

# LLANCARFAN



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

# SOCIETY

**NEWSLETTER 133**

**MARCH 2007**

## **Announce Announcements, Local Events,**

### **Society:**

23 March	A.G.M.
9 April	Whist Drive
7 May	May Day Walk
8 June	Mystery Trip

For full details of our programme see attach dairy of events.

### **Ladies Tuesday Club**

Tues 20 Mar.	A.G.M. nibbles and games
Sat. 21 Apr.	Jumble Sale
Tues 15 May	Lynsey - Wedding in Lapland
Tues 19 June	Outing

### **Births, Deaths, Weddings, etc.**

**Birthday:** Happy belated birthday wishes to Olive Sampson on her 90th birthday in Feburary.

**Deaths:** Marjorie Hobbs died on the 27th January 2007 at the age of 93.

**Newsletter by e-mail** - if you should elect to receive the Newsletter by E-mail, this would provide you with coloured photos where applicable, e.g. the fox in the willows was lovely in colour and really stood out well – it lost its appeal in black and white. It will save the Society money and members of the committee the time and energy of preparing the newsletter for the post. All it will take is an email to Alan Taylor on [a.j.taylor@btconnect.com](mailto:a.j.taylor@btconnect.com) or a phone call.

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**Llanccarfann Society Administrative and Web-site:**

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# Llancarfan Primary School-news.

## The Snow Day

On the dawn of The 8th February. We all woke up to see our gardens all covered in snow.

within 2 hours every kid in Glamorgan was sledging down any slope they could find. me included!

Also the school had to break tradition and close! But Llancarfan was not alone! More than HALF the schools in Wales closed because of the snow. Then on Friday was kept at bay until lunch but then drove us out again.

So we all had 1 and a half days of absolute Bliss!!!!!!

by Evan John



## School dinners in Llancarfan

School dinners started on the first day back in January. William Dobbs was the first child to go up and get his warm school dinner. We had sausages with mash potatoes and vegetables and for dessert we had creamy rice pudding yummy. All the leftover food goes in the recycling bin. If there's food left that has not been served the juniors get extras!!! Hooray.

by Lauren Evans and Hannah Butler



For the first time ever, on Tuesday 9th January at Llancarfan Primary School, the children had hot school dinners. We are given a menu to tell us what is available for lunch. It is a four week menu and some of the food available is homemade cheese and tomato pizza served with chips baked beans and bread, baked chicken fillet served with boiled and roast potatoes, cauliflower florets and peas and gravy, spaghetti bolognese and cheese served with pasta spirals, salad garnish and French bread, roasted Welsh beef and Yorkshire pudding served with boiled and roast potatoes carrot roundels, shredded cabbage and gravy and baked salmon fingers served with jacket wedges, raw vegetables platter and whole meal bread. Delicious!!!

by Clare D, William M and Kelly L

## Llancarfan chess team

Llancarfan primary school's new chess team had their first chess tournament on Sunday the 18th of February 2007. The chess team had practiced for quite a while before entering the tournament. Mr. Lewis, our coach, sadly couldn't make it to the tournament but Will John, Sam Woollett, Evan John, Luke John, Eddie Williams and Joseph Williams all played. They all did quite well and they all got a certificate.

By Sam Woollett & Will John.

## N-power

On the 17th of February 2007 N-Power came to our school to teach us all about different energies and how we can stop Global

Warming, which our pupils enjoyed. We got to do lots of fitness activities including rowing machines, a long jump, a lung capacity finder, 2 laser beams which measure your time running over 5m and a Batak Board, which tests your reaction speed by hitting pads when they light up. British F1 Driver Jenson Button is the world record holder.

by Josh & Marcus

## School dinners

## St David's day

On the 1st of March at Llancarfan Primary School we had an Eisteddfod in celebration of St David, the patron saint of Wales. The day started with everyone in Welsh costumes or rugby shirts. There are three houses, they are. The teams, BARUC, CADOC and DYFAN, got house points for wearing Welsh costume or a Welsh emblem. There were three individual competitions and one class competition. The first competition was individual musicians. Everybody that competed was very good. The next competition was the recitalists. Again, everyone was very good. The next competition was the class recital. All the classes put together something for the competition and each class got a certain amount of points for the position they came. Lastly was the art competition. Everyone's collage was very good. Results were on the white board with the extra points. The final totals showed that the winning house was DYFAN, CADOC were second and BARUC third. Well done to everyone.

by Harri and Joe



## World book day.

### 2nd March

It was world book day at Llancarfan school.

All of the pupils were told, they could dress up as their favorite character, from their favorite book. From Lord of the Rings to cartoon Horrid Henry. There were very creative characters at this WBD.



It was a complete fun day (NO WORK!!!!)

There were quizzes and games (or you could read your book.)

Everyone at world book day, DEF INITELY

## Toast

On a Tuesday and Thursday the school council make toast for the children and teachers. This has been running since the beginning of November 2006. Lots of children have said that the toast is delicious way to start the day!!! So far the school council has raised around £430 towards a shelter box to help families in 3rd world countries. The toast in our book is 10/10 because they do it the way we like it.

by Bethan and Victoria.

## Llancarfan football team win!!!

Llancarfan football team



beat St David, Colwinston on the 31.1.07 in two seven-a-side games. Lewis S, Will J, Logan B, Miriam B, Marcus K, Gabriel S, Harri T and Alex C. won five nil, the other team won three nil with Josh M-L, Sam P, Joe W, Josh T, Jessica H, Evan J, William M and Hannah J. The scorers for the first team were; Logan B (1), Harri T (2), Josh T (1) and Marcus K (1). For the second team Joe W (2) and William M (1) were the scorers.

## Vice President's Page

So many of our newsletters contain memories of the past. Members have written of their childhood, school days and of changes that have taken place in the village. I thought for a change I would write of the present and the future.

I have just spent a couple of weeks in the South of France with Philip and Mary Gammon at their recently renovated property in the town of Fanjeax, about a two hour drive from Toulouse.

They had already made plans to make the trip when they asked me to accompany them. I was at a loss to think of an excuse not to go. I accepted their kind invitation. It would give me an opportunity to see Barbara Milhuisen in Senesse de Senabuge a short distance away. Also the chance to revisit the places that Ruth and I had visited in 1992 and 2003. We celebrated our ruby wedding at Barbara's in 1992.

What does one do in the South of France in the first two weeks of February? Like Wales there are many things you can do when the weather is good. Unfortunately, the weather was not good, like here it rained most of the time. So I was not home sick. We only had three days of sunny weather. We didn't have the snow you had here that brought the country to a standstill! We did have a beautiful view of the snow-capped Pyrenees Mountains.

So what had France got that we haven't? You could say better food and wine. We have good food and lots of imported wine. The thing that the French do different to us is that they spend more time over their food and drink. Everywhere closes down from 12.00 noon to 2.00pm. What makes France a more comfortable country to live in is that they have more space than we have for the same number of people. After all is said and done there is no place like home.

Barbara sends her regards to all the folk back home. She will be in Llancarfan again for the May Day walk.

It is twenty years since the Llancarfan Society was formed. Should we celebrate that in some way? Did we do anything after ten or fifteen years? I can't remember. Perhaps we should wait until it is twenty-five years. That give us five years to think what we should do.

Something I remember that Ruth and I did ten years ago – was to move away from Abernant to Barry. For me that was after nearly 68 years, and for Ruth 50 years. Also in 1997 Ruth bought air tickets for me to fly to Vancouver to see my Lougher cousins, Tom and Gomer in Lolita, California, again. When we previously visited she had not been able to do some of the things that I did on the second trip, such as flying over the Rockies and travelling down to California on a Greyhound Bus. Ruth had as much pleasure in doing that for me as I had in doing it.

--ooOoo--

## Notes – Coordinator

This year our **Village Show** will be on the 28 July – all entries to be in by the 27<sup>th</sup> July (i.e. Friday evening at the hall – with staging on the Friday evening and Saturday morning before 10.00am.

I hope you are all growing your flower and vegetables and sewing or knitting, ready for this great event. The Show catalogue will be out shortly.

It is hoped that this will become an annual event and I hope all those who supported us last year will do so again, plus many more. It was an enjoyable day.



Also for those who have not yet sent their subscriptions, please remember that they were due in January, and John Gardener will be very pleased to hear from you. If you have mislaid your form the amount is: £7.00 per household, and £3.00 for a single person. Cheques payable to: Llancarfan Society and send to John Gardener at the address on the front of this newsletter.

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### **Do you believe in Ghosts by Trudy Fuller**

In Newsletter No. 122 in 2004, I wrote an article about my then 94-year-old mother-in-law and her ghostly experience at the residential home where she lives in Penarth. I was recently asked if this “apparition” was still visiting her at night and would I provide an update on the haunted house and its inhabitants.

In 2002 mother-in-law had a visiting ghost in the guise of a respectable elderly lady who would walk through the locked bedroom door at about 2.00am carrying a cup and saucer, passing the foot of the bed, across the room and out through the stone wall.

Mother-in-law got quite excited by these visits, despite being of a nervous disposition and she even began to look forward to the next one but was disappointed when they ceased in the summer.

Some time before Christmas her bedroom door rattled in the middle of the night and through it came a distinguished-looking immaculately dressed man carrying a cup and saucer.

He walked across the room and out through the opposite wall as had his predecessor. She was sorry to lose her female visitor but delighted to have gained a smart man instead!!

Having possibly found out who the female ghost had been, she now wondered who this man could be. Was he related to her previous caller, perhaps her husband or admirer or even the butler? Or was there no link at all?

This apparition continued to visit for some weeks and one night as he passed the foot of her bed as usual carrying a cup and saucer he bent down and appeared to put this down on her cherished antique piano stool, before walking away through the wall minus the cup and saucer.

This stool is a precious William and Mary heirloom and mother-in-law was worried in case the cup and saucer might mark the tapestry top so she got out of bed to remove it only to find that the cup and saucer was not here. Apparently she was sorry not to find the expected refreshment and felt a fool for getting out of bed and for believing that this incident had actually happened.

Her immaculately dressed man eventually stopped coming, but sometime later another caller came, again with the expected cup and saucer but this fellow was dressed in workman’s clothes and wore a cap on his head.

The handy-man or gardener or who ever he was continued to attend to his night time duties for some weeks and one wonders if the family had fallen on hard times and what had happened to the smart elegant gentleman?

We look forward to 2007 for any further episodes and if mother-in-law is still with us, will someone still bring her a cup of tea during the long winter nights?

If she is no longer using the room in Penarth who will succeed her and will they be similarly visited and waited upon.

The family have been surprised that these “visits” have not been viewed with apprehension and have actually been welcomed by a rather nervous great grand mother.

Truth is stranger than fiction!!

--ooOoo--

## **Letter from John Morris of Pontardawe by Phil Watts**

Some time ago I was handed a letter addressed to John Morris, Glan-yr-Afon, Llancarfan.

John had moved from Glan-yr-Afon in the early 1960's to The Rectory, Llantrithyd and back home (for Jenny) in the early 1990's to Pontardawe, so I forwarded the letter to him.

The writer of the letter is Philip Hogg, John Morris, in his reply to me, explains his connection to Philip Hogg and also how life is progressing with their family at Pontardawe and other parts of the world.

"I have spoken to Philip Hogg, who wrote the letter to Glan yr Afon, my mother's maiden name was 'Hogg'. The Hogg's came from Scotland. My great grandfather was headmaster at Park School, Aberdare, before moving to Cardiff.

The Hoggs came from Ettrick in Scotland from the family of James Hogg the poet, who wrote the "Ettrick Shepherd". He lived 1770-1825, and was a friend of Sir Walter Scott. James Hogg wrote, also, 'Charlie is my darling' and 'Up the river and over the lea, that's the way for Billie and me' etc. He also wrote a book 'The confessions of a justified sinner', all about the devil!

