proportions. We do not have the courage to leave anyone out, if we do that is the signal to receive one from the person omitted. A donation to charity would be more beneficial than buying a couple of hundred charity cards.

Next year the only people to receive a card will be those we haven't seen during the year. Like Marks and Spencer and other retailers from the end of September as a parting farewell we will say 'have a nice Christmas.' The other alternative is to place a greeting in the Llancarfan Society newsletter - that will cover 250 in one swoop.

That's if people are still reading it by then. We all like receiving greetings at Christmas time but as the Prince of Wales said after a visit to Wales in the nineteen thirties 'Some thing must be done'. And they are still doing it! (this is the Prince that became Edward the Eighth not to be confused with the present day Prince).

If you do not have a Christmas card from us in 2004, or do not read the newsletter, or you haven't seen us for us to wish you a Happy Christmas – Good Health and Happiness for 2005. We put this forward as an example of forward planning!

## **Boxing Day Tug Of War And Duck Egg Race by Phil Watts.**

It was good to see both these events well supported again this year. There is always a doubt whether enough people are willing to brave the cold water of the Carfan. Or if the river is of low enough proportions to allow a thousand plastic eggs to meander in a gentle race to the Fox and Hounds bridge. One year the duck egg race had to be decided by drawing eggs from black bags. This was not popular! Another year Sam Smith and Rev. Malcolm Davies tried to hold back the torrents and catch the eggs at the same time at the Fox bridge. Neither have been quite the same since! It is good that the eggs are stopped from littering the Kenson Moors as well as being able to take part in next year's duck egg race.

It is noticeable that these popular events are used by folk to renew old acquaintances. Past residents of the village attending this year were Pam and Graham Hinchley and Jim and Brenda Grove. Long may it continue.

--ooOoo--

## **The Village Christmas tree by Dick Ferris**

The dedication of the few who erect and decorate the tree (Graham Brain, Alan Taylor, John Angell, etc) in the cold days before Christmas must be admired.

But the removal of the tree and its decorations this year was done by Alan Taylor and Graham Brain, not only on a cold January day, but one when it was also absolutely pouring with rain, this is truly dedication.

On behalf of lots of people – many, many thanks!

--ooOoo--

## **Cliff Farm by John Etherington**

The BBC " programme 'Escape to the Country' included a property in Llancarfan a couple of weeks ago: - Cliff Farm. The people who were looking for a country home were, however, not interested and pursued a property near Pontypridd.

The filming around Llancarfan village included a panorama from Pancross Hill down past New House to the Village. Also the ford. And the church, dwelling for a moment on the golden stag wind-vane. I put a note of this in a Christmas Card to Jean Veysey as her son was the craftsman.

One point of interest cropped up in Cliff House. During renovations, the owners (whom I don't know) said that they had found a 'priest hole' - which would date from the period after Henry VIII broke from the Catholic Church. If anyone has contacts with Cliff House, it would be interesting to enquire about this.

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## **Obituaries**

It is with great sadness we have to report the death of Nesta Elvira Hughes, on Wednesday 24 December 2003 at the age of 87. Nesta was the wife of Bob Hughes formerly of Llanbethery.

The funeral service and cremation was held at Coychurch, Bridgend on Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> January. Nesta is survived by children Gerald, Colin and Christine.

Nesta was born in Barry, moved with her parents to the Mason's Arms, Llanbethery in the early 1920's and lived there until she married Bob in 1939 in St Cadoc's Church.

Nesta and Bob lived in Chapel Cottage, Llancarfan until 1947 when they moved to The Vines, Llanbethery, they had a small dairy herd, and supplied the village with milk for many years.

After Bob's death Nesta moved to Fonmon Road, Rhoose, where she died. She was a kind, gentle, homely, country person always had time for others. She will be sadly missed by family, friends and neighbours.

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The 16<sup>th</sup> January saw the sad death of Dick Ferris from a stroke, which has robbed the village of one of its great characters.

Dick and Ann had lived in Llancarfan for over 25 years.

Since his by-pass operations more than ten years ago, Dick was often seen walking around the area, having been told that walking was good for the circulation.

Dick was a great gardener and his garden at 'Fordings' has always been a picture. One especially remembers the enormous height to which his sunflowers grew.

He and Ann were also great Bridge players and he will be missed at the monthly Bridge night at the Village Hall nor will the Village 'Boules' competition be quite the same again.

The funeral was held at St Cadoc's Church on the 27 January and was conducted by Rev. Malcolm Davies.

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### **Llancarfan Society Calendar 2004**

The publication of our second calendar seems to have passed without too many complaints. We found one or two spelling mistakes and omissions when it was too late, however, they were not disastrous we believe it to be a big success. We printed 100 copies over the number required for members; most of these we have been able to sell. There are some left, if you require further copies please contact Alan Taylor, Windrush, Llancarfan.

The 2004 Calendar shows Llantrithyd Church and Abbey for December. We are advised by Mr Peter Williams of Llantrithydd that this building was never an Abbey. It was a 16<sup>th</sup> century house built by a branch of the Bassett family.

