

LLANCARFAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 151 SEPTEMBER 2012



*Season of mists and
mellow fruitfulness*



*Fruitful memories from
a vanishing village*



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EDITORIAL

A MODEST PROPOSAL

The latest digest of the 2011 census informs us that one in six of the population of these sceptred isles is over 65. We have no figures before us, but the same might well prove to be true of this sceptred village.

However, this shocking realisation of a major drain on the nation’s economy is not without redress. As so often, a potential solution lies in the antiquarian records of John Aubrey, cousin to our former Llantrithyd neighbours. In his unpublished draft for a collection of beliefs called the *Remains of Gentilism & Judaism*, Aubrey lists the admirable tradition of ‘The Holy Mawle’:

NO. CL.—THE HOLY MAWLE.

THE HOLY MAWLE, WHICH THEY FANCY HUNG BEHIND THE CHURCH DOOR,
WHICH WHEN THE FATHER WAS SEAVENTIE, THE SONNE MIGHT FETCH TO
KNOCK HIS FATHER IN THE HEAD, AS EFFETE AND OF NO MORE USE.

This efficient process of knocking father on the head clearly has its attractions & relevance. And given that the club in question hangs behind the church door, one need have no qualms of conscience as to its application. It could be argued that any *retrospective* use for those who are *already past* their three score years and ten *might not* gain approval by the Community Council. However, for those of us still to attain our allotted span, there can be no good reason for not applying The Holy Mawle. Given then our approaching deadlines, we ask that the St. Cadoc’s PCC considers this matter with some urgency, thus enabling local families to club together in support of this ancient tradition. Please however return the club to the church hook after use.

APPLAUSE FOR THE APPLE

from Penny Fell

For well over a decade, longer ago than I care to admit, I earned a journalistic crust by interviewing for the *Radio Times*. The victims included far too many emotional actors, stand-up comics & sitcom stars. One interview though, stands out clearly. It was a profile of an immensely tall, scholarly, elderly monk called Father Edmund whose passion was - *apples*. At the Benedictine abbey of Ampleforth in Yorkshire, he grubbed, grafted, sprayed and planted orchards producing 30 tons of fruit a year. He waxed with fervour about the *Laxton Superb & Orleans Reinette*, inveighed against the ubiquitous *Golden Delicious*, and preached that every apple has its perfect time for eating.

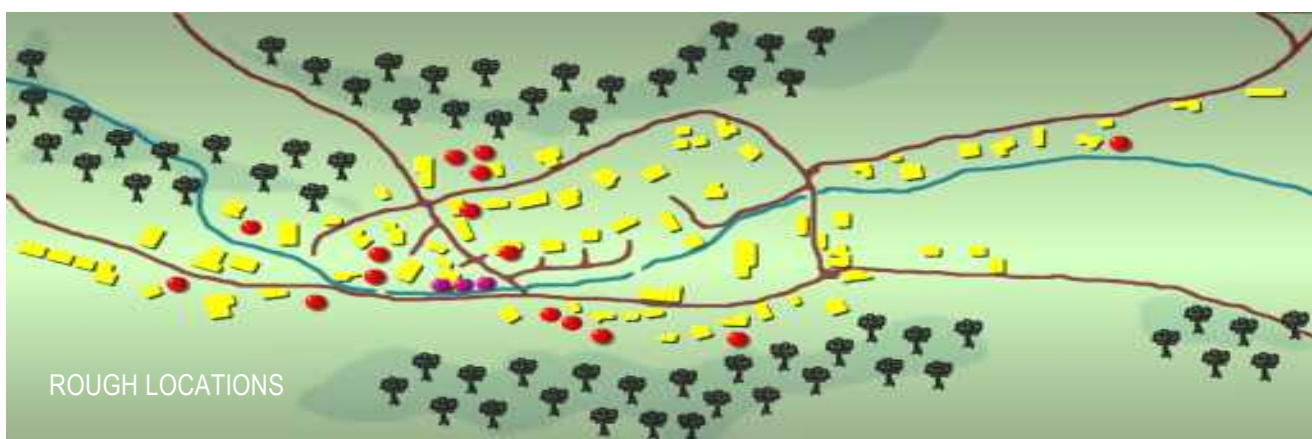
It was with much pleasure, then, that I discovered that Llancafarn also has its own apple pundit and propagator - in the person of Graham Jenkins. Graham was born at The Green, of course, and toddled all the way over to Cross Green at the age of two, to make a second family home there. In the golden memories of his youth, Graham recalls a village groaning with apples, pears and plums. Armed with a local map, I visited him in Barry and he could effortlessly mark out well over a dozen village orchards. Where now there are gardens and drives, there once existed the scrumper's paradise.