All moves on a pace here. Had a good lambing season – 23 lambs from 16 ewes with no problems.

Busy planting the vegetable garden. Put up a 10' x 15' polytunnel a few years ago, very productive. Kate and son are coming over from Tasmania in July for six weeks. Wood (Edward) is busy in France with his woodworking and a large garden. Richard is singing all over the place.

We put a large pond 40 yards x 40 yards in a field a couple of years ago and some ducks and geese have arrived but no babies yet.

We have been to the Millennium Centre twice, but seldom go to Cardiff now – no relatives left. Hope to see you this way sometime.

Very best wishes and happy memories of our time in the Vale"

P.S. from Phil Watts – Whenever John travelled west with his work - he always brought a supply of cockles in their shells for my mother and father at Abernant. These were much appreciated by us all – I suspect the cockles thought different!

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## **Whale Watching in the Sea of Cortez and Baja of California by Mike Crosta, OBE**

We had to be at the boat in San Diego, California by 7.15p.m. on Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2006 or we would miss this holiday that proved to be so good. The boat would be unable to wait for any late arrivals. Our flight from Gatwick on the 11<sup>th</sup> February went via Philadelphia with a changeover of 3 hours until 6.15 p.m. Plenty of time! However, we arrived at Philadelphia in a snowstorm, part of the heaviest East Coast snowfall in many years. For those 3 hours we waited anxiously for our flight to San Diego, watching the snowfall getting heavier. The flight did leave on time but we spent 1 hour at the de-icing bay. This was a surreal experience as a huge nozzle with a very bright light hovered and sprayed the plane thoroughly but seemingly without human involvement. However, we took off, headed west and we could relax! The next day revealed that most of the East coast airports had shut down shortly after our departure and Philadelphia had 21 inches of snow. Throughout our boat journey and whale watching we could not stop thinking how lucky we were not to miss such an experience.

The boat was not big. It was small: 88 feet by 30 feet but with powerful engines. Somehow, 28 passengers and a crew of 8 fitted into it

despite the fact that there were only 4 toilets and 3 showers (the showers being housed within the toilet cubicles). It was amazing how one 'felt to need to go' on passing an empty cubicle and took a shower at any time of day or night to avoid queues building up. The cabins were small: ours containing 2 bunks in which there was no room to sit up and standing room with about one person's width. It was easier for only one of us to try to dress at a time. My feet had to share the bottom of my bunk with a couple of suitcases! Naturally in such a small space there was no toilet or even washbasin. On the roughest night time journey, when desperation finally drove us to it, we had to clamber out of our bunks without hitting our heads, into a narrow corridor, up a steep flight of stairs, through the saloon to the toilets/showers at the rear of the boat, trying not to fall over. It sounds awful but it wasn't. The cabin became cosy. The only deck consisted mainly of a sitting/eating area, which incorporated a small cooking galley about 30 x 10 feet. In that small space, Dan and Dean served such good food. No meal was the same and all would have graced a good restaurant. Every day there was a different cooked breakfast, which somehow Dean enticed me into giving into in spite of any previous resolve to be sensible that day. One day Dan purchased a catch of large red snapper straight from a passing fisherman. A crewman skinned and gutted them at the rear of the boat, the remnants tossed overboard and Dan provided a delicious grilled meal that evening.

The skipper, Mike, and all the crew clearly loved finding wildlife for their passengers to delight in. Mike's patience and perseverance in getting so close to whales so often couldn't be recommended more highly. In addition, we had a top leader in Mark Carwardine, whale expert, well known writer, photographer and author. He oozed love of whales and nature. You would have to see his photographs to believe how good they are. We even had the great benefit of 2 of his friends helping him and us. Rachel always caring and good company used to work with BBC Wildlife Magazine. Peter Bassett, even when suffering from mal de mer,

entertained and shared his knowledge with us. He works for the BBC's Natural History Unit as a producer on such features as "Life in the Freezer" with Sir David Attenborough. That impressed us.

Every day brought us yet another great experience with different whales. Blue whales are the largest creatures ever to exist on the planet and are elusive. We got close to them so many times. Often we were close when they dived, showing the classic shot of the tail in the air. We even had one that adopted the boat and actually swam around close to us. A mother fin whale and its calf did the same, allowing us to see virtually their whole bodies and quite clearly their striking appearance. One area had many humpback whales doing their tricks so close to the boat that we were virtually on top of them. They dived often so we all had many good photos of their tails as they disappeared under the surface. One breached (a complete leap out of the water) incredibly close, literally right in front of the bow of the boat, re-entering with an enormous splash. We were all so surprised and delighted that there was no time to photograph it. Of course, Mark Carwardine did and got a fabulous picture. There were groups of 3, 5 or even 7 together right with the boat. Their "blows" were sometimes so loud and close to the boat that we were wet with spray. On one occasion a brydes whale breached twice right in front of the boat and they often don't breach at all. On several occasions we were completely surrounded by about 1,000 dolphins, which swam alongside us and rode on the bow wave so close you could almost touch them. They leapt out of the water, spinning and doing somersaults. The slower, calmer pilot whales surrounded and stayed with us several times. They are dolphin size and quite distinctive, especially their "blows" which smelled strongly of fish.

We had one very unusual experience when the sea around the boat was covered with hundreds of rays that leapt out of the water flapping their "wings" 2 to 3 times then splashing back into the water. It went on for quite some time. The

experts had seen an individual ray do this but never so many.

In a cove on a remote island we anchored, put the skiffs out to a seal colony and snorkelled with them. It was an amazing experience to watch their balletic movements underwater and they would come right up face to your face-mask and even nibble your flippers.

A very good area where we spent a lot of time was one where we seemed to be rushing from one whale to another. We had quality experiences with blue whales and sperm whales. Sperm whales dive to extreme depths to feed on squid and then rest on the surface to get their breath back. We were then able to get close and wait for and anticipate good tail shots. One we spotted heading straight towards our boat on the surface, large head parting the waters until we thought it was going to ram us but at the last second it dived under the boat.

My favourites were the grey whales. We anchored for a night in Ignacia Lagoon where they come to breed. It is quite sheltered water which is good for photos. Their blows were constantly around us and they frequently surfaced close to the boat. Here we went out in small skiffs and got really close to them at water level. Spy-hopping is where they lift their enormous heads right out of the water. Often this happened right next to the skiff which is almost unnerving as they are really big whales. Often we got covered with the spray of their blows, so close were they. I have some spy-hop photos so close that the baleen in their open mouths can be seen quite clearly as well as their eyes. Mark Carwardine took a great photo of us in our skiff looking for whales in one direction whilst the huge head of a grey whale was directly behind us spy-hopping and looking at us! This picture is expected to feature in a book or magazine. However, the best moment of the whole trip was when we had the most amazing, magical experience of a mother grey whale bringing her calf right up to the skiff, touching it with their large heads and bodies, lifting their heads right out of the water to be patted and smoothed by us from the skiff. They

have a soft rubbery feel but what a special experience! Why would a mother whale be so trusting to do that and allow its calf to do likewise? How incomparable that is to destroying them, which some countries do.

If you can do just one holiday, have one experience, this is it.

--ooOoo--

### **Llancarfan school: 1922 – 1953 by Jean Hunt and Mary Gammon**

The school logbook, 1922 - 1953, begins with Mr Idris Davies "commencing duties as Head Teacher of Llancarfan Council School" and lists Miss Ivy C. Lewis and Miss Connie Griffiths as his assistants. In November 1922, it is noted that "The sad news of the death of Thomas Price of Llanbethery was brought to school by the children. Mr Price for many years had identified himself with education in the parish. He had acted as chairman and Secretary of the School Board from the commencement, and has been a member of the Parish group of Managers until very recently. The cause of Education will be the poorer for the passing of Mr Price, and both scholars and staff members mourn the loss of a staunch and sympathetic friend."

Included in the St David's Day celebrations of the following year, March 1923, was an unveiling of a portrait of the late Mr Price and also the presentation of a photograph of the retired headmaster, Rees Davies (confusingly described in the school log as the "late" headmaster). Many parishioners were present at this function. Until his death in 1924, Rees Davies continued to take an interest in the school and, in particular, his beloved school garden where, in September 1923, he came to judge the plots worked by the boys and awarded prizes to Philip Leigh, Louis Howells and Ronald Harris. In the same month, Dorothy Evans and Kathleen Millichamp left for the Barry Girls Grammar School; Dorothy had been awarded a grant by the United Services Fund and Kathleen had applied for a bursary.



Although, by the 1920s, the school received regular visits from nurses, doctors and dentists, a measles outbreak in 1925 was still devastating and little Margaret Williams of *Ford Farm* died in June. When the weather was fine, lessons were taken in the open-air - perhaps to minimise the spread of infection. There were also rambles to Castle Ditches, *Garnllwyd* and *Llanvithyn*.

We were interested to read that a visit by a Refresher Course from Barry, of young lady teachers, which included Miss Sealey of Llanarfarn School, "ate lunch in the *Fox and Hounds*"! What liberated young ladies they must have been!

Nineteen twenty-five saw a record 3½ cwt crop of potatoes harvested from the school garden and plans were made for evening classes in Cooking and Dressmaking. Utensils were purchased from Messrs. Cross Brothers and the inventory (which still exists) includes the following: - 2 iron saucepans; 2 pie dishes; 2 pudding basins; 3 tin plates; 3 meat dishes; 1 cup and saucer; 1 teaspoon; 1 tablespoon; 1 egg whisk; total value £2.15s.3d. All of this was to be "whisked" away a year later, including the stove, to the new County School at Pyle! It was obviously a very short-lived enterprise.

Later that year the entire school was taken on a remarkable outing to Cardiff, which started at the *National Museum*, then dinner at the *Carlton*, a visit to *County Hall*, followed by *City Hall* "to see the statues of Welsh heroes" and then on to the B.B.C. studios in Park Place and ending with a visit to the *Western Mail* "to see the production of a newspaper."! This mammoth expedition was clearly not for the faint hearted!

In December 1924, it had been recorded that "Miss Ivy C. Lewis, Uncertificated Teacher, relinquished her duties today owing to Marriage. Miss Lewis served as a student teacher for a year from Sept. 9th 1918 to Sept. 8th 1919 after which she became an Uncertificated Teacher. During the whole of this period, with the exception of five half days

in June 1924, in consequence of family bereavement, when leave of absence was granted, Miss Lewis had not been late or absent once.

[A Society note: Ivy Lewis was the mother of Graham Jenkins, a member of the Llanarfarn Society Committee, and she was one of six sisters in a family of 13 children who grew up at *Broadhayes*. The sisters were Ruth, Elsie, Lil, Gladys and Hannah (the same Hannah who had taught in Llanarfarn School 1911-1916). Ruth also taught in Llanarfarn School, and all the sisters were teachers in the vicinity!]

Entries toward the end of the 1920s continued much as usual, with such mundane happenings as "little Calvert Harris, aged 7, while carrying another boy in the playground, fell and fractured his arm." Perhaps, at last, the Attendance Officer was beginning to have some effect, for in December 1926, Bernard Leigh was awarded a silver watch for "five years' perfect attendance" and Lewis Howell a silver medal for three years. Many children also received certificates for good attendance.

The whole school attended Empire Day celebrations at Rhoose in June 1927. At the end of that year, Llanarfarn School Prize Day was written-up in glowing terms in the *Barry Herald*, and it was reported that Len Mortimer had given a rendition of "The Mountain Rills".