We are pleased to correct this error and apologise for our carelessness. Over the years, this building has been given many names. Children brought up in the area often referred to it as the castle. Quote "where have you been?" Reply, "playing up the castle". It is clearly not a castle; it was used by cattle for shelter within living memory.

We will gladly print more information on this building or any other building in the area of Llancarfan and Llantrithyd. We will accept any article for publication that does not require further research.

We would like to know if you, the members, would like us to produce another calendar. This calendar was confined to present day views. The first one concentrated on old photographs and memories. What could be the next theme? Moreover, who is going to do it? Are there any other ideas?

---ooOoo--

### ***Calendar Boys & Girls by Sue Taylor***

The Society has been very fortunate in past years to have received considerable grant aid to assist towards the production costs of its publications. However in 2003 our luck ran out! Nothing daunted Phil Watts and his dedicated band set about obtaining the keenest price possible for a 2004 Calendar. This was soon obtained with the kind assistance of The Barry Advertiser Limited to whom the Society is extremely grateful.

As you will remember our first Calendar was compiled with a lot of research by many people but particularly Phil and Gwynne Liscombe, whose support to the Society is sadly missed not least because of his knowledge of the area over many years.

For the 2004 calendar Phil and local photographer, Phil Heath set about capturing on film countryside scenes which would appeal to Society members. Phil Heath specialises in black and white photography and a superb selection of his local work can be seen in Llancarfan Village Hall, which he has kindly donated and should not be missed by visitors to the Hall.



Other contributors who helped to make this years calendar so special were Chris Lazda, Ann Radcliffe, Gwyneth Plows; also a Society member from Australia Ken Wilkinson who has grown to love the area through his visits to his sister Audrey Baldwin who resides at Broadhayes. Marilyn Cann captured the beauty of St Cadoc's Church just before a local wedding.

After the difficult task of choosing the final 12 prints to be used, comes the proof checking, not an easy task and thanks are due here also to Graham Jenkins; many trips now followed to our printers to check that all the details are correct before the final print run. Even then, the work is not over, the calendars have to be packed and posted to many countries where Society members reside and this year hand delivered to our local areas to be in time for Christmas. Our thanks are due to everyone involved, not least Phil Watts wife Ruth, whose support was second to none; they had to put up with a house full of boxes just before Christmas not to mention members of the distribution team invading their household. This process was speeded along by the invaluable assistance of John and Jean Gardner. Many, many thanks to everyone involved in this most successful project!

--ooOoo--

### **The Wild Goose (previously The Mason's Arms by Phil Watts)**

It is ironical that the Wild Goose (or The Mason's Arms) should be mentioned in two articles in this edition of the newsletter. Nesta Griffiths (Hughes) moved to The Mason's Arms in the early twenties and now we have to announce the closing of the Wild Goose as a public house as from Saturday, 17 January.

Keith and Kay Hancock have run the Wild Goose for the past twenty years. They have gained an excellent reputation for good food served in a homely, friendly atmosphere. Kay has been in charge of the kitchen while Keith has been the "front man". What an excellent team they have been. They have made many friends while in Llanbethery, diners have come from far and wide to enjoy Kay's home cooking. Many of the diners gathered at the "Goose" on their last evening to wish them well in their retirement.

Before coming to the "Goose" Keith worked as an engineer on the M4 motorway as it spread westward across South Wales, little did he know that he would spend the next twenty years in a "dead end" in Llanbethery. Under the guidance of Kay and Keith the "Goose" has been a favourite eating place for many people. It will be difficult to find an establishment of an equal standing in the area.

We would like to wish Kay and Keith the long and healthy retirement they deserve. While Keith is approaching the pension age, retirement has been hastened by recent poor health; hopefully, he is now on the way to a full recovery and in a position to enjoy his retirement. Llanbethery will not be the same without them; they will be missed. The village will not be the same without a pub.

The "Goose" will revert to an ordinary dwelling house. Keith and Kay are not sure at the time of writing where they will make their new home.

Within living memory The Wild Goose and to give it its original name The Mason's Arms had four landlords and two landladies. Mr & Mrs Griffiths kept the Mason's between the two world wars. Mrs Griffiths was the lady that folk turned to in times of birth and death. She was the person on the scene before the undertaker; the doctor and the mid-wife arrived. Reg Kemp who also had an electrical business in Barry followed the Griffiths family. Betty Ringrose took over next having learnt the trade under Trixie Phillips in the Fox and Hounds, Llancafarn. Doreen Clode also took the same road from Llancafarn to Llanbethery for a number of years until Bill Coombes; a nightclub owner from Cardiff took charge. He made most of the changes from the Mason's Arms to The Wild Goose. The locals were in trepidation as to what would happen next, fortunately, Kay and Keith came along and the rest is history. Bill Coombes nearly sold the "Goose" to Edgar Balchin of Fox and Hounds fame. If this sale had gone through the "Goose" would have had the same care and attention that it has had over the past twenty years.

