LLANCARFAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 138

JULY 2009



It is an easy matter to cast a mountain into the ocean, after separating each stone from the other

St. Cadoc

If you want to eat an elephant, first cut it up into small pieces

John Millard: Fox & Hounds



TWENTY-TWO YEARS & COUNTING

The Llancarfan Society Newsletter first hit the news stands in May 1987. It was invented by several worthy villagers to preserve matters of local interest, and has since proved a cornucopia of current affairs, history, wildlife, & a wealth of members' writings.

The latest editors, guided by the pioneering footsteps of Dr. John Etherington, Phil Watts and more recently Ann Ferris, are lan Fell & Rhodi Grey. Unable to duck quickly enough, they now have the honour of shaping contributions from the village and beyond, and filling the gaps when the village chooses to be silent.

They are currently catching up with reading the 137 back issues of the Newsletter, which treasure-trove (thanks to the tireless devotion of committee members Alan & Sue Taylor) can now be accessed, along with much of local interest, at http://www.llancarfansociety.org.uk.

The present and subsequent issues are available to members in full colour online, from which you might print them out in a larger format. We could also produce a few larger A4 printouts on request.

THE CREDIT CRUNCH

Part of our brief is that this newsletter should continue to serve and evolve as a useful compendium of activities in the village. Hopefully it will establish itself as a valued adjunct to your social calendar.

So it gives us no pleasure to report that as a result of the credit crunch – well, we can't think of any other good reason - several people have not renewed their membership of the Llancarfan Society. These are difficult times – and $\mathfrak{L}7$ is $\mathfrak{L}7$, so we do understand. But subscriptions were due with Audrey Porter at the beginning of April.

So to be part of this, and continue to receive copies of this newsletter, again we ask that you join us & get up to date with your subscriptions. Please support your Society, thus making your contribution to conserving the narrative of our village community, past and present, for our future generations.



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I'M NOT ABOUT TO JUMP UNDER A RACEHORSE!

THE VENERABLE FRANCES 'PEGGY' JACKSON –
THE MOST SENIOR FEMALE CLERIC IN WALES – IS MAKING HISTORY,
AND BRINGING HER LOVE OF IT, TO HER PRIESTHOOD IN LLANCARFAN.

I've always been cautious about clerics, Writes lan Fell, ever since I caught headlice at Infants' School. Following the practice of those days, my Dad washed my hair with paraffin. You then had to keep your head wrapped in a wet towel, stinking and stinging, while the paraffin killed the varmints. Our Methodist minister happened to pay a visit during this unfortunate session, and so great was my embarrassment, I hid from him for hours in the pantry.

Consequently, I felt both tentative and intrusive, interviewing our new neighbour and vicar Peggy in her Rectory home at Pancross. After all, you don't ask the doctor, accountant, or indeed any other new neighbour the sort of intrusive questions that Peggy the Archdeacon's calling somehow invites you to ask. I was only emboldened by the knowledge that Peggy's first sermon in St. Cadoc's church had surprised her congregation with its biographical open-ness. So I buckled on the Breastplate of Honesty, and asked the questions:

Q: Who are you?!

PEGGY: I was a bulge baby, born in Loughborough, after the war. 1951. My Dad was a surveyor and geologist, & he helped to build the railways in Iran. That was his big adventure. I used to go on field trips with him, to a surveying camp near Aberystwyth. And my Mum was a Nightingale nurse, trained at St. Thomas's.



My Dad was the rector's son, and my Mum the churchwarden's daughter – but we'd become a completely un-churched family by the time I came along. I never went to church. I did go to Sunday School, but I think my parents flipped when the chap running it started to introduce confession for the children. By then though I was virtually an atheist anyway. And I went off to university still quite agnostic about it all.

I studied history. Somerville College, Oxford. Loved the subject, and it's been a love ever since. It teaches you about human beings. You just learn that people are complex, and not to make assumptions about them, and not to treat them as models in theories. Which is a pretty good preparation for the ministry.

What struck me though, I do remember very clearly, being utterly struck by the Protestant martyrs. Because these were ordinary people, butchers and bakers and so on, who went to the stake for their beliefs – and I could never quite get my head round that.

I got married as soon as I left university, trained for the accountancy in London. We moved to Edinburgh, he was a Scot, is a Scot. My daughter was born in Edinburgh. And then he left. That was the real down, she was 13 months, and that took the bottom out of my life. That was the thing that really started to change things.

It was in the wake of that that I came into the faith. At the cathedral in Edinburgh. So I was confirmed in the Scottish Episcopal Church, not in the Church of England. Of which I'm very proud. Then faith took hold really. That was in the early 80s. Two years later I was training to be a deaconess, at Cuddeston, back again near Oxford. With my daughter. I tumbled in, inside out and upside down!

