

LEST WE FORGET

**LLANCARFAN
SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER 159**

SEPTEMBER 2014

Thomas Hartrey
Llancarfan

David Rhys Davies
Llancarfan

David Lewis
Llancarfan

Lewis Hartrey
Llancarfan

Tudor Davies
Llancarfan

Reggie Lewis
Llancarfan

Owen Evans
Llanbethery

Emrys Morgan Evans
Llanbethery

Gwilym Lougher
Llanvythin

William Howells
Llancadle

Thomas Matthews
Llancadle

Henry C. Gainey
Old Post

Ivor M. Thomas
Curnix

Thomas Taylor
Liege Castle

Edward John
Flaxland

D.Stanley Sherrah
Flaxland

CONTENTS

3 - 9	REMEMBERED IN STONE
10 - 12	A POSTCARD TO WALES
13	A CENTURY LATER
14 - 15	WHAT'S OCCURIN' . . . OR EVEN OCCUR'D
16 - 20	REMEMBERED IN STONE CONTINUED
21 - 22	THE PAIN THROUGH THE WALL and THOSE WHO RETURNED
23	GLAMORGAN GAZETTE : 3 JANUARY 1919
24	LIFE GOES ON : THE VILLAGE SHOW DAY

EDITORIAL

This extended edition of the Llancarfan Society Newsletter¹ tries to reinstate the sixteen men named on our World War One memorial into their life in this community. The contributions here echo and compile earlier research by many people, not least the work of our first editor, Dr. John Etherington. On this occasion we are indebted to Nigel Williams who, despite having his Llantwit Major Local History Society to archive, has more than devotedly drawn on newly available records for his research & recording of the lives of the lads on the memorial. Nigel's close connections with Llancarfan come not least through his Auntie Carol in Llanbethery. Our grateful thanks, Nigel, for enabling this closer connection with the boys who died for our present.

Thanks are due too to those who have shared their stories & images – Ann Ferris, Rhodi Grey, Graham Jenkins, Gordon Kemp, Joann Quelch, David Robinson, Sue Taylor, others too. How often we report again on that harrowing war will depend on your memories demanding to be recorded here. As John Etherington found, documenting the tragedies of that insane conflict is a sensitive, sometimes depressing, activity. What lessons can we learn, and put into practice, in this confused world that those men rescued for us?

Finally, it's worth noting that rich resources await us learner-historians online. Among them are genealogical sites such as *ancestry.com*, the census records, *Forces War Records*, *British Newspapers Online*, and Wales's National Library's resources, like their invaluable *Welsh Newspapers Online*.

¹ With thanks to our printers, Liam & his colleagues at *Infographics*, Vale Business Park, Llandow.

REMEMBERED IN STONE

An historical tribute by Nigel Williams

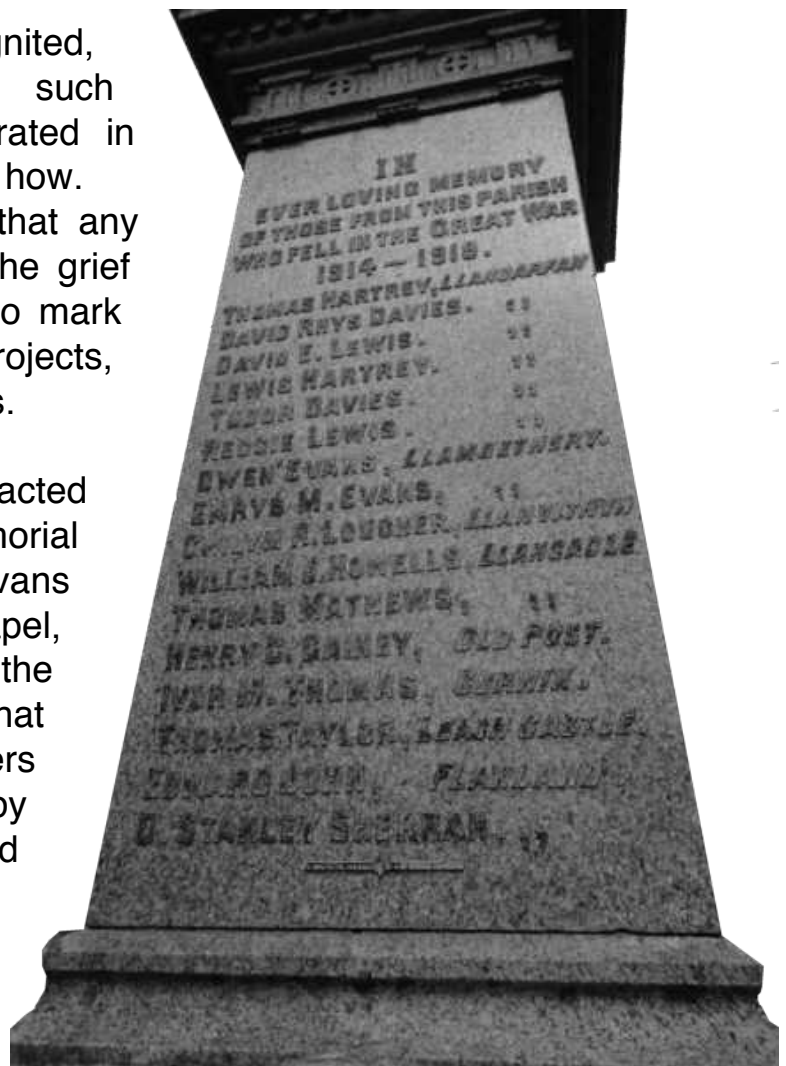
At dusk on Monday 3rd August 1914 Sir Edward Grey sat in his room at The Foreign Office and made a comment about the lamps going out all over Europe. When those lights were turned on again 17 men from Llancarfan had given their lives and 83 names had been recorded in the Roll of Honour as serving their King and Country.

The numbers who had served equated to roughly 20% of the population, a figure similar to that from most communities in the Vale of Glamorgan. Of the 17 who died, all bar one had served in the army, with one lone representative of the Merchant Navy. The majority were teenagers or in their early twenties, and at the time of recruitment a number had moved away from the village and were working elsewhere.