The "Goose" and the "Mason's" are finished as a social focal point. They will be remembered for different reasons. The older ones will say, "we used to drink there on Sunday mornings". Excuse picking up the Sunday papers! Or famous dart matches with neighbouring pubs. Always a good meeting place and as it was for the past twenty years a place for good food and good beer. R.I.P.

--ooOoo--

### **Modafinil - Article from The Telegraph January 2004**

Described as a drug that staves off sleep for hours on end, makes one feel as fresh as a daisy at 4.o'clock in the morning. People are known to be quite lively at this time, but then they are useless the next day. It is claimed that there are no side effects, and will make sleep optional. We are told that such famous people, as Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair exist on very little sleep. To come nearer home the question must be asked, "Is Tony Thomas using modafinil"? There is not a lot of rest on that farm.

--ooOoo--

### **The Llancarfan-Savernake link - millions to one odds by John Etherington (with apologies for ever so slightly banging a drum)**

I have often written about the "windows in time" through which we each saw Llancarfan and the amazing way in which the Society has re-opened some of those windows onto a common timeless courtyard. As a result we all now seem to know someone who left Llancarfan before the other arrived - or *vice versa*.

The story I want to tell here is slightly different, and so against the odds that I find it difficult to work out the chance of its happening.

Just after I left Llancarfan, the Taff Ely windfarm was built on that great sweep of hillside looking down over the Vale and the Severn Sea. As an environmental scientist my attention was immediately taken and I started to investigate the matter. At the same time, my heart sank - I realised that it did not bode well for the bare hilltops and moorlands of Britain.

To cut the story short, it became increasingly obvious that these machines made very little electricity, and my foreboding grew - it would literally need hundreds of thousands of them to achieve the promised saving of carbon-dioxide emission - the only good reason we have been given for their construction... Being me, I wrote two or three critical letters to the press - one to the *Western Mail*, making this point. I was surprised to receive a number of personal letters and phone calls as a result. These were all from people who shared my concerns and wanted to encourage me to continue digging for the truth.

Little did I know that I had kicked a stone which would start an avalanche. The result has swept me off my feet and altered the whole decade for me. Today, I spend perhaps eight hours a day, seven days a week providing consultancy material for various organisations, large and small, which are struggling to head-off the advancing wind-monsters. It is indeed the main reason why lack of time forced me unwillingly to give-up the editorship of our Newsletter.

This won't be news to all of you. Some will remember that there was a proposal for three large wind turbines in the fields between Llanbethery and Llancadle, which prompted me for once to abandon our policy of being non-controversial. I wrote a critical comment on the scheme (Newsletter 62, 1994) but it didn't seem to upset anyone - at least there were no abusive ripostes which is more than I can say about my letters in the press on the subject! On the other hand, we are all NIMBYs when it comes to the value of our houses - bit close to home!

Sorry about the 'drum' but it sets the scene for a really very unexpected event. What earthly connection can there be between this wind power rubbish, Llancarfan and those joined-up time windows?

A week or two ago I received a letter from the chairman of an English branch of the Council for Preservation of Rural England which opened: -"I have been reading your very helpful papers on the wind-farm.org web-site [and would like some further information]. We are debating the desirability of installing wind turbines on the Savernake plateau near Marlborough, in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty." [!!!]

The final paragraph of the letter came as a great surprise: -

"In looking for your address, I entered your name in an internet search, and, to my surprise and delight, was diverted to the Llancarfan website. The reason for my delight is that my wife and I lived for 14 enjoyable years at *Glan-yr-Afon*, Llancarfan, while I was working at what is now called Cardiff University. I took early retirement in 1983. It is good to hear that the *Fox and Hounds* is still the centre of activity in that area!" Signed John Kirkman

Well! John and his wife had overlapped with us in one of those Llancarfan windows and yes, I remember him, though we did not know each other well. I wrote to him recalling, "a tall man with red hair", which he tells me it is now white - as has happened to most of us!

What are the odds against this happening? There are about 60 million people in the UK and 24.5 million homes. When John left Llancarfan I had no idea where he had gone, and assumed that I would never see him again. Of course internet searches have a lot to do with this, letting you whizz through the biggest index of everything in the world in a few seconds, but just the chance of these two abstruse common factors linking a pair of people is quite remote.

If we have a statistician in the Society it would make another little note for the Newsletter!

Well folks, that's it for the moment.

--ooOoo--

### **Barry 25 years ago** (*Barry and District News*) by John Etherington

"A scholarship for advanced study at the Kansas State University, USA, has been awarded to Barry student Miss Gail Liscombe of Greenbanks Drive, Barry"

Gail is the daughter of founder members Dilys and the late Gwynne Liscombe who lived at *Broadhayes* in the years before they left Llancarfan for Barry. Gail of course still lives in Barry and is occasionally seen at Society functions.

