

LLANCARFAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 153 MARCH 2013



I will, as soon as I have delivered my books,
go to America . . .

We shall find bears, wolves, tygers
and other wild beasts in the woods,
but they are honest . . .

We shall know a tyger at first sight
to be what he really is,
but man, the more he wears
the form of an angel of light,
the more he is of a devil.

*Iolo Morganwg to Peggy his wife
in Flemingston, 21 December 1792.*



CONTENTS

3 - 5	PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM : HIGH DRAMA ON THE NANT CARFAN
6-7	WHAT'S OCCURIN'
8-9	TUG O' WAR 2012 (& HOLE'IER THAN THOU)
10	FAREWELLS TO ALAN TAYLOR
11-12	STOP PRESS : LLANCARFAN SCHOOL IS STILL IN DANGER
13	THE THREE LIVING & THE THREE DEAD
14-15	BRAIN ON A BIKE : THE GB EXTREME TOUR
16	A LOST IMAGE FOUND

EDITORIAL

This issue is very much a case of history now rather than of history then. During the past three months the history our village has made was noticed well beyond the bounds of this valley. The frightening 'Car in the Carfan' story is re-traced on the next page – and hopefully it will not be the cause of further embarrassment for the unlucky (and very lucky) lady swept away in the midst of the flood.

However, the events and rumours of the last weeks have caused many editorial revisions to this particular edition. It would not be appropriate for us to dabble in (too much) obscure antiquarianism when there appear to be genuine attacks on our school's survival. The story has evolved daily, reflecting the remarkable efforts on the part of articulate villagers to get their arguments heard against any threats of school closure. As the report on Page 11 underlines, **the school needs your help**. The deadline for letters to the 'Directorate of Learning & Skills' is 1 March. This edition is being chased out a week early in the hopes that **our readers are alerted to add their objections**, and thus protect our village school's inheritance of excellence.

Graham Brain though, it seems, is finding things far too quiet here. So we offer a foretaste of his sponsored bike ride from John O'Groats to Land's End.

Miserably, all our reporting has a cloud of sadness as we pass on tributes to Alan Taylor. Our President, Barbara Milhuisen, has rung from France to offer her own expression of regret. 'Alan,' she says, 'was at the very first meeting which formed *The Llancarfan Society*. From then on I have been proud to have been his friend.'

PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM! HIGH DRAMA ON THE NANT CARFAN

‘Play this again?’ asked the Forward Arrow on the BBC website for Saturday 22 December 2012. And by gosh they did ‘play it again’! The next day it was the **fourth most watched video** on the *BBC News Website*. 106,629 people clicked on the interview with Sam Smith as he re-told the tale of Llancarfan’s Christmas-shaking river drama. Amid countless British flood tales, this was the human story that caught the imagination of Britain’s media.

Of all the newspaper accounts – *Wales on Sunday*, *South Wales Echo*, *Western Mail* and innumerable Britain-wide columns – it was probably the January 3rd narrative in the *Cowbridge Gem* that published a story which got nearest to the truth. And though he braved a fair bit of leg-pulling in the *Fox*, there is no doubt that the village owes Sam Smith praise and admiration for his leading role in the hazardous rescue of the mysterious lady whose car made the terrifying flood trip from our ford to the bridge below the church.

Given that your *Newsletter* tries to record the events of today for the history of tomorrow, it is intriguing to note that ‘the truths of history’ become distorted even from the moment of their telling. Our own river drama has been a classic exercise in learning what people can recall in a state of alarm and flux. It took some time after the excitement for the details to emerge, and it to become clear that the rescue was a frighteningly collaborative village effort. Mysteries still remain, but the truth of what happened lies somewhere near to what Sam recalled for Philip Irwin in his *Gem* interview:

‘We were in the Fox and Hounds pub having a quiet pint when Josh Fell ran in to say that a car had been swept away. We ran outside in time to see the car – it was a Mini – floating by and on its way towards the bridge downstream. I took my car and Josh and Rhodri Price ran ahead. When I arrived, the car had come to rest against the central support of the bridge, and Josh and Rhodri were on the roof, trying to reach the woman. I borrowed a ladder and by then we had been joined by Daren [John], the chef at the *Fox and Hounds*, and Hayley [Hughes], a regular [!]. The car was about six feet from the bank so we used the ladder to break the side window of the car and I crawled out, with Darren and Hayley holding onto my ankles.’