'They weren't very big orchards,' recalls Graham. 'The only big ones were at Llanvythin and Garnllwyd, those two stretched for an acre or so. But there were *small* orchards: behind Caradoc Cottage (the current site of Primrose Cottage), and where Delta Cottage is now. Behind Brook Cottage there were two - though when the bathroom came to Brook Cottage, it disappeared to make access for a cesspit. Penylan had a nice size orchard, and Broadhayes. And my grandmother had an orchard just opposite Broadhayes - I was always in and out of there getting apples and pears ...'

Nicking the fruit was part of village childhood. 'I remember, we used to have to cycle to Barry to school, you see, and stopped off in the mornings early in September and put a few apples in our schoolbags, nice to eat on the way to school. Or on the way home - school dinners weren't up to much'. Any trouble for scrumping? 'No-one bothered. Long as we stuck to the windfalls!'

Most orchards were for family use, but some people *did* count on them for an income. Graham remembers his uncle, a coal miller at Aberthaw, who owned three orchards, spending his spare time up his autumn apple trees. 'He took loads off to sell to his workmates at Aberthaw. There were lovely apples in those orchards. *Devonshire Quarandens*. You don't hear much about those, these days. They were very sweet, and scarlet, pure scarlet - no hint of anything else - and squat-shaped like a ring doughnut. They were delicious.'

Again Graham consults his map, marking out orchards at Black Horse (Cefyl Ddu); and fruit trees climbing up behind the Wesleyan Chapel (White Chapel.) ‘And there was a lovely orchard at Glan yr Afon. And on the banks of the Carfan, all along by Delta Cottage, were lined with plum trees.’ He recalls the gourmet strains of apple, each with its moment. ‘The *Morgan Sweet* – an almost honey sweet apple; and cider apples like the old *Tom Putt*. And then the *Blenheim Orange*, picked late, a beautiful keeper, lasted after Christmas.’



Back in the wartime, when you couldn't nip to Tesco's for a *Granny Smith*, even teenagers dug for victory. In the early 1940s, Graham claims with pride that he planted his very own orchard, between Cross Green and Ty Uchaf. ‘That land belonged to my father, and I planted 21 trees over two years. William Treseder had a nursery down at Duffryn and we bought the fruit trees bare root.’ He counts them off, sixty odd years later. ‘*Bramley, Arlington Pippin, Charles Ross, Early Victoria, Cox's Orange Pippin*. I used to be able to tell Steve Powell the name of every tree in his orchard at Ty Uchaf.’

Graham smiles to think that some of his trees may still be standing. This year though, they won't perhaps groan with the bounty of his youth. 2012 will surely be remembered, apart from the Olympics, as the year the jet stream holidayed in the south, and in Wales we were doomed to a Spring & Summer of perpetual February. Our confused village fruit trees, brave enough to produce early apples, found them torn off in infancy by July's 60 mph gales.

Escaping such weather, Graham is off on a cruise shortly, complete with a notebook to commit more memories to paper. He might do worse than emulate Andrew, a close friend of ours, who found, on travels in Kazakstan, the most ambrosial apple. This, he said, was the temptation Eve offered Adam. Andrew smuggled back the pips in a packet of Dunhill Filter Tips, and with amazing luck and a friendly horticultural genius, he grew a tree which flourishes just across the Severn. His fruit unofficially bears his name.

Now, the *Jenkins Jewel of Glamorgan*. That *would* be something to aim for ...

MISTLETOE – NATURE’S POSTSCRIPT TO AUTUMN

While we’re apple bound, head for the Malverns, or on to Leominster and the borders, and you see trees (apples and others too) bristling with mistletoe. But do we find this berry of the Druids in Llancarfan? We thought not, until Mike Crosta admitted that he’d partaken of the Tree of Knowledge.