Q: And you must have been a pioneer?

PEGGY: Yes, I think so. Though I didn't know it at the time. I went to college quite genuinely saying 'Whatever I am, when I come out – I don't mind what you call me, but I'll work for the church, I'll work for God.' And us women had all bought blue cassocks, expecting to become deaconesses – they've been around in the church for a hundred years. But then while I was at college, the legislation changed. Women were now going to be *deaconed*, so I had to buy a black one to come out with!

I'm a terrible conformist, me. I was head girl! But occasionally, I'm described as a 'militant'. I've set out to say it as it is. I mean, I knew women were unfairly discriminated against, but there was nothing new in that. And in college we were talking about feminist theology. But the militancy – it's all a matter of perception really. As a teenager, we laughed at the Suffragettes. But by gosh, I don't laugh now. Though I'm not about to jump under a racehorse!

That said, I have found myself much involved in the process of discussion about women bishops, and women's priesthood, of course. I was ordained deacon in 1987, which was the earliest year that women could be deacons. And then we waited seven years to be priested, whereas our contemporary chaps, not a single difference in our training, were priested the year after. That was very painful. And then either you say 'It's OK,' when it isn't, or you say 'This hurts'. And as soon as you say that, people call you a militant.

The worst reception we ever get is from the clergy. Some male clergy behave very badly indeed. That's where the nonsense remarks come from. Extraordinary hurtful things. But they're the people who are, presumably, the most threatened. And they say 'Oh, it's not personal!' and proceed to tell you that you're only half a human being. Well of course its personal. It's not some theory over there. It's me you're talking about. And I claim the right to be as human as you do.

Q: [Asking the question I'd been avoiding.] Your role in the community is clearly of importance to your church-going parishioners. But what is the church's relevance to those of us who don't go to church?

PEGGY: Well, as far as I'm concerned, I'm priest for the whole village. So how the village uses that is up to others. In a way. I'll pray for the whole village, I would visit, and meet, and talk, and ask, and answer questions from anybody who wants to. And I'll go and see the school, and look forward to getting to know the kids. I didn't have a school in the parish I was working for before.

And I think that's what the role of the church is. It's to be the humanising force, really – within a village, within a community. And you can't care for your neighbour until you know them, and be known by them. So there's an open-ness, one to another. And that's why I say that the pub is – not a joke – at the heart of much of that. And the church is doing something similar.

I feel at home here. I've moved into this house, from Southwark, and I can honestly say that this is the first house, since I bought my flat in Edinburgh, where I've felt at home. And it's quite amazing. It surprises me, because I expected it to be alien and strange. But it feels like home, already. And the people have been very welcoming, very friendly. They don't seem strange, because they seem in many ways similar to the people I've come from. The country is different from the town - but it's not such a big distinction.

Except for the bat droppings, we didn't have the bat droppings!

Q: Where do you go from here?

PEGGY: Well, the immediate thing is to get hold of the scale of the job. So - three parishes? All three are only a third of my time, and then there's the cathedral involvement, which I haven't yet begun to investigate really.

I will try to – at one level – meet people in detail on the ground, because unless you can do that, you haven't got anywhere to root things. And on the other level, I'll try to get my head round the bigger picture of the diocese. I find myself moving between the two, and it's rather exciting.

I love the work, because as an historian, you love seeing the big sweep of history. But actually, unless you know that it was *this* butcher on *this* day who went to the stake for his beliefs – well, when you can connect that detail to the big picture, and then hold them all together, that's very exciting. And there's a lovely sense that there'll be a purpose in this. Which is why I was brought here.

Cardiff Bailiffs' Accounts: 1542 / 1543

'... 4s. 4d... for costs and expenses sustained in burning Thomas Capper, who was attainted of heresy at Cardiff... And to the same 6s. 10d. for the diet of the said Thomas, being in prison there by the space of 130 days...'

CHURCH NEWS

A warm welcome to the Venerable Peggy Jackson, who joined us on June 1st. Please see our feature interview starting on Page 4.

Special welcomes too go to Joseph Mathew Ivor Newton, son of Mathew & Deborah Newton, and grandson of Viv & Gwenllian Price. Joseph was baptized in the church on May 3rd.

Joseph shares his welcome with James Thomas, weight 7 lb 3 oz, who was born to Oliver & Meryl Spencer, also on May 3rd.

On June 20th a blessing took place to celebrate the Silver Wedding anniversary of Sam & Patsie Smith.

A reminder of Church Service times :

1100 on Sunday Morning Eucharist on Wednesday at 0930.

