

# LLANCARFAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 146

JUNE 2011



As School Administrator Lisa Jones's picture shows, it wasn't just wedding bunting that festooned Llanccarfarn this Spring. See the back page for the creepy tale.



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## EDITORIAL

With apologies for this rather belated newsletter, we report from our AGM changes in the Llancarfan Society. In truth, AGMs are rarely sensational occasions, though deserving gratitude to our diligent auditor, Bob Hutchings, OBE. However, this AGM had to face the rather melancholy resignations of our Membership Secretary Audrey Porter, & of our President Phil Watts.

Audrey's first Newsletter recognition happened as late as May 1994. (*Back then Audrey wrote about the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tuesday Club, reported taking £350 from a Jumble Sale, and then she invited us to a December 'Silent Auction'.*) But let it be recorded that, though Audrey might choose to stay silent about her community service, we, and the village, are more than grateful for her endeavours. Joann Scott-Quelch now assumes, again with our relief and thanks, the Membership Secretary's hot seat.

Meanwhile, a grateful welcome to our newly-elected President, the much-respected Barbara Milhuisen – *of whom more anon* – & for this message:

I feel deeply honoured to follow in the footsteps of Sir Keith Thomas, Ruth & Phil Watts. I share the sentiments of Phil when he first conceived the idea of the society, where its members could meet on happy occasions, not just funerals. I will endeavour to do what ever is asked of me, although not living in Llancarfan, I thank the present inhabitants for their kindness and friendship on my return visits.

I would like to involve more young people in joining, and lapsed members to return to the fold. We have very precious connections with the past, which are important to pass on to the future. Let us all go forward in a mutual spirit of friendship and understanding.

Yours sincerely,  
Barbara Milhuisen.

## WATTS'S OCCURIN'? – PRESIDENT PHIL'S RETIRIN'!

Phil Watts has retired as President of the *Llancarfan Society*. But he leaves a long history behind him. It was in fact a clarion call from Phil (or at least a letter to the *Cowbridge Gem*) which kick-started the whole *Llancarfan Society* enterprise in 1987. And the next quarter century has surprised even him! Back in the middle of that pivotal decade (*as Phil now recalls for Penny Fell*) Llancarfan was in a state of recession:

“The school was threatened with closure, the *Fox & Hounds* was at a low ebb, the church was in debt, and the church hall was up for sale”.

In other words, the rural community of Phil's boyhood, with 28 farmers and small holders, everyone walking to their workplace, school and pub, had been replaced by car-driving communities, and people rushing by without chance to pass the time of day. The village was in need of rebirth.

Paradoxically, the idea of the Society came to Phil at a funeral ...

“We were waiting for the cortège, and I said that we all got together on those occasions – so why not at happier times?”

So Phil fired off his letter to *The Gem*, asking whether those with an interest in the village might meet. The event was oversubscribed – but twelve founding members gathered at the *Fox & Hounds* for what you might call ‘The First Supper’.



Big ideas grew. Further social activities were organised; and the newsletter took shape, originally under the distinguished editorship of John Etherington. Nowadays, with a long record of social activity, publications, charitable giving, a whole procession of May Day walks, a village pétanque piste, and some 180 members, the Society has built on Phil's modest aspirations. Phil's 1987 scheme *has* played a part in the regeneration of a remarkable village.

Even though he has now retired to Barry, it's probably fair to say that Phil keeps Llancarfan in his bones. And he believes that if the village has a special character, it's because of geography:

“I think people form their character from the area in which they live. Llancarfan is in a deep enclosed valley, and has it all - the river, the church,

the pub, the school, chapels. Everything's there. And the river – oh, yes, did I mention the river?" If he ascribes to the Nant Carfan river the role of a capricious and sometimes overactive neighbour, it is true that without it, he would never have lived here.

