

LLANCFAN



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

SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 134

AUGUST 2007

Announce Announcements, Local Events,

Society:

Sat. 22 Sept.	Annual Dinner
Fri. 19 Oct.	Whist Drive
Tues 4 Dec	Social Evening

Ladies Tuesday Club

Tues 18 Sept	Sausage & Mash Evening
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Births, Deaths, Weddings, etc.

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 or a phone call.

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President's Page

What has happened since I last wrote? Easter has come and gone. Similarly, the May Day walk. The Easter Holiday I spent with my niece Anne in Widley, Portsmouth and the weather was excellent. One of the highlights of the weekend was a visit to the Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth Dockyard. If you are ever in the area I recommend a visit. Adjoining the Spinnaker Tower is a magnificent new shopping area called Gunwharf Quay.

The Spinnaker Tower has a viewing platform 100 metres above sea level with a glass floor allowing a wonderful view of the Portsmouth Dockyard and surrounding area. The Spinnaker Tower bears favourable comparison with the London Eye. The cost was going to be £10 million and was completed for £28 million. Poor maths again!

May Day Walk was another success. The numbers taking part were down probably due to the wet weather. I arrived at the Hall expecting to have a cup of tea, a chat and a walk around the village if the rain stopped. Inside the Hall I found Paul Jenkins and family, including three small children suitably dressed for a walk in wet weather. Paul said he was acting on instructions from his father Clive in Kent. We were later joined by Barbara Milhuisen and others prepared for wet weather. So how can you cancel a walk when people travel from Kent and France for a Llancarfan Society May Day Walk? What a wonderful loyal family they are to the village!

The route of the walk began by leaving the Hall turning left towards Ford Cross, past the site of the village water tap and the carpenters shop (which is also known as Harry Hughes's workshop). At Ford Cross we found a locked gate at the footpath entrance, which was considered not accessible. We proceeded to Ford Farm where we would have liked to turn towards Broomwell but yet again it was barred by brambles. So by way of a private entrance we turned back to the top of Penylan Hill then towards The Talbots now known as Middle Hill.

On this route we found a series of brand new stiles. The Vale Council must have known we were coming! On a pre walk John Gardner and I witnessed five men surrounding a hole ready for the receiving post for the stile! Council workers believe there is safety in numbers.

On arrival at the top of Cross Green hill we turned left and walked down the hill to the Hollies also the site of Rose Cottage (in my school days Mrs. Lloyd lived here, she used to try to catch us with the crook of her stick). It is also the position of another village water tap, still to be seen behind the long grass.

There used to be a village pump in the field in front of New House. Molly Ranger tells me it was stolen many years ago. The pump used to be shaded by a large elm tree, which succumbed to Dutch Elm's disease in 1973 and was later removed. I tried to locate the actual site of the well but I was restricted by brambles but I was able to see a wet spot to show me that I was in the right place.

Next stop after The Hollies was the famous Ivy Pool and much to our pleasure we were able to view some trout. We continued through the village but found the temptation of the Fox and Hounds too strong to pass.

During the May Day week end I had the pleasure of meeting two of Barbara's cousins for the first time, one from Stoke the other from Clacton on Sea. They had arranged to spend the weekend with Barbara in Barry so that they could visit the village of Llancarfan for the first time.

The cousins are daughters of George Evans, brother of Edith, Dorothy (Barbara's mother), Dick (who wrote a number of articles for the Society Newsletter) and Glenys. All were former pupils of Llancarfan School. George lived at Ford Cross until the start of the Second of World War. Mrs. Evans moved to Blaengarw, Edith was a nurse, Dick joined the Army, George did war work in the London area and Glenys worked on munitions in the Bridgend Arsenal. Edith was returning from active service in India when she was taken ill on the boat in Liverpool and died in hospital there.

We were able to spend a few hours walking around the village, stopping at the church, school, Fox and Hounds and the river when Barbara had a paddle. I do not know what paddling in the Carfan does for her; it gives me the 'shivers'.

We walked the planned May Day Walk on the Saturday, Barbara's family had to return home before the Monday. We were able to picnic on Ron and Mary Thomas and Kath Watts seat in the churchyard. Many photographs were taken for the family album also a few blanks were able to be filled in, in the research of the family tree. They are going to keep in touch by joining the Llancarfan Society.

What else am I doing? I have started extracting articles from the Llancarfan Society Newsletter numbers 1-75 to be placed in a book. The book I hope to be a tribute and in memory of Ruth.

Many of the articles I have extracted have been written by members of families that welcomed Ruth to the village when she arrived as a land girl with Mr and Mrs. Date, Ty Mawr, Llanbethery. As written in her story in the newsletter Ruth said it was these families that encouraged her to stay. Ruth had the pleasure of living nearly 60 years in Llancarfan; I hope the book will serve as an acknowledgement of a happy life in Llancarfan.