Family services will be held on

2 August, 6 September, 4 October,1 November & 6 December.

SCHOOL REPORT

On June 22nd three teams, Dyfan, Cadoc & Baruc, battled for the Sports Day Cup. All the children took part, and at the halfway point it was very close. To give the teachers time to add up the scores a parents' & a toddlers' race were also held! The final result was a win for Baruc with 179 points, Cadoc with 143 points, and Dyfan with 104.

During the Summer the juniors have been on a swimming course at Font-y-gary, and can all now swim at least a length – non-stop!

The new Community Police Officer, PC Kevin Purnell, came to the school and spoke to Year Six about the dangers of drugs. Class Four

heard about avoiding viruses on phones and computers; Class Three about the harm that smoking & alcohol cause; Class Two learned to take care around medicines; and Year One what to do in an emergency.

Lily Stevens' duck won the Easter Duck Race, followed by Evie Williams', with Ben Thomas' duck coming third. Maisie James sold the most ducks in the whole school.

- The new School Year (for the children) begins
 Wednesday September 2nd.
- Half term break begins on October 23rd.
 However, as this is an Inset Day, the children finish on Thursday October 22nd.
- The second half of the term commences on November 2nd.

LLANCARFAN LAWN TENNIS CLUB

The Children's Tournament, organized by Jane White & David Stevens, took place on June 28th at courts at Llanvithyn, Garnllwyd & Llancarfan.

The overall winners were the Boys' Double, starring Freddie Harries & Josh Manley-Lamb, both of Penmark, while the Girls' Double – who were runners-up - featured Daisy Davies from Greendown, and Joanne Hannaby from Llancarfan.

There was a Coaching / Junior Fun afternoon at the village court, run by Nick and Harry Davies. This was followed by hot dogs and drinks for the 30 children and 20 adults in attendance, the banquet arranged by Sarah Angell and Julie Potter.

The Adult & Child Tournament is scheduled for July 19th. The Adult matches are on September 12th.

- New members are most welcome. Annual subscriptions are Family £65, Adults £35, Juniors £15, and Social £7.50.
- Subscriptions should be sent to the Treasurer, Eleri Long, at Brynaber, Llancadle, CF62 3AQ.

BADMINTON CLUB

The Badminton Club meets **every Friday at 1100**, in the Colcot Leisure Centre, Barry. For more information, please contact Sue Taylor on 01446 781453.

TUESDAY CLUB

Meets in the Village Hall every 3rd Tuesday of the month at 1945. Guests & new members are always welcome. The next meetings are:

July 21st Nostalgia 1940 – 1950 : Jo will play songs on the piano.

Memorabilia: Please bring something to show or discuss.

August No meeting.

Sept 15th Visit to Abergavenny Tapestry.

Oct 20th Speaker : Roger Sellick.

Nov 17th To be announced.

Dec 15th 'Our Party'.

Chair Audrey Porter 781328

Sect Audrey Baldwin 781416

Treasurer Ann Ferris 781350

LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

THE TREASURE HUNT

This was held on June 2nd and proved to be challenging, informative and great fun for all who took part. Thanks go to Audrey, Gwyneth, & Ann for organising and officiating. The winners shall remain anonymous, though on an occasion like this 'Everyone's A Winner'!

ON THE PISTE

The Ruth Watts Pétanque Challenge Cup was feverishly fought for on June 28th, and it was the men in red who came away with the prize. Not Wales, not Llanelli – no, it was Gareth Petty, David Thomas, & Trevor Morgan, proudly wearing the shirts of *The Edmondes Arms*, Cowbridge, who saw off the other seven teams. It proved a very enjoyable, yet seriously competitive, afternoon of boule.

ARE WE THERE YET?

Please note that the annual Mystery Trip has been moved **from July** 10th to July 17th. The reason it's a secret!

WHIST DRIVES . . .

... will be held in the Community Hall on July 28th, September 29th, October 27th, November 24th, and December 29th.

FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD

The Llancarfan Society's Annual Dinner will take place in the *Fox & Hounds* on **September 26**th. Tickets will be available nearer the date from Gwyneth Plows and Sue Taylor – though there's nothing to stop you making an early booking now!

SING FOR OUR SUPPER

The Vale Male Voice Choir will not only entertain us, but will welcome us to sing along at a Social Evening on **December 1**st.

Again, tickets will be available nearer the date, and more information will be published in the next Newsletter.

IT'S SHOWTIME

August 22nd is the date for this year's Village Show, when green fingers, sponge fingers, and little fingers all compete to show the village off at its best.