[I would also have added that this was after Gail had graduated from ??? ('Birmingham' supplied by Phil Watts), but old age is taking its toll and I can't remember which University - Phil will know - or you can ask Dilys - or the lady herself, whom I vividly remember as an eight year old!]

--ooOoo--

### **Reunions** by Phil Watts

In the last newsletter we published photographs of two classes of Llancarfan school children from 1950. We have received a letter from Ewart Lougher who says he can fill in the missing names. Why don't this group of people have a re-union in Llancarfan?

--ooOoo--

## **Investiture at Buckingham Palace** by Molly Vincent of Corner House

July 8<sup>th</sup> 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 were 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 55<sup>th</sup> 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 is 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 he 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.

--ooOoo--

## **Teas of Llanvithyn** by Gwyneth Plows

It was in January 1991 that David and I came to live in the cottage and work for Mr & Mrs Williams (Laurie and Eleanor).

It was in the spring of that year that they asked if we could help one Sunday in June, as they opened the garden for the National Garden Scheme – Dave to sort the parking out in the field

and I would do teas – so we made 150 Welsh Cakes and served tea and coffee in plastic beakers. The next year it was the same.



For the following year I said I would make a couple of fruit cakes and Eleanor made a couple of sponges – the plastic beakers weren't good enough so we had cups and saucers!

Over the past few years we have really excelled – I have raided Audrey Porter's jumble and every charity shop for matching cups and saucers – well at least four of this and five of that, so we don't have to borrow anymore and the cake making has gone from strength to strength.

I start fruit cakes in April and Eleanor makes the sponges in early May for the freezer – she bakes, I wash up the tins for the next batch – “Now Gwyn” – she'll say “I have made four coffee, five chocolate, etc”. and under my breath I say – “Please make two more lemon” – John their gardener and I think they are wonderful.

During the three-four weeks before opening, Eleanor and Laurie are working hard in the garden. No weeds are visible, paths all swept, pool clean and lawn immaculate. I can not do a lot until the day arrives – the weather being the most important factor – in the courtyard or barn. I hope it is not the barn, I always think after three- four hours the cobbles make your feet and legs ache!

The afternoon arrives and with my helpers Jean, Christine, Audrey B, Georgie and any friends who might be staying – its opening time. We now serve chocolate, coffee, lemon, Victoria sponges walnut and date cake, lemon drizzle cake, carrot cake. Also a lovely apple cake, donated by Joyce Fairfax and Welsh Cakes from Jo Williams, together with some other nice treats and, of course, fruit cake!

We usually have 200/250 people – one year 500 came – we did not have a crumb or teabag left.

The garden is open this year on May 23 (2.00 – 6.00pm) and I know Eleanor and Laurie would be pleased to see you. The garden is very special, with beautiful shrubs and trees – The Judas and Handkerchief tree – being special favourites of mine. There is also a 17<sup>th</sup> century gatehouse – it is really worth a visit and when you walk around – please come to the courtyard and I shall be there – apron on – tea/coffee and what cake would you like?



--ooOoo--

## **My Memories of Llancarfan** by Lucy Brain

I am 14 years old and have been living in the beautiful village of Llancarfan for all of my life. I was born in St David's Hospital in Cardiff about three years after my mum and dad moved to Llancarfan from London. In this article, I will be telling a few tales of my childhood in the village.

One of my earliest memories I have of living in Llancarfan is when it snowed heavily one winter, when I was about 2 years of age. My sister Jo took me and our dog Sandy out for a walk around the village. Jo pulled me along in a sledge, and when we passed Margaret Evan's house she came and took a photo of us. We had a snowball fight in the old car park at the Fox and Hounds. At this time, Mike and Cilla Evans were the Landlords.

I remember the Millennium celebrations at the Fox and Hounds pub. Emma and Becky Levy sang "My Love Will Go On" from the film Titanic, and I sang, "There is a castle on a cloud" from Les Miserables. Sam Smith sang a song with my Dad and Jeff Evans.

When I was at Llancarfan Primary School, we used to have an annual sponsored bike ride around the village, we would cycle up school hill and around, ending up cycling through the ford at top speed. I fell off several times, but lived to tell the tale. The ford has always been important for playing, it was a favourite spot for me and friends to sun bathe. We would set up camp by the bench taking shade under the tree. We used to go to Mary Neary's house to get fill ups of water and any other emergency treatments.

When I was 10 years old, my best friend Angharad Hunt and I both played the part of rats in our local pantomime Dick Whittington. We spent a lot of time giggling and had a great time. It was a struggle learning the lines but with a little help from our wonderful director Sam Smith, we got there in the end! (Come on Sam we want another Panto!!)

Another recollection I have, is when I was 11 years old and together with some of my friends from primary school, Angharad Hunt, Lewis Shires, Jordan Davies and Felicity Richards, we went on a sponsored river walk for the NSPCC and raised over £200! We started our river walk at the ford, wading past Delta Cottage, the Old Bake House, Littlemill Cattery and eventually finishing at Garnllwydd. We were presented with Badges and Certificates by the NSPCC in recognition of the hard work we all put in; it was an amazing experience and wonderful fun!