I have written to the families who wrote the extracts concerned and I am encouraged by their positive response. Vivienne is helping me with this enterprise and I feel sure Ruth would have liked that.

Archdeacon Bill Thomas has recently dedicated an alms plate in memory of Ruth for St, Cadoc's Church. I originally chose a vase as a gift to St.Cadoc's, but when I read about

care and attention I quote “needs cleaning once a week”. That would have been an extra chore for some body.

I am grateful to Sam Smith for suggesting the alms plate, Philip Gammon for suggesting that his son Jonathan’s father in law is a wood turner and would be glad to help.

So now we have an alms plate of local oak wood, made by a local craftsman in memory of a local adopted girl Ruth.

It was interesting that when we were examining the collection plates to match up the wood and size etc that the inscription on one of the plates says “ In memory of Morris Price Middle Cross, 1938”. Both these plates are on view on the visitors’ table in the church.

My friend Barbara Milhuisen has suggested to me that while she is home for the Society Dinner on the 22nd of September that we organise a trip to the Cotswolds to meet up with Margaret Mosely (nee Griffiths) and possibly other friends and relatives living in England. Barbara is full of good ideas!

For as long as I can remember we, as a family have travelled to a point half way from Portsmouth to exchange Christmas presents. In the old days it was to exchange young children for holidays. Now we are more likely to exchange old people that no longer drive long distances.

If there is any one ‘out there’ who would like to accompany us please get in touch with me and I will be only to glad to give you further details of dates, times, places etc.

We would probably have a pub lunch and generally ‘mooch’ around. No doubt some people will find some shops! I was thinking more of a river or something else that doesn’t have commercial connections. We will be guided by what Margaret has to tell us.

The organisation of the Village Horticulture Show seems to be going well, although by the time you read this it may have come and gone. The date to remember is July 28th.in the village hall and surrounding area.

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Mobile Library – Andrea D Griffiths

May I through the pages of the Llancarfan Society newsletter, promote the Mobile Library service? Numbers of users in Llancarfan have been dropping off in recent months and I wonder if this is because new people have moved in to the area who do not know that there is a regular service lasting an hour a fortnight – this is very good in

comparison with many other villages throughout the Vale (normal length of stop is 30 minutes) and reflects the initial demand when the service was set up.

We visit Llancarfan Village Hall every other week on a Friday morning, between 10.50 and 11.50, and can offer a good selection of books to suit all ages.

No time to read? Take out one of our talking books and listen while you work – we have top titles on cassette and CD.

Finding it harder to see standard print? Not a problem – we have a wide selection of books in Large Print too!

Less mobile these days? We've thought of that too and made our libraries accessible to everybody by means of a lift – just press the button and the librarian will be pleased to assist.

Maybe you know of somebody who cannot get out to the library but would welcome a regular supply of books – why not volunteer to come along and pick up a few books for them?

Do you have a village Summer Fete? Why not invite the library along – we have staff with many years' experience of delivering all manner of activities for children, including quizzes and crafts, face painting and story times for the younger ones.

You will find all the latest fiction to cater for most tastes, and if it isn't on the van you can reserve it; we will endeavour to have it for you on our next visit. There are non-fiction books to suit all interests – art, gardening, biography, history, military, house and home – and a wide selection of books on health issues, including a full set of Books on Prescription. Children are well catered for, with picture and story-books for all ages in both English and Welsh. Stock is changed over on a regular basis and we have frequent additions of new stock.

It would be a shame to cut down the service or lose it altogether from a village this size. At a time when rural communities are losing their Post Offices, village shops, pubs and public transport, the Mobile Library can be a welcome focal point for village life, a source of useful information and help to foster a real community spirit. Come and say hello next time we are in the village.

Look out for us on the following dates in 2007:

20 July, 3 August, 17 August, 31 August, 14 September, 28 September, 12 October, 26 October, 9 November, 23 November, 7 December and 21 December.

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Wildlife in Llancarfan 1969 – 2006 by Mike Crosta

Since arriving in Llancarfan in 1969 we have never ceased to remind ourselves how lucky we are to live in such a lovely spot. This is not just because we have country vistas front and back but also because of the great diversity of wildlife there is to observe and enjoy. Now we are retired we realise that we see much more of the wildlife simply because we are in the village more.

We like to see the foxes, colourful as they are, especially when a vixen makes its lair in the woods behind us and then brings her young out on the slope to bask on a sunny day. Much maligned they are too if you accept the findings of a recent BBC Wildlife Magazine study. If we had tigers in this country they would have been extinct long ago.

A sighting of a hare in the field behind or en route to Moulton is special. They are characters in the way they act and increasingly rare. There are very few rabbits in the valley although increasing everywhere else. Pheasants are everywhere now. Some time ago we had one who adopted us and would come to the kitchen door and even inside for digestive biscuits. It was especially amusing to see that when the shoot was out surrounding the small wood behind us with 6 to 8 guns for point-blank shots, 'our' pheasant had the sense to take refuge in our garden.