After the high drama and bravery, which indeed involved Sam and Haley coaxing the apparently-traumatised lady through the broken Mini window & rung by rung across the perilous ladder (preceded by her handbag), came the realization of what might have been. Within moments of the rescue, the car was swept under the bridge in the 30-miles-an-hour torrent. It could have

been quite impossible to get her out had it been washed under there earlier. As our Josh said (he was visiting for Christmas), ‘I suddenly realized what standing on the roof, trying to smash the window, might have done to the buoyancy of the car’. (**Rhodri Price’s unique picture *opposite* shows the river’s full force against the windscreen.**) In fact, when people spotted the plunging car, and the 999 call went out to emergency services, they were adamant that no one should go in the river. But the horse had bolted, so to speak, and despite the brigade’s rapid arrival, Sam & Co had completed their rescue by the time the brigade got here. As Sue Millard implied in her radio interviews, you retrospectively cross your fingers in thinking again about the villagers’ actions, and shake a little when imagining other possible outcomes.

The following day (Sunday) the village was out with its cameras as the car was raised, slimy and dripping, onto a rescue vehicle (still ironically displaying the colours of the ill-fated *Dragon Rescue*.) It would seem that the lucky lady’s relatives were on hand to monitor the car’s recovery, but they kept a notably low profile before retrieving the sad (and valuable) contents of the Mini. Still hanging in the air too (for some weeks) were the unanswered questions about the series of events which had resulted in the lady unwisely attempting the ford, and being instantly swept down the river on the floodwaters. Then, via the pub, to an all-round sigh of relief, this [edited] ‘thank you’ message arrived:

“Dear all involved in my rescue. I cannot thank you enough for what you did for me. I know for a fact if you were not there I would not be here now. No words can express my full thoughts for what you did for me.

With much love, Jean.”

Man uses ladder to rescue motorist in flooded ford in Llancarfan



South Wales
CHŌN
HERO OF THE FLOOD
RIVER RESCUE
 My World Magazine
 My World Magazine
 70



*THIS WAS THE FORD THAT
 CAUGHT THE CAR –
 A DRAMA CAPTURED IN
 THESE PREVIOUSLY
 UNSEEN IMAGES*



PICTURES
 COURTESY OF

John Atkin,
 Rhodri Price,
 Alex Griffiths,
 Richard Tamplin
 & Ian Fell



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

ALAN TAYLOR : 6 AUGUST 1936 – 4TH FEBRUARY 2013

The shock that Llancarfan felt following Alan's death was echoed in the (more than) capacity attendance at his funeral service held in the Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium at 2.00 p.m. on Saturday 16 February. What the village had hoped would be a recovery from his incomprehensible illness had turned into the profound sadness of death. There are farewell tributes on *page 10* of this newsletter, and they speak for us all in a village for which he did so much. Good voices were heard at Alan's committal – Gwynedd Plows, Vivienne Charleton, Mick Mace - good voices for a good man. Mike Dams told of Alan's Newport childhood, National Service, and fine friendship at Midland Silicones and Dow Corning. Alan it seems ran the 'Analytical Section' – and his powers of analysis towards decent aims were applied after his retirement, not least to this Llancarfan Society, in 1994. There was much talk of pubs (!), of May Day walks, of the school & village hall. And Malcolm Davies told, with his rarely-concealed emotion, our brave Sue Taylor's story of Dr. Osbourne confiding, in the hospice, that she lives in our 'wonderful village' too. In so many ways, Alan's is a death that affects us all.