In 1928 Miss Sealey left Llanarfarn School for St Athan County School and was succeeded by Miss Gwladys Mary Godfrey. On St David's Day 1928 the children participated in what had become an annual performance and concert. Among them were Kathleen Watts who sang "Yr far a'i Nyth", Oliver Hopkins with "O Dydd i dydd" and Leonard Mortimer with "Suo-gan". These pupil's names are of course familiar to many locals today.

In 1928, Idris Davies (who had served for six years) left his post as Head Teacher and was succeeded in July by Trevor Emlyn Johns. In October there were signs of increasing concern for the children's welfare in that arrangements



were made to serve "tea and cocoa to the dinner children" on alternate days at a charge of two pence per week per child. A mention was made of introducing "rural woodwork", and a sewing machine was received from the Singer Sewing Machine Co. A trainee bursar, Miss Charlotte Elizabeth Thomas, from Llanbethery was appointed. In December the children gave a fund raising concert to supply books for the school library and raised £4.9s.6d. which purchased 24 books.

In 1930 a new teacher, Miss Morfydd Thomas of Brynmawr was appointed at the princely salary of £99 per annum. Mr John's appointment as Head Teacher was a fleeting one as, in 1930, he left for Tongwynlais Mixed School and was succeeded in 1931 by Mr G. F. Davies.

Mr George Davies was to live at *Cartref*, Llanbethery, the residence favoured at the time as the home of the Headmaster. It was a requirement in the 1930s that he should live in the parish. He entered into the social life of the village and was co-opted onto any committee that was set-up to arrange events. The Young Farmers Club Management Committee was one, and he also sat on the Ploughing Match Committee.

The sixteen plots of the school garden were still cultivated by the senior boys who spent half of each Tuesday and Thursday afternoon tending them. Prizes were given annually for each plot. Judging took place in late July and the prizes, which came in cheque form were a great novelty for the children. First prize was 7s.6d., second 5s.0d. and third, 2s.6d.

In June 1931 the boys went for swimming practice at the Miners' Camp, St Athan. Priority was obviously still given to the male sex! The older girls had to content themselves with making cookery uniforms prior to their transfer to school in Rhoose.

Armistice day 1932 was commemorated for the first time by the school in a special service with two minutes silence, and talks on Peace were

given. In 1933, senior scholars, i.e. the 11+ group were transferred to Rhoose and Juniors from Llantrithyd were transferred to Llancarfan.

Despite all of the improvements in the care of children by doctors and health workers, cases of malnutrition were a cause of concern in the school and Captain T. J. Evans M.A. investigated "dinner arrangements."

Royal events were celebrated: the Duke of Kent's wedding in 1934, and the Duke of Gloucester in 1935, but it was the Silver Jubilee in 1935 and the Coronation of George VI in 1937 which were memorable times for the school children. Both days were marked by large tea parties and the village was decorated with bunting in red, white and blue with pictures of the king and Queen hung over the gateways to some of the village houses. Fancy dress parades were held and, for the Coronation, a sports event in the ten-acre field at the top of Penylan Hill. Prizes of shiny shillings and six pences in the new coinage, bearing the king's head were given, and for every participant, a gift of a new bronze 12 sided three penny bit!

H.M.I.'s Report of 1939 sheds considerable light on conditions in the school: "The accommodation consists of a main room now divided into two by removable partitions, infants room and two classrooms in which water was laid-on this summer. Heated by open fires and lit by oil lamps. Electric lighting to be installed in the winter and cess-pit type lavatories to be cleaned-out twice a year. Outdated books to be transferred elsewhere. One period a day for Welsh. There are no native speaking pupils in the school. Two staff members are Welsh speaking. 35-40 pupils remain to take a mid-day meal."

The summary of the report was: "This school possesses a markedly happy and homely atmosphere with very pleasant relationships between staff and pupils."

The same year, 1939 saw another scarlet fever epidemic and, in September, instructions were received not to open the school because of the

outbreak of war. In 1939, '40 and '41 the children were several times dispersed to neighbouring houses owing to air-raid warnings. Ann Radcliffe remembers being transferred to *Broadhayes* during an air raid, and for her the scent of box-hedges, which were then in the garden, still evokes memories of those wartime experiences.

During this period the Admissions Book notes the names of eight children, evacuated to Llancafarn, who attended the school. Some came from Cardiff but there were also two from Beckenham [Kent] and a boy from London. Two of the children stayed at *The Nook*, the tiny residence which later became *Morningside* and was demolished a few years ago for the new house of the same name.

In the thirties and forties most activities centred on the school. Regular Whist drives were held to raise money for the school Christmas party. A large Christmas tree, usually cut down from Weycock Wood, was placed in the centre of the two larger rooms with the partition drawn back. Father Christmas delivered a present to each child (purchased with money from the Whist drives). Graham Jenkins recalls that a sumptuous feast of sandwiches and cakes followed, all contributed by mothers, aunts and grandparents.

The Head teacher, Mr. F. Davies had left Llancafarn for Maesteg in February 1941 and was succeeded by Mr W. J. Samuel.

### **Mr W. J. Samuel 1941 - 1953**

Mr W. J. Samuel, known as "Sammy", is still well remembered by ex-pupils. Len Fairfax told us that, as one of the bigger boys, he was regularly sent out to cut a cane from the hazel hedges. He remembers going up to *Broomwell* for it, and that having cut it, he was very often one of the first to be on the receiving end of the punishment! It was a tradition that the bigger boys tried to break the cane on the last day of term!

Len also remembers the importance of the school garden and wearing clogs, which were kept, in a special shed. Apparently "Sammy" was a stickler for neatness and order - everything had to be returned to its place and every clod of earth returned to the garden, including that adhering to the children's clogs and spades. Just as in Rees Davies' time, each boy had a plot and prizes were awarded for the best crops of vegetables. Len remembers taking marrows home and Ann Radcliffe has told us that the girls grew flowers and they too, took them home.

In 1944 the school log notes that the provision of school meals was being considered and there is mention of a school 'bus. The school celebrated the end of the Second World War by giving holidays to mark the end of War in Europe and Victory [in Japan?] Day.

From about 1944 school dinners were de

From about 1944 school dinners were delivered in containers, with "Sammy" sternly checking to make sure that each child ate his dinner, including the "greens". Len says, "I used to put the greens in my pocket - I hated them!" Apparently cheese straws which, surprisingly, Len also detested, went surreptitiously into the pocket together with the despised greens!

The river was, of course, always a source of great fascination for the children, often making them late for school. As well as fishing, the ambition of the boys was to crawl under the bridge. Ann Radcliff and Margaret Rees remember catching bullheads and sticklebacks. Ann describes a game of leaping down the banks of the river with coat tied, batman style, around the neck!

The punishment book records very few entries despite the fact that former pupils (e.g. Clive Jenkins) have told us that they were regularly caned! On one occasion, Len Fairfax was caned, with three other boys, for "inciting younger boys to fight". Other memories were stone throwing, returning late after playing the "Fox and Hounds" game and answering teacher's back! Children's lavatorial sense of

humour does not change and we have been told one or two unrepeatable stories centred around the closets!

"Sammy's" era came to an end in 1953 when Mr Enoch Lewis succeeded him.

--ooOoo--

### **School Chums – by Barbara Milhuisen**

This photo was taken at the Society Dinner 2006:



Front seated: Ann Radcliffe (nee Williams) and Phil Watts  
Standing directly behind l-r: Margaret Moseley (nee Griffiths),  
Barbara Milhuisen (nee Jenkins) and John Fairfax  
At the back l-r: John Gardener, Valerie Cram (nee Jones), Clive  
Jenkins, Barbara Holt (nee Singleton), Oenwen Jones (nee  
Price).

--ooOoo--

### **Royal British Legion : Poppy Appeal 2006 by Blair Evans**

A big thank-you to everyone – to those raising and to those who personally contributed to The Poppy Appeal 2006 – the record sum of £1,193.44.

The amount raised is a record for the area which encompasses from the top of Tumble, Pendoylan, St Nicholas, Bonvilston, Llanbethery to Llanarfarn.

I mention the above villages, as the area is rural and volunteer collectors are needed still – in parts.

Trudi Fuller, Andrew Morgan, Les White, Mick Mace and Meiron Evans who have persevered over the last four year in support of the Appeal have my appreciation and respect in a job well done. Unfortunately, we now lose Trudi who retires – thank you Trudi - you will be missed – your get up and go attitude was an example to us all.

Thank you to the Static Collection Points: Llanarfarn Primary School; Churches of Llanarfarn, Bonvilston and St Nicholas; Cottrell Park Golf Club; Amelia Farm Trust; David Evans Agricultural Engineers; Village Shop Bonvilston; The Old Post Bonvilston; Aubrey Arms Bonvilston; Red Lion Bonvilston; Red Lion Pendoylan; Fox & Hounds Llanarfarn.

--ooOoo--

### **A letter to John Gardener from Australia by C. Baldwin**

Of the two sisters in Canada, Betty is the older and I think she must have been the one who had the publication.

She lived at Pancross Cottage, probably when you lived next door, after she had married a Canadian soldier and before moving to Canada.

I can remember that she had a daughter at that time. At present she is living in sheltered accommodation where she has twenty-four hour help as she is suffering from Parkinson's disease and I've been told finds it very difficult to hold a conversation in person or by phone, consequently, I've not spoken to her for almost two years.

Cicely the other sister spoke to me by phone sometime last year and I've heard nothing recently.

Her reflections of Llanarfarn would not be as good I think because she almost immediately settled to be a complete Canadian from the outset of going there in about 1949/50.



Most weeks I speak to my daughter Diane on Sunday evening (our time) midday for her and she told me about the rail line being re-opened and a bus service between Rhose Halt and the Airport.

After Madeline died in 2003, I came over with her ashes and scattered them around her parents' grave. This was a promise I made to her about three months or so before she died.

When I was over I went to Rhose several times and saw the developments where the Cement and Asbestos works were. Olwen the third sister, is still living in Rhose and periodically we have a natter on the phone.

I first arrived at St Athan (East Camp) when we had wooden huts (1938) being one of the first 100 airmen there and that's when I first met Madeline and eventually your mother as the next door neighbour.

I used to walk from East camp to Pancross to see her in those days and stop at 'Mustows' on the way back to camp for a cup of tea and fruit pie, in what was originally a wooden shed in those days. Long before the alterations and proper café.

On returning from India in 1945 just a couple of weeks before Christmas, I was stationed at Uxbridge, then in 1946 posted to St Athan (East Camp) and we married in March of 1946 in Llancafarn Church.

Madeline and I came to Australia in 1992.

I still drive though I'm 86 and this year had to take another test, (medical and physical driving) which we have to do from 85 years old.

I miss Madeline very much but am trying to enjoy life as much as it's possible.

This farm is about 100 acres and my son and daughter-in-law have some Galloway cattle (slightly smaller the Herefords), which are quite hardy. They are registered as breeders of this type of cattle and have sold seven of their two

year old calves which are still waiting to be transported to their new home, the buyer being another Pom who's property is not quite ready.

The house is a large four bedroom building and my daughter-in-law's mother lives here as well. One of the jobs I do is to drive the tractor around, especially during the drier weather when the grass grows more quickly, fitted with an attachment called a slasher, basically a three bladed mower driven by a power take off at the back of the tractor.

Enough of my ramblings and boasting for now will write again when I can think of something interesting.

--ooOoo--

### **Bombs over Llancafarn by Eunice Bodenham nee Llewellyn**

Well I remember the afternoon when the bomber came over Llancafarn; it was on the top field above the school. Tables were all laid out for tea, what the village was celebrating I cannot remember, then all of a sudden a German plane came over quite low and we all dived for cover in the hedges the plane fired five bombs (approximately), then a British Spitfire came chasing the German. It was all over in seconds we did hear later that the Spitfire had shot the German plane down over the Channel but I don't know if that was true.

