

LLANCARFAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 140

DECEMBER 2009



Mihi est propositum in taberna mori:
Vinum sit appositum morientis ori
Ut dicant, cum venerint angelorum chori,
"Deus sit propitius huic potatori!"

Archdeacon Walter de Mapes, owner of Walterston, circa 1200

It is in the *Fox & Hounds* that I intend to croak,
Chaired hence by angels high on Cabernet and Coke,
Though my nose resembles a Jerusalem artichoke,
No-one can deny my lips a valedictory soak.

Indulgently Free Translation, December 2009

WELL-SEASONED CONTENTS

3 - 5	BRITISH BOYS FOR BRITISH FARMS
6	2009 VILLAGE SCENES YOU MAY HAVE MISSED
7 - 10	EVENTUALITIES & DISPATCHES
11 - 12	BEN'S TAIL : HOT FROM THE NEWSHOUND
13	STRICTLY FOR THE BIRDS
14 - 15	TWITTER AND I'LL COME TO YOU
16	A SEASONAL RHYME

WALTER DE MAPES

CHRISTMAS can mean a surfeit of many things. However, the Editors feel a duty to apologise for a surfeit of White Chapel contributions to this edition. While the submission from Mrs. Fell is unarguably welcome, we regret that our Christmas cover features Mr. Fell's clearly ill-judged translation of a Latin drinking song, said to be the work of a certain Walter De Mapes.

Walter is traditionally credited, not only with several dubious ditties, but also with building the Walterston Fawr farm house – and perhaps most significantly with the rebuilding of Llancarfan church. As a man of some standing in the 12th century, Walter De Mapes was chaplain to Henry II, often employed as a foreign emissary (think Sam Smith's Norwegian Consulate?), and the archdeacon of Oxford by around 1196. He was apparently a friend of Caradoc of Llancarfan, creating among his more significant works a rib-tickling collection of Latin satirical poems.

Some of which is cast into doubt by knowing that it was Iolo Morgannwg, our son of Pen'On, who claimed the Walterston connection - and of whom it is said he invented more than he knew. See *Newsletters 37 & 39* passim. Sadly, Mr. Fell's translation is in the over-inventive spirit of Iolo – for instance, readers will discern no 'artichoke' reference in Walter's Latin. We must assume that, despite his mis-placed bardic aspirations, your joint editor finds rhymes for 'croak', 'Coke' & 'soak' rather thin on the ground.

BRITISH BOYS FOR BRITISH FARMS

Alan Hills, the man who took this lovely portrait of a Jordanian worker, was for more than 30 years a senior photographer with the British Museum. He spent for example nine seasons recording archaeological digs in Jordan - but his British assignments were no less exotic. Nelson's last letter to Emma Hamilton passed through his photographic fingers, not to mention documenting the remains of Tutankhamen as they were unboxed for the remarkable exhibition of 1972.



However, when Alan found a 1995 obituary of Edward Williams in our Society's web archive, this triggered for him memories of earliest days. Back in the fifties, Mr. Hills was a teenage farmhand on Mr. Williams's farm at Llancadle. We are delighted to share Alan's account of life on the farm, and his evocative snow-scenes from the winter of 1954 / 55.



My father was in the RAF - and by the early 1950's, when I was just 15, I'd already attended 15 schools! So when he came to be posted to St. Athan, I felt enough was enough. Fed up with collecting schools,

I left as soon as possible to start work - on a farm. My father nevertheless insisted that I would need some training – by means of a YMCA scheme called *British Boys for British Farms*.

At the end of the training, having spent a week on each of several farms, the YMCA found us jobs – and as my family had moved to St. Athan, I looked for a job there. The Llantwit Major exchange suggested I should see Mr. Williams at Llancadle Farm.

I stayed happily working at the Williams's farm for about 3 years. At first there was one other worker there, Dai (Thomas?), who surprised me on my first milking by breaking out into song. Dai had a great love of singing, mainly songs from the shows, like *Oklahoma*. And, fair play, there *was* often a bright golden haze on the meadow!



Other workers came and went, some from the mining valleys. One at least of these men told me that he came to the farm to get away from mining – but he returned to the Rhondda when he needed the extra money he could earn underground.