LLANCARFAN SOCIETY EVENTS CALENDAR 2013

1 st April	Subscriptions Due
27 th April	Seedy Saturday in the Village Hall
6 th May	May Day Walk
14 th May	AGM in the Village Hall
23 rd June	Ruth Watts Petanque Cup
13 th July	Llancarfan Village Show
16 th August	Mystery Trip
20 th September	Annual Dinner in the Village Hall
6 th December	Christmas Social Evening

ASPECTS OF ST. CADOC'S CALENDAR TO EASTER 2013

From 18 th Feb for 6 Mondays	1900 Lenten Talks & Thoughts at the Rectory : <i>Small is Beautiful</i>
7 th March	Phase 2 Wall Paintings Progress Meeting
10 th March	1100 Mothering Sunday
13 th March	1300 Penmark Lenten Lunch
14 th March	Dinas Powys Local History Society visit

20 th March	Creative Rural Communities consider church grant bid
24 th March	1045 Palm Sunday with donkey(s)
28 th March	1900 Maundy Service & Vigil
29 th March	0930 Good Friday Children's Service 1430 Last Hour Service
30 March	2000 Easter Vigil Ceremony of Light
31 March	1100 Easter Sunday Service

MORE CONSERVATION CONSTERNATION

After Easter – probably from April Fools' Day onwards (John Aubrey, cousin of our Aubrey neighbours, made the *first ever recorded English mention* of this day in 1686) – work begins again in St. Cadoc's. This will mean not only building scaffolding for more conservation of our emerging Deadly Sins (and possibly their Goodly Neighbours), but also significant restoration work on the mediaeval reredos. It is intended that the church will therefore be closed to visitors, other than for services, until the end of May.

Might potential visitors, and those wishing to hear about the wall-paintings, take the chance (as are several book groups) to view them in March? Any groups could contact me (Ian Fell) through the email address on p.15 below.

THE BIG PHIL

Councillor Jeff James, who (like AMs Jane Hutt, Andrew Davies and Eluned Parrott) has kept a close watch on the current school saga, continues to draw other matters to our attention. He flags up a recent ITV interview with Andrew Loosemore, the VoG's Highways Maintenance Manager, who talked (surprise! surprise!) about the potholes that plague our wheels and ankles. **Apparently the AA says a *third of people in Wales* have experienced pothole damage to their cars.** Our local highwaymen are therefore visiting 'all 23 wards throughout the Vale' following 'a customer satisfaction survey'. (What satisfaction?) Jeff suggests that we note down holes needing attention in order to take advantage of 'The Big Phil' (their name!) when it comes here.

As we fall within the Community Boundary of the Rhoose Ward, our potholes it seems could be tackled in Phase 3, which is between May & September. So watch this space – and for the record, we are told it costs £35 a pothole to fill one in. [Overleaf we note the treatment meted out to one pesky pool that refused to go away.]

SOCIETY SUBSCRIPTIONS

These are now due, please. Subscriptions are now £8 for a single member, and £12 for a family. Contacts for payment are show on page 15.



Repairing the Repairs



Trevor rescuing Fran

0900 Friday 11 January 2013. We had just grabbed our towels for our usual 'Winterbottom' dip in Trevor's pool, to be followed by a sunbathe on John Millard's beach – when this arrived. We'd met *The Boys From The Black Stuff* before, because earlier they'd tarmaced the pitted road leading to the ford. But none of us expected *The Creature From The Black Lagoon*.

Seriously though folks, the first repair to the potholes sadly resulted in a large, deep, unavoidable puddle outside Fran & Trevor's steps. Previously, water could soak away into the verges, but this greenery vanished under the new road. So the Winterbottoms rightly asked the authorities to get rid of their moat. Hence the arrival of this monster, fearsomely chewing up the recent tarmac in order to relay the surface and hopefully create a drainage slope into the river. Titter ye not! Of such matters is village life made.



This was meant to be one of those panoramic shots, where the camera

THE BOXING DAY TUG OF WAR 2012

Christmas may tug at the heart strings, but come Boxing Day, Llancarfan tugs on the rope. This year Judge Sharon Tamplin had no visiting teams to discipline – but the local trainee juniors taught their dads a thing or two about going on the pull. The usual duck egg race followed, and Daren at the *Fox* fortified tired muscles with his barbeque.