Born in 1929, Phil's earliest years were spent at Llanvythin Mill. In fact his family *were* millers, Somerset folk who joined the drift across the Bristol Channel, first milling in Aberthaw, then settling at Little Mill to harness the Carfan. His parents moved to Abernant when he was three, which was the best of both worlds in his view. "We didn't actually live in the village, we considered ourselves outsiders. So we were in a fortunate position - if we didn't like what was going on in village, we could always run away!"

One doesn't quite buy this semi-detached stance. Phil's happiest memories, he says, are here: of Llancarfan School, and of his marriage to Ruth at St Cadoc's. References to the village decorate his home: and in the neat dining room hang the century-old handbells which once it seems festooned the ancient beams of Lanvythin Mill. These were used, in Phil's youth, to ring out Christmas carols on a travelling cart.

Happily, newer methods of transport (which have later wrought such changes in village life) enable him to hop in his car and still play a vigorous part in the Society. And he regularly visits his successor, Barbara Milheusen, also one of Llancarfan's diaspora, at her home in the south of France. Barbara was of those original twelve founders at the *Fox* - of whom Phil says "It's a great pleasure for me to hand over to Barbara. Our families have had a close affinity for nearly a hundred years, and she has always been a great supporter of all our society events."



So – as Phil welcomes Barbara, the time has arrived for us to thank Phil for all he has done, and will continue to do, for the village. He will, he says, be around for a long time yet.

## THE TALE BEHIND PHIL WATT'S 'THANK YOU!' PRESENT

The picture below of Harry Hughes was the Society's (and significantly, the artist Jean Hunt's) expression of thanks to Phil Watts when his retirement was announced at the 6 May AGM. *Jean Hunt* recalls here a few memories reawakened by this delightful glimpse into a corner of village history:



‘This little guache of Harry Hughes, sitting outside the old carpenter’s shop in Llancarfan, was painted shortly after his death in 1976. Harry was Tom and my neighbour when we moved here in 1970. He quickly became a good friend. Wherever we look, in the house or garden, we see some feature Harry had a hand in. I think that applies to many houses here.

‘Harry’s shop formed the front of our right hand boundary (*Copperfield*). On *our* side it was a high black corrugated iron barrier; not the attractive ivied view from the other side! Harry said the shop was about 200-years-old, and his pride and joy. Once inside, you saw an Aladdin’s cave, full of the handyman’s requirements. You name it, somewhere Harry had a tool for it.

‘Our dog Bess loved Harry. If she went missing she would be next door with him! If you look at the photograph in *The Fox*, it shows the pair of them outside the Tamplins’ field (with the original old wooden gate). Harry was a lovely man, and we both still miss him and the long chats we used to have about the village and life in general.’

*For more about Harry Hughes, see Newsletters 14 & 15 online, and passim.*

## THE RICHES IN OUR MIDST

**‘If people don’t support a church it’s just a building –  
and at one time it was going to be a ruin!’**

The above thoughts from our Llanbethery neighbour Mick Mace, OBE, former Vale of Glamorgan Chief Fire Officer, past chair of St. Cadoc’s PCC, are touching & perceptive. Such an affirmation of the importance of the cultural & spiritual building at the heart of both our village & parish, is particularly significant when we are re-applying (as now) to funding bodies, such as the *Heritage Lottery Fund*.



As part of showing how we care to protect our Grade I listed mediaeval church, the Church Architects and the Restoration Committee need now please to show how the church should be conserved and managed in the future. It’s called (surprise! surprise!) a ‘Conservation Management Plan’.

To give this plan reality, we need YOU to help us understand the significance of the church, not just to historians, but to members of our community. Could you possibly send us a note, please, saying what special significance the church has to you, whatever your faith or interest?

So - any affirmations, reminiscences, old drawings, postcards or fading photographs! – whatever you might have of, or feel about, the church would be greatly valued by the Restoration Committee. Please let Ian Fell have anything via the White Chapel, or email [webmaster@mediaforheritage.com](mailto:webmaster@mediaforheritage.com).

