

LLANCARFAN SOCIETY



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

newsletter 124

SEPTEMBER 2004

In early 1996 Mick Mace decided to stand down as Chairman and I had heard that there were no candidates eager to take on the role. At the AGM I sat quietly (and inconspicuously I thought) at the back but suddenly I found I had agreed to take on the baton.

Not having been a committee member or attended any meetings I didn't really know what I was letting myself in for! "All you have to do is chair the meetings" I was told. Sounded OK to someone who had chaired hundreds of meetings across 35 years in industry.

But I have to confess that I had to learn a whole new art! Not always were the meetings relaxed affairs and over the seven years we had many lively discussions. I suppose one should expect a wide range of strongly held views and opinions.

Sometimes one was grateful that we were in a pub and close to a stiff drink!

My favourite monthly meeting was always in December when we attempted no business at all, and over the years it developed into a really enjoyable occasion in the Community Hall with mulled wine and carol singing and a lovely log fire.

There were also the Petanque "competitions". These started on the car park of the Fox & Hounds but when this was no longer possible we hosted it at Glan-yr-Afon for several years - another event which started with barely a handful of players and now has 30 or more.

These gatherings together with the annual dinners and May Day walks greatly increased my knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of our village heritage. Also Mary and Jean (Hunt) contributed with their research on the history of the village school which will hopefully provide useful material for the Llancarfan book. Some of the events brought members from far and wide, and often there were smaller gatherings for lunch or drinks on following days.

Mary and I have been lucky to make many friends in this way - not least the Society's first secretary, Barbara Milhuisen and the three generations of her family. Clive (Jenkins) told us some good tales of his young days - about Dai Glan-yr-Afon and his one-eyed pony for example.

But it is as a result of these contacts that we find ourselves spending many weeks away in France each year and why I could was not able to carry on in the chair.

Best Wishes to those who continue to run the Society and we will probably keep turning up from time to time.

Birthdays, Anniversaries, Births and Deaths

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

Congratulations to:

Heather and Fred Adams on their 60th (Diamond) Wedding Anniversary on the 9th August, and also on the birth of their great grandson on 12 December 2003.

Audrey and Derek Porter's 55th Anniversary on the 4 September 2004.

Sue and Ron Price on their Golden Wedding Anniversary on the 3 July 2004.

Joyce and Frank Jameson on their Golden Wedding Anniversary on the 24 July 2004.

Graham and Audrey Jenkins on their Golden Wedding on the 28 July 2004. They currently live in Colcot Road, Barry. Graham was born at Cross Green and lived there until moving to Flaxland Fach. Audrey takes her turn playing the organ in the church.

Deaths:

Len Fairfax died on 8 August 2004

Peggy Lunn, nee Deere – who died on 28 August 2004

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Announcements, Local Events, Reminders:

Society reminders:

Whist Drive – Friday 29 October 2004

Social Evening – Tuesday 7 December 2004.

Ladies Tuesday Club

19 October : Sausage and Mash Evening

16 November: Wine Tasting with Rock Bottom – Open Evening

December: (date to be arranged) Own Party

Chicken Supreme

The hills around Llancarfan are luscious and green
And the cows in the meadow are a sight to be seen
With the hens here beside me I'm all in a dream
The view from this hen house is truly supreme!

The days are much shorter, now that winter is near
The fox he is hungrier and I've something to fear
As I strut round the flower beds and scratch at the ground
I just know I'm the largest and proudest cockerel around!

The hens they're a laying, here on the nest
I really am grateful, for I can do with the rest
As the eggs keep on coming, the hens seem surprised
Each arrival is greeted with cackles and cries!

The fox he comes calling each night of the week
The hens huddle beside me –
I make them feel safe and discreet!
Henrietta cuddles closer, - she is all soft and sweet
Oh! I say Henrietta "Do get off of my feet!"

As dawn starts to break
I feel duty bound, to jump on my perch and look all around
In my loudest of voices I firmly declare
The start of a new day and I simply must say:
"Good I thank you profusely for this wonderful new day
and ask that you keep us as safe as you may."

Hello from Llancarfan School.

For the last couple of days some children have been to Ogmore.

Ogmore has a education center and is a place where some children can stay over night and have fun.

Ten children from class five went on an I.T and Art course and they had a really good time.

They all made a clay tile which some of the children took home.

They also made a collage each and they were studying on bugs.

Also they each made a mask which they made out of mod roc. Mod roc is a bit like bandages that you get on your arm.

We had lots of free time and in our free time we played in our dormitories and on the tyres outside. We also played some pool and they won some games of table football.

While you are in Ogmore you get lots of new friends from different schools.

The ten pupils that went now have lots of friends.

While you are in Ogmore they cook you lovely food. We had pizza that was really tasty, chicken curry, macaroni cheese, salads, sandwiches, soup the food was delicious and we had really nice juice lots of people loved it.



A Collage we made at Ogmore Center.



A Tile we made at Ogmore Center.

Village Walk by Phil Watts

Children from the top class of Llancarfan School assembled in the village hall. They split into three groups, Alan Taylor discussing the Church area, John Gunson the Culvery field area and Phil Watts walking around the village – then we changed groups.