Once the lamps were reignited, thoughts turned to whether such sacrifice should be commemorated in the towns and villages and, if so, how. A number of communities felt that any memorial would only increase the grief felt by families. Others looked to mark the tragedy through building projects, such as halls or cottage hospitals.

In Llancarfan, the villagers acted quickly. In June 1920, a memorial was unveiled. The Rev. W E Evans of Carmel Congregational Chapel, who was the Chairman of the Memorial Committee, reported that it was a credit to the parishioners that they had contributed £500 by July 1919, and that everyone had helped and no-one hindered.

On 21st November 1918, ten days after the cessation of war, *The Western Mail* included an item noting that 74 old boys of Llancarfan Council School had gone off to war. Eleven of them had paid the ultimate sacrifice. Sixteen names eventually appeared on the roll of honour on the parish war memorial.



■ DAVID RHYS DAVIES & TUDOR DAVIES ■

Two of those who died, and are remembered on the Llancarfan memorial, were sons of the Headmaster Rees Davies and his wife Mary. The family had moved to live at 35 Oxford Street in Barry shortly before War broke out.

David Rhys Davies was 19 when he enlisted in September 1914 in Barry. He was an apprentice fitter with the Barry Railway and still had a year left to complete his apprenticeship. David joined the 11th Battalion of the Rifle Brigade which embarked from Folkestone for France on 21st July 1915. Less than three months later the Battalion came under heavy bombardment whilst in the trenches. The war diary records “only one rifleman was injured”. That rifleman was David who died on 3rd October 1915 and was buried in the Royal Rifles Graveyard at Laventie.

Tudor Davies, the younger son, was 19 when he was killed, a poignant 12 days before the Armistice, on 30th October 1918. Tudor served with the Machine Gun Corps, and he is buried in Le Cateau Military Cemetery.

■ OWEN EVANS & EMRYS MORGAN EVANS ■

The Rev. William Evans had become minister of Carmel Chapel in 1880 and he, his wife and children lived in The Manse in Llanbethery. He was well-known throughout the Vale of Glamorgan and so widely respected by all denominations as to be accorded the soubriquet “Bishop of the Vale”.

Owen and Emrys were two sons (out of eight children) born in Welsh St. Donats. **Owen Evans**, ‘a sculptor’ in the 1911 census, joined up and was posted to the 7th Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment, as were several Vale volunteers. The Division, of which the Battalion was a part, saw action in week one of the Battle of the Somme in July 1916, suffering heavy casualties – 189 officers and 4576 men. Sadly, Owen was one of them, killed at Mametz Wood, and he was buried in Ovillers Military Cemetery. He was 24.

Emrys Morgan Evans was two years younger than his brother Owen and was an Office Boy in 1911. He joined up later in the War, presumably as a result of conscription, and was posted initially to the Welsh Regiment and later to the 2nd/4th Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. The battalion had arrived at Laventie on 11th September 1918 and became engaged in a fruitless attack during which the battalion’s second VC was earned. The engagement also cost Emrys his life on 12th September, and his name is to be found on the Ploegsteert Memorial as his body was never identified. Both sons were commemorated on a memorial tablet in Carmel Chapel.



Emrys Evans & the Carmel Chapel memorial stone

■ HENRY C GAINEY ■

Augustus Samuel Gainey worked for a number of years on the railway before becoming a licensed victualler and a well-known “mine host” at *The Old Post*.

His son, **Henry Charles Gainey**, who had been born in 1889, had followed in his father’s footsteps, and in 1911 was assisting an uncle and aunt in running *The Cambrian Hotel* in St Mary’s Street in Cardiff. Later he moved to the *Albert Hotel*, also in St Mary’s Street. Henry enlisted in the Devonshire Regiment, rising to the rank of Temporary Lieutenant. He was killed in action at Mametz and was buried in the Flatiron Copse Cemetery there.

■ THOMAS HARTREY & LEWIS HARTREY ■

William Hartrey had been born in St Athan and had worked on farms across the Vale, before marrying Elizabeth Howells, a member of an old Llancarfan family, in 1895. In 1901 they were living in Cadoxton, Barry, but by 1911 had moved to Corner House in the centre of Llancarfan.

Their eldest son, **Thomas Hartrey**, had been born at Moulton in 1896 and, on leaving school, had been apprenticed to Thomas Griffiths, the blacksmith, for 4 years. He enlisted on 4th September 1914 in Barry. Thomas was described in the paperwork as being 5 foot 7 inches tall, weighing 137 pounds, with grey-hazel eyes and a fresh-faced complexion. The records also reveal that he still had a year to run on his apprenticeship.

On 5th September Thomas joined the Prince Consort's Own, 8th Battalion Rifle Brigade at Winchester². The battalion had been formed on 21st August 1914 and was billeted at Grayshott. In May 1915 they left Aldershot for the front, but before that Thomas seems to have been absent without leave for short periods on two days in March, for which he forfeited 9 days' pay.³ He had only been in Flanders for two months when he was killed in action on Friday 30th July 1915 and his body was never recovered. His name is recorded on the memorial at Menin Gate.

Lewis Hartrey was three years younger than Thomas and one of twins. He followed his father and worked on the land, being described in his Service Records as a ploughman. By the time he joined the army, conscription had been introduced. He enlisted at Barry on 29th August 1916 aged 17 years 11 months. He seems to have joined the Gloucestershire Regiment and was posted to France on 10th October 1917 for a few weeks before returning home. In the following months he was transferred to 2nd Battalion South Lancashire Regiment with whom he returned to the front on 29th March 1918. Twelve days later Lewis was one of 41 men lost by the Battalion. Just like his brother, Lewis has no grave and his name is recorded on the Ploegsteert Memorial, Hainaut in Belgium.

■ WILLIAM HOWELLS ■

Not all the young men who left the village to find employment in the Valleys ended up working in the coal-mining industry. **William John Howells** was working in a bank in Aberdare when he enlisted there. He was the son of Samuel and Elizabeth Howells and had spent most of his childhood, living in what was described in the 1901 Census as the Court House in Llancadle, where the Howells' family farmed. Father Samuel died in 1907, and in 1911 Elizabeth and her children were living in Old Village Road, Barry. When William joined the London and Provincial Bank, as a clerk, Elizabeth must have returned to the family home.