I phoned my cousin in Newport (Joan Morgan) now Evans and she remembered it as well.

Keep up the good work with the newsletters it brings back many good memories.

--ooOoo—

### **A Comment on the last newsletter by Diana Smith, nee Griffiths**

I was amused to read in the November 132 Newsletter about my father Dilwyn Griffiths

'The Talbots' imitating the cockerels to keep them crowing.

He told me that the one just dropped dead from exhaustion!!!

--ooOoo--

(Co-ordinator – just a few of the letters received from our readers – it would be lovely to receive more – I'm sure that most of you will have a comment or a story to tell, long or short it does not matter – I love reading your stories).

--ooOoo--

### Visit to the Village - Barbara Milhuisen

I took the following photos during a walk around the village a few days before the Society Dinner:



The School



The Church



The Ford



Some members of the Society playing boules on the village piste.

--ooOoo--

### Visit to Aberthaw Cement Works by Phil Watts and John Gardener – 22 November 2006

Today we had the opportunity of viewing the wages book for the February 1915 to March 1916 of the Aberthaw Cement Works. For this we are grateful to Paul Baker of Lafarge, the present owners.

We expected to find names of people of Llancafarn on the pay roll. Unfortunately, the book only gave names and not addresses, so we were reliant on our knowledge of local names.

One name we think could have Llancafarn connection was Hartland. We found that B Hartland worked 72 hours and received £1.16s.3d and did not work less than nine hours a day, seven days a week as a yard labourer. We found that another week he worked on cement loading and was paid one shilling and

sixpence a ton, which seems to be better paid but harder work.

I remember my father telling me that just prior to 1914-15 was he was paid ten shillings a week as a farm worker at Pancross. It is little wonder that men left the farms to work in industry.

The manager Jas Watts (no relation to the writer) was paid £4.0s.0d per week. The foreman earned £2.0s.0d per week; J Dennis a fitter was paid £2.4s.11d; D Weekly an electricians mate was paid £1.2s.3d. for 68 hours. D Palmer (probably David Palmer married to Hannah Lewis of Broadhayes, Llancarfan) employed on the crusher for over 70 hours at 5d an hour. A man by the name of Elgy was employed as a quarry driver, worked 69 hours for £2.2s.10d. The above names are of families that we know were living in the area. Andrew Griffiths mother was Mary Elgy before she married Andrew's father Bob.

The only days the works was not producing cement was Christmas Day and Boxing Day. We did notice that a man by the name of Eidman worked 29 hours in one day after Christmas! He didn't work the next day! There doesn't seem to be such things as double pay for Sundays or Bank Holidays. The total wage bill at the works was £291.0s.3d. for one week. The number of employees was 150.

At this time cement seemed to be distributed in casks, barrels and bags. Presumably a cask is bigger than a barrel we noticed that the cost of making a cask was more than a barrel. The cost of making a cask was 6d. 100 barrels obtained for 17s.9d, bags repaired at 8d a dozen. The bags were usually repaired by females. John remembers a lady from Llancadle using shopping bags made from cement bags on her week's shopping expedition to Barry. Presumably they did not advertise Portland Cement on the side.

John had in his possession one of these original bags, handed down to him by his mother, this we gave to Paul Baker, they are to arrange for it

to be hung in the office of the works with some publicity to follow.

--ooOoo--

## **Memories of Ruth by Clive Jenkins**

I first met Ruth almost 60 years ago, when she was working for the Date in Llanbethery. Someone, probably the Vicar, Picton Thomas, persuaded her to start up a group of cubs. She set about this task with her usual vigour and enthusiasm and soon had a group of about 12 to 14 boys, including myself, lining up once a week to be indoctrinated into the Scout movement.

Everything including money was still in short supply after the war. But Ruth soon managed to kit us out in what passed for a uniform – the most important part being a bright green pullover, which came out of a consignment of clothes sent to Britain by the people of the U.S.A. These parcels used to turn up at the Church Hall at fairly regular intervals!

Ruth ran the group on military lines and every Saturday morning in the summer she organised a gathering at a different field in the village, (woe betide anyone who was late!) Always next to a stream, so that there was water available to brew up tea.

The group was divided into two, each with a leader who was responsible for making up a bonfire on which we cooked bits and pieces of food, which we had scrounged, and brought in an assortment of billy cans. Once again – procured. One of the main ingredients of the cook up was the moorhen's eggs, we stole from the nests along the stream bank. I do not think that Ruth ever knew of this ingredient and certainly would not have approved of it!

It all came to a sad end when one of the boys toppled a bill can of hot fat over his hand and arm and severely burnt himself.



To me all this seems like yesterday and I will never forget Ruth in her khaki uniform blowing her whistle and ordering us about.

--ooOoo--

## **ROOTS by Mike Crosta, OBE**

We have in the family known for a long time that we originated in Italy. The name in fact means crust. (Hence known in the Crown Prosecution Service as “Crusty” Crosta, obviously the opposite of my sunny disposition). Quite a lot of information was known about the Italian family but I have long wanted to go to the original town to see what it was like, meet other descendants still there, confirm our knowledge and discover more.

In June 2006 we finally managed that, having discovered a trip to Menaggio on Lake Como which was only 10 km from Pianello del Lario, the town where my great grandfather was born. I obtained a list of all the Crostas listed for that small town and send all 20 of them the same letter translated into Italian very kindly by Jean Hunt, explaining that I was hoping to meet anybody from the same family. Most of them turned out to be “different” Crostas but I had 3 replies, 1 of which was from Livio Crosta who turned out to be a fisherman and not related. Another was Guiseppe Fontana also not related but who kindly provided a family tree we were not aware of. All wanted to meet us but one was from a Gianpiero Crosta who actually offered to meet us at our hotel in Menaggio and take us to Pianello del Lario to meet the family.

When we arrived at our hotel and told the Manager what we were doing, before I mentioned the town, he said immediately “Pianello del Lario” because of all the Crostas it contained! The following day we waited in anticipation at the hotel for one of our cousins to arrive. There was some trepidation as our ‘phone call the previous evening to Gianpiero had made it clear that his English was non-existent, as was my Italian. He arrived with his cousin, Luigia, and she had no English either.

However, we were all pleased to see each other and so managed limited conversation with the aid of old pictures and lists of names. Then Patrizia arrived with her partner Stefano who also spoke no English although Patrizia certainly did. She had only learned it in school together with German and French but she was so proficient that we managed superbly all day, although we were worried that she must have been exhausted by the time we left.

We all went in their cars to the home of Patrizia’s parents, Bianca and Anselmo Bruni and there began the start of a wonderful day of hospitality and friendship. By the end of the day we had met 15 members of the family. There was no time to see Guiseppe Fontana and we looked for Livio Crosta but saw only his car and boat! Next time we will.

Bianca cooked a lovely traditional Italian lunch where we were jointed by Anna, Patrizia’s sister and Gianni, Bianca’s brother. The meal consisted of homemade salami and smoked ham followed by hand-reared beef and veal. Anselmo is a retired butcher who still has a few cows which had been moved up the mountain to summer pasture. We drank his tasty home-made red wine and tasted his home-made cheese. We later saw the dark old cellars under the house where the salami is hung as well as the wooden vat for crushing grapes the traditional feet method. Desert was Bianca’s home-made ricotta and amaretto torte: a real Italian home, with real Italian friendship and hospitality.

We were also taken on a walking tour of Pianello del Lario by Gianpiero (who knows everyone in the town), Patrizia, Bianca and Luigia. It is situated on the edge of Lake Como with beautiful views, especially after walking up the steep paths to the top of the town on the slopes of the mountain behind. It is really a small hamlet. Some of the houses there were very old and pathways went through corridors under the houses. Near the top of the hamlet at Santa Anna we came to the old, almost derelict, house where Domenico, my Great-Grandfather was born in 1865 to Celestino and Anna Maria

Crosta. Gianpiero knew the present owner who lived in a refurbished part of the house and we had a tour of the old unused rooms. Luigia was able to remember living there as a young child. It was very moving to be there where people who began our family actually lived. At the end of our visit we were sorry to say goodbye to our “cousins” when Gianpiero drove us back to our hotel.

Our visit confirmed what we knew and also provided what we did not know. Domenico (dob 13.6.1865) we knew had a brother Lorenzo Giovanni (dob 21.8.1870) but there were other siblings of whom we know nothing at present. There were 5 others: Rose (29.11.1852), Protasio (27.10.1858), Maria Fortunata (3.11.1859), Antonia Guiseppa (2.10.1867) and Antonio Giovanni (17.1.1873). Lorenzo Giovanni had 4 children and the cousins we met are from that bloodline which stayed in Pianello del Lario. The town is known for Crostas both living and in the churchyard, but from different families.

However, it is Domenico we have to thank for our British Crostas. Born in 1865 he obtained a passport (copy in our possession) and at the age of 16 left beautiful Lake Como for Newport, Gwent, where we know he was involved in a brush shop (old photo). Now called Daniel, he had 7 children, one of whom was Alfred, my grandfather, who had 5 children, one of whom was my father Kenneth. So there we are. Not a long history but interesting, I think, due to Domenico’s sense of adventure. It is rewarding to still have relatives in the original Italian town.

Oh, by the way, we had a super holiday. Lake Como is a glittering jewel with hills and mountains dotted with old, small attractive towns that like Pianello del Lario cling by their fingertips to the shores and hillsides. Excursions over 7,000 ft high mountains to St Moritz, and Milan with its spectacular Duomo, are a must. Our lake-edge hotel faced towns on the east side, ie Varenna and Bellagio where John F Kennedy had stayed a few months before his assassination and where Pliny the Elder and his nephew Pliny the Younger had a villa. Pliny

the Elder was Admiral of the Roman fleet and died in Naples Bay in the eruption of Vesuvius. He nephew observed from a distance and wrote a history and description of the event. I walked where they must have walked!

A super holiday came to a marvellous end on the last day. We took a ride from Menaggio to the north of Lake Como on a lovely old authentic side wheeled steam paddleboat which stopped at Pianello del Lario. On the return journey when dropping off passengers at Pianello we spotted Gianpiero on the landing stage who was surprised to see us on the boat. We managed a few words in “Italian” and we continued on to Menaggio. There, as we disembarked, were Gianpiero, Luigia and Bianca who had driven the 10 km to meet us. We took them to our hotel for cappuccinos and a lively but fragmented chat with the use of my phrase book. We finally saw them off in their car with every intention of our starting Italian lessons and making a return visit.

--ooOoo--

Mrs Murphy’s Words of Wisdom  
submitted by Mary Neary

They managed to put a man on the moon – how come they can’t put the rest of them there.  
They say that one in four is mad – think of three of your friends; if they’re O.K. you’re the one.  
If evolution is still happening, how come women only have two hands.  
My husband said he will leave if I don’t give up shopping – I’m going to miss that man.  
If I had known that grandchildren were so nice I would have had them first.  
I could give up chocolate easily but I’m no quitter.  
If you obey all the rules you miss all the fun.  
I never repeat gossip so listen carefully.  
It is hard to feel as fit as a fiddle when your’re the shape of a Cello.  
There is nothing better than a good friend – except a good friend with chocolate.  
I do miss my husband – but my aim is getting better.

# LLANCARFAN



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

# SOCIETY

**NEWSLETTER 133**

**MARCH 2007**

## **Announce Announcements, Local Events,**

### **Society:**

23 March	A.G.M.
9 April	Whist Drive
7 May	May Day Walk
8 June	Mystery Trip

For full details of our programme see attach dairy of events.