Readers may be interested to hear some of the things that I told them, basically a comparison of how things were in the 1930's and 40's and how they are today.

We stopped at the bottom of school hill, we saw the Old Parsonage, no longer the home of the vicar (we do not have a vicar now). Opposite were the school gardens, twelve plots one each for the oldest boys in the school (the girls had flower gardens nearer to the school) where they were taught how to grow vegetables. The area between the gardens and the river was David Griffiths, Glan yr Afon, the carpenter's field where he kept his pony Polly, and his milking cows.

The next stop was the school the opened in 1875. Points of interest were the delivery and storage of coal for the open fires in the classrooms and the bell that called us back to school after our wanderings around the village in the lunch break. In the absence of motor vehicles it was safe to play on the roads. Next stop – Ty-Uchaf well (situated on the plot of land between the school and Windrush) – condemned when mains water arrived in the area. This had been the only source of water for the surrounding houses. Children were asked to notice the difference in construction of the old houses to the new ones.

When we came to Cross Green we stopped and looked at the home of Henry Williams the clockmaker at Broadhayes. Then they were asked to seek out another source of water, namely Rose Cottage water tap. We also looked at The Mill water wheel before passing on to the ivy pool where we were lucky enough to see some trout in the river.

Then came the big attraction of the big splash of vehicles crossing the ford. We stopped at The Fox and Hounds car park which was formerly the farmyard, cowshed and barn, as well as the Wesleyan stable opposite the chapel. We were able to point out how lucky we are to still have a village shop. The sweet shop in Mrs. Harris's day was a wooden construction opposite the front door of the Fox and Hounds where we used to ring a bell to request service in our lunchtime.

The final stop was to view the banding wheel on the site of the blacksmith shop on the cross before we returned to the village hall to change our groups. There were many other points of interest and many questions, which it was a pleasure to answer. It was also nice to meet up with children, and grand children of friends and neighbours whom we remember from our school days in Llancarfan many years ago.

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Tuesday Club Outing by Joan Burge

The Ladies Tuesday Club Annual Outing, organised by Ruth Watts and Ann Ferris, took place this year on 16th June, when we travelled by coach to Brecon on a gloriously sunny day.

The wonderful views of the reservoir and mountains were thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. We arrived in Brecon after a good journey and had time for a leisurely look around the shopping centre.

After a very good lunch we later went on a Canal Barge trip for two and a half hours on the canal to Usk - very relaxing and enjoyable.

The coach was waiting for us on our return, and we had a good trip back - everyone tired and happy after a super day.

Everything was so well organised and our grateful thanks go the Ruth and Ann for their efforts and we are already looking forward to the next outing.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

by Mike Crosta

When I received a letter in November 2003 informing me that I was being considered for an OBE, Jan and I read it over and over again to see if it was real and not some sort of hoax. Having decided it must be genuine, we made sure that the form to be returned was in the next post. The form was simple but we must have checked it a dozen times to make sure we had made no mistakes on it. Having been sworn to secrecy, I didn't believe it was going to happen until confirmation actually came by means of a press announcement on New Year's Eve.

20th February was the day we were given to go to Buckingham Palace. There was no way we were going to risk traffic or other delays so we went up the day before and stayed in a nice old hotel in Buckingham Palace Road which faced the Palace mews. It was literally a five minute walk to the front entrance. Andrew, our son, and his wife, Nic, joined us for that first night, as did Alexandra, our daughter who flew in from New York for the weekend. We all went to a theatre in the Strand and for a nice meal. On the 20th, Jan, Andrew and Alex were allowed into the Palace as guests. It is an impressive building inside, with lots of gilt, mirrors and red carpet to set the tone you would expect for the Queen of Great Britain.

The investiture was in the large ballroom, containing two thrones, where the guests were seated in advance of the ceremony. The chandeliers were impressive and a military band played soothing music on the balcony. We recipients were given our instructions in a separate impressive room before being taken into the ballroom in front of our guests to a side room where we awaited our turn. As our turn got closer, we could see into the ballroom and observe the ceremony taking place for those in front. I felt no nerves at all just pure enjoyment for the occasion. As one person is receiving his medal, the next has to enter the ballroom and stand in front of the guests. An Air Field Marshal waits at the spot for one and is there to calm any nerves. We

did, in fact, have a little chat and I have to say that he couldn't have been more welcoming if I had been one of his own family. He seemed genuinely pleased for the recipients. In fact, all the staff from the most senior to junior could not have been nicer or more helpful.

We didn't know until the day that it would be the Prince of Wales and not the Queen presenting the medals. Initially, I was disappointed as the Queen is the head of State but that soon evaporated in the splendour and enjoyment of the occasion. The Prince looked splendid in his naval uniform and he could not have been nicer. He really seemed pleased for the recipients and interested in having what had to be a short conversation. Medal in place, I managed to bow and retreat backwards quite smoothly and to meet up with Jan, Andrew and Alex after all recipients had received their awards.

It was a super day, very impressive and exceedingly well done by very kind people.

Andrew and Nic had to return home that evening but Jan, Alex and I had another evening, another show and another day in London, which made the whole weekend an occasion never to forget.

