

LLANCARFAN SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER 154
JUNE 2013



CONTENTS*Cover images with thanks to Emma Levey*

2	CONTENTS & EDITORIAL
3-4	GRAHAM GRABS GB AND WILL WALKS WALES
6-7	WHAT'S OCCURIN'
8-11	MEMORIES FROM THE MAY DAY WALK 2013
12-13	THE PECCADILLOES OF MR. PACE
13-14	LLANCARFAN ARTIST 500 YEARS ON
14	THE FRACKING ALERT
15	THE TRIALS OF TONY'S TUMMOCK
16	LUCKY LUCA IS RESCUED

EDITORIAL

Much to my surprise, and with more than a little embarrassment, I find myself writing this now as both Newsletter Editor and Chairman of the Llanccarfán Society. Our retiring chairman, the redoubtable Mike Crosta, confirmed at our AGM that he had indeed been having thoughts about handing over the reins, but, truth to tell, the speed with which the horse ran away with us surprised both Mike & me. This is not the place to examine whys and wherefores. It is however the place to echo the applause of all members for the guidance and enthusiasm that Mike brought to the chairman's role. Thank you again, Mike.

So. Now I've got to remember how to run a meeting. Time was I was lucky enough to spend large sums of money directing programmes for educational television. Time was I was able to shape and revel in the contributions of brilliant colleagues when running education for our National Museum. But time now – me having just hidden from my seventieth birthday – I realise how lucky I am to play some small part in orchestrating the benevolent skills of our talented Llanccarfán committee, themselves bringing the experience of many years to stimulating and recording what's special about Llanccarfán. Thank goodness too that the dynamic Jim Barratt has now joined our number, and Graham 'Brain the Bike' is again adding his inspiration and enthusiasm to your praise-worthy committee. Mike will continue to show us the way – and all I can now say is, with due gratitude, lets do the show right here, folks!

GRAHAM GRABS GB AND WILL WALKS WALES

‘And gentlemen in ~~England~~-Llancarfan now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here . . .’

Well, it feels like that anyway, as bold school bicyclists prepare to cycle from western Ireland to Llancarfan [*details on Page 6*] and meanwhile, village adventurers Graham Brain and Will Renwick are tying Britain in knots with their dramatic journeyings. Graham you doubtless know is now well into his ride from John O’Groats to Land’s End (ticking off most of Britain’s extremes on the way). Will Renwick (22) meanwhile is at least halfway through his epic *Walk around Wales*, and could well be back in the village about the same time that Graham (62) arrives to a hero’s welcome at Land’s End (23rd June).

One of the innovations of the web is that we’ve been able to take a virtual journey with them (and who says virtual is not as slimming?). Will has been Tweeting and Graham has been Blogging! On his first day out, for instance (16 April) Will told the world that he was ‘about to step out of the front door to begin my trek around the entire perimeter of Wales . . . quick cup of coffee first.’ However, Graham’s eve-of-ride revelations were even more adventurous. He blogged that ‘a good thing about the B&B was no TV’, but then Sandy, the Scottish landlady, was clearly brandishing her claymore as Graham rushed to blog his correction that ‘there was a TV in the sitting room, but at least I got to bed early.’ Close one that, Graham.

Will’s Circumnavigation of Cymru began by tracing his way east on a familiar coastline, then up the Wye valley and onto the marvellous Offa’s Dyke Path, past The Skirrid and the long march over Hay Bluff, up along The Marches, finally achieving the Wales Coastal Path at Connah’s Quay near Chester, and turning back home again (the long way round via Anglesey!). At the time of this report (25 May) Will was in Aberystwyth, slogging uphill to the National Library, & then glugging down again to sample the *Ship & Castle’s* fine ales.

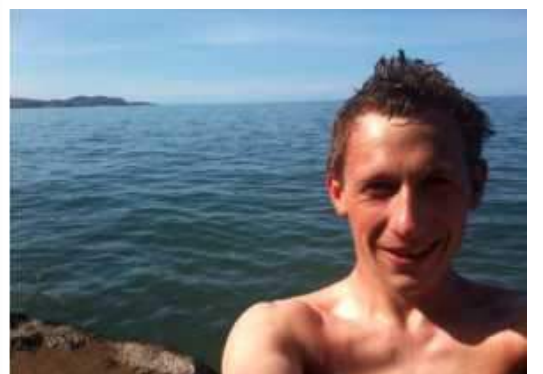
Meanwhile, on this same date (Day 6) Graham has achieved wonders. Starting in the mist at ‘the most northerly’ Dunnet Head, he has biked around 50 miles a day, making his way down the east coast of Scotland to Inverness, and then south-westerly through the great rift valley that begins with Loch Ness and ends in the foothills of Ben Nevis. Except that Graham’s Extremes demanded he went further west to bag the Most Westerly Mainland Point of Ardnamurchan before he even aspired to the heights of Ben Nevis’s 4,409 ft. A stunning achievement already – for both Graham & Will – and for those of us surfing their experiences, it is an inspiration to support their causes and enjoy a vicarious journey from ‘freezing to a bit of sunburn’ in a single day.