William must have enlisted early in the War as his army number was 2098. He joined "C" Company, 11th Battalion, London Regiment, Royal Fusiliers and served as a Private. William Howells was killed in action on 10th February 1917 and his body was not found.

William Howells' name appears on the Thiepval Memorial.
He was 20 years old.

² **8th (Service) Battalion** Formed at Winchester on 21 August 1914. Landed at Boulogne. 27 April 1918 : reduced to cadre strength. 16 June 1918 : Cadre disbanded at Desvres on 3 August 1918.

³ The pay for an ordinary soldier was 1s 9d a day. It was adjusted in 1916.

■ EDWARD JOHN ■

The sudden mobilisation and expansion of the British Army in 1914 meant that certain sections of its administration came under extreme pressure.

In Victorian times each member of a regiment received his pay from a Paymaster, but in 1878 officers from the Control Department and Regimental Paymasters were brought together to form the Army Pay Department. Each of the 69 Brigade Depots possessed Pay Departments and in 1893 the Military Clerks, who assisted these Officers, were formed into the Army Pay Corps. This system was found to be flawed during the Boer War, and subsequently a two-tier system was introduced whereby Regimental Officers in units paid the men, while Paymasters kept the permanent accounts in fixed central offices in the UK.

When hostilities started, these offices suddenly found themselves inundated with work and, whilst civilian staff were recruited to deal with the basic duties, the army filled the higher administrative posts with men whose regiments deemed them unfit for active service. It was for this reason the **Edward (Teddy) John** found himself in the Army Pay Corps.

At the outbreak of war Teddy was 15. He was one of the seven children of Edward and Catherine John, who farmed at Flaxland, and was training to be an auctioneer. It would seem that he was probably a conscript, and that his regiment found him unfit for service overseas. They transferred him to the Army Pay Corps at one of its centres in Shrewsbury where he attained the rank of Lance Corporal.

After the War ended, the process of repatriation of the troops took some time, during which period they still needed to be paid. Consequently Edward was still working in Shrewsbury when he contracted peritonitis and died in hospital there on 18th June 1919. He was buried in the Bethlehem Baptist Chapel yard without military honours at his family's request. The only one of the sixteen to return to the soil of his home, he is commemorated by a headstone in the churchyard at St Cadocs. The stone is maintained by the Community Council for the Commonwealth War Grave Commission.



■ DAVID LEWIS & REGGIE LEWIS ■

David Lewis had been born on 16th May 1882 to William and Catherine Lewis. As a nine-year-old he was staying with a paternal grandmother, a situation not uncommon in the Vale. According to the 1901 Census, David was a blacksmith and was recorded as visiting a family in High Street, Barry. He may however have been boarding there as his skills would have been much sought after in the various works which had grown up around the rapidly-expanding docks.

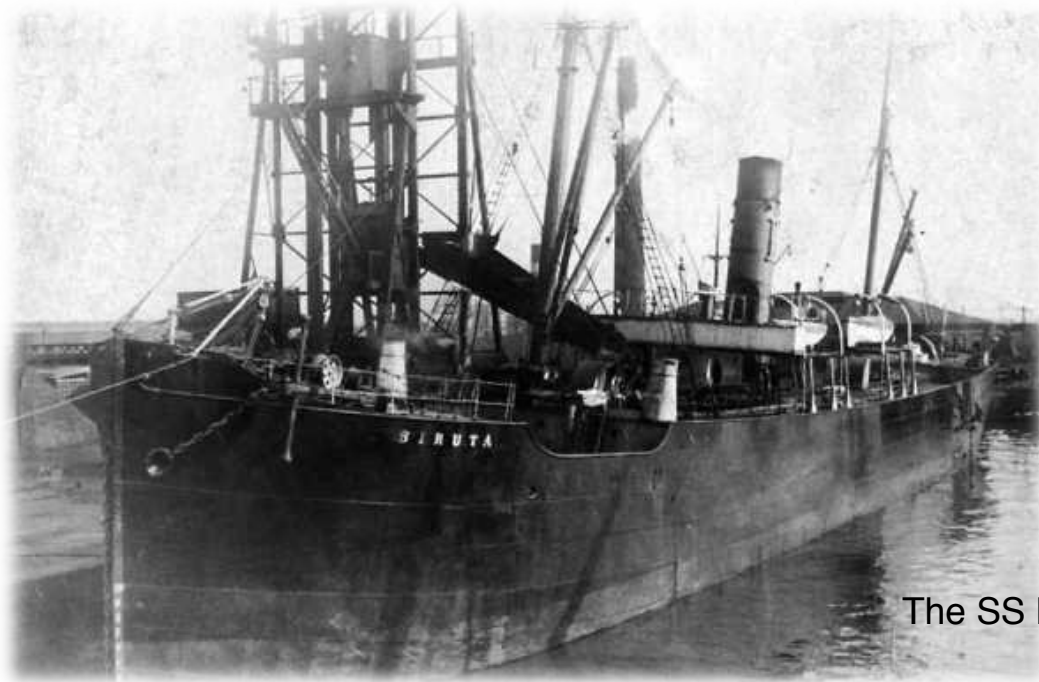
Ten years later David had followed the well-worn path to the valleys and was working as a colliery engine driver (as opposed to a railway engine driver), being responsible for the winding and pumping engines above ground. He was living with his wife and three children at the home of his father-in-law, Oakley Villa, Cross Inn Road, Llantrisant.

David enlisted in October 1915, serving as a private in the mechanical transport section of the Army Service Corps in France and Flanders. He died at the no.3 Canadian General Hospital, Boulogne on 3rd February 1917, from bronchitis and valvular disease of the heart, contracted while on active service. He was buried in the British Cemetery there. He left a widow, Martha, and five children, Reginald; Willie; Sam; Katie and Elsie, living in Bell Street, Barry.

Reggie Lewis (one of the five children) was born in Barry in 1904, but was brought up and educated in Llancafán. Being the eldest child it may have been necessary for him to become the breadwinner following his father's death. (There is no record of Martha & the children being granted a pension).

As a 'breadwinner', one obvious answer was to go to sea, and a berth was found for him aboard the *SS Biruta*, a Newcastle-built vessel of some 1734 tons. Originally named *Marpessa*, she had sailed under the Russian flag, but was being operated by Temple, Thompson and Clark (London) on behalf of the Shipping Controller.