My father was a good gardener, his garden big enough but small. His raspberries and gooseberries were better for not being mollycoddled. Rhubarb looked after itself – but what good pies! Strawberries grew semi-wild, but were so plentiful in the season that the neighbours did very well. We very nearly grew tired of them.

Mistletoe fascinated him. Not only did he grow it on his own apple trees, but he wanted to grow it on our sole Llancarfan tree too. He wanted to do it as birds do. After eating the berries, birds wipe their beaks sideways on a branch to clean them. Sometimes, only sometimes, the seed lodges in a crack in the branch. Sometimes, only sometimes, it germinates as mistletoe.

For years nothing happened on our apple tree. It was not a good apple tree. And so the year after my dad left us, I started cutting it down. However, as I worked my way down towards the bottom, I caught just a glimpse of something tiny and green in the bare branches. By pure luck – and without even the aid of a beak – the mistletoe seed had taken.



That mistletoe grew to almost dominate the tree. So much so that now every Christmas its berries hang in tempting locations in the house. Family, friends and neighbours, all are encouraged to uphold the mistletoe’s religious customs.

We say, of course, that it was my father’s mistletoe; that he had been keeping an eye on the tree until the mistletoe seeds finally flourished as he wanted. Who knows?

IN ST. CADOC’S REDISCOVERED PAINTINGS A LITTLE DEVIL NEEDS NO MISTLETOE TO PROPAGATE THE SINFUL PLEASURES OF THE CWTCH.

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

SOME ST. CADOC'S CHURCH DATES

- 1st Sept 11.00 am Children's Church re-starts 1st Sunday of the month
- 8th Sept St Mary's Day – St Mary the Virgin being the dedication of Penmark Church. Her day is marked with a 7.00 pm Eucharist Service for all-comers, including parishioners also from Llancarfan and Llantrithyd.
- 15th Sept St. Cadoc's Open Churches Day – see details page 12. Llantrithyd is also open and a rewarding visit.
- 16th Sept 6.00 pm – Penmark Village Festival Service –an annual event.
- Sun 23rd Sept 6.00 pm : Joint Parishes' Evensong to be held in Llancarfan.
- Sat 6th Oct 7.00 for 7.30 pm : Harvest Supper – in the Village Hall.
- Sun 7th Oct Harvest Thanksgiving - morning service: 11.00 am
Harvest Evensong: 7.00 pm.



BRAIN THE BIKE

Graham Brain – a prime mover in the *Light Up St Cadoc's* initiative – is kitting out for yet another challenge over the next year. In 2013 he plans to cycle from John O'Groats to Land's End, and promises he's fine-tuning himself to do so. Graham's ride, in support of Road Safety, is a compendium of firsts. He will regularly divert to take in the highest and lowest points of the British Isles (Ireland excluded), and its N,S,E & West extremes. Wales will feature as having the highest tidal range – on the Severn. Expect our support, Graham! – and watch this space as Graham's training enters a higher gear.



Graham (right) with his ugly sister Grizelda (Geoff Evans) spotlighted in earlier Hi Tek gear in Llancarfan's epic 1998 pantomime *Cinderella*.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY : 11 NOVEMBER 2012

As always with each year, 11 November marks the sad ritual of remembering those of our ancestors killed in the World Wars. As ever, the village will gather on Remembrance Day to thank them for their sacrifice. *Joann Quelch*, former Clerk to the Community Council, has reminded us of the practicalities of maintaining our village memorial. It is now 25 years since the Community Council refurbished the memorial (tucked behind the churchyard wall), drawing on funds from a dedicated War Memorial Account. The balance of this account was put to a final purpose on the 2nd August 1996, when Llancafán marked the outcome of sacrifice by celebrating VJ Day. The memorial account is now closed – but the memorial remains to remind us of the village's lost generation. A previous *Newsletter 30* contains an account of raising the original funds for the memorial, and those remembered identified in later issues.

JOAN JENKINS OF YSTRAD MYNACH

Our condolences to relatives of Mrs. Joan Jenkins, whose death has been reported by Phil Watts. Mrs. Jenkins became a Society member after revisiting the village to revive childhood memories of her school holidays, when she stayed with her Auntie, Margaret Sherrah. As an occasional correspondent, Mrs. Jenkins previously shared this photograph of her aunt, standing in the imposing (now vanished) porch of St. Cadoc's – not the church, but Tony & Sheelagh Lewis's house, known today as the Old Parsonage.