GRAHAM GRABS GB
<http://gbextremetour.wordpress.com/>



Photos by kind permission of Graham Brain & Will Renwick

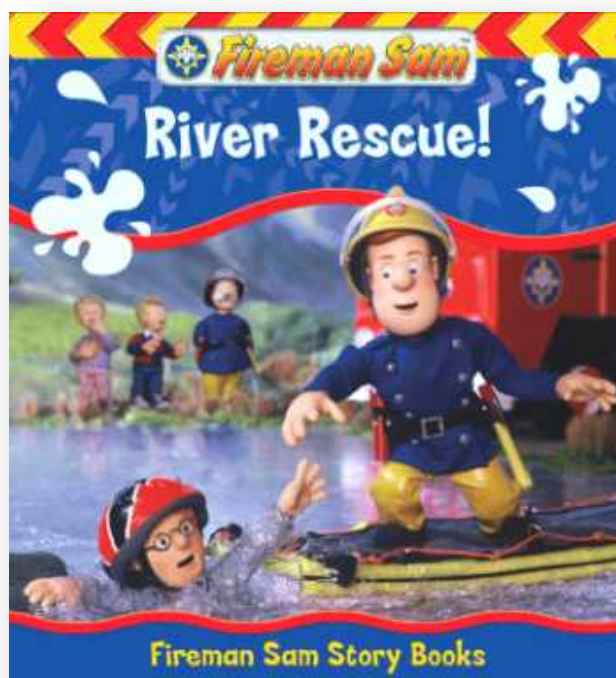
WILL WALKS WALES
<https://twitter.com/WillWalksWales>



AND WHILE WE'RE CELEBRATING OUR HEROES . . .

“EXCUSE ME, YOU'RE BLOCKING MY PLAQUE”

The praise for Sam Smith's valour in the Christmas river hasn't gone to his head – though this headline does record our hero's momentary lapse when someone masked his memorial on the *Fox & Hounds*' bar front. However, the celebration refuses to die. We can reveal that the distinguished journalist John Cosslett, former editor of the *Western Mail*, has been moved to poetry. Readers are aware of William McGonagall, Victorian creator of the abysmal rhymes about the Tay Bridge disaster. Mr. Cosslett notes that his tribute to Sam is written 'with guidance from' McGonagall, and we have privileged permission to reproduce it here:



SAM DID IT BY THE BOOK

Sam Smith and friends, supping ale at the *Fox and Hounds*,
And looking forward to a few more rounds,
Leapt into action when they heard a scream
Warn of a woman's peril in the village stream.

Her car, swept from the ford by torrent in spate,
Might now become her coffin – and seal her fate.
But Hero Sam, ex-Royal Marine, eschewing further alehouse drink,
Had plans to bring her back from the brink.

In minutes short, he and his team requisitioned
A ladder which they cleverly positioned;
And then Sam thrust it through the glass
In the car-door next to th'imprisoned lass.

Over the rungs our Hero crawled in a feat of selfless courage,
And plucked the terrified lady from her motorised carriage.
Not a moment too soon, for shortly after it was sucked
Into the death-trap of the under-bridge duct.

THE END

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

BEAK ON A BIKE

It's bikes-away on 27 June as Colin Smith, Llancarfan's Head Teacher, and a group of dads begin a five-day St Cadoc pilgrimage pedal from the far side of Ireland. They will cycle from the Comenius partner school in Killarney and bike back to Llancarfan, about 300 miles. The ride celebrates keeping Llancarfan Primary School open and will raise funds towards the school's outstanding education – and perhaps for a minibus? The charity *Dreams & Wishes*, which 'works tirelessly to fulfill the dreams of seriously ill children', should benefit too. Details will be found on <http://outstandingllancarfan.com>.