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Petanque Piste by Sam Smith

Following a generous donation by the Reynard Committee, and with the help and cooperation of the Llancarfan Lawn Tennis Club, the new Petanque Piste next to the recently renovated tennis court, has been completed and is now available to all members of the Llancarfan Society and residents of the area.

Although seating for spectators is not yet in place the piste itself is ready.



The official opening was on Friday 30 July. Teams of three were invited to play for the inaugural prizes.

There were more than a dozen teams and play went on into the dusk. The winning team was no less than the society chairman, Graham Brain accompanied by his wife Kay and Ann Ferris.

They beat off a strong challenge from the runners-up Alan Taylor, Jennie Knott and Ruth Watts. Well done to the victors and many thanks to all who took part and enjoyed a glass (or two!) of bubbly.

Following the opening of the piste, it may be used when free and is indeed free of charge. It is, however, advisable to book in advance, which can be done by calling 01446 781350.

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Thoughts On Pancross by Tony Thomas

Jenkin Bowen farmed Pancross from the 1870's until the early 1900's. He was considered a very good farmer - he rode around the farm every day and by 10am his donkey would be tied up outside the Fox and Hounds for the rest of the day!

There was an excellent set of buildings on Pancross which were well designed and built in the 1870's. Jenkin Bowen kept four men, paying them 3d on a Wednesday and 6d on Saturday (9d for the week). When paying the last man one Saturday night he looked at him and said, "Do you think I've got a Quarry?" An expression my Father used with me often!

The Landlords were the Church in Wales who were disestablished soon after we took over and the farms went to the Universities of Wales and the Glebe Lands went to the County Council. The Church owned Treguff, Llanvithyn, Penon, Penylan, Middlecross and various parcels of land in Llancarfan.

Jenkin Bowen, as far as I can determine, never raised any children, but sadly buried six, all under the age of 8. The grave is in Llangunwyd. He retired to live in the Vines in Llanbethery

His nephew took over Pancross around 1901, but only farmed it for about eighteen months. William Hopkins (the late Gwyn Hopkins' Grandfather) took over afterwards and farmed until the end of the First World War. He was chairman of the temperance committee and used to drink behind a curtain in the Green Dragon. When anyone entered the pub he would quietly move the curtain with his stick to see who it was!

William Hopkins was known as a wheel farmer and it was said that you could not go to Cardiff without seeing his team either going or coming back from hauling hay or straw to town.

David James (his grandson and great grandson farm the Grange in Wick) took over soon after the First World War. He was a great breeder and showman. He bred Shire horses and pedigree Hereford cattle. Unfortunately for him prices slumped badly by the early 1920's. Horses, which were worth over £200 a piece in 1921, were worth only about £30 by 1923. It was the same with cattle and so by 1928 he was a poor man and gave up farming. The buildings were covered by prize certificates that his stock had won and the Shire stallions he bred left many good foals all over the

country.

Arthur Watts (father of Roly Watts of the buses) took over in 1928. He was not a big man but was very stern and a strict disciplinarian. It was said that he would enter the Church Hall when full of youngsters enjoying themselves and he would just stand and everybody would be quiet.

He used to sell milk, which he hauled to Aberthaw station in a van. One day, when turning the corner at Llancadle cross, the wheel came off the van - they even had their problems in those days!

Arthur was a specialist Mangold grower and he grew them in the same field every year. The field would be heavily dunged, then the mangolds would be planted a yard apart. Seeds men would come the following year and select a cartload of the best and take them to grow on for seed. That cartload was worth more than the whole of the rest of the field.

Tom Tucker worked for Arthur Watts and was getting £1.2s.6d a week and living in. He stayed with us until 1948 when he took Crosston, which he farmed until his death in about 1968.

Father took the tenancy of Pancross at Candlemas 1935. Emlyn Williams of Aberogwrn had told him that Arthur Watts was vacating the farm, so Father applied for it. The Farm had been let to Arthur for £500 a year - £2 per acre. He had the chance to move to Ty Uchaf in Llantrithyd where his wife's uncle was farming. His wife would be able to look after her uncle and it would be a lot less money to find. The Landlords would not reduce his rent. I always thought it rather unfair but after six months of haggling, Father got the farm for £320 a year.

Father increased Tom's wages to £1.5s.0d. He was a very good man who did a good days work every day and could do every job on the farm well.

We moved to Pancross on March 1st 1935 from West House in Wick. In Wick we had a 50-acre farm, which Father had farmed since he was married in 1931. In those days one did not get married until one had a farm to put the wife to work in the next morning!

During the move, the cattle were walked from Wick in the one-day but the ewes were rested over night at Ty Draw in St Mary Church by permission of Evan Crook. Tom Evans (Grandfather of John and David) moved the furniture and chattels in his coal lorry - I expect he swept it first!

When Phil Watts asked me to write about the changes on the farm, I thought the running of the house deserved mention.

It must be borne in mind that at that time the only water was roof water collected in a cistern with just one tap on the floor in the corner of the kitchen. The first job every morning was to lift and sift the ashes then light the fire in the old range which was black leaded regularly and used for all the cooking and water heating.