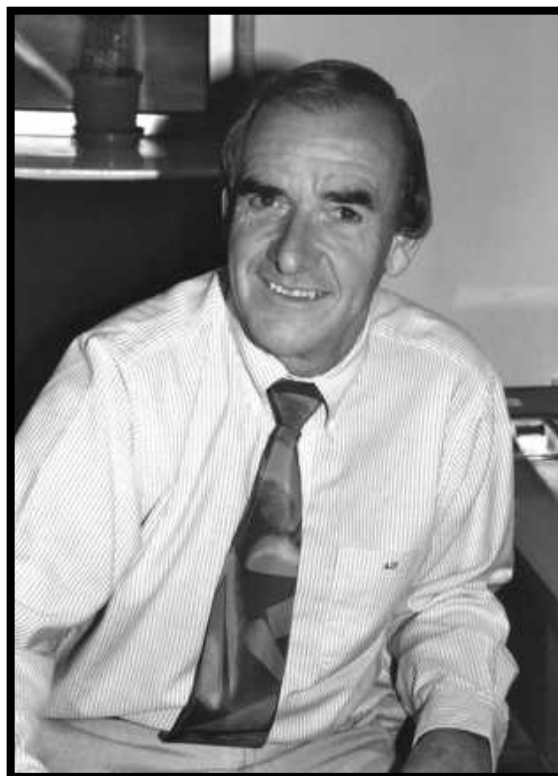


does the joints. All very well – but it still couldn't cope with the bouncing rope!

FAREWELLS TO ALAN TAYLOR

Audrey Baldwin We have a feeling of shock and great loss with the death of Alan Taylor. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to Sue and family. I am lucky in having had Alan as a very good friend, and I am sure many people are feeling this too.

Alan was fun to be with, to go places with, have an interesting discussion with, even talk about sport. Perhaps not everyone knows though how much Alan put into the village. If he saw a need or difficulty, whatever the time, inconvenience or weather, Alan would be there to offer help.



Alan made a school garden to encourage the children to grow plants and vegetables. His own was immaculate, and its produce delicious. As a member of the Llancarfan Society Committee, and the Hall Committee (LDCA), he worked tirelessly and successfully, developing plans, driving miles, and (after much filling in forms) gaining grants. Fairy lights, hanging baskets, mending things – if Alan saw something needing attention it would happen, sometimes with very ‘mucky’ jobs. Always busy, it is with such grateful thanks that we will remember him, keeping the wheels of the village turning here in Llancarfan.

Mike Dams (extracted from a funeral tribute to his former colleague).

Sue – who has been wonderfully strong for Alan – married him in 1971. They moved to Llancarfan. Alan threw his heart and soul into the village life. He worked tirelessly helping fund raise for the Village Hall, and saw this through to the end. He took the role of local school governor very seriously, and was moved to tears last Christmas when the children sang him a special carol.

Malcolm Davies (extract from his funeral address). Each of us has been blessed with the friendship of a man whose character embodied the best of all that could be found in every day life. For a time, which now seems far too brief, we were gifted with the presence of a man who demonstrated, in the anguish of his own heart, what it was to be poor in spirit. I will always remember Alan as the embodiment of what it means to be generous of heart.

STOP PRESS : LLANCARFAN SCHOOL IS STILL IN DANGER

Llancarfan School is still under threat of closure if proposals are adopted, according to a meeting held as this Newsletter goes to press. Three Assembly Members (Jane Hutt, Andrew Davies and Eluned Parrott, an all-party turnout) met with governors, parents, teachers, community members at the school on 21 February 2013. All in the hall (AMs too) were unanimous that if the Vale of Glamorgan Council carries out proposed changes to admissions policies, the long term future of our school *will* be threatened. **To protect it, people must challenge the Council now.**

To adapt a slogan, schools aren't just for children, they're for life. Llancarfan Primary is a cornerstone of our community, a magnet for young families. The school is graded as outstanding – one of Wales's best primary schools, in the top 3%. It is fully subscribed and the junior hub of one of the most vigorous and admirable village communities in south Wales. How, in heaven's name, have we reached a point where we are even talking about policies which threaten its future?