CHURCH NEWS

The curious incident of the cleric in the cathedral – the unexplained (to us) resignation of the Very Rev Janet Henderson as Dean of Llandaff – has meant new commitments for our Peggy. As Archdeacon of Llandaff, Peggy Jackson has been asked to 'have necessary oversight of the cathedral . . . until a new dean is appointed.' Clearly this means many new responsibilities. While matters are clarified re St. Cadoc's, Churchwarden Jean Vesey asks us to mention the licensing of a new Priest (Rev. Melanie Price) for Rhoose & Porthkerry on July 16th at St. Peter's Church, Rhoose, 7.30 p.m. All are welcome to 'quite a significant service with clergy top brass, 10 church wardens, local Mayors & dignitaries - and' - adds Jean – 'a bun fight after.'

LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

With AGM decisions out of the way for another year (AGM held 14 May) it's all hands to the pump (or watering-cans) for the Village Show. Ann Ferris adds a note about this below. Meanwhile, we are happy to formally confirm the self-denying re-appointment of Audrey Baldwin, Nigel Booth, Mike Crosta, Ann Ferris, Audrey Porter, Sue Taylor, and Phil Watts to your committee. Gwyneth Plows continues as Secretary, Joann Scott Quelch as Membership Secretary, honorary Historical Archivist is John Etherington, and Margaret Evans kindly audited the current accounts. Rhodi Grey has sadly resigned. Some roles remain under discussion. Welcome newcomers (or re-comers) this time are (a former chairman) Graham Brain, and as new Vice-Chairman the dynamic Jim Barratt. Your editor, Ian Fell, is now doubling as Chairman.

LLANCARFAN VILLAGE SHOW : 13 JULY 2013

The show is well on in its planning. Enclosed (if you've not already had one delivered) should be a short copy of the show schedule. As the full schedule is not ready to enclose with this newsletter, and also to save print & postage costs, it has been decided not to circulate full schedules outside the local

villages. But please put the word about. Meanwhile, if you wish to enter exhibits for the show, and haven't received a full schedule, please contact Ann Ferris, Show Secretary, on 01446 781350, or by post at Fordings, Llancarfan, CF62 3AD. Ann will gladly send you a schedule by return post.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2013

Please use your members' rights to raise any issues a week in advance to be placed on the agenda for these meetings. Next should be Tuesday 2 July.

SEEDY SATURDAY

Diligent Seedy Saturday pioneer Sara Tickner reports that this was 'gently attended' - two dozen visitors at most. Plants and seeds changed hands, though a surfeit of beautifully potted & labelled tomato plants were returned unclaimed to the benevolent Angells, hoping that the school might grow them on. A visitor from Llantwit read of *Seedy Saturday* in the *Gem*, and said they have a seed swap there a month earlier, part of their community gardening society. So come on Llancarfan – and it's time we were 'Best Kept' again!

AFTER ALAN

Alan Taylor will long be a man sadly missed from the Llancarfan Society. At a practical level, he was (with Sue) behind much of the organisational distribution of this Newsletter. He also governed the archiving of the letters online, a notable resource. And then there is the website which he long maintained with village information. It could be we are now lacking the skills to build on Alan's work – but are looking hard for guidance in this area. All advice on taking our past into the future will be welcomed with some urgency.

LLANCARFAN COMMUNITY CINEMA

After the inspiration of *Les Mis* and the astonishing *Life of Pi*, Jim Barratt (your new vice-chairman) & team bring us 'a red hot romance' called *Silver Linings Playbook (15)*. This is on **Saturday 8 June**, doors 7.15 pm, film at 7.45 pm. Then on **Saturday 6 July**, doors at 7.30, film at 8.00 pm, is the **18**-rated *Django Unchained*. The AGM is in the afternoon before the screening. *Django* is a member-chosen 'tale of slavery and vengeance' – and we are warned There Will Be Blood. And that's only the AGM. Anyone for tennis?