We sometimes think we spend more on bird food per week than we do on ourselves, sometimes only for the squirrels to steal. However, they are characters in themselves. Starlings are surprisingly colourful if you look at them closely but now are rare in the garden although still in the village. Sparrows, too, disappeared from the gardens for a few years but we now have a cheeky gang of about 30 and they appear to be keeping the other birds away since the start of Spring. Normally we have many blue tits, great tits, greenfinch, chaffinch and goldfinch either on the feeders or eating up what falls from them. It doesn't stop weird plants growing under the feeders from seeds germinating.

We usually have a family of blue tits in one of our nesting boxes and we have had one again this year. At present one baby just started to poke his beak and eyes over the rim of the entrance hole to see what is going on outside. We were right there to see his very first exit from the box, hesitant at first, then sitting gingerly among the branches. The parents don't rely on the peanut feeders on their doorstep but go to and from the river to get various insects for the brood.

Not many people appreciate the crows, rooks and jackdaws but they are intelligent and amazing flying acrobats who sometimes simply enjoy the thrill of high gusty winds. We are sure this year we have heard the "honk" of a raven but haven't yet been positive of seeing one. The jays have always been here, flying to and fro. There are plenty of magpies, rather assertive and not our favourites, but they have their place, as does the fox. Green woodpeckers are regular visitors to the garden for insects and frequently can be heard in their travels through the valley. After many years of never seeing one, we have now had a few years of very regular almost daily visits to our peanut feeders of spotted woodpeckers in their smart red, black and white uniform and we can see when a mother shows her young where the feeders are. It is a privilege to see often such a bird.

A plain bird, but tolerant of man, is the dunnock and we have particular affection for those that visit us as they seem to know and expect when we put out crumbs in “their spot” as they appear almost immediately. Blackbirds and thrushes are under threat but still are present in village gardens and fields. Their cousins, the redwings and fieldfares, can usually be sighted in winter in the surrounding fields. We have wagtails (grey, yellow and pied) in the village, the latter most frequently seen in supermarket car parks for some reason.

The robin, fortunately, is still his frequent assertive self in our garden. They however can cause problems. Some years ago, one built a nest in a flowerpot on a high shelf in our garage. We couldn't work out where all the mess (dried grass and guano) was coming from until I reached for the pot to find staring at me some 5 or 6 wide-eyed, wide mouthed babies crammed together like sardines in a tin. I quickly put them back and they fledged successfully. I left the nest in the pot but it has not been used since. Last year we found more mess that we couldn't account for near open plastic containers on the garage wall. Then we discovered nesting material appearing in one of them together with a daily trail of nuts, bolts, screws, etc. through the garage and even out onto the drive and the Brains' lawn. I put a stop to that by putting a blanket over the whole area as our car tyres and lawnmower were in danger. On a weight ratio, the robin must have required great strength and determination to lift and carry them so far in order to build a nest in the container.

On holidays, guides are pleased to point out herons but, of course, they are frequent visitors to our village, even at the trout pool in the river. Our summer visitors are eagerly looked forward to as the swifts, house martins and swallows are so acrobatic. They seem to vary in numbers and this year there are a lot of swifts at the church end of the village. They too can cause problems but it is illegal to disrupt them when nesting. Last year we had swallows nesting in the top of our garage, somehow clearing at high speed the narrow gap over the door in order to gain access. I gingerly felt in the nest and counted 5 eggs. They hatched and together with the parents left a considerable daily mess of guano over the cars beneath. As they grew they started to fall out of the nest onto the cars and floor. I would carefully put them back on a daily basis, only for one to fall out again. I believe one must have been a weak one pushed out to make room and they probably were cursing me for putting it back each time. We eventually had to leave the cars on the drive as we were afraid we might run over them. 3 fledged, coming for a while back into the garage to shelter at night. In fact, they produced a second brood so that they kept our cars out on the drive for the whole summer. They came back this year but chose our front porch to build their nest and 5 eggs were laid and hatched. It is splendid to see the parents dive bomb magpies which get too close, making them duck in alarm.

Buzzards are pleasingly common. We have seen over a dozen at one time soaring high over the village and bringing food to their young in the field behind. Pleasing because they have been threatened in the past. Kestrels visit as well. Over many years we failed to see a sparrow hawk but in the last few years our bird feeders have been targeted as they swoop at low level over the hedges then into the garden. Most attacks fail but occasionally we find little piles of feathers left behind by the victims. Often they have

landed in a garden tree for several seconds, giving us a clear view of this wild and handsome bird. Their manoeuvrability in attack is amazing to see as they pursue in and around the trees. Frequently I have been sitting outside on our bench and a sparrow hawk has swooped close towards me then veered off after a small bird. One day we heard some magpies squawking and looked out of one of our front windows to see right beneath a sparrow hawk with a collared dove in its talons, plucking its feathers out with its beak. We watched for a while until, with difficulty, it flew off carrying its prey into a field.