ANNUAL LLANCAFAN SOCIETY DINNER IN THE LLANCAFAN COMMUNITY HALL

Professional caterers will provide the dinner to celebrate 25 years of the Society : **Friday 14th September 2012** : 7.30 pm for 8.00 pm

As for drinks, you bring your own. No corkage!

Dinner £18 per person : tickets available from *Gwyneth Plows 01446 713533*

NEXT EVENTS COPY DEADLINE PLEASE 24 NOVEMBER 2012

TWO The Great British Story: A People's History

The Llancarfan Chapter

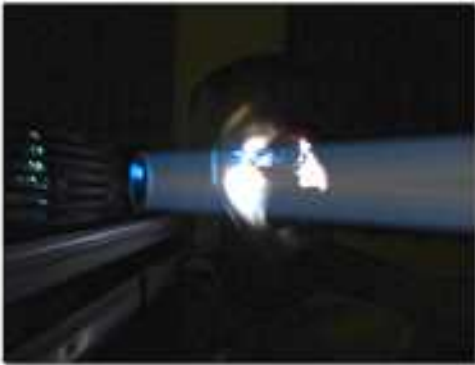
Filmed last September, St. Cadoc's gained UK-wide celebrity in Episode Five of Michael Wood's epic documentary series. In the July 20th transmission on BBC2, Michael described Llancarfan's limewashed medieval wall paintings as a 'sensational discovery'. Village youngsters triumphed with artist Emma Levey in re-creating our ancestral works of art.





Llancarfan's Community Cinema will hit the big screen on **Friday September 21st** with an Indian Summer showing of the delightful movie

❖ THE BEST EXOTIC ❖
MARIGOLD HOTEL



All are invited to join Jim Barratt and team from 7.15 p.m. for a themed event at our very own flicks in the sticks. You won't need to dress up as in *Rocky Horror* showings, but there will be Indian nibbles and a glass of fizz to evoke the drowsy summers of the lost Raj. This is a film of great charm and nostalgia.



Earlier in July, Jim's volunteers mounted test showings of multiple trailers to explore the challenges of running a cinema club. Unravelling & erecting the screen was only the first of the brain-teasers. Sound, vision, black-outs and mass-bottom-testing of the seats confirmed many things, including the need for cushions (to be provided).

After village consultation & debate, the programme up to Christmas 2012 has been settled upon:

Friday 19 October : a pre-Halloween showing of
The Woman in Black

Friday 16 November : Wes Anderson's evocative
Moonrise Kingdom

Saturday 15 December : Afternoon family special
We Bought a Zoo

Full details of screenings, ticket charges and how to become a member to enjoy discounts and other perks can be found on the cinema website:

<http://llancarfancommunitycinema.wordpress.com/>

LLANCARFAN
COMMUNITY CINEMA

MUSEUMS PIECES : A SEARCH FOR HIDDEN HISTORIES

René Halkett (*writes* Ian Fell) was a German artist friend of Penny & mine who spent his last years over the water in Cornwall. He was born in 1900, and his life marked so many significant turning points in the 20th century. (For instance, during the war he broadcast black propaganda to Germany from Woburn Abbey, and then just after the war he discovered his German general cousin in the Island Farm prisoner-of-war camp at Bridgend. Those sort of tales.) Anyway, René quaintly described himself as ‘a museums piece’.

Nowadays, some of us are also piling up points towards being ‘museums pieces’. And this set me wondering about the artefacts in all our attics – one of two of which objects should possibly be in a glass case, neatly classified (though hopefully not buried forever in an unseen iceberg of collectables in a fine museum store). Ask yourselves though, what history are *we* hoarding?

Michael Wood, for example, exhibited such an iconic object when talking to audiences who visited the excellent *Great British Story* open day on the 16th of June at *Amgueddfa Werin Cymru* – now re-designated *The Welsh History Museum*. That’s St Fagans to you and me. He was taking part in a sort of academic *Call My Bluff*, and showed a small rusty pointed object, inviting the audience to guess between a true description of what it was, and another persuasive lie about its origin. It was a fun engagement with history – we once did something similar here with blind wine tasting in the village hall!