TENNIS

deborah.rees@greener-ways.co.uk

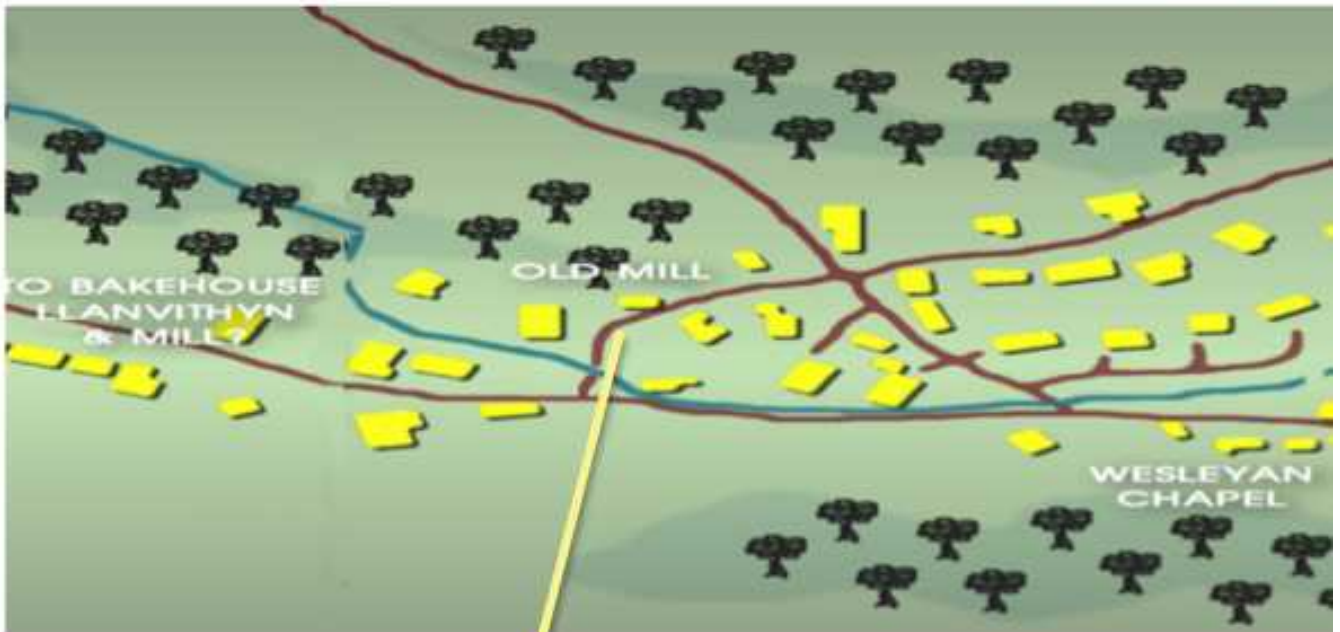
Sunday 14th July 2 - 4 p.m. BBQ Fun Day. Tennis & children's fun. Kids' & adults' food & soft drinks. Tickets £5 from Julie Archibald & Gaile Griffiths.

PETANQUE

23rd June : Teams are welcome to challenge all for the Ruth Watts Cup.

NEXT EVENTS COPY DEADLINE PLEASE : 26 AUGUST 2013

THE MAY DAY WALK 2013 : 25th



The finest of sunshine brought 47 people & 3 dogs out of and to hear about aspects of its past from several who we joined brother Clive (over from Kent) in sharing memories with. An hour & a half vanished swifter than cherry blossom as we cherry-pick memories, and add to the facts ob-