Now I am older, I view things a little differently from when I was young. I have realised that there are things that are missing from our village for people of my age.

During the holidays, I have friends staying over and we have nothing to do. Here are some suggestions I would like to put forward; a swing park will bring endless fun to children (and adults) of all ages, a weekly youth club for teenagers to socialise in the evenings, more classes in the village hall e.g. keep fit, yoga, self defence, etc. to name a few.

I am thoroughly looking forward to our new multipurpose tennis court and petanque pitch, it will be a great place to meet people and exercise.

To conclude this article I'm sure that I am speaking on behalf of all the young people in Llancarfan (and surrounding villages) by saying that I am grateful to be living in such an understanding and safe community.

--ooOoo--

## **Memories of the Threshing Days of old at Porthkerry by Alfred Mills**

(extract from The GEM dated 26 February)

An occasion we always looked forward to in my youth was the arrival of the threshing machine, now no longer seen with the advent of the combine harvester.

It was a 'red letter occasion', sometimes lasting two days, depending on the number of corn ricks available. Water and coal was provided for the traction engine by the farmer.

The threshing crew were always the same during the years I remember them – Alf Vincent, Bill Hartery and Dai from Tonyrefail (we never knew his surname).

Mr Vincent was the engineer in charge, Mr Hartery fed the sheaves into the drum and Dai looked after the trusser.

After putting the drum in situ, to which was attached the trusser, Mr Vincent then lined up the large fly-wheel with a pulley on the drum, attached the long driving belt, and moved the engine back a little to get the correct tension on the belt.

The drum, which to me as a boy was a magic box, had flails, sieves, fans and movement which carried the threshed straw to the trusser, and neatly bundled bouldings, tied at each end about six foot in length. Dia then pitched them to where the straw mow was being built. Bill Hartery was the feed man on top of the drum and fed the sheaf evenly into the drum – a worker alongside him having cut the string and passed the sheaf to him. The most unpleasant task was keeping the outlet under the drum free of waste, the grain husks, thistle seeds and the like – and on a windy day the chaff man could go home quite dirty.

When threshing was at Porthkerry, my mother catered for the three crew for the midday meal (an arrangement with the bailiff).

I learned a lot about their adventures with the tackle, narrow roads, steep gradients and awkward gateways. Often when moving from place to place, someone was sent ahead so that a free passage would be ensured. When travelling, Mr Hartery steered and Mr Vincent attended to the needs of the traction engine.

Mr sympathies were with the workers who had to carry the full sacks of grain to the granary, involving some twenty stone steps, empty them on the granary floor, and return the sacks for further filling. My dad never took kindly to this task.

Now and then a television channel showing a programme relevant to those days will feature a film of that period, showing what I have tried to describe. I feel a sense of nostalgia that the

passage of time and the inventiveness of mankind has done away with those rural activities, which I remember so fondly.

--ooOoo--

## Joke!

A little white cat died and went to heaven. St Peter welcomed the little cat and asked if there was anything it would like, the cat said "I used to have a red cushion to sit on before", St Peter replied "you shall have your red cushion – we treat animal the same as people here". A few days later two mice arrived at heaven, St Peter welcomed them and ask if everything was ok – the mice said, "we used to have roller skates before". St Peter replied then of course you will have roller skates here. A week or so passed and St Peter visited the cat to ask if everything was all right, and the cat said, "everything is perfect, and I just love those meals on wheels".

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Retired CPS Prosecutor In Queen's New Year Honours List Issue **Date: 02 January 2004**

Former CPS principal crown prosecutor, Michael Crosta, has been awarded an OBE in the Queen's New Year Honours List.

Michael has a great passion for wildlife and actively took on responsibility for wildlife cases for South Wales. Over the years he handled cases of the illegal use of snares, possession of protected birds and an illicit trade in giant clamshells. In this role he built up good contacts with the South Wales Police's wildlife officers and the RSPB and was responsible for the first successful prosecution of its kind in relation to an attempt to kill protected birds by a pigeon fancier.

He said, "**I am delighted and amazed to receive this award. When I first found out I was absolutely over the moon**".

"I thoroughly enjoyed working for the CPS and always tried to be robust and impartial when dealing with cases. I would particularly like to pay tribute to the rest of the youth team, which produced timely, sufficient and fair results achieving some of the best figures in the country. Without their close co-operation we couldn't have achieved such good results."

Michael worked for the CPS since it was set up in 1986. Until his retirement in May this year, he spent the majority of his career working in the Cardiff area, initially in Barry before moving to Bridgend. He was involved in a number of pioneering projects and was a dedicated member of the South Wales youth team.

Michael is married with two children and lives in Llancarfan.