Birds that never fail to entertain are our regular nuthatches as they bully the other birds off the feeders with their pointed beaks and eat facing downwards. Smart they are too in their military uniforms with highwayman's mask. Another bird we failed to see over many years was the longtailed tit but in the last few years we frequently see small flocks of them stopping for a few minutes as they pass through, using the peanut feeders and even the roses right outside our window. They are a glad and pleasing sight every time.

There are some birds which are severely in decline but we are quite well off for them. The bullfinch is a favourite of mine and I am content to see one or two each winter. The yellow hammer can be seen and heard with its special song along the lanes around the village and recently one even foraged for a minute in our garden. Owls at night and cuckoos in spring are always to be heard. Our resident wrens frequently scold if we get in their way. Coal tits are regular visitors on the feeders but siskins, firecrests and marsh tits are very occasional. We have a treecreeper fond of our trees, as is the odd chiffchaff but I usually see or hear skylarks on my walks to Moulton and Penmark. We are very fortunate to have any but I also saw and heard one the other day as I drove past St Athan airfield. We wouldn't expect to see lapwings either but we can and we should be thankful to Llew Price for his sympathetic farming regarding them. I have also seen bramblings and linnets on his hedges. We must not forget the river where moorhens and ducks nest and this year a perfect round nest is right opposite the road stone wall with a mother moorhen sitting on five eggs. The lucky see the amazing flashing colours of the kingfisher occasionally and pictures in books do not prepare one for their brilliance in real life. Two together remain a vivid memory flying alongside the road.

So, friends and neighbours, keep your eyes and ears open and you might be pleasantly surprised at the wildlife that is still clinging on in this country.

--ooOoo--

Memories of Tony Davies by Dilys Liscombe

Tony and Family came from Pencoed to Llancarfan in the late 1960's, when they bought a building plot. This was the era of self-build in Llancarfan and they lived with Dilys and Gwynne Liscombe in Broadhayes while the bungalow was being built. Gwynne and Tony spent most of their spare time for many months, labouring and landscaping.

It was an enjoyable time, as there were several others in the village embarking on similar projects.

The relaxation came on Saturday nights when parties were held in one or other of these houses. Tony and Kath were both very good singers so they added to the atmosphere of the parties.

Tony originated from Pontypridd but soon settled into country life. All of his family, particularly his father loved coming to Llancarfan.

Tony liked walking around the village and anyone he met, I'm sure, heard a very good story, as he was a great storyteller and a friend to everyone.

He will be sadly missed – but not forgotten.

--ooOoo--

Obituary - Trixie Phillips by Phil Watts.

Trixie was born in Barry in March 1915. She had a very happy home life in spite of losing three brothers in the forces in the wars. William was drowned at sea, Gwyn killed whilst serving in the famous 8th Army and Colin her young brother killed with the Paratroops.

Trixie learnt her secretarial skills at Greggs in Cardiff, which put her on the road for a business career.

At 14 she changed her age to 17, moved to Jersey to live with her mother's sister. She worked for the bus company and we are told she was soon running it!

She became homesick and after three years was transferred to Western Welsh in Cardiff and lived again at home.

Trixie married her boyfriend Duke who was a pilot in the R.A.F. three weeks after war started. He was shot down and killed six months later.

Because of her compassionate circumstances she was not called up for the forces. She was drafted into the Police Forces in Barry
Working in the Police Station by day, she managed the Tivoli Cinema at night

Later Trixie became involved with Bindles Dance Hall, Cold Knap, working with Mr. Norman Hardy the owner. They became business partners which extended to the Waters Edge Hotel and the Fox and Hounds in Llancarfan. She eventually bought the Fox and Hounds and made it into a very popular country pub and restaurant

She lived in Llanccarfan from 1952 to 1985 supported all that went on in the village where she made many friends who have enjoyed returning her kindness over the years. At 92 she had a sharp active mind and memory, which outlasted the body.

She will be missed and remembered by all her friends and family. She often said that she was fortunate to have worked with people when they were at their best.

--ooOoo--

Memories by Jane M Snape (nee Hughes) of Queensland, Australia

Thank you for your welcome letter with all the news and questions.

We actually lived at Llanvithin Mill for a number of years, attending Llanccarfan School and Barry Girls' Grammar School. I passed the Scholarship when I was 11 years of age. I was born September 1924 in Garn Hill, Dinas Powis and baptised in the local Church of England Church, opposite the Farm. My mother died when we were living in St Fagans. I also lost a brother aged 5 the same week and they were both buried in the Methodist Church ground in Croes-fane on March 3rd 1933, when I was 8 years of age. There were five children then and our father was wonderful, cooking, washing, cleaning for us as well as doing his own work.