Such a prestigious event merits a programme of its own, so look out for one like this. The programme & entry form list all the events, competitions & rules.

Past years have shown this to be a wonderful occasion, made even more special when you join in and enter one of the competitions. So, in the words of the immortal Delia – 'Let's be 'aving yer!!!'



FROM A WATERFALL OF ROSES TO A SLOUGH OF DESPOND

Attn: Rights of Way Officer, Vale of Glamorgan Council

01446 704600



We know it as Margaret's Path – that lovely escape that Margaret Evans caringly shares with us, alongside the old mill-race. It welcomes us with a torrent of delicate roses, as Summer gets its feet over the threshold.

The roses are a delight not only to us, but to the many visitors wishing to trace the Way-marked route from the humped-back Kenson Bridge below Penmark, on towards our village, then up Margaret's Path to Garnllwyd and beyond.

That's if they get this far. If you've tried walking up the Nant Carvan within the last year, you will surely have met with an impenetrable quagmire of mud.

It takes the hooves of a very few beasts to totally obliterate any footpath, as has been the case for many months a few hundred metres north of Kenson Bridge.

A perilous welly-filling progress might just get the walker over the potholes and into the admittedly marshy fields below Pancross. Such a sturdy traveller – for to have got there they must surely be sturdy – will doubtless cope with the collapsed wooden bridge between the fields, before climbing up to the Pancross road.

Then through Llancarfan, and at last Margaret's path beckons with delight. Until, that is, the country jaunt comes face to face with the Slough of Despond. Here, as you leave the treasured woodland walk, a stile lures you into the sinking mud, chewed up by animal hooves over many muddy months. The way-marker might reasonably carry the legend 'Danger: Cows Crossing'.

In short, the route is a disgrace, and shows our community in the worst of lights. It suggests we care nothing about protecting our and our visitors' rights. What should we do about it?



THE BLAIR CATCH PROJECT

BLAIR EVANS IS REPUTED TO HAVE COACHED RUGBY PLAYERS BY THROWING THEM BRICKS INSTEAD OF BALLS. MIKE CROSTA CONFIRMS THE TRUTH.

Many people will know Blair Evans as the local farmer who, over the years, was prepared to use his tractor to tow out the cars which had become stuck in the village ford. Perhaps less well known are his services to the game of rugby.

Blair started farming in 1961 with a milk herd at Ty-to-Maen Farm, on the northern edge of Llancarfan. When this became unprofitable, he delivered milk to Penmark, Llanebethery, St. Nicholas & Llancarfan. Until the supermarkets muscled in.

The milking parlour is still there, but converted into part of Bryan & Sandra Marsh's *Wild Rose House*. The parlour fascinated local youngsters, enjoying the sights and sounds of cows being milked – virtually by hand – with the use of 'clusters'.

In 1996, having earned his pension, Blair swapped cows for coaching. He quickly earned a Welsh Rugby Union Coaching Certificate, Cardiff & District Rugby winning many trophies under his rule. And the legend that, as an incentive to catch the ball, Blair had the players in the lineout practicing by catching a brick is in fact true!

Some of his trainees survived to play for Wales – and he was also youth coach for Glamorgan Wanderers. He's particularly proud that he took the Wanderers from Division 4 to the Premiership, facing Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and the like.

As a young man, Blair had polished his skills at the goal face. He played wing forward for Crawshays, Welsh Academicals, Kenyan Police v East Africa (a big win!), Glamorgan Wanderers, Cardiff Athletic (The Rags), finally Cowbridge RFC.

Older villagers still recall Blair coaching the Llancarfan Primary School team, often on the field behind his farmhouse. His players included David Oakley, Max Evans, and Andrew Crosta. Then there were Ralf Evans, the Morgan boys of Llanbethery – Fred, Haydn & Charles – and Evan Williams, who became Captain of the Glamorgan Wanderers Youth Team. If only he'd kept up the rugby he could be famous now!

18 months ago Blair gave up coaching to become the Wanderers Chairman, only retiring in this June of 2009. At the Welsh Rugby Annual Awards Dinner, on the 26th of May 2009, sponsored by the Principality Building Society, there was a shortlist of three for the prestigious *Services to Rugby* Award.

The winner was Blair Evans of Ty-to-Maen Farm.

Well done, Blair! We are sure the villagers are very proud of you. The award itself is sufficient honour, but Blair was also presented with a Welsh rugby shirt, signed by the current squad, which in his usual magnanimous way Blair is handing on to be displayed in the Glamorgan Wanderers' clubhouse.