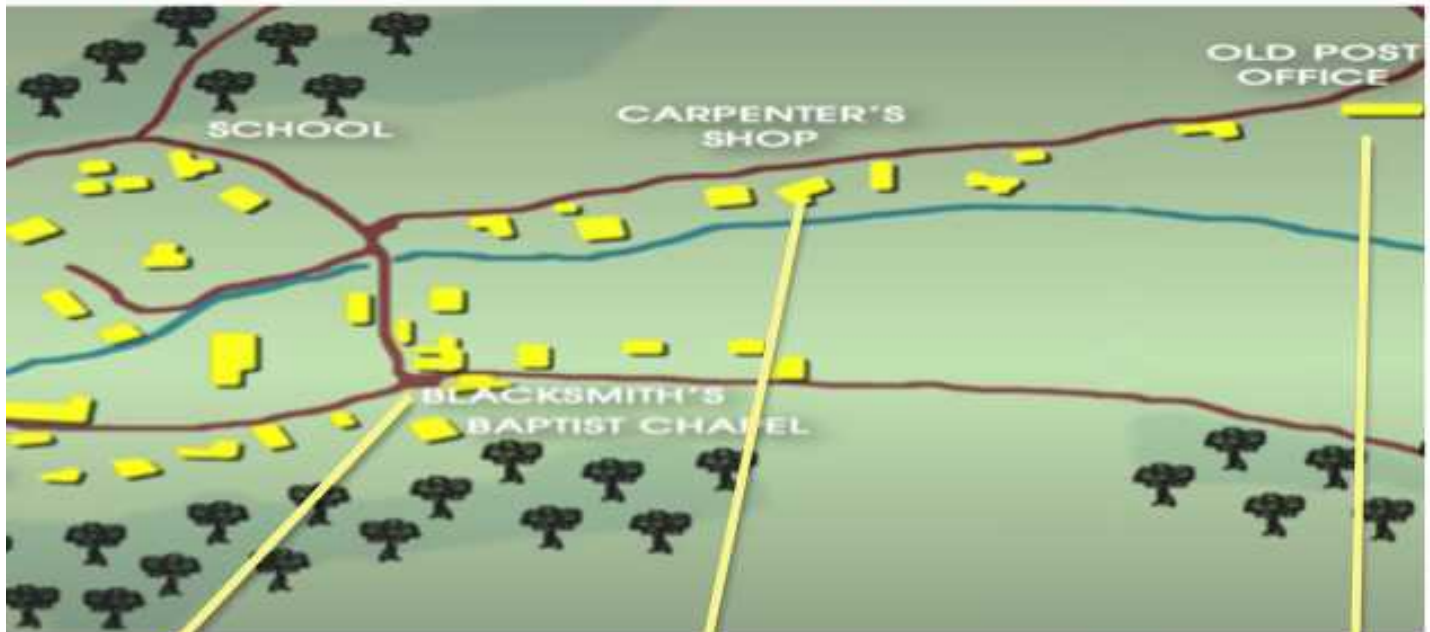
May-walkers' merry milling at the wheel of the Old Mill



Young blacksmith Jehoiada Lewis (r.), apprentice to Tom Griffiths

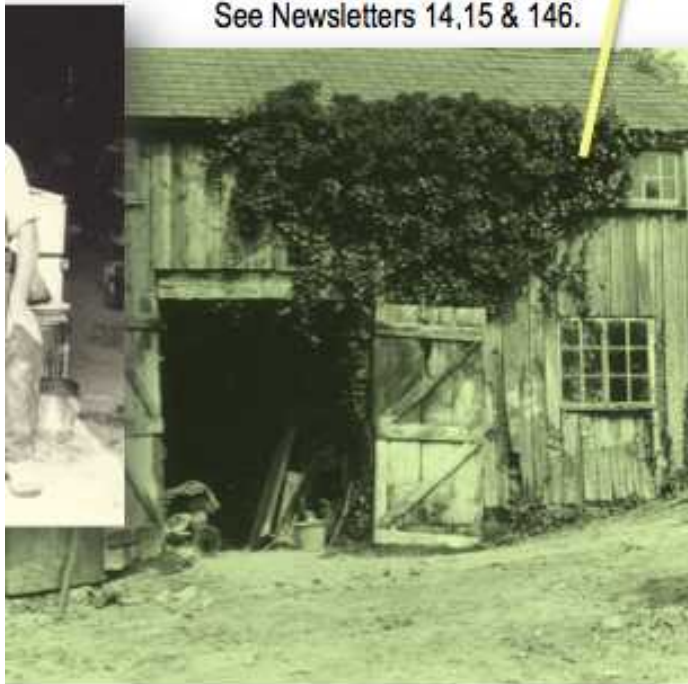


ANNIVERSARY VILLAGERS' TALES



their winter shells on Sunday May 5th to celebrate their village are born here. President Barbara Milhuisen (over from France) with knowledgeable village stalwarts Phil Watts & Graham Jenkins. in a May wind (that's enough poetics. Ed.) Over the page scured by the chilly north wind across the microphone.

Harry Hughes & workshop.
See Newsletters 14,15 & 146.



Barbara Milhuisen evokes her Llanccarfau upbringing by Dorothy, her post-mistress mum



MEMORIES FROM THE MAY DAY WALK 2013

This year's walk, devised by Barbara Milheusen as a way of introducing (& re-introducing) people to aspects of village history, began at the blacksmiths'.



That intriguing disk of metal set in front of the Baptist chapel was explained as the technology which served Jehoiada Lewis, who smithed there from 1914. Repairing cartwheels and fitting iron tyres brought a steamy spectacle to this farming village. (You can find a good sequence of images showing the process at the address under this picture.)