His name was John Hughes and in Llanccarfan area we kept chickens, ducks and sheep. He worked around the area when he was required. A lot of his time was spent at Garnllwyd Farm working for Mr Evans, among other places.

We were at the Mill when the Farms got Foot and Mouth.

I myself am 82 years of age. I am a retired Registered Nurse. My last nursing post was as a Nursing Administer and Educator and I actually retired when I was 73. So I nursed for over 50 years. My sister Joyce Helena Smith who is also a member of your Society, trained as a Children's nurse. She is 76 years of age and lives a short distance away from me.

When I went to Barry School, I walked from the Mill into Llanccarfan and then went to Aberthaw railway station in a Coal truck and then walked up from Barry Station to the School. We finished School at 4.00 pm but because the Boys' School did not finish until 4.15 pm we had to wait until the 5.15 pm train to Aberthaw and then the coal truck to Llanccarfan and then walk home – I left home at 7.30am and arrived back about 7.30pm. By the way, my father was in the Home Guard there.

Mr Davies was our Head master and there was a Miss Thomas, and I think the Infant's teacher was a lady whose surname was Jenkins. Does Phil Watts have a sister Kathleen?

We all remember Kathleen Watts (n.b). She went to School with my older brother John Hughes or Sonny as we called him. He did a lot of cross-country running. We went to the Church for Services and Sunday School and we went on trips with them.

I remember having a Sunday School Party in a field when bombs were dropped. I can remember running carrying a child on my shoulders. Some of the names remembered are: Marjorie Singleton, Dilys Lewis, Graham Jenkins and Kathleen Watts. When I was just 16 one of our Aunts lost her 17 year old daughter and I went and stay with her and this was in Portmadoc, North Wales.

All for now. Best wishes to everyone. Will love hearing from you.

Jane Snape

(n.b.) The late Kathleen Watts, Phil Watts' sister).

--ooOoo--

Bethlehem Welsh Baptist Chapel by Graham Jenkins

In 1817 a conference of the Welsh Baptist Churches in Glamorgan 'looked with great sorrow' at the Vale of Glamorgan in that the Gospels of Jesus Christ were not being preached. As a result a missionary called Thomas Jones was appointed to preach the gospel at Llancarfan, Llantwit Major and other villages. This missionary was a salaried man paid for by the Baptist Home Mission. Other ministers were asked from time to time to pay visits to these villages.

At the time it was said 'The Lord smiled upon these preachers and that efforts were rewarded with success. Congregations were gathered together and 'a meeting house was erected suitable to the district'. Until the Chapel was erected on its present site, services were held in a building opposite but the exact location of this building has not been recorded.

The first chapel building was erected in 1823 and by now Thomas Jones had left the village. The first appointed minister was Rev. Jabez Lawrence. However, the chapel had been in existence for one year prior to his arrival. Jabez Lawrence lived in Llantwit Major. The history of the ministry of Jabez Lawrence is meagre. He took full time charge of the Llantwit Major Chapel and eventually opened a business there. He severed his connection with Llancarfan after about six years and Robert Pritchard was ordained C1829-30. The Rev. Pritchard also had the living of Carmel, Pontypridd. Much success was recorded regarding his ministry in the village and many important families were added to the church membership. He moved on to Nantyglo in 1835. The next minister was Rev. Robert Williams who arrived from Llangynydr in 1836 and he also was minister of Philadelphia Baptist (now Calfaria) Cadoxton.

There is no account of anything spectacular occurring during Robert Williams' tenure of office except that he had an assistant Richard Edwards who died and is buried in the Churchyard. An account of Church activities given in 1837 by Rev. Robert Williams to David Jones the Carmarthen historian stated 'The Church was comfortable and the outlook for the future was hopeful and encouraging'. There are no recorded lists of deacons or church workers for the early years of the Church although it is known that four of the members were Mr & Mrs Jehoiada Howell and Mr & Mrs Thomas Hopkins. Jehoiada Howell must have been well respected as the Church members erected his tombstone and placed the following lines on it.

"Yr oedd yn ddlyn cariadlawn, yn gristion didwell ac yn ddeacon defnyddiol am y cleng mlynedd diweddaf oï oes yr oedd iddo air da gan bawb a chan y gwirionedd ei hun". (The family of Jehoiada Howell remained closely associated with the Church until its final closure in 1978).

From 1839-1856 little is known of the chapel as records of those years were either lost or destroyed. It is known, however, that the Rev. James Lewis was in the post by 1860, although there is no record of his ordination. In the second week of April 1860 the annual 'Big meeting' took place on Tuesday and Wednesday and the preacher was the Rev. Daniel Davies of Swansea (Daniel Davies Ddall). Being a blind man he wore very dark glasses and many villagers had not encountered this phenomenon before. His text was taken from the 21st chapter of Genesis, Verse 19. "And God opened her eyes". He is said to have preached with inspiration, arousing such emotion that the congregation arose shouting "Hallelujah". At this time there were no hymnbooks. The hymns being sung by the method known of 'Lining the hymn'.