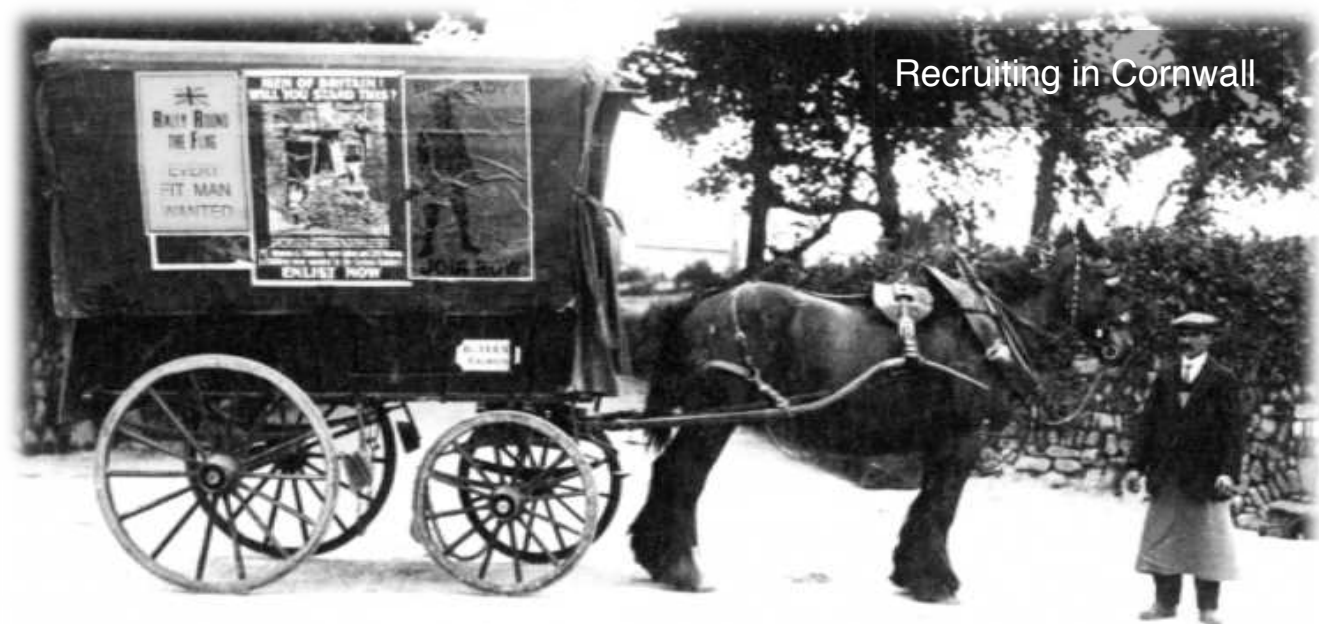
A photograph exists of the *SS Biruta*, showing her alongside coal hoists, possibly in one of the South Wales ports. On the voyage in question though she was in ballast, and though she was described as being defensively armed it was to no avail as it is believed she was torpedoed without warning eight miles north west and $\frac{3}{4}$ miles west of Calais on 6th August 1918.



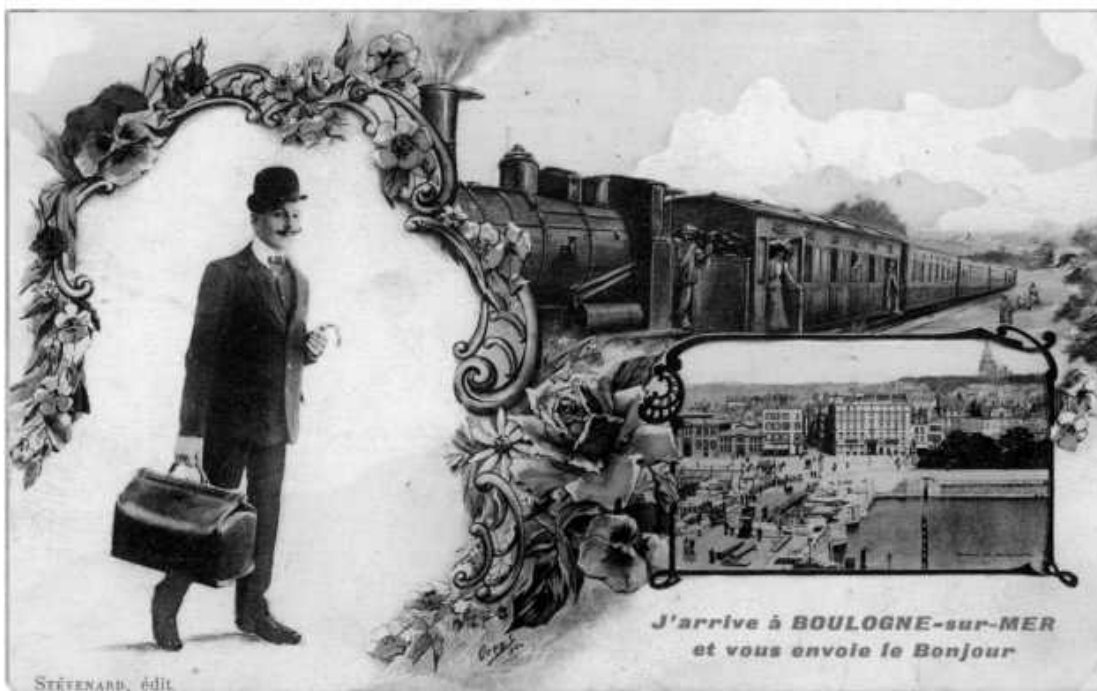
The SS Biruta

There remains some uncertainty over her fate as there have been suggestions that she may have hit a mine. Whatever the cause, all hands were lost. Reggie was just 14, and probably one of the youngest from the Vale to have lost his life during the conflict. His name is recorded on the Tower Hill Memorial.

It is ironic that there was only one other vessel lost that day, and that was many hundreds of miles away, and only a few weeks later the threat from German submarines had all but disappeared.



Recruiting in Cornwall



A POSTCARD TO WALES

Ian Fell

Back in June 2009, your former co-editor Rhodi Grey and I were getting to know each other over a pint in the *Fox & Hounds*. Rhodi is Swansea-born and I'm from Whalley in Lancashire – and during our chat it didn't us take too long to discover a poignant coincidence that linked our lives.