### **Ladies Tuesday Club**

Tues 20 Mar.	A.G.M. nibbles and games
Sat. 21 Apr.	Jumble Sale
Tues 15 May	Lynsey - Wedding in Lapland
Tues 19 June	Outing

### **Births, Deaths, Weddings, etc.**

**Birthday:** Happy belated birthday wishes to Olive Sampson on her 90th birthday in Feburary.

**Deaths:** Marjorie Hobbs died on the 27th January 2007 at the age of 93.

**Newsletter by e-mail** - if you should elect to receive the Newsletter by E-mail, this would provide you with coloured photos where applicable, e.g. the fox in the willows was lovely in colour and really stood out well – it lost its appeal in black and white. It will save the Society money and members of the committee the time and energy of preparing the newsletter for the post. All it will take is an email to Alan Taylor on [a.j.taylor@btconnect.com](mailto:a.j.taylor@btconnect.com) or a phone call.

**Contributions to the Newsletter to:** Ann Ferris, Fordings, Llanccarfann, Vale of Glamorgan, CF62 3AD,

**Local Correspondent:** Alan Taylor, Windrush, Llanccarfann, CF62 3AD or e-mail [a.j.taylor@btconnect.com](mailto:a.j.taylor@btconnect.com)

**Subscriptions/Membership Secretary and Mailing Enquiries:** John Gardner, The Willows, Fonmon, CF62 3BJ. Tel. 01446 710054

**Secretary:** Sheila Mace, Pelydryn, Llanbethery, Barry, CF62 3AN. Tel. 01446 750691.

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[www.llanccarfann.f9.co.uk](http://www.llanccarfann.f9.co.uk)



# Llancarfan Primary School-news.

## The Snow Day

On the dawn of The 8th February. We all woke up to see our gardens all covered in snow.

within 2 hours every kid in Glamorgan was sledging down any slope they could find. me included!

Also the school had to break tradition and close! But Llancarfan was not alone! More than HALF the schools in Wales closed because of the snow. Then on Friday was kept at bay until lunch but then drove us out again.

So we all had 1 and a half days of absolute Bliss!!!!!!

by Evan John



## School dinners in Llancarfan

School dinners started on the first day back in January. William Dobbs was the first child to go up and get his warm school dinner. We had sausages with mash potatoes and vegetables and for dessert we had creamy rice pudding yummy. All the leftover food goes in the recycling bin. If there's food left that has not been served the juniors get extras!!! Hooray.

by Lauren Evans and Hannah Butler



For the first time ever, on Tuesday 9th January at Llancarfan Primary School, the children had hot school dinners. We are given a menu to tell us what is available for lunch. It is a four week menu and some of the food available is homemade cheese and tomato pizza served with chips baked beans and bread, baked chicken fillet served with boiled and roast potatoes, cauliflower florets and peas and gravy, spaghetti bolognese and cheese served with pasta spirals, salad garnish and French bread, roasted Welsh beef and Yorkshire pudding served with boiled and roast potatoes carrot roundels, shredded cabbage and gravy and baked salmon fingers served with jacket wedges, raw vegetables platter and whole meal bread. Delicious!!!

by Clare D, William M and Kelly L

## Llancarfan chess team

Llancarfan primary school's new chess team had their first chess tournament on Sunday the 18th of February 2007. The chess team had practiced for quite a while before entering the tournament. Mr. Lewis, our coach, sadly couldn't make it to the tournament but Will John, Sam Woollett, Evan John, Luke John, Eddie Williams and Joseph Williams all played. They all did quite well and they all got a certificate.

By Sam Woollett & Will John.

## N-power

On the 17th of February 2007 N-Power came to our school to teach us all about different energies and how we can stop Global

Warming, which our pupils enjoyed. We got to do lots of fitness activities including rowing machines, a long jump, a lung capacity finder, 2 laser beams which measure your time running over 5m and a Batak Board, which tests your reaction speed by hitting pads when they light up. British F1 Driver Jenson Button is the world record holder.

by Josh & Marcus

## School dinners

## St David's day

On the 1st of March at Llancarfan Primary School we had an Eisteddfod in celebration of St David, the patron saint of Wales. The day started with everyone in Welsh costumes or rugby shirts. There are three houses, they are. The teams, BARUC, CADOC and DYFAN, got house points for wearing Welsh costume or a Welsh emblem. There were three individual competitions and one class competition. The first competition was individual musicians. Everybody that competed was very good. The next competition was the recitalists. Again, everyone was very good. The next competition was the class recital. All the classes put together something for the competition and each class got a certain amount of points for the position they came. Lastly was the art competition. Everyone's collage was very good. Results were on the white board with the extra points. The final totals showed that the winning house was DYFAN, CADOC were second and BARUC third. Well done to everyone.

by Harri and Joe



## World book day.

### 2nd March

It was world book day at Llancarfan school.

All of the pupils were told, they could dress up as their favorite character, from their favorite book. From Lord of the Rings to cartoon Horrid Henry. There were very creative characters at this WBD.



It was a complete fun day (NO WORK!!!!)

There were quizzes and games (or you could read your book.)

Everyone at world book day, DEF INITELY

## Toast

On a Tuesday and Thursday the school council make toast for the children and teachers. This has been running since the beginning of November 2006. Lots of children have said that the toast is delicious way to start the day!!! So far the school council has raised around £430 towards a shelter box to help families in 3rd world countries. The toast in our book is 10/10 because they do it the way we like it.

by Bethan and Victoria.

## Llancarfan football team win!!!

Llancarfan football team



beat St David, Colwinston on the 31.1.07 in two seven-a-side games. Lewis S, Will J, Logan B, Miriam B, Marcus K, Gabriel S, Harri T and Alex C. won five nil, the other team won three nil with Josh M-L, Sam P, Joe W, Josh T, Jessica H, Evan J, William M and Hannah J. The scorers for the first team were; Logan B (1), Harri T (2), Josh T (1) and Marcus K (1). For the second team Joe W (2) and William M (1) were the scorers.

## Vice President's Page

So many of our newsletters contain memories of the past. Members have written of their childhood, school days and of changes that have taken place in the village. I thought for a change I would write of the present and the future.

I have just spent a couple of weeks in the South of France with Philip and Mary Gammon at their recently renovated property in the town of Fanjeax, about a two hour drive from Toulouse.

They had already made plans to make the trip when they asked me to accompany them. I was at a loss to think of an excuse not to go. I accepted their kind invitation. It would give me an opportunity to see Barbara Milhuisen in Senesse de Senabuge a short distance away. Also the chance to revisit the places that Ruth and I had visited in 1992 and 2003. We celebrated our ruby wedding at Barbara's in 1992.

What does one do in the South of France in the first two weeks of February? Like Wales there are many things you can do when the weather is good. Unfortunately, the weather was not good, like here it rained most of the time. So I was not home sick. We only had three days of sunny weather. We didn't have the snow you had here that brought the country to a standstill! We did have a beautiful view of the snow-capped Pyrenees Mountains.

So what had France got that we haven't? You could say better food and wine. We have good food and lots of imported wine. The thing that the French do different to us is that they spend more time over their food and drink. Everywhere closes down from 12.00 noon to 2.00pm. What makes France a more comfortable country to live in is that they have more space than we have for the same number of people. After all is said and done there is no place like home.

Barbara sends her regards to all the folk back home. She will be in Llancarfan again for the May Day walk.

It is twenty years since the Llancarfan Society was formed. Should we celebrate that in some way? Did we do anything after ten or fifteen years? I can't remember. Perhaps we should wait until it is twenty-five years. That give us five years to think what we should do.

Something I remember that Ruth and I did ten years ago – was to move away from Abernant to Barry. For me that was after nearly 68 years, and for Ruth 50 years. Also in 1997 Ruth bought air tickets for me to fly to Vancouver to see my Lougher cousins, Tom and Gomer in Lolita, California, again. When we previously visited she had not been able to do some of the things that I did on the second trip, such as flying over the Rockies and travelling down to California on a Greyhound Bus. Ruth had as much pleasure in doing that for me as I had in doing it.

--ooOoo--

## Notes – Coordinator

This year our **Village Show** will be on the 28 July – all entries to be in by the 27<sup>th</sup> July (i.e. Friday evening at the hall – with staging on the Friday evening and Saturday morning before 10.00am.

I hope you are all growing your flower and vegetables and sewing or knitting, ready for this great event. The Show catalogue will be out shortly.

It is hoped that this will become an annual event and I hope all those who supported us last year will do so again, plus many more. It was an enjoyable day.



Also for those who have not yet sent their subscriptions, please remember that they were due in January, and John Gardener will be very pleased to hear from you. If you have mislaid your form the amount is: £7.00 per household, and £3.00 for a single person. Cheques payable to: Llancarfan Society and send to John Gardener at the address on the front of this newsletter.

--ooOoo--

### **Do you believe in Ghosts by Trudy Fuller**

In Newsletter No. 122 in 2004, I wrote an article about my then 94-year-old mother-in-law and her ghostly experience at the residential home where she lives in Penarth. I was recently asked if this “apparition” was still visiting her at night and would I provide an update on the haunted house and its inhabitants.

In 2002 mother-in-law had a visiting ghost in the guise of a respectable elderly lady who would walk through the locked bedroom door at about 2.00am carrying a cup and saucer, passing the foot of the bed, across the room and out through the stone wall.

Mother-in-law got quite excited by these visits, despite being of a nervous disposition and she even began to look forward to the next one but was disappointed when they ceased in the summer.

Some time before Christmas her bedroom door rattled in the middle of the night and through it came a distinguished-looking immaculately dressed man carrying a cup and saucer.

He walked across the room and out through the opposite wall as had his predecessor. She was sorry to lose her female visitor but delighted to have gained a smart man instead!!

Having possibly found out who the female ghost had been, she now wondered who this man could be. Was he related to her previous caller, perhaps her husband or admirer or even the butler? Or was there no link at all?

This apparition continued to visit for some weeks and one night as he passed the foot of her bed as usual carrying a cup and saucer he bent down and appeared to put this down on her cherished antique piano stool, before walking away through the wall minus the cup and saucer.

This stool is a precious William and Mary heirloom and mother-in-law was worried in case the cup and saucer might mark the tapestry top so she got out of bed to remove it only to find that the cup and saucer was not here. Apparently she was sorry not to find the expected refreshment and felt a fool for getting out of bed and for believing that this incident had actually happened.

Her immaculately dressed man eventually stopped coming, but sometime later another caller came, again with the expected cup and saucer but this fellow was dressed in workman’s clothes and wore a cap on his head.

The handy-man or gardener or who ever he was continued to attend to his night time duties for some weeks and one wonders if the family had fallen on hard times and what had happened to the smart elegant gentleman?

We look forward to 2007 for any further episodes and if mother-in-law is still with us, will someone still bring her a cup of tea during the long winter nights?

If she is no longer using the room in Penarth who will succeed her and will they be similarly visited and waited upon.

The family have been surprised that these “visits” have not been viewed with apprehension and have actually been welcomed by a rather nervous great grand mother.

Truth is stranger than fiction!!

--ooOoo--

## **Letter from John Morris of Pontardawe by Phil Watts**

Some time ago I was handed a letter addressed to John Morris, Glan-yr-Afon, Llancarfan.

John had moved from Glan-yr-Afon in the early 1960's to The Rectory, Llantrithyd and back home (for Jenny) in the early 1990's to Pontardawe, so I forwarded the letter to him.

The writer of the letter is Philip Hogg, John Morris, in his reply to me, explains his connection to Philip Hogg and also how life is progressing with their family at Pontardawe and other parts of the world.