Michael’s rusty iron, shaped perhaps like one of those square-headed nails you come across, turned out (rather wonderfully) to be a nail from the famous Sutton Hoo Burial Ship. These ship imprints, you’ll recall, were discovered in the sands of East Anglia just before the Second World War. They bore a treasure trove of Anglo-Saxon grave goods, many now in the British Museum.

Anyway, doubtless eased by the minor distraction of the outbreak of war, things in 1939 fell off the back of a boat, so to speak. The rusty nail somehow came ultimately into the caring hands of Michael Wood. And at St. Fagans he confessed to both fetishistic pride in the relic, but also to a niggling sense of guilt that it too should really become a ‘museums piece’.



Which brings me to two personal confessions about objects in the attic. The first is the Countess of Mount Edgcumbe’s pig. Cupid. Sorry, no, we don’t keep a pig in the attic. That’s reserved for the old wasps’ nest, the odd squirrel, and the occasional sleek slowworm. But I *do* have a boar’s tusk that I think could belong to Cupid.

You see, way back in the mid 1700s, the Countess Emma cherished Cupid the Pig. This beast, 'tis said, dined at table in the Edgcumbe's palatial home overlooking Plymouth Sound, even travelling with the family to London. When Cupid finally passed into a porcine paradise, the remains were buried in a leafy cwm now known as Fern Dell. (Paul Rebhan, who shares Plymouth years with us, tells me he knows the place.)

Even George III – Mad King George – paid tribute to Cupid when he invented the seaside holiday during a Royal Progress to Plymouth in 1789. Tradition has it that when George was inspecting Cupid's grave (as you do) Queen Charlotte asked the King what he was looking at. "The family-vault, Charly," he replied, "Family-vault, family-vault!"

Family vault or not, all signs of Cupid's urn had vanished by the late 1970s. Then a young man, appropriately called Barry Fox, set out to tidy up Fern Dell. Out of the earth emerged a tusk. And to shorten the tale, Barry lent it to me, and Plymouth Museum's Department of Natural History ultimately confirmed its identity as the 'canine or tusk of a boar or similar species'.

At this stage, *our* lives then had an unexpected hiccup, we moved to London – and shamefully I never returned the putative Cupid to Barry Fox. Fair play, Cupid's tusk is hardly an iconic object to rival a Sutton Hoo nail, but if it dined with a countess, it's surely a 'museums piece'!



My second skeleton in the cupboard is what looks like a square stone birdbath. We think in fact it could be a holy water stoup, hidden from the reformers and iconoclasts in the garden of the West Yorkshire house which we moved to in yet another fit of economic migration. It was a lovely old tannery house (though it must have stunk when the tanpits were open in the garden) and its posh name was 'Ellen Royd'. However, if you looked back 200 years into the list of manorial dues, its real name was 'Boggart House'.

Tolerant neighbours know that our dog is called 'Boggart', named by our children after their former home. Back there in Calderdale, many still knew our house as *Boggart House*, because a boggart (a sort of goblin or Welsh '*bwgan*') was reputed to sit in a stone throne in our garden. To our disappointment though, by 1983 the Boggart had shifted home – maybe to nearby Boggart Hole Clough? Sadly though he left no forwarding address.

To be fair, our boggart had good reason to flit. Sometime in earlier years, you see, some over-zealous former owner of our house had encouraged our local church to carry off the Boggart's Chair. (I do hope it's still to be seen in a

south-east corner inside Luddenden Church in the Calder valley? There's also a gravestone just inside the churchyard gate, marking the remains of 'William Oddy of Boggart House' – but that's another story!)

And why, you ask, was our boggart dethroned?

Our boggart was un-seated because his throne was identified as an **early church font**, its rim 'slighted' during Reformation or in Civil War times. This of course formed a sort of armchair in which our boggart could sit when, as antiquarians thought, the slighted font had been hidden away in our tannery grounds to protect it from further sacrilege. And presumably the legend of the boggart's chair grew as later generations forgot the true identity of the font.