My late dad, previously a mental nurse & knowledgeable historian, handed down to me a fine collection of postcards about 'his' hospital, Calderstones, which in WW1 was a major *military* hospital. It so happened too that Rhodi had just inherited some family postcards. And 'Whalley' rang a distant bell.

I think,' said Rhodi, 'that's where my grandfather was in hospital, after he was shot in the First World War. My Nan wanted him sent back to be nursed in Swansea, but he ended up there in Lancashire.'

A week or two later we convened again over our postcards, and confirmed that we had identical ones of those heroes in Hospital Blue in a Calderstones ward. Even stranger, some of Rhodi and my postcards seemed to be written with a very similar hand, possibly even by the same person.

Rhodi offered a clue to the mystery. "Of course! My grand-dad lost his right arm, somewhere in the trenches at Ypres.' And studying the writing behind grand-dad Jack's postcards (page 12) we began to reveal their poignant tale.

In July 1912, Jack Morgan, a copper rollerman, was away in Hereford at a training camp with the 6th Glamorgan Welsh Regiment. He sent two postcards to Swansea – one to Jack's wife, Maud, and the other with kisses to his 2-year-old daughter, Phyllis.

Two years later Jack's training exercises turned into reality. The postcards to Phyllis reveal the tragedy that seized the lives of all that generation. The next one came from a Field Post Office in France. A military censor had allowed a sprightly greeting: 'Just a line to let you know that Dad is tip top.' But the card showed a French soldier, his gun raised above a snow-filled trench.

Like the little French girl on the card's picture, young Phyllis seems to have sent her Dad a cheerful note, because Jack's next postcard from 'active service' said how proud he was to have received her letter. Then, in July 1915, another frightening message arrived in Swansea. Its photograph showed the devastation in Ypres after the fall of 'the first fire-igniting shell'. Someone had tried un-successfully to rub out the word 'Ypres'. And now Jack's message to his daughter, Rhodi's mum, could only read 'Dear Phyllis, Best love + kisses from Dad.' He sent 15 kisses.

About four months later the Swansea family received yet another card. Dated 28th October 1915, it showed 'A Ward in Queen Mary's Military Hospital, Whalley'. Jack, wounded in action, had joined the fifty six thousand & eight hundred disabled soldiers who (from April 14th 1915 to June 30th 1920) were treated in just that one Lancashire hospital.

For a while Jack's messages (like those on my cards) were to continue in a different hand. A 9th November card to Phyllis was probably dictated to a fellow Boy in Blue, or a kindly nurse. 'Trusting you are a good girl,' said Jack, 'and that you won't forget the onions.'



The mystery of the onions remains unresolved. However, by the following April Jack was able again to send a postcard of 'Easter Joy' to his little daughter. Again, like his short censored cry from the battle front, he could manage only the briefest of messages –

'Best love + kisses to Phyllis from Dad.'

But the shaky handwriting carries its own triumphant clues. Jack Morgan lost his right arm. But he'd taught his left hand to write again.

CARDS TO RHODI GREY'S MOTHER

TRAINING



DEPLOYMENT



RECOVERY



INJURY



The wounded are entertained in Calder

A CENTURY LATER

Tour de Galles 20-23 June



Tournament de Tennis 22 June



Jenkins Diamond Duo

Songs of Praise 27 June



Ruth Watts Petanque 22 June



Tom Evans Tractor Pass!



Ray Evans, Barbara Milhuisen & Barry Morgan - two big birthdays and a bishop



Tidying the churchyard

THE INHERITANCE
OF SACRIFICE



stones Military Hospital

THE LIFE THEY WON
FOR US CARRIES ON



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

CHURCH DATES

Saturday 4 Oct	Harvest Supper Saturday
7.00 pm Sun 5 Oct	Harvest Evensong
19 October 2014 (& 15 March 2015)	<i>Dechrau Canu Dechrau Canmol</i> – music from St. Cadoc's features in S4C's <i>Songs of Praise</i>
3.00 pm Sun 2 Nov	Annual Memorial Service
10.45 am Sun 9 Nov	Remembrance Service

Weddings too – Steve Pearce's niece Amy Bruno married Jason Windle on 30 Aug, Rhys Griffiths from the Hawking Centre marries Emily Hunt at 12.00 pm on 6 Sept, and Moira Sleeth's daughter Abigail marries Alan Smart at 2.00 pm on 13 Sept. Congratulations now, and of course when they're due.

LLANCARFAN SOCIETY DIARY DATES

- 26th September
7.30 for 8.00 pm
Annual Dinner in the Village Hall :
tickets £22.50. First come, first served
from Gwyn on 01446 713533.
- The Mystery Trip. Gwyneth knows where we're going, but the trip
was postponed until late **October** because of her earlier operation.
- 5th December, 7.30 for 8.00 pm Christmas Social Evening.

FROM BIG APPLE TO LLANCARFAN'S ORCHARDS

A welcome (back) to the village (and Bridge Cottage) for Matthew & Fran Valencia, accompanied by Isaac, Theo, Sophia, Freddie & Gabriel.



LLANCARFAN
COMMUNITY CINEMA

Announces its third season. Signing up by Tues 30 Sept brings a £10 membership **discount** : £20 for a couple or a family, and £10 for an individual. See trailers on <http://llancarfan cinema.co.uk/>

- Fri 19 Sept The Secret Life of Walter Mitty
- Fri 17 Oct Sci-Fi Weekender : Edge of Tomorrow,
- & Sat 18 Oct Flash Gordon, and Blade Runner.
- Fri 14 Nov The Fault In Our Stars.
- Sat 13 Dec Frozen Sing-A-Long (3.00 pm start)

LLANCARFAN VILLAGE SHOW DAY & REAL ALE HOG ROAST

Photographed (with due warning and permission) from the church tower, this year's extended Village Show Day appeared to be a sea of sails, a splendid amphitheatre of gazebos (lent by the European-funded 'Creative Rural Communities'). And truth to tell, on Saturday the 16th of August, Llancarfan was verdantly rural, highly creative and definitely a buzzing community.