--ooOoo--

The following item is a cutting from:

**South Wales Star 1891.**

**LLANCARFAN CHURCH BELLS  
Consecration by the Bishop of Llandaff**



## A Glimpse into the Past

Llancarfan Church - so full of old and interesting associations - was on Tuesday morning the scene of a ceremony seldom witnessed nowadays, viz. - the consecration of a peal of bells by the Bishop of Llandaff. The versatile Welsh journalist, Morien, describes the interesting event as follows:- It seems, he says, that during the last half-century the sound of the church bells had not been broken on the stillness of the historic Llancarfan valley - a spot consecrated to pious use since at least the earliest ages of the history of Christianity in Wales. Twenty years ago, when the Rev. A. T. Hughes, the present vicar, was appointed to this living, the church itself had fallen into a wretched condition of dilapidation. He then spent £800 in restoring the venerable shrine of Cattwg the Wise to a condition somewhat worthy of its noble purpose and venerable associations. The church is situate in a picturesque green hollow, with deep, winding glens radiating from it. In the glen above it is Llanveithyn, so noted in the annals of Glamorgan as once the home of Cattwg Ddoeth, or the Wise, whose wise short sayings, in the shape of proverbs and triads, are not only among the most interesting, but the most precious of the literary remains of pre-Augustine times. A short distance beyond Llanveithyn - or, more correctly Llanveithryn, which signifies "The nursery of learning" - is the ancient residence of St. Dyvrig (or, in Latin, St. Dubricius), archbishop of the Church of Great Britain, and whose episcopal Churches were Llandaff and Caerlleon-on-Usk. In a field close to the Church of Llancarfan are seen uneven mounds, describing, according to local tradition, the site of the residence of Caradoc of Llancarfan, the earliest Welsh historian, whose writings are to this day the source whence all subsequent historians derived, and still derive, their most authentic records relating to Wales. At Llanveithyn and Llancarfan were held some of the most momentous synods or cymmanvas in the history of the British Church, and in those places also were educated some of the most celebrated of the Cymric ancient bards in Cymric and Latin learning. It was, moreover, at Llancarfan Aneurin, known, as is supposed, also by the name of Gildas, author of the "Gododin", the earliest of Welsh poems which have come down to us, found refuge after the disastrous battle of Catteraeth, near Strath Clyde.

There cannot be any doubt whatever that it was here he composed that historical heroic poem, which describes the incidents of that awful fight in defence of the liberties of Britain, the result of which was that the Government of England was lost to the Welsh nation. Wales however, baffled every foe. As might be expected Llancarfan Church is a remarkably interesting building. In the work of restoration the present enlightened vicar has dealt with its archaeological remains with loving care, so that the interior of the sacred building retains all its primitive appearance. Indeed, it does not require much imagination while there among the worshippers to fancy oneself as having been whisked by enchantment back to those primitive ages when the forefathers of the hamlet attended within this building to listen to the wisdom of Cattwg the Wise, St. Dubricius, and St. Teilo, or, in latter ages to the enlightened views of the learned Caradoc the Monk. The church, as might be expected points east and west. Above the altar, and extending its full length, are the remains of the reredos, the lower portion of which has disappeared among the "spoils of time". What remains is very beautiful, consisting of exquisite wood carvings. Behind the altar and remains of the reredos is a narrow room, extending the full width of the space occupied by the altar.

A similar narrow room is seen behind the great altar of that other venerable building, the Parish Church of Llantwit Major. It is supposed these narrow spaces behind each altar were for the purpose of dramatic art when the sacred plays enacted formed so important an element in educating the people in sacred literature during non-literary ages as far as the masses were concerned. At the top of each of the pillars holding up the pointed arches of the nave are very curious carved heads, and two of the figures belong to the same period of ecclesiastical ornamentation as the stone cylinder lying in the churchyard against the western wall of Llantwit Major Church. When the present vicar succeeded in obtaining funds to restore the nave and chancel he was unable to restore the belfry and re-cast the bells. Lately, however, he had been successful in both. The square tower with antique windows of Bath stone, is an effective addition to the church's pleasant appearance. The original bells, four in number, bore the names - Sir Thomas Lewis, Van, Caerphilly, and the date 1646: Thomas Bassett, Llanveithyn, 1664: C.J.J. H. and T.S. 1646: and Gibbon 1664. Two of the present bells were presented by Mr G.T. Clark, Talygarn. One of these is a re-cast of the bell presented by Sir Thomas Lewis, Van, in memory of his wife, Mrs Ann Price Clark, his wife who was a descendant of Sir Thomas mentioned above.