There is an account of another annual 'Big Meeting' probably held a year or two later when the Rev. Jones of Bethesda, Swansea took for his text Verse 6, Mathew Chapter 28. 'Nid yw efe yma Canys Cyfododd'.

At this time the membership of the Church was 120 – all Welsh speaking and the original Church would have been somewhat small. Although there are no records relating to the 'rebuilding' it must have been about this time that plans were put into place to erect a larger church with a capacity for two hundred people. The 120 members 'were said to be all full of the spirit' and the leaders of the Church at that time were David Morgan (Fonmon) Morgan Morgan (Rhoose) J Morgan (Aberthaw), Wm Jenkins, Thos Griffiths, David Lewis (Moulton) and Evan Edwards who was leader of the singing.

From 1863-73 the Rev. Richard Evans was the Minister. He was said to be a quiet man of fine Christian character and occasionally rather humorous. Mr Evan Edwards of Llancadle was leader of the singing during this period. Many amusing incidents are said to have taken place during this period especially when Mr Edwards was absent. The congregation would either attempt to sing in the wrong metre, when all idea of tune was lost, or they would pitch the singing too high or low and have to stop and begin again.

'Big meetings' continued to be the highlight of the year. On one occasion there were two visiting preachers; Rev. James of Glyn Nedd – a powerfully built man and very stout

and the Rev. Hughes of Bethania Maesteg, a very small man in stature, but not in mind or heart for he was a great man in the hands and guidance of God. The Rev. James rose first to preach at one of the services and a fight nearly ensued when the Rev. Hughes rushed, arms outstretched, into the pulpit and refused to allow the Rev. James to preach first.

1874-1884 saw the Ministry of the Rev. Owen Jones. This was said to be a happy and prosperous period in the history of the Church. At his ordination the Rev. Hugh Jones then a Tutor at Llangollen College preached on 'I am not ashamed of the gospels of Christ' and the Rev. Jones of Llwyn-y- pia preached on the 'The Prodigal Son'. The Monday morning service was commenced by the Rev. James Thomas of Carmel who was said to be a remarkably fervent man of prayer.

It was said at the time that the people of the Chapel, though uneducated, were very ardent in prayer and knew their bibles thoroughly. They were also very homely people. An anonymous member who was living at that time is recorded as saying 'I do not recall any dispute whatsoever within the Church'. The Rev. Owen Jones left Llancarfan for Cowbridge.

During the ensuing period there were very many preachers well known for their fiery delivery. Some who preached at Bethlehem were Revs Harris (Aberdare), Nathaniel Thomas (Cardiff), Jones (Rhymney) known as Mathetus Awdwr y Geiriadur Cymraeg, Lloyd (Merthyr), Thomas (Narberth), Thomas (New Caersalen, Swansea) and Williams (Mountain Ash) who baptised fourteen persons at the first use of the Baptistery. (Previously Baptising was thought to have been done in the river).

At this time the Chapel at Llancarfan enjoyed three choirs viz:

Conductor:

Childres Choir at Moulton – Morgan Howells
Childres Choir at Bethlehem – David Spencer
Y Cor Mawr, Bethlehem - David Howells

David Howells was regarded locally as being the Caradoc of the big choir (Efe oedd Caradog y Cor Mawr). The choir was probably one of considerable strength and quality rendering "Y Don o flaen gwyn toedd", "Y Tordaith", "Blodeuyn Olaf", "Teyrnasoedd y Ddaear" and "Worthy is the Lamb".

During this period Jehoiada Howells was still taking an active part in Church activities. He must have been a very old man by this time as records state he was married to Margaret David of Pennon on August 5th 1815. Before his death Johoiada Howells extracted a promise from Thomas Griffiths (Shoemaker) that he (Thomas Griffiths) would give out a certain hymn to be sung on the first Sunday of every New Year. Thomas Griffiths is said to have been faithful to this promise for very many years.

From 1886-88 Rev. Walters better known by his Bardic name 'Talmai' was the minister. This was not a happy period for the first discordant note in the history of the Church is here found. Rev. Walters was followed in 1890 by Rev. E D Lewis. Rev. Lewis is said to have worked diligently during his five year stay and was very highly regarded as a Minister.

The Rev. Lloyd arrived in 1899 and remained until 1905: he left to go to England and little is recorded of his Ministry. There was no incumbent Minister again until 1911 when Rev. T Newton Sealy was ordained. At this time the Church's outlook was beginning to look much less prosperous. When Dr Edwards of the Welsh Baptist Union visited around this time he reported there were only ten members to the congregation at Llancarfan and only five at Aberthaw. That statement was later said to be incorrect and misleading when a list of thirty-eight active members was produced. Mr Sealy resigned the Ministry at Llancarfan in 1921.