The men milked the cows by hand and brought the milk to the house to separate it.

The cream was kept for sale and making butter and the skim was fed to the calves.

The men came in for breakfast and had porridge and bacon and egg. The fire had to be hot enough for cooking and boiling the kettle by breakfast time.

We often had 2-3 men living in and usually a maid. As there was only an earth closet at the bottom of the garden there were chamber pots under the beds and these, of course, had to be emptied daily. There were flagstone floors, which were regularly scrubbed, and with no electricity, the oil lamps had to be filled every evening.

The Dairy, which faced northeast, had stone flag floors and a gauze mesh on each window, letting in cold air but keeping out the flies. Here the milk was separated. This had to be scalded every day to keep it clean. Once a week, Mother made butter. Father would churn the cream in a large wooden butter churn, which had to be turned by hand. It was then put on a marble butter worker and finally stored on a large slate slab.

With three or more men, a maid and a growing family to feed, Mother did a lot of baking. She had a flour chest in the kitchen, which would hold a couple of cwt of flour. Her recipe for yeast cake (which Joan still uses but on a smaller scale) started with "take 18lbs of flour!" Then there were always welsh bakestone cakes and fruit slab cakes.

In the early years we would kill about 6-7 pigs a year. First we had to light a boiler to heat the water (to scald the pig to remove its hair). When I was 16, Father decided that I should start killing the pigs and with him standing over me it was quite a nerve-racking experience. It was essential to cut the jugular vein without severing the windpipe because if you did, the pig would die too quickly without bleeding sufficiently and the bacon would not take the salt needed to preserve it.

We lived very well after killing a pig because there were no refrigerators and a lot had to be eaten quickly! First we would have a meal or two of liver and then Mother would make faggots of the rest of the liver and other bits and pieces. Mother would soak the head, trotters and off bits in brine for a week or so to make brawn. Like the faggots, I loved the brawn. The spare rib was also a treat!

Then, of course, Mother would melt the lard and she would get pails and pails of beautiful white pure lard and bowls of croutons - I did not like them much but the lard was wonderful for trying or making pastry - you can never get pastry like Mother made with the home produced lard (sorry Joan!).

Finally we had the bacon, which Father salted in the cellar. We used to buy blocks of salt about 2'6" long and 9" square. This had to be crushed to a powder and saltpetre was put in the joints of the bacon to help preserve it. After a couple of weeks in salt it was hung on the beams in the kitchen where it would keep if salted properly. It was Father's job to slice the bacon the night before, ready for breakfast. If it were too salty, he would soak it in boiling water.

Main water came in about 1938 and it was interesting how we, as newcomers were criticised by the older inhabitants - the well had been good enough for them and their fathers before them!

The telephone came much at the same time as the water and electricity about 1941-2. It was interesting how easily we took to these newfangled inventions. We bought Middlecross in 1964 and Mrs Davies used the electric light to see to light the oil lamps and still went out into the yard to fill the kettle with water!

We did not have a car until just before the war. My parents went to Bridgend once a fortnight to buy their groceries and sell cream. They went by horse and dray to Gilestone where they caught the train.

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Obituaries

Lew Griffiths, named David Llewellyn Griffiths, was brought up in Llancarfan, attended the Llancarfan School and Bethlehem Chapel and lived with his mother, father and three brothers Leslie, Bedford and Robert (Bob) at Top End Caradoc Cottage where they had a smallholding. Before moving to Llancarfan his mother and father owned one of the very few fish and chip shops in Barry.

Llew served an apprenticeship at Shepherds Garage in Bonvilston. I well remember him passing Abernant going to and from work on this B.S.A bantam motorbike. At the outbreak of war he obtained employment with the British Aeroplane Company. He met his wife Flo here, he was later seconded to the Royal Ordnance Factory in Cardiff where he worked until he retired. He lived in Cardiff until his retirement, then he moved to Rhoose before moving to Hereford to be near his son, Clive.

While growing up in Llancarfan he took part in all the local activities, fishing in the Ivy Pool (tickling trout being a speciality), shooting - he often came to Abernant to seek out the odd rabbit, he was a bell ringer at St Cadoc's Church at the same time as David Harris and Dick Evans and also a keen darts, card and snooker player. He won many prizes and competition and won the Christmas Turkey two years running from the Llancarfan Whist Drive. In the '60's whilst living in Cardiff he and mother took up ballroom dancing and became quite good dancers having had lessons for a few years at the Sybil Marks School of Dancing at the Heath.

Llew will be remembered as a kind friendly man with a sense of humour. He was also described as a peace maker, so many times his son heard him say 'oh say nothing, keep the peace'.

Llew had one son, Clive, a daughter in law Dawn, and three grand children, Rebecca - 24 (now in Australia), Alison 23, who lives locally with husband and granddaughter Aysha -1 and grandson Clive - 2.

Len Fairfax - it is with great sadness that we report the death of Len on 8 August. The funeral was on Tuesday 17 August at Zoar Chapel, Bonvilston and internment at Zoar burial ground.

Len was born in Llantrithyd and lived at Wren's Castle until he moved to Summit View, Aberthin.

He attended Llancarfan school under the headship of Mr Samuel.