The other is a re-cast of the Gibbon bell, now present by his descendant, the present Mr J S Gibbon, Newton, Cowbridge. The cost incurred by the Rev. A T Hughes amounts to £800, £200 of which is given by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. A balance of £35 remains to be collected. Among those

present at the consecrating service were the Bishop of Llandaff, Canon Evans, Rhymney; the Revs A. T. Hughes, D Bowen, Cowbridge; E Jenkins, Llanmihangel; T Rees, M. A. Cowbridge Schools; J Jones, Bassaleg; and S Jones, Flimstone; and O. H. Jones, Fonmon Castle; and Mr Jenkin Matthews, Rhymney. The Lord Bishop during the consecration portion of the service, stood in the entrance into the belfry, with the Vicar of Llancarfan and Canon Evans. His lordship afterwards delivered a sermon founded on Numbers x., 10. During the sermon the bishop traced the various modes of summoning to Divine service in ancient times. His lordship is a learned archaeologist, and he stated that formerly summoning was done by couriers, clappers, trumpets, square bells, and rattles, each mode of inviting succeeding one another. But it was known that round bells were employed in the ninth century. The bishop concluded by describing the church bells as heralds, and he hoped those new ones of Llancarfan would not be used in anything less worthy than as heralds of the Gospel. One of the Misses Hughes, of the Vicarage, presided at the harmonium, and another Miss Hughes led the singing. The choir is a model one for any village church, and the singing was very sweet. A confirmation service was held in the afternoon and a Welsh one in the evening. The Vicar of Glyntav had been announced to preach, but was unable to do so, owing to an accident.

*(from Tom Clemett)*

--ooOoo--

## **Do You Believe In Ghosts**

**by Trudy Fuller**

My 94-year-old mother-in-law has a memory like a computer, although hers does not break down! She likes to be precise and authoritative and does not suffer fools gladly. She left Devon in 1987 to be nearer to her only son Roger. She is fiercely independent and did all her own washing, shopping and cooking until a heart attack in 2001, forced her to go into a residential home, where she has the necessary car. Her large room is at the top of a Victorian house in Penarth, overlooking the Bristol Channel, where she is surrounded by her own furniture and treasured possessions. Because of her nervous disposition, she keeps her door locked. Imagine her surprise one night last autumn when she was awoken by the sound of someone trying to open her locked door, or so she thought. She glanced at her clock to see it was 2.00am as a ghostly figure appeared through the closed door and glided across her room only to disappear through the stone party wall. Mother-in-law did not dare tell anyone of this, for fear of being branded senile!!

A few weeks later mother-in-law was again woken by the noise of someone trying to open her door at 2.15 am. The ghostly figure came in carrying a cup and saucer and walked around the foot of the bed to disappear again through the solid stonewall into the next room. The following day when her early morning cup of tea was brought in, mother-in-law told the staff about her visitor. The carer said she would send another colleague to talk to her, as Viv would know all about the story. Sure enough Viv, the other carer, was able to inform mother-in-law that she had also seen this apparition and it was believed to be a Mrs Williams who had resided in the next room of the adjoining house. Mrs Williams was said to be a very nice, kind lady who had lived in the house for some years.

In December 2003 the door rattled at 2.20 am and this time mother-in-law switched on the table lamp beside her bed. Suddenly, the ghost appeared with a cup and saucer. Because the light was on it was possible to see more clearly as the visitor floated around the foot of the bed and out through the wall as usual. Mother-in-law was only worried in case "her Guest" damaged her grandfather clock, as she passed through the wall beside it. Apparently, the woman was dressed in a tweedy skirt and jumper and had short dark hair. It was after this third visit that the family were finally told of the midnight escapades taking place in Penarth.

Had we been told by anyone but my mother-in-law, we might not have believed it, what she or the family cannot understand is, why does she not feel frightened, because normally she is a very timid character, but she is not at all scared by her visitor.

Sometime later she had another visit from "her" Mrs Williams and this time, as the apparition passed the foot of the bed, mother-in-law said "Hello" whereupon the ghost turned her head

smiled and said "Hello" in an educated voice, as she continued on her journey through the wall into the next room.

We do find it hard to believe that a spirit can or will talk, but we do not believe that mother-in-law tells lies or exaggerates. She quite looks forward to the next visit, because she is normally a very light sleeper and finds most nights very long. The ghost did come again a few weeks ago and we await the next encounter.

--ooOoo--

### **Whist Drive by Phil Watts**

A successful Whist Drive was held in the Village Hall on Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> February. Joy and Tony Rees purchased the whist prizes. Ruth Watts purchased the raffle prizes. Audrey Porter, Audrey Baldwin and Ruth Watts made and served tea and coffee – Audrey Porter having made the Welsh Cakes.

Winners were Jackie Chugg, Betty Williams, Derek Porter, Tony Rees, Tom Hunt and Sylvia Hook. The raffle was won by Audrey Porter, Sylvia Brock and Audrey Baldwin.

We all enjoyed a very pleasant evening and continue to have new faces appearing to meet up with the regulars. Why not join us at the next whist drive on the 29 October in the Village Hall, commencing 7.30pm.