From 1921 until closure in 1970's Bethlehem was without a Minister apart from 1926-30 when it shared the Rev. D P David with Croes-y-Parc, Peterston-s-Ely, 1956-60 Rev. Owen Thomas shared with Llantwit Major and 1963-73 Rev. Garlyn Davies shared with Llantwit Major. Very little has been recorded of these Ministries although some people will still remember Rev's Owen Thomas and Gwylm Davies.

During the last few years when Bethlehem was open it was kept alive due to the devotion of a handful of people. Membership had declined to four or five and services were conducted in the vestry. Often the service was conducted by Jehoiada Lewis (great grandson of Jehoiada Howells previously mentioned) with Leslie Griffiths playing the Guelph harmonium and one or two in the congregation. Sometimes a 'local' preacher would have been engaged and this meant a member of the congregation offering hospitality for lunch and tea on the Sunday. Indeed during the 1930's, 40's, and early 50's there was a visiting preacher each Sunday. Some of these were students from the Baptist College in Cardiff; students from the Bible College in Barry or just 'lay' preachers. The Rev. Ian Paisley preached at Bethlehem during his period at Barry Bible College.

At one time Bethlehem must have been quite sound financially. In June 1858 there was sufficient money to purchase the Chapel Cottages from a Wm Richards, and later it purchased the Smithy and land behind. The land behind the Smithy was designed as an extension to the graveyard. Later under the will of Wm Thomas, Penmark, "The Woodlands" came into Church ownership although it had to be disposed of, as the property was not needed for a minister. At some time in the late 1800's, the Vestry and Stable below were acquired from Wm Williams of Mountain Ash for the sum of £500. In its heyday when the Church was flourishing many people must have been present for communion. An invoice dated 5th March 1876 showed that Catherine Price was paid 2d. for bread and 2s.6d. for wine which would appear to be a large amount of money for those days. Another invoice showed that John Edwards (Church treasurer) paid Wm Evans, Old Mill, St Athans, 9s.0d for 10 cwt coal.

The inside of the Chapel consisted of a large rectangular porch with doors at each end to enter the body of the Church. There was a coloured glass window, which allowed latecomers to know when it was appropriate to enter. There were two narrow aisles servicing a centre block of pews and blocks of pews on either side. The 'Big Seat' where the Deacons and Elders sat was situated in front of the main block of pews and elevated. Behind the 'Big Seat' was the Pulpit, which had a scrolled text "He who is baptised shall be saved", arched in blue, behind. Underneath the 'Big Seat' was the baptising pool, which was clad in white tiles and gravity fed from a spring just under Coed Crynallt. Needless to say the water was always very cold and never heated for baptisms. The Chapel was heated by two free standing cylindrical stoves with galvanised pipes taking the smoke up to the roof. They were not over efficient and with a small congregation the Church was never warm.

On each of the sidewalls and situated between the three side windows were two marble plaques commemorating some of the early deacons of the Church. One was commemorating a Mr Morgan of Fonmon and another a Mr Wm Jenkins (who was the grandfather of Thomas Shanklyn). Behind the Church was a narrow covered tunnel, which Sunday School scholars enjoyed exploring before class on Sunday afternoons.

Because of the seating layout, it was not possible to carry a coffin into Church for a funeral and on such occasions the coffin was left to sit on a bier in the porch. Whilst there were funerals from time to time, weddings were quite uncommon. This was because the registrar had to attend and it seemed much easier for members to be married in St Cadoc's Church. The last person to be married at Bethlehem was Joan Morgan of The Green who married Ivor Evans who often preached at the Chapel. Joan Morgan was a great great granddaughter of one of the founder members, Jehoiada Howell.

The last interment was just before the Church was sold when the ashes of Ada Ellis again a direct descendant of Jehoiada Howell were interred in the family grave.

In 1980 after much discussion with the Welsh Baptist Union regarding the burial ground, the Church was sold to Mr Nigel Reynolds of Penarth. Mr Reynolds agreed to create a small garden of remembrance just above and to the left of the entrance gate. That small parcel of ground contains the graves of Jehoiada Howell and those of his daughter, granddaughter and numerous great grandchildren. The headstone from the grave of David Thomas (Cumix Farm) was also placed there from another part of the graveyard. All other memorial stones were taken away although records of them are available in the Family History Archives. The majority of the 'older' stones were inscribed in Welsh, as that was the language of worship up until the late 1920's or early 30's and one of these stones situated by the side of the path leading to the Vestry stated someone had died on February 30th!! The language of worship became totally English during the later years of Church's existence but in 1966 there were two funeral services which were bi-lingual and that is the last time Welsh was uttered from the pulpit.