And what's that to do with the bird-bath / holy water stoup? Well, I found *that* in a collapsed boundary wall, from which I took pains to rescue it. I can't *prove* that it's a hidden stoup, but its association with the slighted font made us take it into safe-keeping.

Today it sits here in our garden. I'm not sure if sometimes a baby boggart uses it - but we do hear noises. Should I do the decent thing, and let our boggart's stoup regain its 'museums piece' dignity?



Anyway, hopefully you saw St. Cadoc's ultimate 'found objects' – our remarkable wall-paintings - in Michael Wood's *Great British Story*, pictures from which appear in our centre spread.

But the quest remains. What other treasured artefacts are we 'curating' in our attics (or hanging on our walls)? Which are those relics of our lives, or of the village past, that we should be telling each other about? Will you come along to *St. Cadoc's Open Doors* day on September 15th and chat about them? All 'Attic Attack' stories will be gratefully welcomed – just let me know. In short, let's get together and puzzle each other with those iconic things that have formed, enriched and evoked our personal and local history.

ST. CADOC'S SINALONG
15 September 2012



As seen on tv's
The Great
British Story

Llancarfan's
Heritage in
Action

All Day
Activities
for all ages from
1030 to 1730

15 September
2012

Please note too:
Llancarfan church
is normally open
daily for visitors

See website for
directions &
further details

- ✿ **Nobble a Naughtiness**
Invent a picture of your favourite sin!
Artist in Residence Emma Levey
leads little devils a merry dance
through our vices & virtues!
- ✿ **Attic Attack** – bring
a treasured object or picture
and tell us about the story it holds.
- ✿ **Reunite** an ancient memorial
with the things its occupant owned.
- ✿ **See the latest paintings!**
Astonishing mediaeval works
of art and devotion discovered
on St. Cadoc's church walls.

www.stcadocs.org.uk/



FIFTY YEARS AGO . . . this was the delightful *Three Horseshoes* at Moulton. The pub shown here sadly vanished in a devastating fire at 5 a.m. on Saturday the 14th of July 1962. Apparently only the cellars now remain to remind present day *Horseshoe* visitors of the pub's 450 years of history.



IS THIS THE MOST COSMOPOLITAN ROAD IN LLANCARFAN?

Villager Edward Knott has pointed out that the recent road markings on School Hill are clearly aimed at French right-hand-side drivers (presumably under the influence of the nearby *petanque piste*). And now we find (thanks to Helen Isom) that back on St. David's Day 1980, her father Geoff Burrows decided to make appropriate cultural modifications to the school signs!



HEADS IN THE SAND

My apologies – print deadlines loom, and the last-minute hedge-cutting of several village phone & internet lines (perhaps too the work-commitments of potential correspondents) means you are exposed to even more reportage from your editor. Sorry.

I shall say this only once – not least because I tend to stay blissfully ignorant of planning rules & institutions until someone wants to do something beastly in our backyard – by which time the horse has probably bolted.

However, because you are Llancarfan Society readers, surely one can assume that you feel there's something here worth protecting? You may even have said so, back when John Gunson did admirable work in listing what Llancarfan dwellers thought mattered to them. Read it at http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/files/Living/Planning/Policy/County_Treasures/Llancarfan.pdf. It's intriguing; not least to learn that for instance we treasure our (money-free) red phone box by the village hall.

Back in June I was invited to dig my head out of the sand, and learn that the Welsh Assembly is planning a Heritage Bill. This will not be introduced to the Assembly before the 2014-15 session. However, if we ignore the preceding consultation sessions examining how we identify and manage our heritage – then on our own buried heads be it.

The actual session I went to was at Fonmon, hosted by the much-liked and most-shrewd owner, Sir Brooke Boothby. I knew Sir Brooke only from his reputation through his 'co-workers' (to use a very IKEA term!), and learnt much from his introduction to heritage from the 'Owner's Perspective'. (I knew that his Victorian ancestor Oliver H. Jones at times showed visiting groups around St. Cadoc's. I didn't know though that his forebears once owned Barry Island, but lost it betting on a race between snails!)

But I digress. Back in 2007 the DCMS came up with a white paper called 'Heritage Protection for the 21st century' – which ran out of parliamentary time and so never became law. Now of course, as more decision-making devolves to the Assembly, they have the task of juggling heritage protection, hoping to simplify the procedures for defending what we care about.