Months of unseen preparation by a family tree of committees - "we're the Show Team, you should really talk to Head of Hog Roast" – climaxed in a splendid day in which all generations relished a village that had pulled the stops out. *[See pictures on back page & on film night]*. No names, no pack drill, but all the good folk who put their backs into making our fun day funniest must be thanked for their determination, & praised for their success.

What a day! - in which a chocolate fountain competed for attention with strawberry bowlfuls, on which a more than generous tombola rewarded villagers as bountifully as the countless raffle prizes, and throughout which hundreds of visitors peered in admiration at the harvest of craft and husbandry. Whether in the hall, the tents, or bringing floral spectacle to the church, the competition exhibits had been soundly judged by solemn judges, and then the judgments were re-judged by ourselves as we debated why our prize jellies hadn't even got a look in. However, we were entirely swept along by how remarkably well the exhibits deserved their cups and trophies.

Show Secretary Kay Brain played a blinder in persuading the Welsh Assembly's Minister for Finance to present the awards (and wrangle the raffle ticket numbers). Jane Hutt AM carried out her civic-dignitary duties with warmth and charm, and as if she'd never before seen a row of prize onions. And all this happened under (literally) the hawk-eyes of beautiful birds flown in at the last minute (we're told) from the Welsh Hawking Centre.

Great also to see the promotional presence at the fair of several societies, including our own - on the stall of which our President, Barbara Milhuisen, cunningly signed up five new members. Thanks for signing up, readers!

Any list of winners must remain written in their hearts (and probably online). However, it's worth noting that multi-tasking Jenny Knott scored most points in competition, and the talented Freya O'Brien collected most junior points.

As for the hog roast, this has in one bound established itself as an irresistible annual companion to the Time-Honoured Show. And in the words of one village veteran (a full two months older than me) as he mused upon the generational jollity – 'It's just like the old days'. Grateful thanks to everyone!

■ REMEMBERED IN STONE [CONTINUED] ■

■ GWILYM LOUGHER ■

The highest ranked casualty recorded on the Llancarfan Memorial is Lieutenant **Gwilym Robert Lougher**. He had been born in 1880, the son of William and Mary Ann Lougher of Llanvithyn. Like many farmers' sons in the Vale at the end of the nineteenth century, Gwilym could well have had a taste of army life as a member of the Glamorgan Yeomanry. However he seems to have eschewed life on a farm to become a Relieving Officer⁴, living in Cardiff but working in Penarth, just before war was declared. In the summer of 1914 he had married Margaret Howells, the daughter of a farming family from Broughton, but who was living with her widowed mother in Penarth.⁵

There was some confusion concerning Gwilym's role in the army. According to a report in the *Barry Dock News* on 6th October 1917, he had been "in the engagements with the Royal Engineers at Suvla Bay (Salonika), Egypt and Palestine". However the few army records which survive for him refer to the award of the 1915 Star for service in the Royal Army Medical Corps, Volunteer section. He was serving as the Quartermaster, Welch Casualty Clearing Station, Royal Army Medical Corps in Cairo when he died on Friday 21st September 1917. He was buried in the Cairo War Memorial Cemetery. What caused his death cannot be established but it would have been unlikely to have occurred during action.

■ THOMAS MATTHEWS ■

Llancarfan, like many communities in the Vale of Glamorgan, attracted farmworkers from the border counties of England throughout the nineteenth century because wages tended to be higher here⁶. Such workers also had a tendency not to settle for too long in one place. This was true of John Matthews who came from Llangarron in Hereford. He worked in St Maughan in Monmouthshire, married his wife, Sarah, in her home town of Coleford, before moving to Penarth where three children were born. In 1901 the family was living in Llancadle, but by 1911 Sarah had been widowed and was living

⁴ Apparently an official appointed by a parish or union to administer relief to the poor.

⁵ This counters a confusing family belief expressed in Newsletter 97, the above being confirmed by both *Births, Marriages & Deaths* records, and by probate documentation.

⁶ According to an excellent article in *Llantwit Major: Aspects of its History [Vol 7]*, farm work was indeed better paid here than elsewhere. 'Because of its proximity to the coalfield and other major industries' – miners could earn 5 to 6s a day – 'farmers in the Vale were obliged to pay higher wages.' By 1914, farm labouring wages, with a tied cottage, had risen to 18s. By 1917, the Corn Production Act had granted agricultural workers a minimum weekly wage of 25s. Competition for work however was to sow the seeds of discontent.

in Cadoxton, Barry. Her son, **Tom Matthews**, who had spent much of his childhood in Llancadle, was working in a bakery in High Street, Barry.

In the spring of 1915, shortly before he enlisted in Barry, Tom Matthews married Mary Pugh from Pontypridd. He was serving with 2nd Battalion of the Welsh Regiment when he was killed in action on 9th November 1917, aged 24. His name appears on the Tyne Cot Memorial.

■ D STANLEY SHERRAH ■

Evan Sherrah had worked as a superintendent surveyor of mines. Born in Coity, he had lived in Senghenydd, where his children were born, and in Llantrisant, before moving to Flaxland sometime during the War.



David Stanley Sherrah had evidently followed in his father's footsteps, being described as an assistant surveyor, possibly to his father. David Stanley had enlisted in the Royal Engineers on 20th November 1914 aged 21 and attained the rank of Lance Corporal. He saw action at Ypres during which he was gassed. This, combined with the foul & wet conditions and the physicality of trench

warfare, led to a breakdown in his health. In 1918 Stanley was brought back to Netley Hospital and then transferred to a sanatorium in Brecon and then to one in Torquay, where his sister was nursing. But 'despite all medical tenderness' under his sister's care, it was to prove in vain.

He was discharged from the army on 1st January 1918 and awarded the Silver Star which was granted to those who had been invalided out of the services.

Stanley died at Flaxland on 18th September 1919 and was buried at

Y DARIAN

DTDD IAU, HYDREF 20, 1912.