The Background: to feed or not to feed?

As you may know, the Council is considering a change in the way pupils are allocated secondary school places - to bring it into line with something they consider more "up-to-date".

All Vale secondary schools currently take their pupils from designated primaries (this is the "feeder-school system" – and Llancarfan School "feeds" Cowbridge Comprehensive, quite nourishingly). Only after this commitment are spare places open to others. This long-standing scheme has the blessed advantage of pupils knowing where they are heading, allowing schools to forge vital educational links between primary & secondary levels, all this has proven educational and social benefit. For this reason alone, changes should be challenged.

However – for Llancarfan, there is the important additional issue. The feeder school system has been a key feature in attracting families to the school. Over half of its 115 pupils come from outside our catchment area.

Parents are not stupid: they recognise the benefit of a stable transfer for their children from one good school to another. The proposed secondary admissions system (catchment areas based on postcode) will significantly threaten the intake, and therefore the viability, of schools like Llancarfan.

Even if a “reprieve” is being talked of this year, the long-term effects of a change will be the erosion of our school’s viability. So even if you are not, never have been, or never will be a parent, **please lobby against this proposal**. It might be one of the most important things you do for the village.

Llancarfan is famous for its community spirit – in the last 10 years villagers

- Funded a new building programme
- Enabled sports area use (a Tennis Club & Reynard Trust collaboration)
- Created a garden Monty Don would be proud of
- Fostered church links with St Cadoc’s

It’s a pretty safe bet, that if you are reading this, you are one of the sterling souls who have helped to ignite this beacon of community involvement. Please do one more thing: write a letter simply objecting to changes in schools admissions policy to:

Mr M Matthews,
 Directorate of Learning and Skills
 Provincial House, Kendrick Road
 Barry, CF62 8BF

Or email it:

MMatthews@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Letters should be:

- One page only – they can be as brief as you like!
- contain the words “**objection**” and “**proposed changes to admissions arrangements**”
- reach their destination by 1 March at the latest.



Parents from the school have distributed an admirable template letter which you can sign and send on, if you don’t wish to compose your own. There is an up to date website (appropriately named!) : www.outstandingllancarfan.com

As we reported last year, sixteen children moved into the village in 2011 alone, carrying vitality and youth and energetic parents. The school brought them here. Without it, Llancarfan faces a future as a retirement ghetto or a commuter ghost-town. Keep our kids!

Every voice counts – please join the chorus.

Penny Fell

THE THREE LIVING & THE THREE DEAD



Predictions from the past take on a strange relevance as Llancarfan masses its opposition to any threat to our **Outstanding Village School**. Your editor is no Gilray (!) but some time ago I made the cartoon (*above*), an eccentric response to one of our astonishing wall-paintings, known today as ***Death & The Gallant***. This 15th century painting (*below*) is a pocket version of two ancient themes. One is ***The Dance of Death***, in which all ranks of society are danced off by cadaverous zombies. The other theme is of ***The Three Living & The Three Dead***. Paintings quite often tell the tale of three living people (sometimes hunting kings) who meet three skeletal figures which utter the dreadful warning: **'As I am, so shall you be!'**

Above is my attempt at a modern version. You will recognize perhaps the **Three Living Protectors** of Llancarfan's life and vitality. From left to right are **The School, The Church, and The Pub**. Opposing them are our local versions of The Three Dead – **The Post Office, The Chapels, and The Mills**. **How many times must we cry again this fearsome warning?**



BRAIN ON A BIKE : THE GB EXTREME TOUR



It is somewhat astonishing that *Graham Brain*, who has worked for 24 years in *Serco's* traffic enforcement business – speed cameras to you and me – is nevertheless long-established as a much loved friend of the village. After all, with around 5 deaths a day on Britain's roads, we can't possibly take against Graham for helping us to care about Road Safety.