<http://www.blisworth.org.uk/images/wright.htm>

Stage 2 of the walk paused outside Edward & Jenny Knott's home, site of the workshop of Dai 'Glan yr Afon' Griffiths and then Harry Hughes. Here Clive Jenkins was able to evoke the trades pursued there, originally joinery. He also recalled how mason Harry Hughes repaired the village bridge, cutting & carrying big blocks of stone from the Leys (near where the power-station now stands). Dai Glan yr Afon had apparently other skills – as a master at solving crossword puzzles. Clive said he won large sums of money from the *News of the World* for doing this. Young Clive, called in to clean the workshop loft, saw the evidence : not piles of hidden money, but string-bound bundles of Dai's solved crosswords.

Staging Post 3 was literally a 'post' house, and was the childhood home of young Barbara Jenkins [later Milheusen] herself. Her mother Dorothy had learned post-mistressly skills working with Johnny Jones at the previous village post office, a part of Great House. This business disappeared, but the need didn't go away, so the council built two houses out there on the Pen'On road, one for the school's head teacher, and one for a postmaster or mistress. Dorothy got the job, and Clive helped make the 'Post Office' sign.

As for the postbox (seen in the centre spread) it has a distinguished history because it has swallowed 'letters home' posted by athletes from 35 nations. In 1958 this very postbox sat in the Athletes' Village at St, Athan, home to some 1450 competitors who took part in Cardiff's Empire Games. 'Somehow or other,' said Barbara, 'my mother found out about this postbox, and so it was brought from the Athletes' Village, and I'm pleased to say it's still here!'

Barbara's mum had interests beyond the post office counter. Indeed, says Barbara, she was much more interested in working in the garden. This passion she shared with Charles Bryer, who for a time ran the *Fox & Hounds*. They worked to cultivate their patches and at least twice entered our village for a Best Kept Village award. It paid off. In 1963 Llancarfan became the *Best Kept Village* in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The cup marking the triumph was duly displayed in the Post Office's passageway, the award proudly presented on a red plush cloth. That was until the day that Barbara's Mum's chip pan caught fire whilst she was tending her prize-winning garden.

'Well,' said Barbara, 'She smelt burning, rushed into the house, rescued the chip pan, threw it down – and the cup's chenille cloth caught fire with the burning fat. It was a gold cup. And she thought "My gosh, what if it melts?" '



The Best Kept Village Sign – & note how much grass has gone



Charles Bryer, Dorothy & cup

The upshot was that she grabbed the cup, burnt her hands, threw the award outside, and saw to her injuries. We are told that people were duly sympathetic, but Dorothy's actions did *not* meet with the approval of the chairman of the Parish Council, Mrs. Ruth Jenkins. She had taught Barbara's Mum in school, and consequently 'my mother always stood to attention.' 'Dorothy,' said Mrs. Jenkins, 'You are not responsible. I'm taking the cup back!'

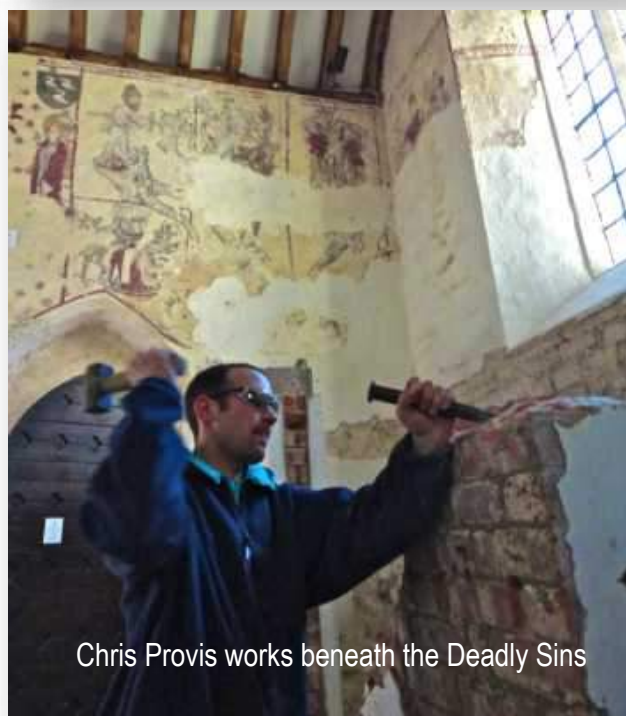
The final stage of the walk (we'd already been entertained for well over an hour) was outside the Old Mill. This we learned had been run as a corn mill by a family called Price. However, it went into disrepair, and found future use as a storehouse, a granary, and a home for chickens. All of which whetted our appetite for re-visiting the online *Newsletters* to follow up the history. And it also gave several of us an excuse to try one of the *Fox's* excellent lunchtime bar meals after the mental exercise of the Maytime walk.