Llancarfan, ger Pontfaen.—Ar y 18fed o Fedi, 1919, bu farw Mr. David Stanley Sherrah (lance-corporal), annwyl fab Mr. a Mrs. Evan Sherrah. Ymunodd â'r fyddin er gwneud ei ran dros ei wlad fel eraill o fechgyn dewrion Cymru. Bu allan ar dir Ffrainc am ysbaid o ddennaw mis. Lance-corporal gyda'r Royal Engineers ydoedd. Cafodd y nwy gwenwynig ym mrwydr fawr Ypres, a bu allan yn y tywydd gwlyb yn ganlynol i hyony. Yn herwydd bywyd caled milwr, ac nad oedd yntau yn fachgen o gyfansoddiad cryf, rhoddodd ei iechyd ffordd. Yn 1918 cafodd ei ryddhau o'r fyddin, ac anfonwyd ef i'r ysbyty yn Netley am dri mis. Wedi hynny anfonwyd ef i Gasnewydd i'r ysbyty yno. Symudwyd ef oddiyno drachefn i Sanatorium ym Mrycheiniog, ac oddi yno i Sanatorium yn Torquay. Bu yn y lle hwn am dri mis o dan ddwyllaw tyner ei chwaer ei hun, sef Miss Sherrah, oedd ar y pryd yn nurse yn Torquay Sanatorium. Ond er pob tynerwch meddygol, gwaethygu a wnaï y dolur, a daeth gartref i farw. Bachgen ieuanc ydoedd, 25 mlwydd oed, ac yn aelod ffyddlon yng Ngharmel, Tresimwn. Claddwyd ei weddillion ym Mynwent y Groeswen. Gwasanaethwyd gan y Parchu. Evans, Carmel, Tresimwn; Morris, Noddfa, Senghenydd, a Gwrhyd Lewis, Tonyrefail. Fel y dywedwyd yn ei angladd—Bu farw yn yr Arglwydd a gwyn ei fyd.

Groeswen Chapel near Senghenydd, the service being conducted in Welsh by Rev W E Evans of Carmel, Bonvilston and two other ministers. The Welsh language report of his death (above) appeared in the Valleys' press. His father Evan remained a loyal member of the congregation at Carmel, Bonvilston, until his death in 1925.

■ THOMAS TAYLOR ■

Whilst it had become common for workers in the Vale to be attracted by the prospect of work in the Valleys, in the case of Edward and Margaret Taylor and their family they made the opposite move, as before the War they lived at 220 Abercynon Road, Abercynon. Edward Taylor was described as a small farmer and contractor's haulier, probably looking after the many pit ponies, as well as providing horses and carts on a regular basis. Of the eight children in the family, the eldest boys, Thomas and Miles, worked with their father.

Sometime during the War, Edward moved to Liege Castle, but this was *after* Thomas had enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery. **Thomas Taylor** was killed on Wednesday 16th October 1918, shortly after the village of St Aubert was captured in the Pursuit to the Selle. Thomas was buried in the British Cemetery there. According to family tradition, Thomas' close companion from Abercynon, Will Beavon, was standing with him outside a trench when Thomas asked him to hold his rifle. At that moment Thomas was shot and killed. He was 24.

■ IVOR M THOMAS ■

Ivor Morgan Thomas had farming in his blood. Before the War broke out he was helping his father, Rhys, at Curnix Farm, just as Rhys had helped *his* father, also called Rhys, to run Dog Hill Farm in St Nicholas. Ivor enlisted in Cowbridge during 1915, and was serving in the 1st Battalion of the East Yorkshire Regiment. But a poignant letter to an uncle and aunt shows that farming was probably never far from his mind :

Tuesday 19.3.1918.

Dear Uncle & Auntie. Just to let you know I am alive and kicking somewhere in France. It is quite different to England as you would naturally expect and just where we are everything is pretty quiet and hope it will continue so, but you never know how quick a change may come. Of course we shall not say where we are but you can have a good guess, as they partly know at home.

We haven't had such a bad Winter out here, although it was rather rough for the first two months. We are having lovely weather this month but I think it is changing now, it has turned to rain today after a long spell of fine weather, but we want it for some things.

I received a letter from Home one day last week and by what I can make out the land will soon be ready for Spring sowing so I expect you are rather busy just now. I will be out of all that hum this year. I haven't seen much this last three years, but will see less this, but never mind hope to see it next.

There is some good land about here and I think I should be more at home with a good team of horses and a plough turning some of this over. If all goes well I hope to be home at the beginning of the Summer (but I don't think I shall bring Girl home with me). Have you been lucky with the lambs this year, they have been fairly lucky at home, and it was the same throughout the district so they said. I should like to hear from you at any time and trusting you is all quite well as I am.

I remain, Your Affec. Nephew, Ivor.

Ivor was killed five days after writing this letter and before it had arrived at its destination. The Germans launched a fierce offensive on 21st March and forced the British troops to withdraw towards the north bank of the Somme. Heavy casualties resulted, including Ivor, who died on Tuesday 26th March 1918, aged 26. He was buried in Cerisy-Gailly Cemetery in the Somme Valley, close to where he fell.

■ WILLIAM CLIFFORD DYMENT ■

There is one name which is not recorded on the War Memorial – that of **William Clifford Dymont** who was born in Llanccarfan in 1889.⁷

William Dymont's parents were both from Somerset, and his father had been in the Glamorgan Constabulary for a number of years, serving in Tondu. On leaving the Police, the family seems not to have settled in any one place for more than a few years. By 1891 for instance they were living in Stogumber,

⁷ We are grateful for earlier queries from Gordon Kemp (Newsletter 90) and a valued response from David Robinson which have helped enlighten this newsletter about William Dymont.

Somerset, where William Dymont senior was a farm bailiff. Then in 1901 he was farming Lower Prescoed Farm, near Pontypool. On such evidence the link with Llancarfan may well be tenuous.

As war approached, William Clifford was living in Newport with his brother-in-law, firstly working as a carpenter in a self-employed capacity, and then for the GWR as part of the war-effort. He enlisted in Newport, though at the time he had married and was living in Nottingham. He served first with the Royal Engineers before transferring to 17th Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers. Almost any extract from his letters home, reproduced by his son Clifford Dymont in an autobiography entitled *The Railway Game*, makes poignant reading:

*My dearest wife,
Thank you for your long letter. I was very amused at what you wrote about the children's prayers, how when you were teaching them to say 'Feed the young and tender plants' Clifford shouted 'That's me!' and when you came to 'Give us this day our daily bread' Susie chimed in with 'And treacle'. That will make me chuckle for days. You are able to get Lyle's G.S. then. Good . . .*

*Write soon, dearest,
Your affectionate
Will.*

William Clifford Dymont died on 22nd May 1918 and was buried in the Varennes Military Cemetery on The Somme. He is remembered on the war memorial in Christchurch, Caerleon.