And thanks, Mick, for starting us off – a Chief Fire Officer must know a lot about national treasures and the ruins they can become!

## AND MEANWHILE

We’re sort of pacing our publicity about the latest astonishing revelations in the church as we work on a clear strategic agreement as to how to share them with the ever-more-interested public. However, our enthusiasm for Church Tourism does mean a growing number of group visits, as well as by locals & individuals. This 14<sup>th</sup> May saw a *Christian Aid* sponsored walk end here, and on the 27<sup>th</sup> we welcomed at least three professors, one famous writer, and several curatorial professionals under their banner of the *Society of Antiquaries of London*. Many more groups are booked in for the summer – which does no harm at all, we hope, to both Church and *Fox & Hounds*.

## BUNTING IN THE STREETS

### Llancarfan's Royal Wedding Festivities of 29 April 2011

It feels like ancient history already – but looking back, its not every day that a truly Welsh event captures Llancarfan's imagination. But then, when a lad called William Wales gets married by a chap from Swansea, to tunes from Anglesey, and television commentary by a guy from Bridgend – then it's time to reach for the bunting.

'Sori – no bunting,' said the *Tesco* Culverhouse Cross assistant. 'We think they sent it all to England.'

However, ever resourceful, the Llancarfan Royal Wedding Street Party Team (working from the village pub) had their secret sources of red, white and blue. These (not the party team) were duly strung out across the *Fox & Hounds* car-park, tables summoned from village hall and households, and all enclosed in fencing last seen corralling sheep at the Vale Agricultural Show.

Thus was created an arena of celebratory anticipation – and all before 11 o'clock, when half the Vale rushed home to watch the royal wedding, its panoply and its frocks, on hi-def television.

To be fair, there was competition. Charlotte Williams and Scott John had booked St. Cadoc's in which to be made man and wife well before the royals announced their plans. So William had to make do with Westminster Abbey, while Llancarfan's own wedding went ahead in parallel, under the direction of the Ven. Peggy Jackson and the watchful eye of St George.

Once the telly had confirmed with a balcony kiss the wedded bliss of William and Kate, the citizens of Llancarfan re-emerged in force. Snapshots of the occasion (*see over*) captured the village en fete, with well over a hundred villagers feasting on picnic goodies. Future historians will have to work out who was who – there were times when only the removal of sun-glasses, wigs and ra-ra skirts revealed the identity of fellow villagers!

By around six o'clock chairs were still being forcibly extracted from people's bottoms to be returned to the village hall. And then at six thirty, with the car-park re-transformed to its usual pebble beach, festivities continued for the many who enjoyed John's *Fox & Hounds* barbeque. The day was a triumph of organisation for Sue Millard, Julie Potter, Claire Thomas, Steve & Lorna Vink, and a wonderful lesson in village conviviality for young and old alike.







Royal Wedding  
Street Party  
Llancarfan 29 April 2011

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

### TABLE TENNIS

A table tennis table & bats have been donated to the Community Hall. Anyone interested in playing, or setting up a *Table Tennis* section, should contact Alan Taylor on 01446 781453.

### FLOWER ARRANGING

Another successful term for the *Flower Arranging* group, as they now gear up for the Village Show. Further classes will start in the Autumn and new members should contact Mary Grey on 781936.

### THE AUDREYS

In our last issue we passed on Audrey Porter's thanks to all who showed kindness during her time in hospital. It was remiss of us to overlook Audrey Baldwin's similar request to thank people after her illness. We do so now.