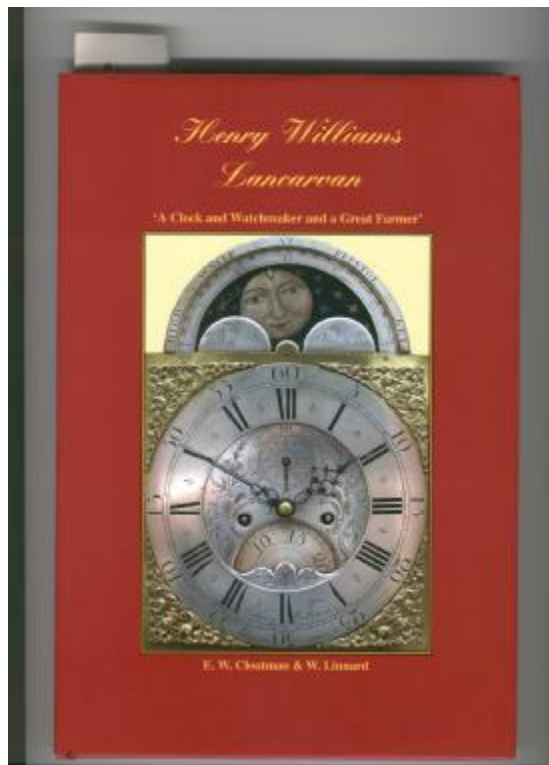
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### **Henry Williams, Llanarvan**

Following the AGM this year E W Cloutman and W Linnard talked to us about Henry William (1727-1790) a farmer/clockmaker who produced some of the finest domestic clocks ever made in Wales. He was apprenticed in Gloucester, but subsequently worked in the little village of Llanarvan in the Vale of Glamorgan, he was a remarkable and versatile clockmaker.

Edward Cloutman and William Linnard have produced an illustrated book which describes in detail all his known clocks, and presents a penetrating analysis of their stylistic feature. The clocks include a month-going longcase clock, ten eight-day longcase clocks (three of them with tidal dials), two thirty-hour longcase clocks (one with alarm), and a fine bracket clock as well as silver watches.

The study reveals a connection between Henry Williams and the Bilbie family of clockmakers in Somerset, which gives important new insights into clock-dial manufacture and dial engraving in the eighteenth century, within the rural community in the 'Garden of Wales'.



The following poem and translation appears in the book – it is a traditional Welsh tribran:

'To geni aur ac arian  
'Ta geni diroedd llydan  
Mi rhown nhw'n rodd a chalon rhwydd  
Am fyw ym mhlwyf Llancafarn.

(literal translation)  
If I had gold and silver  
If I had extensive Lands  
I'd give them freely with happy heart  
To live in the parish of Llancafarn.

--ooOoo--

The following was received in reply to our last newsletter:

**Littledean House Hotel Littledean, Cinderford,**

Gloucestershire GL 14 3JT ;;;;, ;;

Dear Mary Neary ,

I am a member of the Llancafarn Society who used to live at Walterston Fawr with my mother and step-father (Doreen and Robert Manby) between the ages of about 18 and 23 – I was married in Llancafarn Church and we had the reception at the house. I read with great interest the interview you gave to John Gunson. Not because of Llancafarn, but because of Ireland. My father came from Mayo and wrote his own memoirs in "Memoirs of an Accidental Airman", telling of his childhood in Ireland and then his life in the RAF and British Diplomatic Service. Our claim to 'history' is being the Rainsford family, who sold their brewery to Arthur Guinness and after whom the street outside the brewery is named, as is the new hospitality suite inside.

My Papa was born in 1909 at Fisherhill, outside Castlebar where his father was a RIC County Inspector. I won't bore you with the details but I have very much enjoyed going to Ireland and meeting

all sorts of people who are equally interest in all the various letters and diaries which seem to have comemy way, including some from the D'Oliers, the Hugenot silversmiths. Another street name in Dublin! My grandmother came from Cavan and here we have the Brookes, one of whom, Charlotte, is mentioned in the current day tourist literature as having written poetry in Irish – unusal for some of Anglo-Irish descent. Her father was Henry Brook a very well known playwright in his day. I intend to deposit my little archive in Dublin when I next go over.

I have also corresponded with a member of the Garda Siochana (if this is the spelling) who wrote a book about the RIC from 1822 – 1922 and which clarified both my father's tales and that of his older sister. I sent the author copies of my aunt's diary and he was so delighted he published it in the retired Garda members' magazine. My cousins reared in Dublin didn't exactly boast at school that their grandfather was a policeman but times have moved on and I feel quite relaxed about it now.

I hope you enjoy Llancarfan as much as I did all those years ago. My younger half brother and sister went to the village school and when I was old enough to drink I enjoyed the Fox and Hounds with boyfriends from RAF St. Athan. The people we sold Walterston to still live there.

You probably don't want to know any sell this hotel and retire we hope to spend kindled interest again. You probably don't want to know any of this, but as my husband and I are about to sell this hotel and retire we hope to spend more time in Ireland and your memories just kindled interest again.

With All best wishes,  
Josephine Felton (nee Rainsford)

--ooOoo--

It was so nice to receive this letter in response to the first Newsletter of the new regime that I felt if it was printed in may encourage others to write to me as well. (co-ordinator Ann Ferris).

I am sorry for the delay in the production of this newsletter, but if you have read the obituaries who will guess why. There has been so much to deal with – it was just delayed.

Apologies – will endeavour to do better next time.

--ooOoo--