ST GEORGE, ST PATRICK & CÁL CEANNANN MASH

IN NEWSLETTER 137 WE SUMMED UP THE CURRENT PROGRESS TOWARDS REVEALING & CONSERVING ST. CADOC'S REMARKABLE MEDIAEVAL PAINTINGS. FUTURE ISSUES HOPE TO UNPICK SOME OF THE TALES BEHIND THE ART & ITS TROUBLED HISTORY. THIS BRIEF REPORT REFLECTS THE COMMUNITY EFFORTS HELPING TO SAVE THESE UNIQUE WORKS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

READERS OF THE NEWSLETTER must be aware that a mediaeval knight has galloped unexpectedly into our village life, and is apparently intent on saving a royal family from a ravaging dragon – not to mention a woolly lamb. St. George is still hampered though by his 20 layers of lime-wash, and not quite up to scratch yet as a knight errant. Fund-raisers in the village have chosen to brandish their own swords – well, knives and forks – as the conservation project has moved ahead.

First up was Ceri Renwick's dynamic crew, who with Shepherd's Pie & home-made soup feted 70 of us at a very successful fund-raising Karaoke Supper. This most welcome initiative paved the way for building on the vital, and very generous, financing of the investigation & consolidation by the Waterloo Foundation.



Among other supporters, on May 30th the ladies of the Book Club exchanged their bookmarks for bodhráns, and hosted an Irish Evening. This event came complete with three luminous line-dancers, and a rich soundtrack of traditional live music from the talented Colum Regan. Under the guidance of Kay Brain, village cooks regaled us with sausages & Colcannon –*cál ceannann* is Irish for 'white-headed cabbage' –and transformed a staple Irish dish into a banquet for a king. Traditionally, small coins were hidden in the Colcannon, a romantic hazard avoided on this occasion! However, the feast yielded an impressive £700.

The church itself regularly welcomes many casual visitors, wall-artists, thesis-writers, & coach-outings

- most recently from Cardiff Archaeological & Monmouth Antiquarian Societies. Larger groups have survived presentations from those of us one page ahead of them in the art & history books. They've welcomed too the interpretive panels, displayed on the protective light oak desks, hand crafted by Bob Hartery. Visitors have exchanged generous donations for introductory DVDs, copies sponsored by Media for Heritage & Vision Thing.

As the project progresses, applications are now lodged with both the Heritage Lottery Fund and CADW. This follows formal presentations to church authorities, conservators & architects. The outcome of such applications should be known by September, hopefully enabling the next stage of conservation & revelation.

THE GREEN GREEN GRASS OF HOME

ALEXANDRA CROSTA EVOKES A LLANCARFAN CHILDHOOD

Home. Llancarfan. I must have been one of the luckiest kids alive. I didn't realise that not every kid grew up with the beautiful countryside as a playground. I've lived in the USA for 15 years and nowhere but Llancarfan is home to me.

From the smell that hit you as you drove down Pancross Hill, to the noise of the farm animals as they woke you up in the morning, to the view out of the window – there was nothing like it.

As kids, after school, we couldn't wait to get out, all of us meeting up at the fir trees by the telephone box. We had no phones but we all knew where to meet. We'd fish for eels and bullheads under the bridge and by the ford. Great for biking through too. We knew every inch of that river, where to step and where to avoid. We knew every tree to climb and every nook and cranny of the woods.

Except, of course, the woods behind Blair's.

Every one knew there was a red devil that lived there!

Hours on hours we spent, and Summer after Summer - exploring, getting into trouble, and coming home with wellies full of water, holes in our knees, covered in mud - and other things too. Sorry Mum. And of course the rescued animals and birds I brought home to 'save' – sadly, they usually had to be taken to the farm to be knocked over the head.

The fun and the freedom that we had, you couldn't dream of a better childhood. And even though we raced at top speed on our BMX's to be home by dark – hey, it was light when we left for home, honest! - the days were still never long enough. There were the Summers over the moors, running through sprinklers to the sound of lawns being mowed. And there were the Winters, sledging down the hill above the school, and building igloos in the drifts on the hill to Moulton. Each season brought something special to the village.

Each season often brought something special to Patch, the farm dog. She certainly had plenty of litters. I'd pick out a puppy every time, though I was never allowed to keep one. But every moment was an adventure, a memory treasured and a new friend - human, animal or insect - made. I wish every kid could be as lucky as me.

My Dad will have my guts for garters for writing this, but I have always said that Llancarfan is where I want finally to rest. As Tom Jones sings in *The Green Green Grass of Home*, I wish to have a spot in the church graveyard and be always Home. Because of course the next generation of kids will *need* my gravestone to play hide and seek around, just like I used to.

I hope they appreciate it as much as I loved it. I'm proud to be Welsh, and blessed to be from Llancarfan.

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