"I have spoken to Philip Hogg, who wrote the letter to Glan yr Afon, my mother's maiden name was 'Hogg'. The Hogg's came from Scotland. My great grandfather was headmaster at Park School, Aberdare, before moving to Cardiff.

The Hoggs came from Ettrick in Scotland from the family of James Hogg the poet, who wrote the "Ettrick Shepherd". He lived 1770-1825, and was a friend of Sir Walter Scott. James Hogg wrote, also, 'Charlie is my darling' and 'Up the river and over the lea, that's the way for Billie and me' etc. He also wrote a book 'The confessions of a justified sinner', all about the devil!

All moves on a pace here. Had a good lambing season – 23 lambs from 16 ewes with no problems.

Busy planting the vegetable garden. Put up a 10' x 15' polytunnel a few years ago, very productive. Kate and son are coming over from Tasmania in July for six weeks. Wood (Edward) is busy in France with his woodworking and a large garden. Richard is singing all over the place.

We put a large pond 40 yards x 40 yards in a field a couple of years ago and some ducks and geese have arrived but no babies yet.

We have been to the Millennium Centre twice, but seldom go to Cardiff now – no relatives left. Hope to see you this way sometime.

Very best wishes and happy memories of our time in the Vale"

P.S. from Phil Watts – Whenever John travelled west with his work - he always brought a supply of cockles in their shells for my mother and father at Abernant. These were much appreciated by us all – I suspect the cockles thought different!

--ooOoo--

## **Whale Watching in the Sea of Cortez and Baja of California by Mike Crosta, OBE**

We had to be at the boat in San Diego, California by 7.15p.m. on Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2006 or we would miss this holiday that proved to be so good. The boat would be unable to wait for any late arrivals. Our flight from Gatwick on the 11<sup>th</sup> February went via Philadelphia with a changeover of 3 hours until 6.15 p.m. Plenty of time! However, we arrived at Philadelphia in a snowstorm, part of the heaviest East Coast snowfall in many years. For those 3 hours we waited anxiously for our flight to San Diego, watching the snowfall getting heavier. The flight did leave on time but we spent 1 hour at the de-icing bay. This was a surreal experience as a huge nozzle with a very bright light hovered and sprayed the plane thoroughly but seemingly without human involvement. However, we took off, headed west and we could relax! The next day revealed that most of the East coast airports had shut down shortly after our departure and Philadelphia had 21 inches of snow. Throughout our boat journey and whale watching we could not stop thinking how lucky we were not to miss such an experience.

The boat was not big. It was small: 88 feet by 30 feet but with powerful engines. Somehow, 28 passengers and a crew of 8 fitted into it



despite the fact that there were only 4 toilets and 3 showers (the showers being housed within the toilet cubicles). It was amazing how one 'felt to need to go' on passing an empty cubicle and took a shower at any time of day or night to avoid queues building up. The cabins were small: ours containing 2 bunks in which there was no room to sit up and standing room with about one person's width. It was easier for only one of us to try to dress at a time. My feet had to share the bottom of my bunk with a couple of suitcases! Naturally in such a small space there was no toilet or even washbasin. On the roughest night time journey, when desperation finally drove us to it, we had to clamber out of our bunks without hitting our heads, into a narrow corridor, up a steep flight of stairs, through the saloon to the toilets/showers at the rear of the boat, trying not to fall over. It sounds awful but it wasn't. The cabin became cosy. The only deck consisted mainly of a sitting/eating area, which incorporated a small cooking galley about 30 x 10 feet. In that small space, Dan and Dean served such good food. No meal was the same and all would have graced a good restaurant. Every day there was a different cooked breakfast, which somehow Dean enticed me into giving into in spite of any previous resolve to be sensible that day. One day Dan purchased a catch of large red snapper straight from a passing fisherman. A crewman skinned and gutted them at the rear of the boat, the remnants tossed overboard and Dan provided a delicious grilled meal that evening.

The skipper, Mike, and all the crew clearly loved finding wildlife for their passengers to delight in. Mike's patience and perseverance in getting so close to whales so often couldn't be recommended more highly. In addition, we had a top leader in Mark Carwardine, whale expert, well known writer, photographer and author. He oozed love of whales and nature. You would have to see his photographs to believe how good they are. We even had the great benefit of 2 of his friends helping him and us. Rachel always caring and good company used to work with BBC Wildlife Magazine. Peter Bassett, even when suffering from mal de mer,

entertained and shared his knowledge with us. He works for the BBC's Natural History Unit as a producer on such features as "Life in the Freezer" with Sir David Attenborough. That impressed us.

Every day brought us yet another great experience with different whales. Blue whales are the largest creatures ever to exist on the planet and are elusive. We got close to them so many times. Often we were close when they dived, showing the classic shot of the tail in the air. We even had one that adopted the boat and actually swam around close to us. A mother fin whale and its calf did the same, allowing us to see virtually their whole bodies and quite clearly their striking appearance. One area had many humpback whales doing their tricks so close to the boat that we were virtually on top of them. They dived often so we all had many good photos of their tails as they disappeared under the surface. One breached (a complete leap out of the water) incredibly close, literally right in front of the bow of the boat, re-entering with an enormous splash. We were all so surprised and delighted that there was no time to photograph it. Of course, Mark Carwardine did and got a fabulous picture. There were groups of 3, 5 or even 7 together right with the boat. Their "blows" were sometimes so loud and close to the boat that we were wet with spray. On one occasion a brydes whale breached twice right in front of the boat and they often don't breach at all. On several occasions we were completely surrounded by about 1,000 dolphins, which swam alongside us and rode on the bow wave so close you could almost touch them. They leapt out of the water, spinning and doing somersaults. The slower, calmer pilot whales surrounded and stayed with us several times. They are dolphin size and quite distinctive, especially their "blows" which smelled strongly of fish.

We had one very unusual experience when the sea around the boat was covered with hundreds of rays that leapt out of the water flapping their "wings" 2 to 3 times then splashing back into the water. It went on for quite some time. The

experts had seen an individual ray do this but never so many.

In a cove on a remote island we anchored, put the skiffs out to a seal colony and snorkelled with them. It was an amazing experience to watch their balletic movements underwater and they would come right up face to your face-mask and even nibble your flippers.

A very good area where we spent a lot of time was one where we seemed to be rushing from one whale to another. We had quality experiences with blue whales and sperm whales. Sperm whales dive to extreme depths to feed on squid and then rest on the surface to get their breath back. We were then able to get close and wait for and anticipate good tail shots. One we spotted heading straight towards our boat on the surface, large head parting the waters until we thought it was going to ram us but at the last second it dived under the boat.

My favourites were the grey whales. We anchored for a night in Ignacia Lagoon where they come to breed. It is quite sheltered water which is good for photos. Their blows were constantly around us and they frequently surfaced close to the boat. Here we went out in small skiffs and got really close to them at water level. Spy-hopping is where they lift their enormous heads right out of the water. Often this happened right next to the skiff which is almost unnerving as they are really big whales. Often we got covered with the spray of their blows, so close were they. I have some spy-hop photos so close that the baleen in their open mouths can be seen quite clearly as well as their eyes. Mark Carwardine took a great photo of us in our skiff looking for whales in one direction whilst the huge head of a grey whale was directly behind us spy-hopping and looking at us! This picture is expected to feature in a book or magazine. However, the best moment of the whole trip was when we had the most amazing, magical experience of a mother grey whale bringing her calf right up to the skiff, touching it with their large heads and bodies, lifting their heads right out of the water to be patted and smoothed by us from the skiff. They

have a soft rubbery feel but what a special experience! Why would a mother whale be so trusting to do that and allow its calf to do likewise? How incomparable that is to destroying them, which some countries do.

If you can do just one holiday, have one experience, this is it.

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### **Llancarfan school: 1922 – 1953 by Jean Hunt and Mary Gammon**

The school logbook, 1922 - 1953, begins with Mr Idris Davies "commencing duties as Head Teacher of Llancarfan Council School" and lists Miss Ivy C. Lewis and Miss Connie Griffiths as his assistants. In November 1922, it is noted that "The sad news of the death of Thomas Price of Llanbethery was brought to school by the children. Mr Price for many years had identified himself with education in the parish. He had acted as chairman and Secretary of the School Board from the commencement, and has been a member of the Parish group of Managers until very recently. The cause of Education will be the poorer for the passing of Mr Price, and both scholars and staff members mourn the loss of a staunch and sympathetic friend."

Included in the St David's Day celebrations of the following year, March 1923, was an unveiling of a portrait of the late Mr Price and also the presentation of a photograph of the retired headmaster, Rees Davies (confusingly described in the school log as the "late" headmaster). Many parishioners were present at this function. Until his death in 1924, Rees Davies continued to take an interest in the school and, in particular, his beloved school garden where, in September 1923, he came to judge the plots worked by the boys and awarded prizes to Philip Leigh, Louis Howells and Ronald Harris. In the same month, Dorothy Evans and Kathleen Millichamp left for the Barry Girls Grammar School; Dorothy had been awarded a grant by the United Services Fund and Kathleen had applied for a bursary.

Although, by the 1920s, the school received regular visits from nurses, doctors and dentists, a measles outbreak in 1925 was still devastating and little Margaret Williams of *Ford Farm* died in June. When the weather was fine, lessons were taken in the open-air - perhaps to minimise the spread of infection. There were also rambles to Castle Ditches, *Garnllwyd* and *Llanvithyn*.

We were interested to read that a visit by a Refresher Course from Barry, of young lady teachers, which included Miss Sealey of Llanarfarn School, "ate lunch in the *Fox and Hounds*"! What liberated young ladies they must have been!

Nineteen twenty-five saw a record 3½ cwt crop of potatoes harvested from the school garden and plans were made for evening classes in Cooking and Dressmaking. Utensils were purchased from Messrs. Cross Brothers and the inventory (which still exists) includes the following: - 2 iron saucepans; 2 pie dishes; 2 pudding basins; 3 tin plates; 3 meat dishes; 1 cup and saucer; 1 teaspoon; 1 tablespoon; 1 egg whisk; total value £2.15s.3d. All of this was to be "whisked" away a year later, including the stove, to the new County School at Pyle! It was obviously a very short-lived enterprise.

Later that year the entire school was taken on a remarkable outing to Cardiff, which started at the *National Museum*, then dinner at the *Carlton*, a visit to *County Hall*, followed by *City Hall* "to see the statues of Welsh heroes" and then on to the B.B.C. studios in Park Place and ending with a visit to the *Western Mail* "to see the production of a newspaper."! This mammoth expedition was clearly not for the faint hearted!

In December 1924, it had been recorded that "Miss Ivy C. Lewis, Uncertificated Teacher, relinquished her duties today owing to Marriage. Miss Lewis served as a student teacher for a year from Sept. 9th 1918 to Sept. 8th 1919 after which she became an Uncertificated Teacher. During the whole of this period, with the exception of five half days

in June 1924, in consequence of family bereavement, when leave of absence was granted, Miss Lewis had not been late or absent once.

[A Society note: Ivy Lewis was the mother of Graham Jenkins, a member of the Llanarfarn Society Committee, and she was one of six sisters in a family of 13 children who grew up at *Broadhayes*. The sisters were Ruth, Elsie, Lil, Gladys and Hannah (the same Hannah who had taught in Llanarfarn School 1911-1916). Ruth also taught in Llanarfarn School, and all the sisters were teachers in the vicinity!]

Entries toward the end of the 1920s continued much as usual, with such mundane happenings as "little Calvert Harris, aged 7, while carrying another boy in the playground, fell and fractured his arm." Perhaps, at last, the Attendance Officer was beginning to have some effect, for in December 1926, Bernard Leigh was awarded a silver watch for "five years' perfect attendance" and Lewis Howell a silver medal for three years. Many children also received certificates for good attendance.