Len worked for the G.P.O. and B.T. and could often be seen examining and repairing telephones in the Llancarfan area. He had retired with ill health for a number of years.

He suffered with and fought against Parkinson's Disease in the latter year of his life. He resisted the progress of the disease with great courage. He was often seen doing things that a lesser man would not attempt.

Len acted as a sick visitor for the Llancarfan Society when it was more appropriate for him to be receiving a sick visit. We valued him greatly as a member, we shall miss him as will his family and friends. He will be remembered as a strong character and was always good company.

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Shortlands by David Evans, France

Within Newsletter 123 there is a reference to Shortlands, the grass swept downland above Greendown. Here in summer months my father kept his dry cows amongst the younger stock of Friesian Heifers, prior to their entering the milking herd at Garnllwyd, lower down the valley.

Some areas were cultivated with turnips, spring corn often under-sown with clover. Here the Grey Partridges flourished and the Corncrake passed through on their autumn migration to Africa.

Here is a rather poor quality photograph of my father's new Standard Fordson tractor the day it arrived with its shiny black tyres.



I would place the date at about September 1939 when I would have been five and he would have been 39 years of age. We still had two fine carthorses, Captain and Gypsy, in the stable within the corn barn, at that period. I suspect this would have been the tractor Towyn recalls.

A man would need to walk often over hard difficult ground for eleven miles to plough one acre, so it was clearly an attractive alternative source of power. Metal-lugged rear wheels were obtained for cultivating the heavy clay ground elsewhere, and I have seen father walking beside this tractor, whilst ploughing land on the far side of the Shortland, in the most freezing weather conditions clad in a velvet-collared overcoat, present by Dr Melbourne Roberts of Barry. People expected less in those days whilst attitudes were very different, perhaps wit was the salt of conversation not the food a diet based on what the animals could provide.

Game in season was frequent, but always à la Carte.

The horses were as efficient with hindsight, for the machine was ghastly to start, requiring hot water to encourage the plugs to fire, and the kick back from the low starting handle was beyond belief. The brake system was incorporated within the clutch on the left side, and I rather doubt if one could stop the machine whilst descending Llanvithin Hill.

Somehow we all survived. Fortunately for environmental conservation Dad liked shooting, appreciating that pheasants required good covers and moist quiet corners, so not every unspoilt patch was cultivated. However the 'War Ag' soon found supporters and much was lost.

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The snail is the slug that could not afford to shell out for its mortgage.

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Llantrithyd Place from John M Cann

*Newsletter 122 asked for more information on Llantrithyd Place. When the children were very young, we had picnics in Llantrithyd Place, which was still just recognisable as a very large house. I guess we found out about it at the time and its connection with the Bassetts. More recently however it was the connection with the Aubreys, especially John who wrote 'Brief Lives' that would spring to mind. However, I was sure that I had seen a picture of a magnificent room. After a few false starts I found this and two others of the outside of the house in an article on **The Parish of Llantrithyd** written by **Brian Ll. James** in 1961 and published in '**The Garden of Wales**' ed. **Stewart Williams**. Brian has kindly allowed me to make an extract from this on Llantrithyd Place. Those who would like to know more about the Bassetts, Mansels & Aubreys should read Brian's excellent article, and for those who want fuller architectural information the **RCHM Inventory of Ancient Monuments in Glamorgan** Volume IV Part 1 '**The Greater Houses**' has a large entry with plans. Both of these publications are likely to be in local Public Libraries.*



Inside Llantrithyd Church a mural monument depicts John Bassett and his wife at prayer. On the altar-tomb rest the life-sized effigies of Anthony Mansel, in full armour, and his wife, the daughter of John Bassett. On the side of the tomb are represented the Mansel children as 'weepers'. It is a very short distance from the church where these gentlemen and their ladies lie to the ruins of their mansion, Llantrithyd Place. The house is now in an advanced stage of dilapidation, most of the architectural features have disappeared and ground level has reached the old first floor level in most places. The Place was built around three sides of a courtyard, open to the west, with the principal apartments on the east abutting on the churchyard. In this part, on the first floor, was the Gallery running the whole 68 feet of the east side, having an elaborate fireplace and large windows. The drawing of this room by Mrs. J. M. Traherne of Coedriglan is probably only an imaginary reconstruction as it seems unlikely that she ever saw it in good repair. Below the south wing are ruins of extensive out-buildings and traces of the kitchen gardens, fishpond and ornamental 'canals'.

The mansion is described, by G. T. Clark and R. O. Jones of Fonmon in 1866-7, as "*a very fine example of the dwelling place of a wealthy Welsh squire during the reign of the house of Tudor, built at one time and not added to or altered over a long period*". Writing in 1674, John Aubrey, afterwards the second baronet, declared that "*John Basset built ye house of Lantrithyd in ye yeare 1546*". It is likely that Bassett built on an old site. One of the most prominent men in Glamorgan, John (ap) Thomas Bassett was probably to a large extent 'self-made'. He was a lawyer, and King's Attorney in Glamorgan, member for Cardiff in the Parliament of 1542, Sheriff of Glamorgan in 1545 and one of the first Justices of the Peace, but he was never more than a freeholder within the manor of Llantrithyd, which belonged to his kinsmen, the Bassetts of Beaupre.