During its lifetime the Church affairs were run by trustees. The first were appointed in 1803 long before a building was erected. The last Trustees were appointed in 1967 and they were Mrs B Thomas, Mr Leslie Griffiths and Mr Jehoiada Lewis.

--ooOoo--

Summer is A'coming In by Jean Hunt (June 2006) - Written a year ago – June 2006)

“Summer is icumen in
Lhude sing cuccu!”

(Summer is a'coming in
Loudly sings cuckoo)

Cuckoo Song: circa 1250

Summer has certainly been a long time “a'coming in” and I haven't yet personally heard the cuckoo, but doubtless many of you have. According to a recent newspaper article, cuckoos are becoming worryingly scarce these days, but yesterday (June 2nd) we had glorious sunshine all day. The sky was still a beautiful blue when we strolled round the village in the evening and joined in a game of boules at the village ‘petanque piste’. The laughter of the players was accompanied by loud twittering and singing from a nearby blackbird – perhaps disturbed by human activity too near his nest! However, had I been asked to define happiness that evening, I might have said “Happiness is a game of boules played with friends and neighbours on a balmy June evening in Llancafarn!”

I had just returned from two weeks in Norway visiting family. With the exception of my very lively little great nephews and nieces, the majority of Norwegians I observed seemed curiously sombre – despite the fact that Norway has become a very rich country. Perhaps it was the weather – cold and wet – or possibly there is a great deal of truth in what a philosophical Glaswegian remarked to me many years ago, when I was travelling down from Edinburgh by train.

“Money disna' bring ye happiness”! said my fellow traveller, having described to me in detail how he had made his first million!

“But I had a friend,” he added “And he was verra', verra' rich! And he took tae the drink an' became debauched!”

I made appropriate noises of shocked horror, and shivered dramatically – but only because we were travelling during a particularly bitter January and the heating in our compartment had broken down, despite the fact that we were travelling First Class! My father, who had seen me off at Waverley station had insisted on “upgrading” my ticket, and had also presented me with a very elegant ladies hip flask of brandy! Not wanting to be seen as “verra', verra' rich and debauched” after listening to such a Hogarthian moral tale, I didn't dare produce the hip flask until my travelling companion left the train! I then discovered that the heating was working in the lowly Second Class carriages, so I

moved myself – bag and baggage – and hip flask (from which I took a vulgar but warming swig!) to a warmer seat.

No – money, certainly didn't bring me happiness on that bitter cold January day (with the exception of the brandy!) – but, returning to the present day and the immediate future, hopefully the beautiful June weather will continue to convince us that Summer is definitely a'coming in!

--ooOoo--

A Night of Great Music and Fun by Mary Neary

Once again we had the joy of attending a wonderful choir. We were also entertained by two talented young musicians on the night of the 16th June.

The Aber Valley Male Voice Choir arrived in St Cadoc's Church, Llancarfan displaying their sense of humour. Several members in a scarf, others in gloves and some brave enough to cover their heads with Balaclavas or hats, just to remind us of the cold weather and how they suffered in our cold Church last year. This year, however, they soon disrobed of their warm clothing, for St Cadoc's church had a warm welcome waiting to greet them, both from the eagerly awaiting audience and the newly refurbishment of a warm church.

The introduction by Sam Smith to the Choir and the young musicians was done in humorous way.

Many of the popular hymns were sung beautifully and favourite songs continued to be sung with great passion.

The quality of the concert was enhanced by Robert Morgan and Geraint Herbert, two young performers, who are to be admired for their great gifts. Not a sound or a cough could be heard during the performance by these two multi-talented boys or should I say young men? Congratulations to you both and all the best for the future. You both were inspiring!

Now for the rest of that evening.

After such a wonderful and uplifting concert, we all marched off to the Village Hall, where a hearty ploughman's supper and a variety of drinks were waiting to be consumed.

Once the Choir had had their fill, they broke into song and entertained us once again with their great voices. Many of the members of the choir were not shy in giving their individual renditions or honouring requesting from the audience for old favourites, such

as 'Danny Boy' and many others. Audience participation came with ease, for many were in fine voice.

Thank you from all of us.

A big thank you and congratulation must go to Gwyneth Plows and to all her willing helpers, (too many to name but you know who your are), for giving so much of their time and energy in organising and arranging such a successful evening and in helping to ensure that "*a great night was had by all*".

--ooOoo--

It is with regret that my Newsletter is so late and does not include the school page nor is the full length.

On the day I was due to finish the newsletter and deliver it for printing I was flooded – so hey-ho all my plans that day were for nothing.

Hopefully, the next letter will be full length with a report on the Village show, with photographs and the Society Dinner which is on the 22nd September this year – we look forward to meeting you all once again, and of course any items which you would like to submit.

The menu for the dinner is on page 16, please remove carefully and return as soon as possible.

Also missing is the page from the school, which I received but was on my desk when the flooding occurred and has now been packed away – I apologise to both the school children and all other readers.