The whole school attended Empire Day celebrations at Rhoose in June 1927. At the end of that year, Llanarfarn School Prize Day was written-up in glowing terms in the *Barry Herald*, and it was reported that Len Mortimer had given a rendition of "The Mountain Rills".

In 1928 Miss Sealey left Llanarfarn School for St Athan County School and was succeeded by Miss Gwladys Mary Godfrey. On St David's Day 1928 the children participated in what had become an annual performance and concert. Among them were Kathleen Watts who sang "Yr far a'i Nyth", Oliver Hopkins with "O Dydd i dydd" and Leonard Mortimer with "Suo-gan". These pupil's names are of course familiar to many locals today.

In 1928, Idris Davies (who had served for six years) left his post as Head Teacher and was succeeded in July by Trevor Emlyn Johns. In October there were signs of increasing concern for the children's welfare in that arrangements

were made to serve "tea and cocoa to the dinner children" on alternate days at a charge of two pence per week per child. A mention was made of introducing "rural woodwork", and a sewing machine was received from the Singer Sewing Machine Co. A trainee bursar, Miss Charlotte Elizabeth Thomas, from Llanbethery was appointed. In December the children gave a fund raising concert to supply books for the school library and raised £4.9s.6d. which purchased 24 books.

In 1930 a new teacher, Miss Morfydd Thomas of Brynmawr was appointed at the princely salary of £99 per annum. Mr John's appointment as Head Teacher was a fleeting one as, in 1930, he left for Tongwynlais Mixed School and was succeeded in 1931 by Mr G. F. Davies.

Mr George Davies was to live at *Cartref*, Llanbethery, the residence favoured at the time as the home of the Headmaster. It was a requirement in the 1930s that he should live in the parish. He entered into the social life of the village and was co-opted onto any committee that was set-up to arrange events. The Young Farmers Club Management Committee was one, and he also sat on the Ploughing Match Committee.

The sixteen plots of the school garden were still cultivated by the senior boys who spent half of each Tuesday and Thursday afternoon tending them. Prizes were given annually for each plot. Judging took place in late July and the prizes, which came in cheque form were a great novelty for the children. First prize was 7s.6d., second 5s.0d. and third, 2s.6d.

In June 1931 the boys went for swimming practice at the Miners' Camp, St Athan. Priority was obviously still given to the male sex! The older girls had to content themselves with making cookery uniforms prior to their transfer to school in Rhoose.

Armistice day 1932 was commemorated for the first time by the school in a special service with two minutes silence, and talks on Peace were

given. In 1933, senior scholars, i.e. the 11+ group were transferred to Rhoose and Juniors from Llantrithyd were transferred to Llancarfan.

Despite all of the improvements in the care of children by doctors and health workers, cases of malnutrition were a cause of concern in the school and Captain T. J. Evans M.A. investigated "dinner arrangements."

Royal events were celebrated: the Duke of Kent's wedding in 1934, and the Duke of Gloucester in 1935, but it was the Silver Jubilee in 1935 and the Coronation of George VI in 1937 which were memorable times for the school children. Both days were marked by large tea parties and the village was decorated with bunting in red, white and blue with pictures of the king and Queen hung over the gateways to some of the village houses. Fancy dress parades were held and, for the Coronation, a sports event in the ten-acre field at the top of Penylan Hill. Prizes of shiny shillings and six pences in the new coinage, bearing the king's head were given, and for every participant, a gift of a new bronze 12 sided three penny bit!

H.M.I.'s Report of 1939 sheds considerable light on conditions in the school: "The accommodation consists of a main room now divided into two by removable partitions, infants room and two classrooms in which water was laid-on this summer. Heated by open fires and lit by oil lamps. Electric lighting to be installed in the winter and cess-pit type lavatories to be cleaned-out twice a year. Outdated books to be transferred elsewhere. One period a day for Welsh. There are no native speaking pupils in the school. Two staff members are Welsh speaking. 35-40 pupils remain to take a mid-day meal."

The summary of the report was: "This school possesses a markedly happy and homely atmosphere with very pleasant relationships between staff and pupils."

The same year, 1939 saw another scarlet fever epidemic and, in September, instructions were received not to open the school because of the



outbreak of war. In 1939, '40 and '41 the children were several times dispersed to neighbouring houses owing to air-raid warnings. Ann Radcliffe remembers being transferred to *Broadhayes* during an air raid, and for her the scent of box-hedges, which were then in the garden, still evokes memories of those wartime experiences.

During this period the Admissions Book notes the names of eight children, evacuated to Llancafarn, who attended the school. Some came from Cardiff but there were also two from Beckenham [Kent] and a boy from London. Two of the children stayed at *The Nook*, the tiny residence which later became *Morningside* and was demolished a few years ago for the new house of the same name.

In the thirties and forties most activities centred on the school. Regular Whist drives were held to raise money for the school Christmas party. A large Christmas tree, usually cut down from Weycock Wood, was placed in the centre of the two larger rooms with the partition drawn back. Father Christmas delivered a present to each child (purchased with money from the Whist drives). Graham Jenkins recalls that a sumptuous feast of sandwiches and cakes followed, all contributed by mothers, aunts and grandparents.

The Head teacher, Mr. F. Davies had left Llancafarn for Maesteg in February 1941 and was succeeded by Mr W. J. Samuel.

### **Mr W. J. Samuel 1941 - 1953**

Mr W. J. Samuel, known as "Sammy", is still well remembered by ex-pupils. Len Fairfax told us that, as one of the bigger boys, he was regularly sent out to cut a cane from the hazel hedges. He remembers going up to *Broomwell* for it, and that having cut it, he was very often one of the first to be on the receiving end of the punishment! It was a tradition that the bigger boys tried to break the cane on the last day of term!

Len also remembers the importance of the school garden and wearing clogs, which were kept, in a special shed. Apparently "Sammy" was a stickler for neatness and order - everything had to be returned to its place and every clod of earth returned to the garden, including that adhering to the children's clogs and spades. Just as in Rees Davies' time, each boy had a plot and prizes were awarded for the best crops of vegetables. Len remembers taking marrows home and Ann Radcliffe has told us that the girls grew flowers and they too, took them home.

In 1944 the school log notes that the provision of school meals was being considered and there is mention of a school 'bus. The school celebrated the end of the Second World War by giving holidays to mark the end of War in Europe and Victory [in Japan?] Day.

From about 1944 school dinners were de

From about 1944 school dinners were delivered in containers, with "Sammy" sternly checking to make sure that each child ate his dinner, including the "greens". Len says, "I used to put the greens in my pocket - I hated them!" Apparently cheese straws which, surprisingly, Len also detested, went surreptitiously into the pocket together with the despised greens!

The river was, of course, always a source of great fascination for the children, often making them late for school. As well as fishing, the ambition of the boys was to crawl under the bridge. Ann Radcliff and Margaret Rees remember catching bullheads and sticklebacks. Ann describes a game of leaping down the banks of the river with coat tied, batman style, around the neck!

The punishment book records very few entries despite the fact that former pupils (e.g. Clive Jenkins) have told us that they were regularly caned! On one occasion, Len Fairfax was caned, with three other boys, for "inciting younger boys to fight". Other memories were stone throwing, returning late after playing the "Fox and Hounds" game and answering teacher's back! Children's lavatorial sense of

humour does not change and we have been told one or two unrepeatable stories centred around the closets!

"Sammy's" era came to an end in 1953 when Mr Enoch Lewis succeeded him.

--ooOoo--

### **School Chums – by Barbara Milhuisen**

This photo was taken at the Society Dinner 2006:



Front seated: Ann Radcliffe (nee Williams) and Phil Watts  
Standing directly behind l-r: Margaret Moseley (nee Griffiths),  
Barbara Milhuisen (nee Jenkins) and John Fairfax  
At the back l-r: John Gardener, Valerie Cram (nee Jones), Clive  
Jenkins, Barbara Holt (nee Singleton), Oenwen Jones (nee  
Price).

--ooOoo--

### **Royal British Legion : Poppy Appeal 2006 by Blair Evans**

A big thank-you to everyone – to those raising and to those who personally contributed to The Poppy Appeal 2006 – the record sum of £1,193.44.

The amount raised is a record for the area which encompasses from the top of Tumble, Pendoylan, St Nicholas, Bonvilston, Llanbethery to Llanarfarn.

I mention the above villages, as the area is rural and volunteer collectors are needed still – in parts.

Trudi Fuller, Andrew Morgan, Les White, Mick Mace and Meiron Evans who have persevered over the last four year in support of the Appeal have my appreciation and respect in a job well done. Unfortunately, we now lose Trudi who retires – thank you Trudi - you will be missed – your get up and go attitude was an example to us all.

Thank you to the Static Collection Points: Llanarfarn Primary School; Churches of Llanarfarn, Bonvilston and St Nicholas; Cottrell Park Golf Club; Amelia Farm Trust; David Evans Agricultural Engineers; Village Shop Bonvilston; The Old Post Bonvilston; Aubrey Arms Bonvilston; Red Lion Bonvilston; Red Lion Pendoylan; Fox & Hounds Llanarfarn.

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### **A letter to John Gardener from Australia by C. Baldwin**

Of the two sisters in Canada, Betty is the older and I think she must have been the one who had the publication.

She lived at Pancross Cottage, probably when you lived next door, after she had married a Canadian soldier and before moving to Canada.

I can remember that she had a daughter at that time. At present she is living in sheltered accommodation where she has twenty-four hour help as she is suffering from Parkinson's disease and I've been told finds it very difficult to hold a conversation in person or by phone, consequently, I've not spoken to her for almost two years.

Cicely the other sister spoke to me by phone sometime last year and I've heard nothing recently.

Her reflections of Llanarfarn would not be as good I think because she almost immediately settled to be a complete Canadian from the outset of going there in about 1949/50.

Most weeks I speak to my daughter Diane on Sunday evening (our time) midday for her and she told me about the rail line being re-opened and a bus service between Rhose Halt and the Airport.

After Madeline died in 2003, I came over with her ashes and scattered them around her parents' grave. This was a promise I made to her about three months or so before she died.

When I was over I went to Rhose several times and saw the developments where the Cement and Asbestos works were. Olwen the third sister, is still living in Rhose and periodically we have a natter on the phone.

I first arrived at St Athan (East Camp) when we had wooden huts (1938) being one of the first 100 airmen there and that's when I first met Madeline and eventually your mother as the next door neighbour.

I used to walk from East camp to Pancross to see her in those days and stop at 'Mustows' on the way back to camp for a cup of tea and fruit pie, in what was originally a wooden shed in those days. Long before the alterations and proper café.

On returning from India in 1945 just a couple of weeks before Christmas, I was stationed at Uxbridge, then in 1946 posted to St Athan (East Camp) and we married in March of 1946 in Llancafarn Church.

Madeline and I came to Australia in 1992.

I still drive though I'm 86 and this year had to take another test, (medical and physical driving) which we have to do from 85 years old.

I miss Madeline very much but am trying to enjoy life as much as it's possible.

This farm is about 100 acres and my son and daughter-in-law have some Galloway cattle (slightly smaller the Herefords), which are quite hardy. They are registered as breeders of this type of cattle and have sold seven of their two

year old calves which are still waiting to be transported to their new home, the buyer being another Pom who's property is not quite ready.

The house is a large four bedroom building and my daughter-in-law's mother lives here as well. One of the jobs I do is to drive the tractor around, especially during the drier weather when the grass grows more quickly, fitted with an attachment called a slasher, basically a three bladed mower driven by a power take off at the back of the tractor.

Enough of my ramblings and boasting for now will write again when I can think of something interesting.