From John Thomas Bassett descended, in the male line, the Bassetts of Bonvilston; but the bulk of the estate passed to his daughter by his second wife. It is said that Bassett fell into an "*ill opinion*" of his first wife and disinherited his children by her. The heiress married Anthony Mansel, second son of Sir Rice Mansel of Margam. The union of the estates of Bassett and Mansel formed the basis of the importance of the Llantrithyd squires. Mansel was not destined to found a family of his name, for of his children only two daughters survived, the elder marrying Sir Thomas Aubrey, a Breconshire man and the son of an important lawyer of Elizabeth's reign.



Drawing Room, Llantrithyd Place

A. F. Rolfe after Mrs. J. M. Traherne, 1846

Sir Thomas's son, Sir John, had not long come into his inheritance when, in 1642, the Civil War began. During his time Llantrithyd was a place of refuge to Sir John's kinsman, Dr. Francis Mansell, who had been ejected from the Principalship of Jesus College, Oxford, in 1648. Here also came Mansell's protégé, the young Leoline Jenkins, as tutor to Aubrey's son and the sons of a number of the local gentry. Sir John Aubrey was a patron of John Aubrey the antiquarian, a distant kinsman. This renowned author spent a great deal of time at Llantrithyd Place. He says in his *Brief Lives* that Leoline was a native of Llantrithyd, though others disagree. He wrote a life of Dr. Mansell in which is described how the learned doctor's retirement at Llantrithyd Place was disturbed by the "*rebell souldiery*" who broke into the house "*and one Clements a Farrier (by trade) but a Preacher by Profession, ript and toare his Canonical Cassock about him that it dangled from his Girtle downewards in so many small shreads or thongs as made them greate Sporte*". The soldiers, when they had amused themselves sufficiently in damaging the house and books, took Leoline Jenkins away and he was soon afterwards indicted at Quarter Sessions for keeping a "*seminary of rebellion and sedition*".

Another fugitive had been glad of the temporary shelter of the Place in the summer of 1645. He was the celebrated James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh, the man who calculated that the creation of the world took place in the year 4,004 B.C.



Llantrithyd Place

A. F. Rolfe after Mrs. J. M. Traherne, 1846

The beginning of the 19th century was the time of the final desertion of the Place by its lords. In 1804 Malkin regretted that Sir John was not a more frequent visitor. He died in 1826 and his nephew inherited the estate in name only as most of it was leased out. The roof of the Place fell in about 1832. A year or two later stone was taken from

it for the rebuilding of the Aubrey Arms, and in the succeeding fifty years the old building was a convenient quarry for any stone or wood required about the estate. The Glamorgan property of the Aubrey Estate was sold in 1916 to Henry Radcliffe, the Cardiff ship-owner.

Many thanks to Brian James for the above text, and to the National Museum of Wales for permission to reproduce copies of their three paintings.

--ooOoo--

Some people put on weight from reading too much – especially menus.

A letter to Lucy from Heather Adams

Dear Lucy

I was so very interested to read your article in the Newsletter. It gave me so much pleasure to know how happy you are in Llancarfan. My husband Fred and I lived in your house before you and your family did, and I think it was one of the happiest times of my long life. The house was called Witches Barn when we first went there, but I refused to be known as the Witch so we searched for a Welsh name which would indicate the peace and tranquility which we felt in the village, and a Welsh speaking friend happened to mention a house she knew of called Ynysdawel – roughly translated, Island of Peace – which was just what we were looking for.

We lived at Ynysdawel for twelve years, and your mention of the snow reminds me that during that time we had three periods of heavy snowfalls, which had not happened for many years before that. On the occasion of the first snowfall we traveled back, with no problems, from Cheshire after Christmas, only to find that we were unable to get down the lane to Llancarfan. A kind farmer (was it Geoff Evans?) put us on a bale of hay on the back of his tractor – Fred nursing our small dog, Toby, and I nursing my handbag! (I had developed a bad chesty cold while I was away, and was sure I would have Pneumonia, always expecting the worse, as I tended to, and it was bitterly cold! Anyway Richy Evans at Bonvilston Garage, where we had left the car, had lent me a huge anorak to wrap myself up in, which was very kind and very comforting.) The tractor could not go down the lane but had to go across the fields and this made it a very bumpy ride. Nevertheless, we were extremely relieved and grateful for get home at last.

The second snowfall came when Fred was due to go to London to be installed as National President of his association. We used to see the fine snow falling in the light over the front door, and know that we were in for a blizzard and days of deep snow, so Fred decided to pack his case and go and stay in a Cardiff Hotel after work the next day so that he could be on the spot to catch the train the following day! I was due to go with him to London, so he tried to get the South Glamorgan County Council, as it was then, and for whom he worked, to come and clear the lanes so that I could get up to the main road!! They were not prepared to do that, but they did send a Land Rover, and a very obliging driver to collect on THE day; we dropped Toby off at the Kennels and finally arrived at Cardiff Station, in time to catch the train, much to Fred's relief.