The farm itself was mainly beef & sheep, with a few cows kept in milk, and quite a lot of the land given over to arable crops. Mr. & Mrs. Williams were very fond of horses, and kept a couple (hunters I think), which won prizes at the Royal Welsh Show, and point-to-point races at Penllyn.

There was a working horse too. He was getting on a bit then, but was very useful for jobs like taking feed out to the winter fields. He knew the fields like the back of his hand (hoof?), and would plod up and down while we tossed the feed out of the back of the wagon. At times we'd take him down to the blacksmith at Llancarfan. Riding on his back, going down, was a bit like sitting on top of an aircraft carrier!



Sometimes it seems the time I spent working on the farm gave me a kind of snapshot (well, I am a photographer!) of a time when farming was changing quite rapidly. For instance, there were a couple of Fordson Standard tractors, and later a Landrover and a Nuffield Diesel were added. That's me driving the Nuffield, wearing my flat cap!

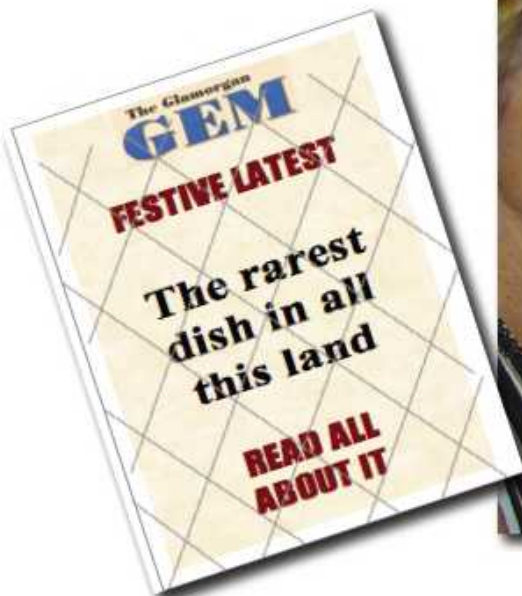
As time went on, of course, many of the implements were adapted from horse to tractor-drawn – mowers, reaper binder, and so on. So for the first couple of years, the corn harvest was done in the old way, cutting and sheaving with the reaper binder, then stoking before stacking. Then in the winter the corn was threshed when the contractors arrived with a steam traction engine, driving the threshing drum. But by 1955 the harvest was cut by combine harvester.

Looking back, Ted Williams was a good boss. I do remember mentioning the idea of chicken batteries to him. He got quite annoyed, and said 'You can't treat animals like that'. You wonder what he'd say today?



My time with the Williams family came to an end when my folks moved again, this time to Scotland. I 'lived in' for a time until after the harvest, then finally joined the RAF to become the photographer I'd always wanted to be. So these shots in the snow reflect only the second purchase from my farming earnings - a lovely second hand camera. I think these were amongst its early efforts, and probably *my* earliest attempts at home processing. They do show their age – but then don't we all!

2009 VILLAGE SCENES YOU MAY HAVE MISSED



WHAT'S OCCURIN'? OR MAYBE EVEN OCCUR'D!

CHURCH NEWS

Church Service Times :

Morning Eucharist each Wednesday at 09.30.

Service each Sunday at 11.00.

Family service : First Sunday of the month.

Other Diary Dates :

First Sunday in Advent : 29 November

School Christingle (School only) : Friday 18 Dec at 10.30

Lessons & Carols, Llantrithyd : 17 Dec 18.30 (& refreshments)

Lessons & Carols : Sunday 20 Dec 19.30 (& refreshments)

Crib Service & Church Christingle : Thurs 24 Dec at 15.00.

Midnight Mass : Thurs 24 Dec at 11.30.

Christmas Day Eucharist : Fri 25 Dec at 11.00.

The task of submitting grant applications for the Restoration work continues in line with the timetable, and we should see the actual preservation work restart in late Summer 2010.

A number of fund-raising events are planned, resuming on Boxing Day with the legendary Duck Egg Race. You can 'buy' your Duck Eggs for £1 each, & sign up now for sponsorship in the *Fox & Hounds* or in the Church. Eggs will also be 'for sale' on Boxing Day. (Tips on the form of any particular egg are available for a small backhander to the editor.)