--ooOoo--

### **Bombs over Llancafarn by Eunice Bodenham nee Llewellyn**

Well I remember the afternoon when the bomber came over Llancafarn; it was on the top field above the school. Tables were all laid out for tea, what the village was celebrating I cannot remember, then all of a sudden a German plane came over quite low and we all dived for cover in the hedges the plane fired five bombs (approximately), then a British Spitfire came chasing the German. It was all over in seconds we did hear later that the Spitfire had shot the German plane down over the Channel but I don't know if that was true.

I phoned my cousin in Newport (Joan Morgan) now Evans and she remembered it as well.

Keep up the good work with the newsletters it brings back many good memories.

--ooOoo—

### **A Comment on the last newsletter by Diana Smith, nee Griffiths**

I was amused to read in the November 132 Newsletter about my father Dilwyn Griffiths

'The Talbots' imitating the cockerels to keep them crowing.

He told me that the one just dropped dead from exhaustion!!!

--ooOoo--

(Co-ordinator – just a few of the letters received from our readers – it would be lovely to receive more – I'm sure that most of you will have a comment or a story to tell, long or short it does not matter – I love reading your stories).

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### Visit to the Village - Barbara Milhuisen

I took the following photos during a walk around the village a few days before the Society Dinner:



The School



The Church



The Ford



Some members of the Society playing boules on the village piste.

--ooOoo--

### Visit to Aberthaw Cement Works by Phil Watts and John Gardener – 22 November 2006

Today we had the opportunity of viewing the wages book for the February 1915 to March 1916 of the Aberthaw Cement Works. For this we are grateful to Paul Baker of Lafarge, the present owners.

We expected to find names of people of Llancafarn on the pay roll. Unfortunately, the book only gave names and not addresses, so we were reliant on our knowledge of local names.

One name we think could have Llancafarn connection was Hartland. We found that B Hartland worked 72 hours and received £1.16s.3d and did not work less than nine hours a day, seven days a week as a yard labourer. We found that another week he worked on cement loading and was paid one shilling and



sixpence a ton, which seems to be better paid but harder work.

I remember my father telling me that just prior to 1914-15 was he was paid ten shillings a week as a farm worker at Pancross. It is little wonder that men left the farms to work in industry.

The manager Jas Watts (no relation to the writer) was paid £4.0s.0d per week. The foreman earned £2.0s.0d per week; J Dennis a fitter was paid £2.4s.11d; D Weekly an electricians mate was paid £1.2s.3d. for 68 hours. D Palmer (probably David Palmer married to Hannah Lewis of Broadhayes, Llancarfan) employed on the crusher for over 70 hours at 5d an hour. A man by the name of Elgy was employed as a quarry driver, worked 69 hours for £2.2s.10d. The above names are of families that we know were living in the area. Andrew Griffiths mother was Mary Elgy before she married Andrew's father Bob.

The only days the works was not producing cement was Christmas Day and Boxing Day. We did notice that a man by the name of Eidman worked 29 hours in one day after Christmas! He didn't work the next day! There doesn't seem to be such things as double pay for Sundays or Bank Holidays. The total wage bill at the works was £291.0s.3d. for one week. The number of employees was 150.

At this time cement seemed to be distributed in casks, barrels and bags. Presumably a cask is bigger than a barrel we noticed that the cost of making a cask was more than a barrel. The cost of making a cask was 6d. 100 barrels obtained for 17s.9d, bags repaired at 8d a dozen. The bags were usually repaired by females. John remembers a lady from Llancadle using shopping bags made from cement bags on her week's shopping expedition to Barry. Presumably they did not advertise Portland Cement on the side.

John had in his possession one of these original bags, handed down to him by his mother, this we gave to Paul Baker, they are to arrange for it

to be hung in the office of the works with some publicity to follow.

--ooOoo--

## **Memories of Ruth by Clive Jenkins**

I first met Ruth almost 60 years ago, when she was working for the Date in Llanbethery. Someone, probably the Vicar, Picton Thomas, persuaded her to start up a group of cubs. She set about this task with her usual vigour and enthusiasm and soon had a group of about 12 to 14 boys, including myself, lining up once a week to be indoctrinated into the Scout movement.

Everything including money was still in short supply after the war. But Ruth soon managed to kit us out in what passed for a uniform – the most important part being a bright green pullover, which came out of a consignment of clothes sent to Britain by the people of the U.S.A. These parcels used to turn up at the Church Hall at fairly regular intervals!

Ruth ran the group on military lines and every Saturday morning in the summer she organised a gathering at a different field in the village, (woe betide anyone who was late!) Always next to a stream, so that there was water available to brew up tea.

The group was divided into two, each with a leader who was responsible for making up a bonfire on which we cooked bits and pieces of food, which we had scrounged, and brought in an assortment of billy cans. Once again – procured. One of the main ingredients of the cook up was the moorhen's eggs, we stole from the nests along the stream bank. I do not think that Ruth ever knew of this ingredient and certainly would not have approved of it!

It all came to a sad end when one of the boys toppled a bill can of hot fat over his hand and arm and severely burnt himself.

To me all this seems like yesterday and I will never forget Ruth in her khaki uniform blowing her whistle and ordering us about.

--ooOoo--

### **ROOTS by Mike Crosta, OBE**

We have in the family known for a long time that we originated in Italy. The name in fact means crust. (Hence known in the Crown Prosecution Service as “Crusty” Crosta, obviously the opposite of my sunny disposition). Quite a lot of information was known about the Italian family but I have long wanted to go to the original town to see what it was like, meet other descendants still there, confirm our knowledge and discover more.

In June 2006 we finally managed that, having discovered a trip to Menaggio on Lake Como which was only 10 km from Pianello del Lario, the town where my great grandfather was born. I obtained a list of all the Crostas listed for that small town and send all 20 of them the same letter translated into Italian very kindly by Jean Hunt, explaining that I was hoping to meet anybody from the same family. Most of them turned out to be “different” Crostas but I had 3 replies, 1 of which was from Livio Crosta who turned out to be a fisherman and not related. Another was Guiseppe Fontana also not related but who kindly provided a family tree we were not aware of. All wanted to meet us but one was from a Gianpiero Crosta who actually offered to meet us at our hotel in Menaggio and take us to Pianello del Lario to meet the family.

When we arrived at our hotel and told the Manager what we were doing, before I mentioned the town, he said immediately “Pianello del Lario” because of all the Crostas it contained! The following day we waited in anticipation at the hotel for one of our cousins to arrive. There was some trepidation as our ‘phone call the previous evening to Gianpiero had made it clear that his English was non-existent, as was my Italian. He arrived with his cousin, Luigia, and she had no English either.

However, we were all pleased to see each other and so managed limited conversation with the aid of old pictures and lists of names. Then Patrizia arrived with her partner Stefano who also spoke no English although Patrizia certainly did. She had only learned it in school together with German and French but she was so proficient that we managed superbly all day, although we were worried that she must have been exhausted by the time we left.

We all went in their cars to the home of Patrizia’s parents, Bianca and Anselmo Bruni and there began the start of a wonderful day of hospitality and friendship. By the end of the day we had met 15 members of the family. There was no time to see Guiseppe Fontana and we looked for Livio Crosta but saw only his car and boat! Next time we will.

Bianca cooked a lovely traditional Italian lunch where we were jointed by Anna, Patrizia’s sister and Gianni, Bianca’s brother. The meal consisted of homemade salami and smoked ham followed by hand-reared beef and veal. Anselmo is a retired butcher who still has a few cows which had been moved up the mountain to summer pasture. We drank his tasty home-made red wine and tasted his home-made cheese. We later saw the dark old cellars under the house where the salami is hung as well as the wooden vat for crushing grapes the traditional feet method. Desert was Bianca’s home-made ricotta and amaretto torte: a real Italian home, with real Italian friendship and hospitality.

We were also taken on a walking tour of Pianello del Lario by Gianpiero (who knows everyone in the town), Patrizia, Bianca and Luigia. It is situated on the edge of Lake Como with beautiful views, especially after walking up the steep paths to the top of the town on the slopes of the mountain behind. It is really a small hamlet. Some of the houses there were very old and pathways went through corridors under the houses. Near the top of the hamlet at Santa Anna we came to the old, almost derelict, house where Domenico, my Great-Grandfather was born in 1865 to Celestino and Anna Maria

Crosta. Gianpiero knew the present owner who lived in a refurbished part of the house and we had a tour of the old unused rooms. Luigia was able to remember living there as a young child. It was very moving to be there where people who began our family actually lived. At the end of our visit we were sorry to say goodbye to our “cousins” when Gianpiero drove us back to our hotel.

Our visit confirmed what we knew and also provided what we did not know. Domenico (dob 13.6.1865) we knew had a brother Lorenzo Giovanni (dob 21.8.1870) but there were other siblings of whom we know nothing at present. There were 5 others: Rose (29.11.1852), Protasio (27.10.1858), Maria Fortunata (3.11.1859), Antonia Guiseppa (2.10.1867) and Antonio Giovanni (17.1.1873). Lorenzo Giovanni had 4 children and the cousins we met are from that bloodline which stayed in Pianello del Lario. The town is known for Crostas both living and in the churchyard, but from different families.

However, it is Domenico we have to thank for our British Crostas. Born in 1865 he obtained a passport (copy in our possession) and at the age of 16 left beautiful Lake Como for Newport, Gwent, where we know he was involved in a brush shop (old photo). Now called Daniel, he had 7 children, one of whom was Alfred, my grandfather, who had 5 children, one of whom was my father Kenneth. So there we are. Not a long history but interesting, I think, due to Domenico’s sense of adventure. It is rewarding to still have relatives in the original Italian town.

Oh, by the way, we had a super holiday. Lake Como is a glittering jewel with hills and mountains dotted with old, small attractive towns that like Pianello del Lario cling by their fingertips to the shores and hillsides. Excursions over 7,000 ft high mountains to St Moritz, and Milan with its spectacular Duomo, are a must. Our lake-edge hotel faced towns on the east side, ie Varenna and Bellagio where John F Kennedy had stayed a few months before his assassination and where Pliny the Elder and his nephew Pliny the Younger had a villa. Pliny

the Elder was Admiral of the Roman fleet and died in Naples Bay in the eruption of Vesuvius. He nephew observed from a distance and wrote a history and description of the event. I walked where they must have walked!

A super holiday came to a marvellous end on the last day. We took a ride from Menaggio to the north of Lake Como on a lovely old authentic side wheeled steam paddleboat which stopped at Pianello del Lario. On the return journey when dropping off passengers at Pianello we spotted Gianpiero on the landing stage who was surprised to see us on the boat. We managed a few words in “Italian” and we continued on to Menaggio. There, as we disembarked, were Gianpiero, Luigia and Bianca who had driven the 10 km to meet us. We took them to our hotel for cappuccinos and a lively but fragmented chat with the use of my phrase book. We finally saw them off in their car with every intention of our starting Italian lessons and making a return visit.

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Mrs Murphy’s Words of Wisdom  
submitted by Mary Neary

They managed to put a man on the moon – how come they can’t put the rest of them there.  
They say that one in four is mad – think of three of your friends; if they’re O.K. you’re the one.  
If evolution is still happening, how come women only have two hands.  
My husband said he will leave if I don’t give up shopping – I’m going to miss that man.  
If I had known that grandchildren were so nice I would have had them first.  
I could give up chocolate easily but I’m no quitter.  
If you obey all the rules you miss all the fun.  
I never repeat gossip so listen carefully.  
It is hard to feel as fit as a fiddle when your’re the shape of a Cello.  
There is nothing better than a good friend – except a good friend with chocolate.  
I do miss my husband – but my aim is getting better.