'Of course,' adds Nigel Williams, 'the story does not end here. Those who returned found a village that had changed for ever and their contribution to that story still needs to be told.' We hope it can be.

Meanwhile, in researching the above biographies, Nigel acknowledges all those who carried out the research for the various articles which have appeared in the Society Newsletter over past years. [These earlier accounts from 1999 & 2000 can be found online, significantly in issues 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 95, 96 & 97.] Nigel has used the wealth of information now available to add to the stories they began to tell.

THE PAIN THROUGH THE WALL

Ian Fell

Almost every family could have a tale to tell, sharing the human stories of wartime, even though the horrors of the trenches were often locked in the hearts of those who returned. My dad (born 1911) had one story he told us kids. At the age of four, on a dull wet afternoon in 1915, he remembered hearing sounds of anguish coming through the wall of his childhood home. Though soundly built, the wall was no barrier to the neighbour's cries.

My dad's mum explained to him that the lady next door had got an official telegram which began 'It is my painful duty to inform you . . . ' As youngsters, we didn't quite understand its meaning. Neighbours, after all, don't cry.

Then, around 1990, Auntie May died, and a box of family photographs came my way. Among the images of re-discovered relatives were photographs of two young men, aged 18 & 24, who nobody had ever mentioned. Then we found two letters, both to my great-grandmother. One informed her of the death of her son Robert, on the 9th of August 1915. Killed in action in Gallipoli. The second advised her that her son Frank was missing, believed drowned, with the sinking of the *Royal Edward* on the 14th of August 1915.

Two proud photographs of lads in uniform. Two sons dead within the space of five days. A family grief so bitter no-one ever spoke of it. Suddenly we understood the pain of another unknown mother, heard through the wall.

WESTERN MAIL, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1918.

WALES DAY BY DAY

Ten years ago yesterday (20th) the National Memorial to the fallen heroes in the South African war was unveiled in Cathays Park by Sir John French.

It is estimated that quite a third of the mature timber that existed in this country before the war has had to be cut down. Welsh timber has certainly been cut down to that extent.

A London paper observes:—"Mrs. Sheridan is said to have put on breeches to hear her husband speak. Mrs. Asquith and Mrs. Lloyd George often go to the Ladies' Gallery for the same purpose."

Seventy-four old boys of Llanrcarfan Council School have served in the war. This is very creditable for such a sparsely populated parish. Of the number eleven have made the supreme sacrifice, two being the headmaster's own sons.

THOSE WHO RETURNED

A hundred years on, the roll call of those who died opens all our eyes to the pain and loss to this community. If you plot a mental map - of the farms, church, chapels, school - then you begin to take in the changes wrought by war on our lives and landscape.

Significantly, even these little snippets of news re-assembled here from a *Wales Day by Day* column in the *Western Mail*, point to some of those changes. Nigel Williams of course has noted the astonishing tally of 75

boys who served from Llancarfan Council School. Did 64 come back? What tales did they share, or hide? Then again, we can read that 'a third of the mature timber that existed in this country before the war has had to be cut down'. What were the losses and changes to the landscape in our neck of the Vale? As for the quaint reference to Mrs. Sheridan (wife of the famous playwright and MP) putting on breeches 'to hear her husband speak', this refers to her sneaking into parliament in 'a man's frock coat and trousers' in June 1804. But the quotation clearly reflects the changes in women's lives, not least the February 1918 grant of the vote to women over 30. How did things change for women in the Vale? Perhaps you will tell us untold tales in a future issue?



Recruiting at St. Minver in Cornwall

Just for now, a few memories arrived from Llancarfan Society members. Ann Ferris confides that her father came back safely, having joined up at a brave 16. It brings some light relief to know that *his* only injury was when, following a thumb infection, a nurse removed his nail and rubbed the wound with cortisone. Apparently a replacement nail re-grew, strong enough to be used as a knife or screwdriver. Ann's dad also reported that, when the water-logged trenches prevented their sleep, soldiers would drape their arms over a rope stretched between two strong posts, and would try to sleep slung on a clothes line.



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Munition Complexion.**

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For her part, Sue Taylor says that she & Alan made a pilgrimage to Ypres a full 17 times together, carrying 3 Armistice Day poppies to place on the graves of Welsh soldiers there. And my mum (Mrs. Marjorie Fell, born 1915) remembers her mother turning yellow as one of the hazards of working with the TNT in an armaments factory. This little advert to the left, for Pomeroy Skin Food, might bring a wry smile, marketing a cure for 'Munition Complexion'. Commerce as ever will find a way to take advantage of human needs, even amid the horrors of the war to end all wars.

GLAMORGAN
GAZETTE
3 JANUARY 1919

V A L E N O T E S .

(By *Pela-gius.*)

In the distant future will the Vale be pointed to as proof that "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless numbers mourn"? Well we remember at the outbreak of the war the rousing speeches and appeals to the patriotism of our young men to volunteer for the Army and Navy to fight the battles for freedom. With readiness this appeal was answered. A stream of the best of Britain's young manhood stepped forward to sign the roll. The eulogy of the gentlemen on the platform, the professed undying gratitude of the ladies—has it all proved "camouflage"? Many of these brave boys lie buried "somewhere in France" or Belgium in unknown graves, all their sacrifices forgotten by the general public they saved from worse than slavery. Others have returned maimed and broken in health; many others are yet to return in a similar condition; yet the monuments that were to be erected to commemorate their heroism and sacrifice remain a "lip gratitude"—maybe, to take practical shape when another war lord sets loose the dogs of war.

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LEST WE FORGET . . .

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For many of the past issues & more details please see the (to be updated) website at <http://www.llancarfansociety.org.uk/>

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VILLAGE
SHOW
DAY
2014

& BACK IN 1914,
THE WAR WENT ON.
BUT EMBROIDERED
GREETINGS STILL
FOUND THEIR WAY
FROM BATTLEFIELDS
ACROSS THE SEA.
THIS HOPEFUL CARD
BROUGHT BIRTHDAY
WISHES TO JOANN
QUELCH'S AUNT,
GERTIE MATTOCK.