### TUESDAY CLUB

*Future events include:*

21 June	Talk by Mrs. Barbara Forte entitled 'Telling the Tale'
20 July	Outing to Hereford
August	No meetings
20 Sept	1800 visit to Llantrithyd church, Peter Williams guide, then eat out
October	To be announced
15 Nov	Mrs. Mary Grey to talk on flower arranging
20 Dec	Christmas party

### LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

3 July	New date for Ruth Watts Pétanque, delayed by rain from 12 June
15 July	Mystery Trip
20 Aug	Village Show
24 Sept	Annual Dinner at <i>Fox &amp; Hounds</i>

### LDCA

Councillor Jeff James is inviting the Mayor of the Vale to officially open the Community Hall extension. We hope for another *Neil Diamond Tribute Evening* at the same time, date to be announced. Repainting inside the hall is complete, and landscaping the rear should finish by the end of June.

### SUNDAY LUNCH

19 June 1330 : A lunch in aid of the *Velindre Fund Appeal & St. Cadoc's Church* will be held at Castle Lodge Farm (Andrew & June Studley). Tickets £15 available from Sue Taylor or June Studley.

### CRICKET CLUB

Pre-season curry training took place, as usual, in the *Fox* on 14 April – with a turnout of 50 plus. Some new, hopefully talented, players were uncovered.

We raised about £450, and are grateful to John, Sue & the staff, plus those who donated raffle prizes. Then the season kicked off at St. Fagans' CC against Chartered Trust, where we were sadly defeated by 40 runs. Nick Crane, pick of the bowlers, took 2 wickets for 40 runs, but other than Freddie John (58) and Rich Williams (28), it was a pretty poor batting performance. Still, the rust was knocked off for the remaining fixtures:

1 Jun	The Mitres	The Cathedral School
21 Jun	The Surveyors	Cowbridge Old School
26 Jun	Colwinston	Colwinston
28 Jun	The Mitres	St Fagans CC
13 Jul	Pennlyn	St Fagans CC
17 Jul	Colwinston	St Fagans CC
18 Aug	Chartered Trust	St Fagans CC
23 Aug	Barry West End	Barry Athletic CC

Support always welcome, with bar open at St Fagans' CC. Interested players please contact Rob John : 07889 107795 or Rich Williams : 07790 272145

### **TENNIS CLUB**

Long-serving David Stevens, in search of new blood, has agreed to stay on as honorary chairman, the club not being the same without him. But significantly, we have a very energetic new committee led by Gary Dunsford, the new chair. Membership queries please to [gary.dunsford@gmail.com](mailto:gary.dunsford@gmail.com).

*Coaching* (by Sean) takes place on Monday evenings. To ring the competitive changes, or a chat, try *Adults' Club Night* 1900 Wednesdays.

17 July 1300 : *Tennis Funday* : children of all ages invited, & there's a BBQ.

Ideas welcome or effort offered for future activities, please contact Gary.

### **CHURCH NEWS**

We are sad to reflect that Fr. Bill Feild died on May 18<sup>th</sup>. His funeral took place on Friday May 27<sup>th</sup> at All Saints, Barry, and he was then interred in Llancafán churchyard. Dorothy May Hill from Bonvilston died on May 24<sup>th</sup>. The funeral took place at St. Cadocs' on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, with interment in Llantrithyd churchyard. 'Will' Powell from Bridge Cottage, was baptised on Sunday June 5<sup>th</sup>, actually by his grandfather, Canon John Rowlands, Rector of Whitchurch. Will's parents are James & Sara, who is John Rowlands' daughter. The 29<sup>th</sup> April wedding of Scott & Charlotte John is mentioned elsewhere.

### **NEW BLOOD**

A village welcome to newcomers Paul & Julia Rebhan. They are settling into *The Hollies* (a prickly prospect?) with their children, Matthew, Amelie & Christopher, who are enriching the numbers at the school. Julia keeps her involvement with Trinity College, Carmarthen, while Paul plays a pioneering role in thin-film solar electrical devices with a firm called *G24 Innovations*.