On the occasion of the third snowfall Fred had just retired from his job, and we were very fortunate to be able to wait until the snow had gone before we left the village twelve days later! In the meantime, we all got our mail from the Fox & Hounds, where Peter Badcock managed to deliver it, and as no diners were able to take up their bookings for dinner at the Fox because of the blocked lanes, Edgar Balchin cooked for the villagers, and I remember having duck and all the trimmings for lunch in the bar; it was a great social time.

Others will no doubt have their stories; of taking diners, who were complete strangers, home with them for the night, which turned out to be for several days. (In those days we dressed more formally to go out in the evenings, the women usually in long dresses or skirts, not really suitable for walking about in deep snow, so more suitable clothes had to be found for them; ask Audrey Porter and others about this!) At that time Jeff and Beryl Booth (who, sadly, are no longer with us) lived at Witton Lodge, Walterston and on the night of this heavy snowfall were visited by a number of strangers who had become stranded. Jeff and Beryl very kindly gave them shelter for the night. I believe they were stuck there for several days and nights until they were rescued by a helicopter. (Nigel will no doubt be able to add to this.)

I hope you will continue to enjoy your life in Llancarfan, Lucy, and I'm sure that with your ideas for making the village an even better place for youngsters and teenagers you will be a great asset to the village, as I know it has always been a problem for parents to have to ferry their children to Barry or elsewhere for various activities.

Have a great life,
With very best wishes,
Heather Adams.

--ooOoo--

LIFE WITH LIONS by Mike Crosta

When I retired as a prosecuting solicitor from the Crown Prosecution Service in June 2003, I decided to do some voluntary work.

I joined the Llantwit Major Lions, which is a club for people who not only want to help the local community but also causes worldwide. There are many such clubs in the U. K. and in the World, all affiliated to the Interational body.

We are a small group of about 20 members who meet twice a month on Thursday evenings in a private room at the Boverton Castle pub. It is friendly and informal, not only organizing local events to raise money but also meeting socially from time to time. In fact most of us went on a long weekend to a very interesting Prague last October.

I have managed to involve myself in some of the events which I have found rewarding. In August we have a pitch at the Vale of Glamorgan Show. We have 2 old-fashioned fairground type trials of strength called ring-a-bells, where a mallet is used to hit the base in order to try to ring the bell at the top. One is for adults and the other for children. We charge for each attempt and give no prizes but it proves really popular. It is amazing how many people keep on coming back determined to ring the bell.

Twice a year we organise diabetic screening in Llantwit Major, basically for pensioners, where for no charge and by providing a painless blood sample, within a few minutes a nurse can carry out a test which will show if a person is clear or not. Judging by the numbers who attend and the comments, people find this a very useful service.

I recently spent the day at Llantwit Major rattling a collection box which I did not particularly look forward to but it proved rewarding as people often liked to chat.

It was the same when we had a second-hand book sale. It involved an 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. day, but again provided some entertaining conversations. Also, reusing books is very environmentally sound.

We are not restricted to Llantwit Major and have just changed the name to Llantwit Major and the Vale of Glamorgan in order to make that clear. In fact we are actively looking for causes, which we can assist. We are also looking for new blood, young or older, working or retired, male or female. If anyone is interested, I can assist. People are invited to attend a couple of meetings before committing themselves so, in fact, it is painless to start.

--ooOoo--

Ice Screams

- Q. What is a mermaid? A. A deep-she fish
- Q. What bow can't be tied? A. A rainbow
- Q. What bell never rings? A. A dumbbell
- Q. What tune is sung in a car? A. A car-toon
- Q. What nut has no shell? A. A doughnut
- Q. What pie can fly? A. A magpie
- Q. What insect is musical? A. A Humbug
- Q. What has four wheels and flies? A. A dustcart

Llancarfan School Bus 1939 – 1951

By John Gardner

A red single decker bus with gold writing, which said WESTERN WELSH, came complete with a conductress. Conductress, yes, most men were in the forces. Remember when The Western Welsh garage was in Broad Street, Barry, now it is something to do with Track 2000. Were any single deck buses of Western Welsh era preserved? I do not know of any, does anybody else know of one.

The school bus had taken men from Barry to the camp now called RAF St Athan, the base for D.A.R.A., and then came to the village to become the school bus.

The journey to pick up children, from the age of four and half years old up to eleven years of age, went as follows, (I think); it travelled up through Llancadle on to Moulton. At Moulton it would pick up Barbara Price, Oenwen Price, Margaret Roberts and two brothers by the name of Burrows, (I cannot remember their Christian names (over to Barbara and Oenwen to ease their minds back). The bus would arrive at Moulton the same time as Oenwen's father was putting out the milk churns for either Mel Morgan or Bill Rees to pick up in (I think) Melhuish's milk lorry (early). I wonder what the Health and Safety executive would say about Mel and Bill lifting those milk churns from the farmers platform onto the lorry or the health food authority say about milk being carried in those churns in the middle of summer (very hot summers, even then before global warming). Did Mel and Bill put wet sacks over the churns to keep the milk cool in the summer, I think they did (your observation would be welcome).