Anyway - now, he says, he wants to give something back. To this end, Graham is challenging himself to cycle from John O'Groats to Lands End in a Serco-sponsored promotion of the Road Safety

cause. Graham is of course well into his rigorous training for the ride – not least because it isn't a case of free-wheeling south by the shortest possible route. Oh dear me no!

Graham's 'on yer bike' challenge is *The GB Extreme Tour*. His punishing route encompasses 'the geographical extremes of the UK mainland' – hence his 'Extreme Tour' of thigh-chafing, calf-locking, back-graunching extremes:

1. *John O'Groats to Lands End - furthest between two settlements.*
2. *Dunnet Head – the most Northerly point.*
3. *Ardnamurchan Lighthouse – the most Westerly point.*
4. *Ben Nevis (climb) – the highest point.*
5. *Whalley, Lancs. – the most central point.*
6. *Church Flatts – the furthest point from the sea in any direction.*
7. *Holme Fen – the lowest point.*
8. *Lowestoft Ness – the most Easterly point.*
9. *Lavernock Point – the highest tidal flow.*
10. *The Lizard – the most Southerly point.*
11. *Land's End.*

And just in case we think he's a big softy, Graham adds:

12. *Against the prevailing wind.*

The ride (and climb) will run for 35 days (inclusive of rest days), starting on the 20th of May. His diversions mean that he will cover some 1,500 miles, throwing in a 4,409ft (1,344m) trek up Ben Nevis.



Hand it to Graham, he *has* previously organised 10 Serco-sponsored cycle rides, raising some £15,000 for various charities. And he hopes other sponsored riders will join him for at least one (perhaps 30?) different legs of the journey. Hopefully our June issue can report on Graham's first weeks and cheer his progress, duly toasting his bravery and his determination. Meanwhile,

all muscle-relaxing buttock-hardening tips will be welcomed. Never has *The John Bull Puncture Repair Outfit* faced such major challenges! The web supporters' page is <http://www.justgiving.com/GBExtremeTour2013>.

MEANWHILE – 'A TYGER AT FIRST SIGHT'

Chatting to Graham, he told us of his recent cinema trip to see the *Life of Pi*. This film involves a shipwreck, and the hero is stranded on a boat with a Bengal tiger named Richard Parker. Graham loved the movie, as did Kay, but her horrid cold meant Graham was cast away to the spare bedroom that night to avoid catching anything nasty. Happily Kiki the family cat (above) was company. However, at about three a.m. Graham was awakened by a raging tiger at the bottom of his bed. The squalling, howling, hissing, spitting that disturbed his Pacific Ocean dreams were enough to convince his sleeping self that he was a tiger's breakfast! Only when he prised open his eyelids did he see Kiki defending the bottom of the bed from invasion - by Ray and Blair Evans' cat, who had apparently forced the cat-flap and homed in on Graham's bed. The valiant Kiki fought back with an Oscar-winning performance as Richard Parker!

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Edited by Ian Fell : ian@mediaforheritage.com