## BLUEBELLS, GARLIC & SPADEFULS OF HISTORY

The thirty or so devotees of the Society's May Day Walk were blessed this year with a day surpassing even our glorious April. As the sun paid tribute to one of the Vale's oldest monuments – the St. Lythans burial chamber – we headed away from it, dropping down across the fields for what promised to be a pretty potter in Goldsland Wood. Pretty and pottery it proved – but so very much more. For, as we were to discover, those few acres of garlic-clad woodland held a disproportionate number of clues to history.

Leading the conducted walk was Cedric Mumford, now well retired after 30 years as Senior Lecturer in Chemistry at UWIC. What many of us didn't realise was how significant were the memories Cedric was retracing with us. Thirty-one years ago, back in 1980, young Cedric (an informed amateur archaeologist) had teamed up with Ken Crosta (our chairman's dad) to plumb the secrets of Goldsland Wood. Their joint exploration continued over two decades, a collaboration ending just two years before Mike's dad died, aged 88, in October 2002. As Cedric confided to his diary, 'for almost twenty years Goldsland Wood has been our contact with Nature and with the past'.

Quite frankly, neither this present write-up, nor our blissful walk, could do justice to the history which Cedric generously shared. Three major windows into history were opened up, the first signs of which were the deep adits in the ground, possibly Bronze-age mines, exploiting a seam of lead with copper traces that crosses the limestone hillside, reaching down to Wenvoe. Clues in the form of chunks of lead ore (galena) had been found on the second site, outlined on the map below, to which we then made our way. This site proved almost a place of pilgrimage, year by year, for Cedric, Ken Crosta and others.



Samian ware  
found on site



What they had found, back in 1980, were extensive traces of an estimated 2,500-year-old settlement. It was here that, season by season, they would dig and investigate, proving the lines of walls and ditches, and unearthing a remarkable number of ancient artefacts.

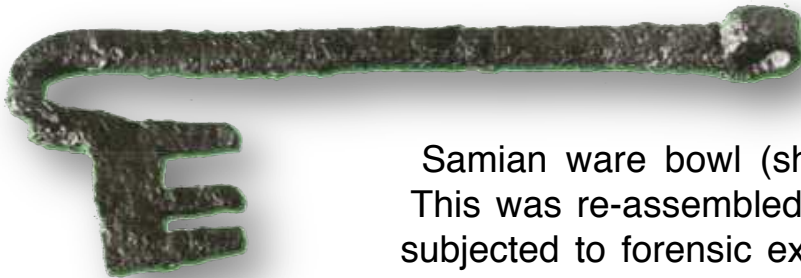


Intrepid walkers, Cedric & Mike in the settlement, the bone cave, & a hint of garlic.



As May Day walkers, we tried hard to pick out the network of walls beneath the undergrowth that had once defined the homestead and farm buildings of our distant ancestors (including the Romans, who moved in later). Plentiful evidence was unearthed by Cedric and Ken's trowels, including bones, teeth, roof tiles, pottery sherds, window-glass, horn, flint-implements, coins, a pewter spoon & a bronze bangle, all part of the trove of intriguing items.

Cedric showed us, for instance, one key to the past – literally a key, found in June 1986, now in the National Museum, and confirmed to be a rare (to Wales) Roman L-shaped key. Three Junes earlier, the iron snaffle-bit from a Roman horse had come to light, and later again the spoon, a rush-light holder and a latch-lifter.



There is a satisfying footnote to one of the many finds – namely, the

Samian ware bowl (shown in colour on page 12). This was re-assembled by Ken Crosta, and in 1990 subjected to forensic examination via his proud son, Mike, pulling Crown Prosecutor strings with the Scenes of Crime Unit in Bridgend. The Samian pot

revealed human fingerprints, imprinted in 120 AD into the bottom rim of the pot. And they knew the name of the Clermont Ferand potter who done it, Your Worship, because 'Junius' branded his name onto the base of the pot.