Did I say 'we'? I was surprised to learn that only in the last three years have owners been consulted about any proposal to list their property. At the other

end of the scale, I also learnt that being made a World Heritage Site (as happened to Blaenavon) adds *no additional statutory local protection*.

CADW looks after heritage in Wales. However, this is too simple a statement. From 'Country Landowners' to "Historic Houses" to 'Vale Planners' to (finally) you and me, all of us are in the business of conserving what we value whilst evolving with the needs of the times. (Interestingly, St. Cadoc's – as long as it has a congregation – is a 'place of worship', and can apply its own rules.) And at what stage are *our* voices heard?

Not simple then. So the question has been raised – can it be simpler? One thought being tested is to devise a 'unified consent process' so that 'applications for changes to designated historic assets' can be 'dealt with by local authorities'. It is reported that this would not happen in Wales until the said 'local authorities' had 'sufficient capacity' to do so.

Hmmm. Few of us have to worry about the upkeep of our stately piles, or face the conflict between preserving them in aspic and/or responding to present and future needs. However, we do live in a Designated Conservation Area, which status brings only limited protection against change. You will have your own views, but there are those who argue that our local planners have not been notably good at enabling us to protect what we, as individuals and as a community, value.

Think on then. Let's keep an eye on, and feed into, this Heritage bill. Heads in the sand mean plastic pimples on the horizon.

Meanwhile, it's heartening to report that Sir Brooke Boothby (deprived of Barry Island by the afore-mentioned snail race) regrets the demise of the leisure island's funfair, which brought 'pleasure & entertainment to millions'. But his dilemma is our dilemma. Where should our heritage draw the line between fossilized relics from the past and helter-skelters in the tiltyard?



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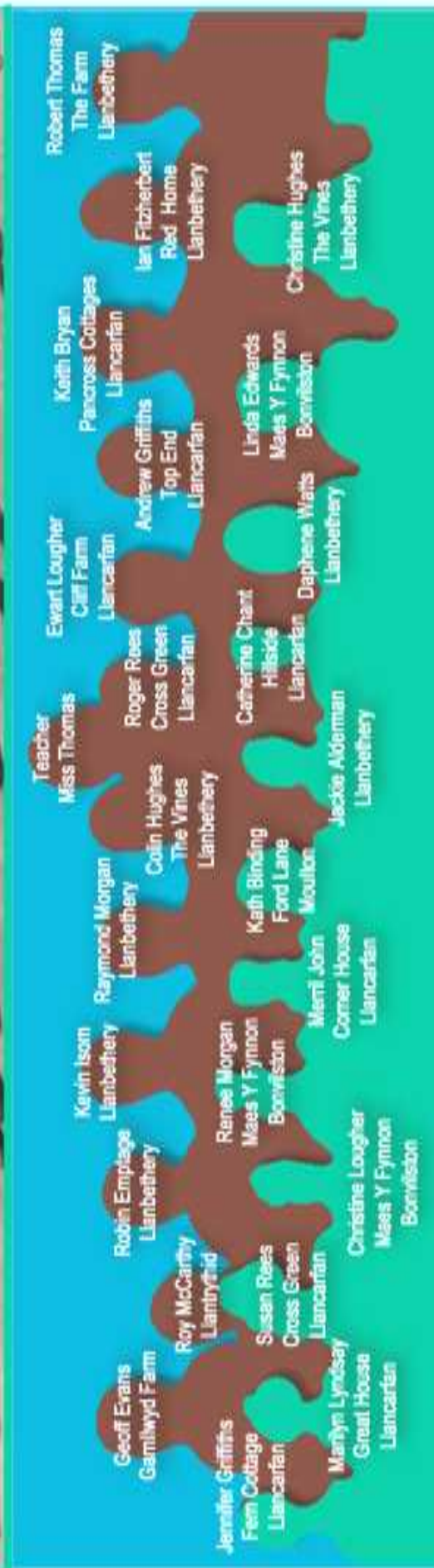
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For past issues & more details please see the website at

<http://www.llancarfansociety.org.uk/>

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In the absence of a School newsletter, Peter Badcock kindly recalled for Phil Watts the names of these 1954 pupils.