Forthcoming events for 2010 include Pimms & Strawberry Teas to be held at the Rectory, family picnics, the Cowbridge Choir Concert in the Church, and a Hog Roast. Dates & ticket prices will be announced, so please see future Newsletters.

The Parochial Church Council has recently also given provisional approval for a new sound system for the church - I heard that, pardon? – and for a long overdue cleaning & servicing of the church organ. We'll tell you more when we hear more.

ONGOING EVENTS

For new readers (and as reminders to our regulars) we mention that Whist Drives are planned for the last Tuesday of each month, while the

Badminton Club meets every Friday morning at the Calcot Leisure Centre, Barry.

The Flower arranging classes are up & running in the Community Hall on Wednesday mornings, and while this six-session class is now fully booked, a possible new start, and advanced classes, are being considered for the New Year.

Cricket & tennis news will re-start when it gets warmer, though we do hear that the annual dinners are good!

FOX & HOUNDS

John & Sue Millard continue to tempt and entertain us with special menus, including an appetising Christmas dinner, regular Quiz Nights, and of course the French evening that took place on November 14th. This proved to be a magnificent 5-course banquet, designed in conjunction with the five wines supplied & described by Nicola Watts, brought over from her winery in the Bordeaux region.

We gather that similar events are planned for 2010, and are asked to remind you of a special *New Year's Eve* menu at £43 per person, bookable on 01446 781287.

Finally, in this season of giving & receiving Christmas cards, there is a large poster on the wall in the *Fox* bar, produced by the Macmillan Charity for Cancer Support. The idea is that instead of sending cards to your friends in the village this year (assuming we have any!) you can make whatever you feel is an appropriate donation, and write a Christmas greeting to them all.

This way you send a Christmas greeting Help a worth charity Save a forest of trees Save the postman's legs Have a good excuse to call for a pint when you check to see who has wished you a Merry Christmas!

TUESDAY CLUB : WE'LL MEET AGAIN

The ladies of the Tuesday Club met again on a not-so-sunny day (November 17th), and were joined by gentlemen 'home from the front', to recall World War II. Memories both happy & sad were shared, and personal events described both to those who were there, and to others too young to know what their elders had witnessed. There were tables of memorabilia, including a Mae West gasmask, a ration book, utility

books, newspapers and clothing coupons on display. The evening was rounded off with a sing-song of 1940s tunes, accompanied and encouraged by Jo Williams on the piano.

Next up for the Tuesday club is the Christmas Party on 15 December, to meet, eat & enjoy, with a gift from the lucky dip.

LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

The Vale Male Voice Choir appear in the Village Hall on December 1st, who will join in singing carols & well-known songs, voices whetted by the festive drinks on offer. This date also launches entry forms for the *Annual Audrey Porter Quiz*, available via Sue Taylor & *Fox & Hounds*.

CALL MY BLUFF

November 20th saw a triumphant team-win by the appropriately named *The Fillies* – well, appropriate except that there was also a man in the team! As for the rest of us, we think we all came second, but who cares after six glasses of wine? Andrew Thorn, David Stevens, and – yes – Sam Smith proved good-humoured, sneakily deceptive experts, spreading the party spirit, being ably supported by the Interval band, the *Garth Mountain Boys*. It goes without saying that Audrey Baldwin won the Champagne Bottle Roll at her first attempt!

THE LLANCARFAN CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS . . .

. . . will be switched on, & carols sung, weather permitting, by the ford about 6 p.m., Saturday December 5th. Llanbethery lights beam forth around teatime on Sunday December 20th.



BOXING DAY TUG OF WAR

Build up your muscles & enter a team for the time-honoured Tug of War across the ford. As well as the Duck Eggs we're promised a feast of a BBQ behind the *Fox & Hounds*.

POST SCRIPT

Did any of you watch the TV programme *Coming Home* the other day? It was about the TV presenter Gabby Logan, and her footballer father Terry Yorath's family history. And guess where her great-great-great grandmother came from? Llanccarf.

FESTIVE NEWS FROM THE CHALK FACE



Llancarfan Primary School

New Headteacher

We're very excited that Mrs Brereton will be our new Head teacher from the start of the summer term. She is currently the Deputy Head teacher in Llanilltud Fawr Primary School in Llantwit Major.