Back with the walk, much of this fascinating detail had to fight with the birds and the undergrowth, rustling under thirty pairs of feet, Cedric having the decency not to bring a megaphone into the bluebell woods! But nevertheless, our appetites were whetted to revisit the sites of Ken & Cedric's archaeology.

Finally, as if these revelations were not sufficient, we were then led through garlic paths to a third wonder. These were shallow caves, excavated during recent seasons by archaeologists from (of all places) the University of Central Lancashire. Two *cwms* contain these caves, Cwms Slatter and George, relics of major cave systems that collapsed, maybe around the last ice age.

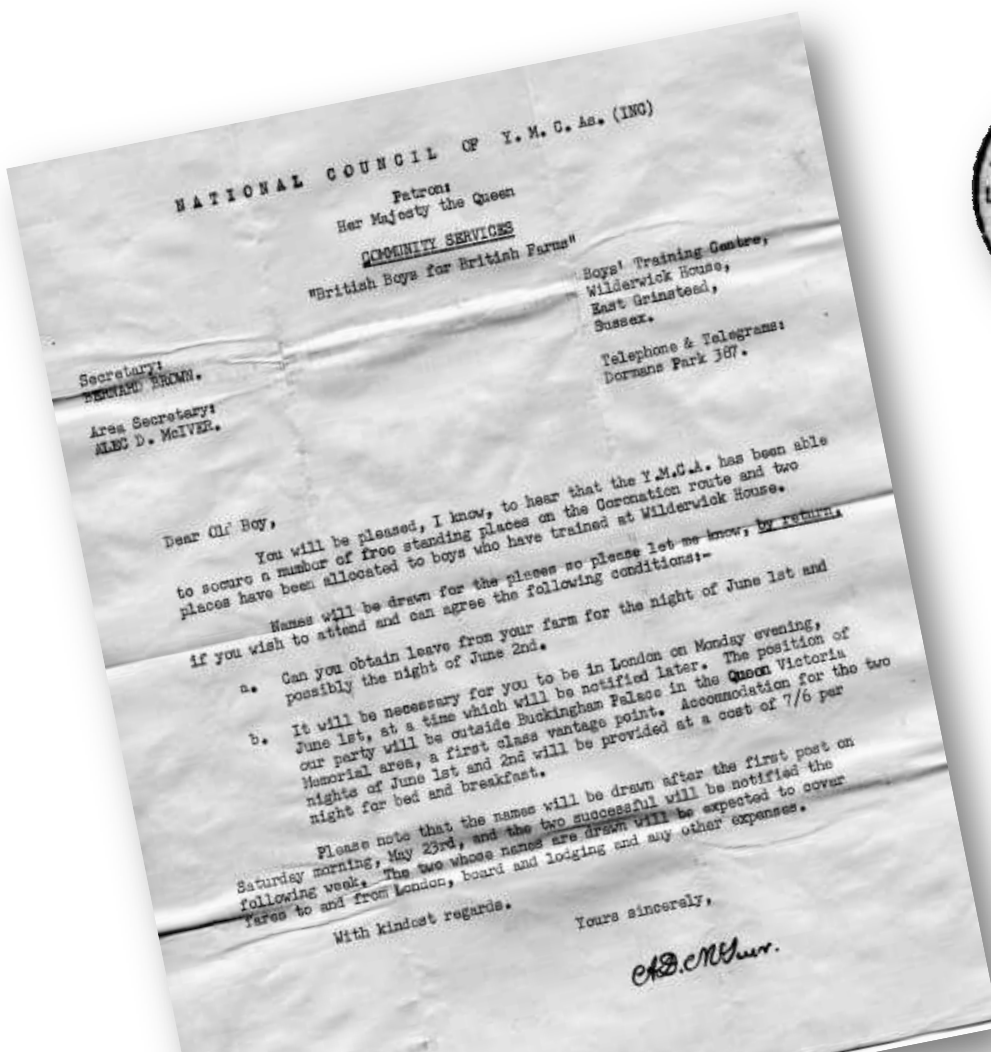
The finds from these caves have yet to be written up – but they could prove astonishing. The archaeologists have already identified collections of small human bones & teeth, thought to have fallen off bodies left out for natural de-fleshing, their main skeletons then, it is hypothesised, carried off for ritual entombment in the nearby chambers of St. Lythans and Tinkinswood.