THE PECCADILLOES OF MR. PACE



Pace's arch supports Epstein's *Christ*



Chris Provis works beneath the Deadly Sins

We would not for a moment suggest that the distinguished architect George Pace committed sins of an amorous nature – which is quite often what is understood by the word ‘peccadillo’. ‘Peccadillo’ in fact means a ‘small sin’ - as opposed to the Seven Large & Deadly Sins which continue to be revealed to our visitors’ wonderment on the church walls. However, the shots above show the latest sin which had to be tackled by the Conservation Panel of St. Cadoc’s P.C.C.

As the moral guidance of our astonishing ‘University of the Middle Ages’ slowly re-appears, it has become clear that new brooms of the 1960s unwittingly swept away some of the artistry of the 1480’s. The fact is, the respected architect George Pace (1915-1975), who created his stunning arch (seen above) in Llandaff Cathedral, also designed for St. Cadoc’s what many felt to be (frankly) an undistinguished vestry of brick & concrete.

In early April of this year the church carried out its 'faculty' (that is 'permission') to knock the vestry down, which it will now replace with a new vestry near the foot of the church tower. They say it was the very devil to demolish, not least because the bricks were laid, it seems, upside down.

Sadly, what the demolition, and the careful 'vibration-free' removal of the brick wall has confirmed, is that when Pace's vestry was built, this seems to have caused the disappearance of a significant lower section of the Seven Deadly Sins. So for the last two months of April & May, Jane Rutherford and Ann Ballantyne have been busy not only in consolidating and uncovering more of the surviving Deadly Sins, &c., but are also hoping to rescue any fragments of painting still clinging to the walls at the lower level.

What exactly disappeared when the vestry was built? Clues barely survive to show us where the sinners, which we deduce were doomed to slide into the necks of a seven-headed dragon, actually ended up. Did the Pace works unwittingly destroy a fiery hell or a dragon's belly – or something else? Or must we take some comfort in not knowing our ultimate doom, should we be personally tempted to try any of Llanccarfan's world-important Deadly Sins?



Emma Levey
Llanccarfan Artist
500 Years On





LLANCARFAN'S DICK WHITTINGTON

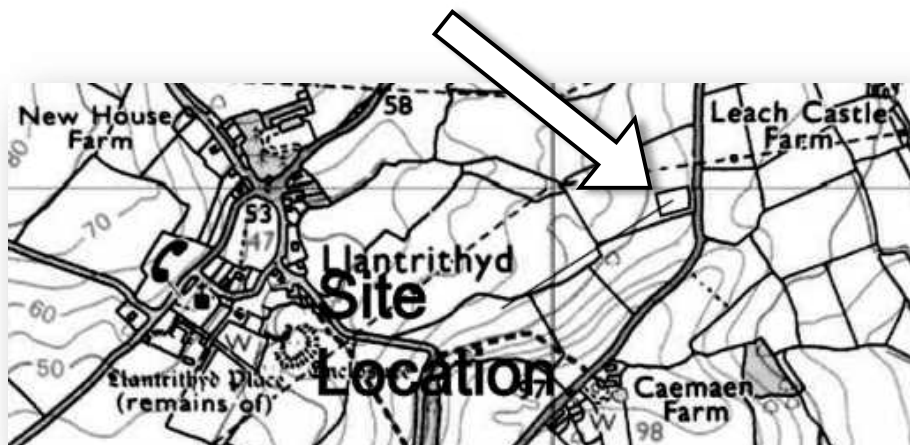
(we always knew she was a girl really) does seem to be finding the first hints of fortune in London Town. **Emma Levey** (of Little Mill) is up in the smoke, making progress in her career as a highly talented illustrator. Our village has long admired her skills with pens & paintbrush (not to mention the beer handle in the *Fox*), and now it's London's turn. Emma is just signing with publishers *Top That!* for publication of her children's book about Hattie Peck, a hen inspired by the feathered companions of Emma's Little Mill childhood. She's the wind-flustered fowl on our front cover!