Christmas Concerts

This year the juniors are performing a play called 'Stable Manners' and the infants are performing 'Oopsy Daisy Fairy.' These are going to be great. Villagers are welcome to join us for our dress rehearsal on Monday 7th December: infants at 10 am and juniors at 2 pm.

Fundraising for the N.S.P.C.C.
We recently did sponsored work for the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) and we raised a massive £961.09.



Christmas Fair

Our Christmas Fair is on Saturday the 5th December and starts at 1.30. There will be lots of different stalls.

Junior Road Safety Officers (J.R.S.O.s)

The four J.R.S.O.'s are Molly, Adam, Libby and Sam. As J.R.S.O.s we are trying to keep all the children safe near the road. We have done many things such as: We tried a walking bus last year. We have organised competitions for the pupils. We have gone to a J.R.S.O conference to learn from other schools. We have started to decorate our notice board to tell people the things that we are doing.

Healthy Schools

We are now selling fruit twice a week and the children enjoy eating it!



FINALLY - SATNAV IS STRANGER THAN FICTION

27 November 2009 . . .
an unfortunate wrong turning
at the Llancarfan ford . . .

PLEASE SEND US YOUR
'FORD' TALES FOR
THE NEXT NEWSLETTER

BEN'S TAIL : HOT FROM THE NEWSHOUND



As I settle into my new office outside the *Fox & Hounds*, it is good to recall the events that have occurred in Llancarfan over the last year. You, dear reader, may not realise it, but there is not much I miss whilst guarding here - and for what I *have* missed I do apologise.

Well, it has been a year for changes. Peggy Jackson has joined us as the new Archdeacon, Joanne Scott Quelch has retired as Secretary to the Community Council, and Sue Taylor moved on from being Chairman of the L.D.C.A.

Ollie & Meryl Spencer had a new baby son, Simon & Emma Heselton expect a new child in December, Tom Hunt and Phil Watts both made 80, Trevor Winterbottom had his 70th birthday, Tony & Sheelagh Lewis had a new grandson, and the Greys christened a new grand-daughter. Audrey Baldwin visited her family in Kenya, while Gemma & Richard Pavey moved to the village and were married in the Church. Other newcomers included Jane Hall & Julian, and Pip Watkins at Bridge Cottage. Mick and Jan Crosta's daughter came back from her life in America, whilst John & Sarah Angell's daughter Rose has gone to teach English at a school in Shanghai. But we're sorry that Brian & Shirley Vincent are off, like Emma & Simon Heretton, who move to Cross Green, & Rhiannon Webber to Penarth.

Nigel Booth the builder - new chairman of the LDCA - has been busy working on Geoff Burrows' house, and a new roof for Audrey Baldwin's. (Must ask him about solar panels for the kennel.) The Tamplins have set up their new Electrical & Landscaping business, and are building Victoria a new stable. Allison & Andy Hannaby's eldest son is accepted for Cambridge University, while Sam & Patsie Smith have expanded their Travel Agent's business with the acquisition of Strachan Sports.

More achievements have come our way too. Blair Evans was recognized for his services to Welsh rugby, and Evan Williams trained *State of Play* who came fourth in the Grand National – while *Deep*

Purple won the Charlie Hall Chase at Wetherby. Thanks to Ann Ferris & her band of helpers, the Village Show was a great success, while the *Fox & Hounds* was acclaimed for the best food in the Vale. And talking of my owners (dogs have owners, cats have staff) they've had the outside of the pub done up for me, to make amends for me missing Rebecca when she went to New York to train as a make-up artist. Oh – and a big tail wag to Darren John, the new chef.

Did I mention Frank has had a new lease of life since his hernia op, and that Joyce Jamieson has had a new knee? (If there're any spare bones going, I'm your dog.) We have had our illnesses, of course – Keith Thomas, Trevor Winterbottom, Jackie Hartery, Mick Mace, Henry Woolff – and sadly some of the village's oldest associates have passed away.