Incidentally, nobody slept after the milk lorry had passed Mel used to drive like the clappers all churns dancing and rattling on the lorry platform. Who knows of a farm where the milk churn platform still stands? I know where Pancross Farm's stand was! Did milk churns hold twelve gallons? (Tony Thomas would know).

The bus would then go to Bonvilston via Five Mile Lane, I think. At Bonvilston it would pick up Hubert Taylor, Gordon Hill, Peter Newton and, maybe, Barry Griffiths in later years also Ann Dobbins. On to Llantrythid. How it entered Llantrythid I do not know, off the A48 perhaps or via Carmel??? At Llantrythid it would pick up Waldo Edwards, David and Enid Savours, Arthur and Margaret Paullett, Harold, John, Gwyneth and the late Len Fairfax; Brian Evans and his sister (do not remember her name), Gordon Taylor, George and Phyllis Hanson (and I am almost certain) his elder and younger brothers, and Alen, Ken and Trevor Milsol. From Llantrythid via Carmel, I would say along Cae-Maen road, did it pick up Jeff and Vernon Thomas from Gowlog, I don't know (please enlighten me Jeff, via our coordinator) onto the Aberogwen farm where it would pick up Ann & Rhys Williams, also, a very important thing, the school milk. What would the education authority say about the school milk travelling on an unrefrigerated school bus (did not do any harm to us did it)? Then onto to Llancarfan via Pancross where on a wet day it would pick up Keith, Tony, Isobel, Thomas, Doreen, Billy and Margaret Tucker and myself, Evelyn Pilot and the Bryant girls and the Price brothers in later years perhaps after Pancross Council Houses were built.

At Llancarfan all children aged between four and a half and eleven would get off to go to the village school. Once you were eleven you went to Cowbridge or Barry Grammar School. All failures of scholarship went to Rhoose School (I was one of the failures).

At Llancarfan the drivers would switch off the bus engine as petrol was scarce (coupons and permits for petrol) as it took a while for all the children to disembark. Elsie Lewis (teacher at Rhoose Infants School) would get on the bus and in later years Len Rees (Form 1 teacher at Rhoose School) (big cricket man) Len wore Plus4 trousers.

At Llancarfan the hooligans (Elsie Lewis called us) would put potatoes up the exhaust pipe, farmers son's had ample supplies of potatoes as the government gave grants to farmers for planting potatoes

(even if they ploughed them back in) when the driver went to start the engine he had difficulty as the exhaust gases could not escape. In those days they were Leyland Buses (I believe), which had an advance, and retard lever on the steering column, which altered the timing of the engine the driver would move this lever in an attempt to start the engine. As the engine started it would backfire BANG! This would cause Elsie Lewis to go white and jump nearly hitting her head on the luggage rack. Out of the exhaust would shoot the potatoes hitting the churchyard wall. No wonder Elsie Lewis would call us 'Hooligans'. I wonder what she would call some of the youths of today.

The bus would then proceed to Rhoose School via Llancadle, Aberthaw, Fonmon Cross, and Fonmon Road with all those over eleven from Llancarfan, Llantrythid, Bonvilston and all 5 year olds to 11 years from Llancadle, Aberthaw and Fonmon, as Rhoose was then a junior and senior school. One left Rhoose School at 15 years of age.

From this article arises a point of where are they now:

Burrow boys of Moulton or Pennon
Margaret Roberts, Moulton
Ann Dobins of Bonvilston
Brian Evans and his sister.

If anyone knows of the whereabouts of any of the above, they may be interested in Llancarfan Society Newsletter and I would like to know their whereabouts.

This article is written from memory (age play tricks with memories) please correct me if I have made errors.

(Coordinator – wouldn't it be lovely if all the questions John has asked were answered.)

23, Heol Sirhwi,
Cwm Talwg,
Barry,
CF 62 7 TG.
01-08-04

Sam Smith,
Lay Chairman,
St. Cadoc's Church.

Dear Sam,

I am writing to you with regard to the foreword that I wrote for the recent Llancarfan Society Newsletter. I wrote that the church since the retirement of Rev. Malcolm Davies had stagnated. I wish to apologise for the use of the word stagnated it does not convey what I wanted to say. I wished to say that the church had temporarily ceased to go forward. This, I thought was the general opinion formed at the Easter Vestry.

I wished to say that this situation was so because we no longer had a vicar, and did not reflect in any way on the efforts and resolve of the worshippers of Llancarfan.

It is my intention to put an apology in the next newsletter which is due out at the end of September. In the meantime please convey to the rest of the Church Council my apologies. We will publish anything further that you or your council wish to say on this matter and the present condition of the Church.

I assure you of my support of the work that continues to be done in the Parish.

Best Wishes as always
Phil Watts.

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23 Heol Sirhwi
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3rd August 2004

Dear Phil,

Thank you for your letter of 1st August, I'm pleased to see your comments and particularly that you will publish something in the next Newsletter.

I have written the enclosed for the next 'Gem' article which I hope without being rough on you gives an update on the current situation. Did you but know it, you have given me an ideal opportunity to tell the Parish how things are.

I'm delighted to see that you will continue to support our work and will pass on your comments at the next FCC meeting on 1st September.

Sam