Perhaps you've already discovered Emma's greetings cards (which even turn up in *Tescos*), and have enjoyed her delightful cameos of animal life. (Perhaps too you saw her spirited appearance as St. Cadoc's 'Artist in Residence' in Michael Wood's *Great British Story* series.) But now a growing public will meet Emma's menagerie of animal characters, and the Leveys can celebrate hatching their very own Beatrix Potter of the heritage Vale.

Emma's fame has in fact spread even further than Highgate Hill. In March she travelled to Bologna where, despite tremendous competition, she made a great impression at the Children's Book Fair. Paint again, Whittington!

DRILLING ALERT : PLANNING APPLICATION 2013/00335/FUL

This is one of three sites now identified in a current planning application to drill an exploratory borehole to test for gas reserves. It's just by that blind bend on the top road leading



to the A48, which we are told is our friend Evan Williams's land. Readers may well agree with Andrew Davies AM that "It is regrettable that the applicants have failed to take the time to consult with locals . . . [and so] . . . appreciated how unsuitable this rural and isolated area is for an operation of this type and scale." Councillor Jeff James has now 'called in' the application to the Planning Committee, due to meet on 6th June. An opposition group has been established, coordinated as villagersagainstdrilling@gmail.com. Please monitor this villagers' site for further information – and of course readers may wish to respond further following forthcoming developments.

THE TRIALS OF TONY'S TUMMOCK

If I were to run this computer solidly for a month, it would apparently use around 240 kilowatt hours of electricity. By comparison, Tony's Tummock (there are other terms of endearment available) aims to produce *500 kilowatts per hour* of electricity. And now, according to the project manager, Chris Hanks, the green blip on the skyline is actually working at 75% of its capacity.

Chris illustrates, in a latest welcome update, some of the drolleries of power production. Even though he is only some 2 miles from the mighty generator at Aberthaw, the nearest sub-station is 8 miles away! This inaccessibility of the power network has caused teething problems for Tony's Tummock, which of course feeds power *into* the grid. Pancross's bio-digester needs to generate continuously, but the national grid (connection?) was intermittent, and initially shut them off from the grid 3 or 4 times every day. This issue it seems though is now resolved (so maybe we needn't understand it anyway)!



You'll know that the digester is fed with slurry, manure, and grass, which it digests to make methane, which in turn is burned to make electricity. But, you may ask, what happens to the wet solids that survive the process? Apparently, Chris explains, he is now in the early stages of running an on-site dryer to turn it into cattle bedding for Pancross. This however won't be efficient until the Bio-digester generates at full capacity, because they need the 'waste' hot water to dry the bedding material. In Chris's words 'As the system is a biological one, it will take 12 to 24 weeks to build up the biological mass to digest the solid energy, so we take small steps forward each day.'

To be fair, the walkers among us have certainly had our own 'steps forward' made pretty unpleasant by the biomass process. Vale Bio-Energy has applied to divert the public footpath to avoid the facility, redirecting it to follow the hedgerow near to the plant, using 'the all weather surface to join up again at the road'. They've suggested to the Vale planners that a public right of way through such a facility is not really desirable, and they hope that a diversion would 'not negatively affect the quality or distance of the footpath'.



LUCKY LUCA IS RESCUED : Yet another drama in the ford

The Gem (9 May 2013) carried our full story of Llanccarfan's latest drama. On Bank Holiday Monday, Louise Iles, hacking from Liege Manor, was crossing the ford with 26-year-old Luca when (like many a cyclist) he slipped on the hazardous lichen there. For two hours Luca's breeder Sarah Bassett did everything to rescue the bleeding horse, even calling the fire service's Animal Rescue team from Malpas. Then, just as they were fearing the worst, brave Luca summoned his final strength, and stood up. The profoundly relieved team were able to walk him gently home to his paddock, where he made a rapid recovery. 'Once home,' said Sarah,

'it was like he was in the paddock for the Grand National.' Sir Bradley Wiggins eat your heart out!



© All contributions to this Newsletter are copyright of the Llanccarfan 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 : newsletter@mediaforheritage.com

Society President Barbara Milhuisen
 Retiring Society Chairman Mike Crosta OBE
 Secretary Gwyneth Plows
 Subscriptions & Membership to
 Joann Scott-Quelch, 2 Penylan House, Llanccarfan CF62 3AH

The publication of this newsletter is again subsidised by a greatly appreciated grant from The Vale of Glamorgan Community Fund

For past issues & more details please see the evolving website at <http://www.llanccarfansociety.org.uk/>