There have been a few new cats and dogs in the village, to keep my vocal chords in trim. (I hear too there are new editors of the Llancarfan Society Newsletter, though this smaller version is proving less absorbent than the old one that carpeted my kennel.) Meanwhile, the boys and girls of the village have done us proud again, while the paintings in the Church are still to be properly uncovered (though new grants have been approved and others applied for). I wish they'd give me a grant for digging holes. Mind you, the holes in the roads are worse than ever, but everybody still puts a brave face on things.

Events in the village hall have helped in this respect. This year we have had a Neil Diamond tribute act, and an Irish night (with luminous lady dancers), a wine tasting (with equally luminous tasters), a magnificent Harvest Supper, and all the various activities arranged by the Societies. I cannot understand why dogs are not allowed to join in – though they did offer me a training session in the Village Hall on Monday nights.

All in all then, a typical Llancarfan village year. And it's not over yet. I can't wait for the Duck Egg Race and the Tug of War on Boxing Day, when everybody comes to see me in my own backyard to whisper their secrets into my ear. You know who you are!

Anyway, I'm off for a walk around the village now, to mark out my territory. Some other dogs call it 'P-mail', but I reckon they lack breeding. So – I'll keep my nose to the ground - and all that remains is for me to wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Woof!

STRICTLY FOR THE BIRDS : Penny Fell twitches the curtains



Winter in Llancarfan. Time for us to twitch the curtains and spy on the neighbours. Not the usual lot with opposable thumbs – no, the feathered ones. There are few greater joys to living in this village than sudden sightings of a kingfisher, siskin, or a corn bunting. And in this coming January 30/31 we can all join in the *RSPB Birdwatch Weekend*.

The semi-wildernesses around Llancarfan are, they say, one of the few places left in the Vale which remain truly hospitable to birds. And local competition to host them is as fierce as reality telly! As you'll see above, last Winter Melinda Thomas photographed 10 long-tailed tits in her garden (count them if you can). Gossip reports that Margaret Evans clocked 32 ground-feeding goldfinches outside her home. And when Liz Hunt reported a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker in Llanbethery last year, the RSPB rang her personally with congratulations.

Over the years, we reckon we've seen 39 species in or from the White Chapel garden, mostly robins, wrens, tits, finches and songbirds. Personalities quickly emerge. For instance, over the wall at Brook Cottage, a fat pheasant was determined to fit into Fran Winterbottom's bird table. He regularly shoehorned himself under the roof, tail feathers bulging, glaring sideways - "Does my bum look big in this?" The break-dancing dunnocks are also fun. And last summer a baby sparrow sheltered for a whole dripping afternoon under a coconut shell, terrified to move in case someone stole his patent design for an avian umbrella.

We *will* be taking part in the *Birdwatch Weekend*; stare unflinchingly for a whole hour and it's amazing what you see. Last year, a tree-creeper scuttled up the Indian Bean tree, distinguishable from a mouse only by the silhouette of his curved beak. A chubby little Black Cap slid along the wall in his French onion-seller's beret. And, as the hour struck, with impeccable timing, on came the star of the show, shimmying down like Boy George in full eye-make up and trademark hat: the Greater Spotted Woodpecker. So come January, join the watch & tell us what you spot!

Meanwhile, Ian Fell relates a spooky tale for Christmas . . .

TWITTER AND I'LL COME TO YOU

The ghost stories of M. R. James frighten by unearthing spookiness in the everyday. His *Oh Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad* [1904] reduces a university professor to a lather of fear at the sight of his billowing bedclothes. He has blown on the bronze whistle he found in a ruined Templar church. Some folk never learn.



Well, back in the last late Summer, Penny & I had a similar experience. We'd been away, and returned to a chorus of phone messages. Those from friends & the plumber were welcome. But the last was a tiny bit unsettling.

You know how someone can text you a message, and then nowadays the wonders of science turn it into a voice on your home telephone? This was one of those. It spoke in synthetic cybertones, an almost but not quite human voice. And it said:

*Found / a phone / on / Hangman's Field. /
It's / under a stone / on / a stile / on entrance
to / Hangman's Field.*

BT had usefully recorded the phone number from which the message came. It was my mobile. Fair play, I don't use the mobile often, only to find Penny in Tesco's, that sort of thing. So I didn't know I'd lost it. On Hangman's Field. Spooky.