None of us, it is good to report, needed carrying back to our cars, parked within sight of the St. Lythans' burial chamber. Surely though we had reached back into several thousands of years of our history. And rarely has a bluebell walk in the woods yielded such wonders as were offered to us, with our grateful thanks, by Cedric Mumford, and (through the proxy of his son) the fondly-remembered Ken Crosta.

## TALKING OF MATTERS ROYAL

You may remember the memories evoked by Alan Hills, the former British Museum photographer, who in our Christmas 2009 edition recalled his time in the 1950s, working as a 'British Boy for British Farms' under Edward Williams at Llancadle. Well just before that, in May 1953, he was farm training at Gileston – where to his surprise he received the letter below, inviting him to apply for one of the two 'free standing places on the Coronation route'!

As it happens, Alan says he chose not to follow up the offer. Instead, he struck out on his bike over the Brecon Beacons, leaving the Vale for his first-ever long distance ride on Coronation Day, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1953. So he never saw the Coronation, not even on one of those new-fangled TV sets. And still today, says Alan, he thinks the Beacons would win out over William & Kate's wedding – which, given their hasty post-marriage retreat to Anglesey, might just have been a feeling shared by the young royals themselves!



*Ian Fell P.S. My Grandpa built a television for our Lancashire village to watch the Coronation on. He kept a garage – looked much like Harry Hughes's shop – but I don't think our home-made telly was pedal-powered!*

## THE GHOST TREE

This is the creepiest, crawliest school story of the season. Thousands of tiny caterpillars have coated a school tree, railings & walls with their spooky webs. These seem to be the 'cling-film' tents of the Bird Cherry Ermine moth. Fingers crossed though, the tree should recover, and the moths usually fly by July.



## Llancarfan Primary School Report

### Swimming

All the juniors in Llancarfan Primary School had a week of swimming lessons from 23<sup>rd</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> of May in Fontygary pool. Everyone improved their technique and all had a splashing time!

### Rev it up

On Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May, a West End show came to the school from London. They have been going around schools in the Vale. The performance was brilliant and they certainly revved it up!



### Crucial Crew

The Y6 pupils went on a school trip to Crucial Crew. It was to teach us about the dangers of the outside world. It was like an indoor village. We had to go around it going into the shops and building sites and pubs. We all really enjoyed.

By Alex, Max, Josh, Sam

### Llancarfan's sporting term

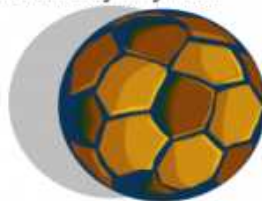
Tennis: Four Y6 pupils went to a tennis tournament at Windsor tennis club (Penarth), had a great time and were very successful.

Rugby: Y3 and Y6 went to a rugby tournament at Cardiff Arms Park. The support from their fellow class mates was superb and everybody enjoyed the trip.

Hockey: The Llancarfan hockey team took part in the dragon sports hockey tournament they didn't lose a game up till the knock out stages when they got beaten on the golden goal by St. Helens.

Football: Two football teams from Llancarfan the captains were Sam gammon and Jack parry, everybody had a great day unfortunately between them they only won one game.

By Toby and Jack



### PGL

On the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2011 Year 6 went on an adventure week to Tregoe House in Powys. We did lots of fun activities there like canoeing, climbing and lots of exercises with the whole class.

All of the activities were phenomenal and we got stuck into all the wet and muddy activities.

Ben, our "groupie" taught us loads of songs and very exciting games. It was an adventure to remember!!!

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