Society President Barbara Milhuisen & Society Chairman Mike Crosta OBE

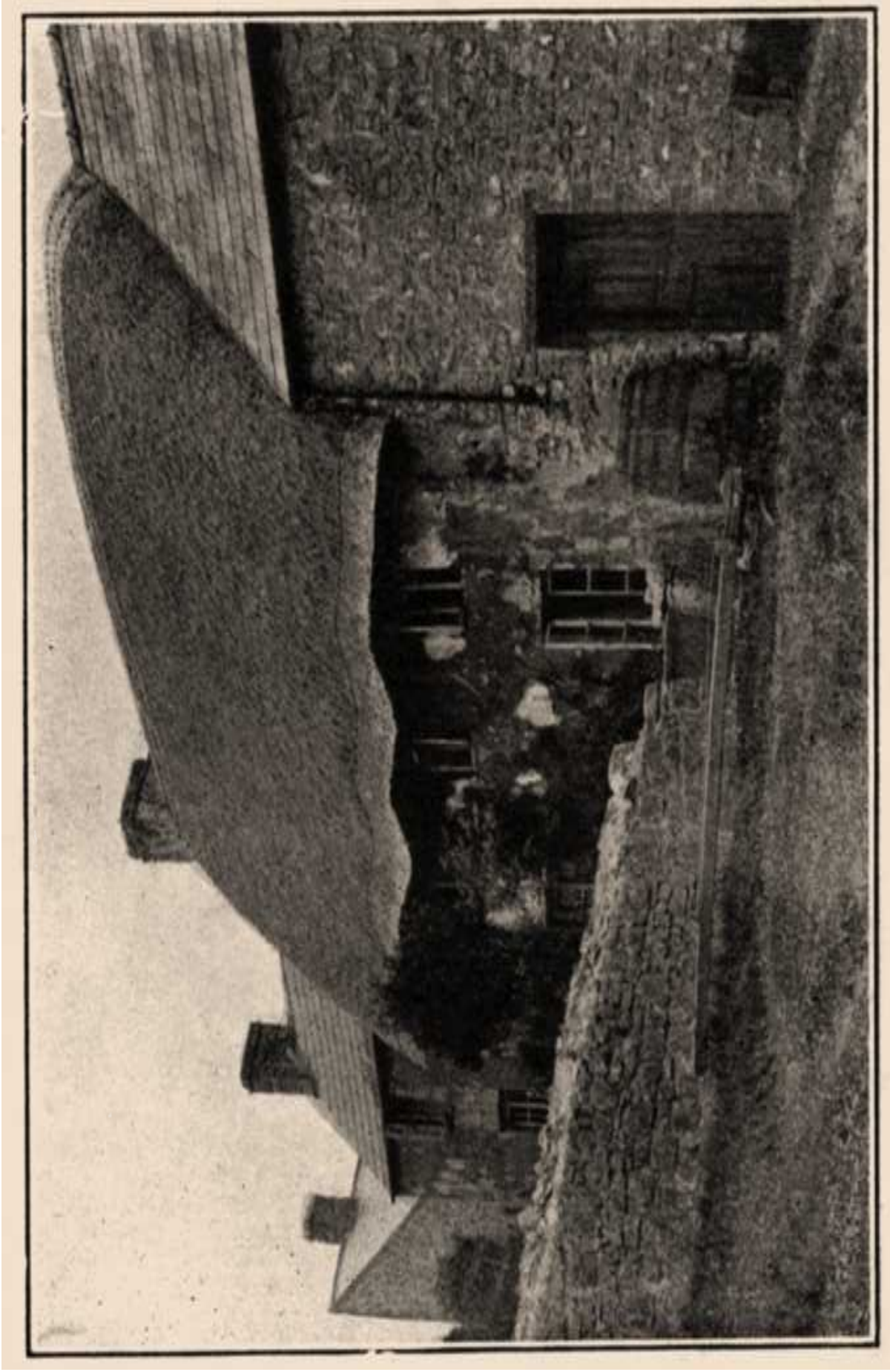
Secretary Gwyneth Plows

Subs & Membership to Joann Scott-Quelch, 2 Penylan House, Llancarfan CF62 3AH

For past issues & more details please see the website at

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

**A LOST
IMAGE
FOUND
AGAIN** ❧ **THE
HOUSE
IN
WHICH
IOLO
WAS
BORN**



This remarkably rare picture was kindly sourced by Gareth Deer, an Anglesey-based cousin of our member Wendy Lawday, who pointed it out. The caption reads 'Le Ganwyd Iolo Morganwg. Yr hen dy to cawn yn Penon, lle bernir i Iolo gael ei eni. Diweddar yw'r atodiad o'r ddeutu.' It first appeared in *Gwaith Iolo Morganwg*, 1913, and confirms the belief that Iolo Morganwg was born under this very roof in Pen'on. It is the start of a trail of discovery, and Arwyn Hughes has kindly undertaken to help trace the site of this lost building in a future Newsletter. Grateful thanks, Wendy!