But where on earth was Hangman's Field? The phone must have dropped from my pocket when walking the dog (these newish trousers have more pockets than a kid's party conjurer). But where? Aberthaw? Castle Ditches? St Lythan's Tomb? Cowbridge Common?

Cowbridge Common. Yes, there arose a faded memory of an ancient scaffold on Cowbridge Common, or Stalling Down. And isn't there a Gibbet's Hill out of Cowbridge? It's lovely up there on the common, when the meadow-grass bristles with wild flowers. Might this haunt of dog-walkers be Hangman's Field?

In-depth academic research involved a pint of Bass in the (now tragically burned) *Bush* at St. Hilary. This led me to 'Tom next door', who knows everything, and thence to Mr. Llewellyn Senior, whose family tends the Common from their farm at Old Beaupre. 'Yes,' confirmed Mr. Llewellyn, they *did* farm the common at Hangman's Field – though they'd tried to cut back on the executions.

And so dear reader, as the blood-red sun sank low into the west, we scoured the stiles of Stalling Down. At times Penny would raise her iPhone as if displaying a pilgrim's icon, hoping to summon a plaintive whimper from the missing mobile. But answer came there none.

Only when we gained the ancient clump of trees did we rediscover the circular wall around it, scaled by at least two stiles, bewitching us into the copse's hanging depths. And there, just as the spectral voice had promised, under a stone, beneath one of the stiles, we found it - my immobile mobile, switched-off and silent as the grave.

Had Edgar Allen Poe written this tale, I would then have turned on my mobile, only to fall in a swoon onto the blood-stained earth. There, on the digital screen, would have been the hideous image of a hanged man, his face distorted by the punitive cruelty.

But I didn't. There was no hanged man. Instead we left a 'thank you' note, just in case the nameless finder returned to search the stile.

I am not in a hurry, though, to receive any future cyber messages from Hangman's Field. Yates's map of 1799 clearly names and illustrates the gallows on Stalling Down. And Hilary M. Thomas's millennium history of St Hilary records the 1786 execution there of John Thomas Hary, 'that dreadful thief'. Only a year later, William Owens was hanged on the Down for murdering his lover, and likewise Cornelius Gordon of Llanrhidian for killing his wife. And it is said that at the moment of execution, the whole Down trembled 'as with an earthquake'.

During the five days my mobile was lost, Cowbridge Common had trembled again, with a thunderstorm. My portative telephone had survived rain, shine and lightning. So I remain most grateful to the voice that told of its survival. But on the other hand, these adventures *do* bring an unfortunate twist to the saying 'please don't hang up'!

SOME EARLY CASHMAS MARTYRS

The earliest, of course, the turkey was –
Murdered discretely in some slaughterhouse
As if a Herod had decreed our mimicking
His slaughterfest of babes born to be king.

Next up for shaving, countless brother beasts,
Body parts primed to punctuate the feast,
Hung, drawn & quartered, marinated masses,
Snack foods from evolution's lower classes.

Martyrs less physical now parade before us,
But no less victims of the Cashmas chorus,
For just as Christians swallowed solstice rites
Raw commerce has engorged *their* Holy nights.

Even poor Guido, honest regicide,
Now finds himself consumed by Cashmastide,
His Samhain fires reduced to sparks ascending
As fevered bulbscapes animate our spending.

Two months of sweating to consume and pay
Reach full delirium on Cashmas day
When tree-wrapped trophies render rare delight -
Before 'Sales' frenzy bloats us into night.

So Santa, should you care to stuff *our* hose,
Please leave of vanished innocence a double dose.

A HAPPY *PROPER* CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR READERS!

© All contributions to this Newsletter are the copyright of
The Llancarfan Society, and may be edited, but it is not intended
to restrict the re-use by contributors of their original works

Edited by Ian Fell & Rhodi Grey
Society President Phil Watts
Society Chairman Mike Crosta
Secretary Gwyneth Plows

Subscriptions & Membership to

Audrey Porter, Mill Race Cottage, Llancarfan, CF62 3AD

Mailing Enquiries to Alan Taylor, Windrush, Llancarfan CF62 3AD
a.j.taylor@btconnect.com

**New Society
Members
will always be
most welcome.
Please contact
the Membership
Secretary on
01446 781328.**