

**LLANCARFAN SOCIETY**  
**NEWSLETTER 167**  
**SEPT 2016**



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## EDITORIAL

It's over thirty years since I last visited the wonderfully atmospheric Hereford Cathedral. You can tell how long ago, because the famous *Mappa Mundi* was then murkily ignored among the cobwebs, nothing like its exposure today as a revenue-earning cathedral 'treasure'. Back then too we visited the Chained Library, the largest surviving chained library in the world<sup>1</sup>. It holds some 1,500 books, dating from c.800 AD, including 227 medieval manuscript books. These rarities still have no need for a supermarket security system, because no light-fingered mediaeval could carry a book further than the chain attached to its bookshelf rod. You must read the book, or study the illuminations, on the spot.

It is a lovely pocket of history. However I mention Hereford because, as a borrower from Cowbridge Library, the lovely people there are often very helpful in tracking down a book that they don't have in stock. If you nibble at history, you sometimes need to consult an obscure tome, not necessarily very ancient, but this must often to be summoned from the British Library's mystical northern repository of Boston Spa. You pays your pounds, and the book usually lands.

In the last weeks though, even helpful Cowbridge couldn't borrow a copy of a 2016 publication that I needed, which sells for a mere £151.82. My pocket money doesn't run to this. And it seemed now that the only place I could read it was the British Library itself. (I can cope – I've loved reading there for fifty years.) But, can you believe it, even there the 'book' is *only* an electronic copy, *only* available to read in the library, only on a British Library computer? In short, we're back in Hereford's dark ages, reading restricted to the obsessive mad researcher, thumbing the parchment pages of this digitally chained library.

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<sup>1</sup> Front page image found via <https://dararochlinbookdoctor.com>

## AN OLD SWEAT & GLAMORGAN CRICKET : CAMPBELL REED

*This summer the media have reflected many commemorations of the mid-point of the First World War. July 1916 saw the horror of the 38th (Welsh) Division's attack on Mametz Wood, which resulted in over 4,000 British casualties. A recent letter to Phil Watts, then to your editor, led to our member Campbell Reed kindly sharing this account of his uncle, Maurice Griffiths. (Readers of the **Glamorgan Cricket Club Year Book 2016** may well have been privileged to read an abridged variation of this piece.)*

*As a survivor, **Maurice Griffiths** brought home physical & psychological wounds to Bridge House, Llancarfan, where many, in his words, 'did not understand'. But his nephew's account gently evokes the restorative qualities of an unexpected medicine – village and county cricket . . .*

I write, **says Campbell**, about a man who fought in the Great War. Nothing too remarkable about that, one may say - thousands upon thousands did the same. The bulk of them perished in Northern France, and did not return.

Some *did* miraculously return, though often mentally scarred, disabled and disillusioned. One who did so was my uncle, Maurice Griffiths. In 1914 he and a small number of others, all about 19-20 years of age, had left the village of Llancarfan, and enlisted. From this quiet, picturesque, loving place, they went into the unknown. "Your Country needs You!"

Two of them, my uncle and his close friend, David Rhys Davies, were assigned to the Rifle Brigade. They were inseparable. Kitted out, they would have travelled to Folkestone, and followed the same road, now aptly named, *The Road of Remembrance*, towards waiting ships to ferry them across the Channel to France. They were really only boys, but had to grow up quickly.

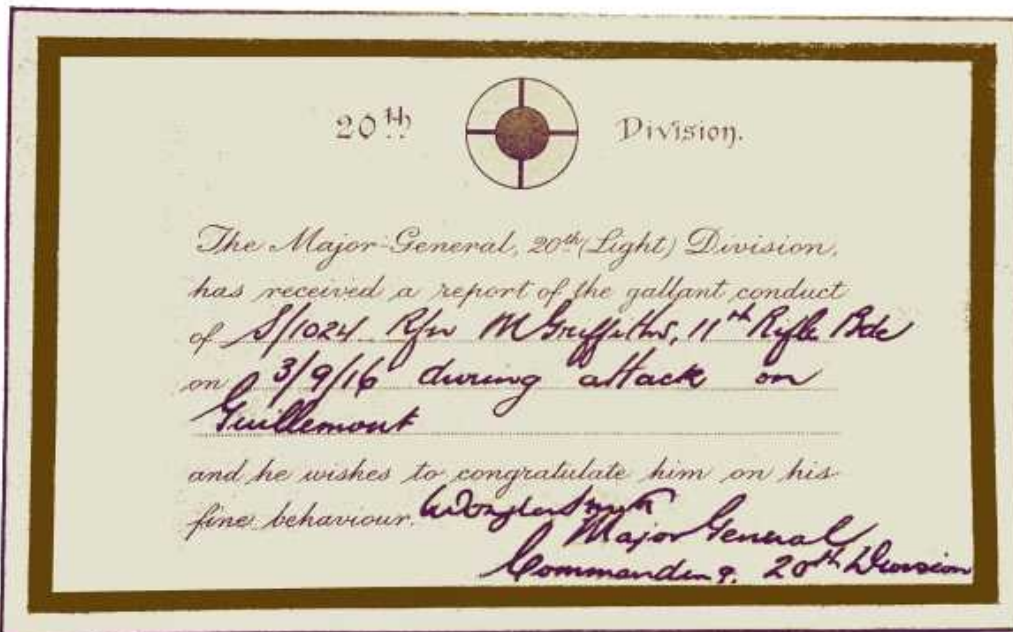
**Fast forward** to 1946 or thereabouts. Because of a surfeit of family bereavements, I found myself living with this ex-soldier in Llancarfan. I would have been about seven, being looked after by a somewhat austere man. For the next twenty years or so, he was a replacement for my father. It was just the two of us. I knew little of The Great War at that age. But as the years passed, I was to learn something of its horrors, although the said uncle did not speak of it much, only when pressed, and then with some reluctance.

This though was the time that Glamorgan Cricket emerged. For some years, he had been an ardent cricket fan. I do not think he had ever played the game, but Glamorgan Cricket became quite a feature in his life. During the summer, he would pack his sandwiches, and pick up a young lad in the village (one who later became a leading historian of the twentieth century and

equally fond both of cricket, and of playing the game<sup>2</sup>). They would drive to the old Cardiff Arms Park ground, and be mesmerised by their heroes. The names of these cricketers tripped off my uncle's tongue with ease, and I too soon began to learn about them. Some of these heroes (and he saw most of them play) included "Johnnie" Clay, Maurice Turnbull (Glamorgan captain for ten seasons), Douglas Jardine, Kenneth Farnes – then later, the great Wilfred Wooller. Not to speak of Hutton, Washbrook, Compton, Leyland, Sutcliffe and Sir Learie Constantine, who once played at Barry.

**Back to the Front.** The Rifle Brigade featured prominently on The Somme, and at Passchendaele, where nearly as many soldiers drowned in the mud as were killed by bullets. But for my uncle the greatest personal tragedy of the war was the death of his very close friend, David Rhys Davies, who was shot dead alongside him, aged twenty. He was buried in the Royal Irish Rifles Graveyard, Laventie, about 11 kilometres south west of Armentières.<sup>3</sup>

I do not think my uncle recovered from that awful experience. He went on to fight with distinction, at Guillemont and at Villers - Bretonneux, near Amiens. A hundred years ago this September his 'gallant conduct' was recorded :



Commendation  
for 'fine  
behaviour'  
3 Sept 1926 –  
[Re-coloured  
from Xerox]

My uncle hated rats all his life - a throwback to life in the Trenches. They would run over the soldiers as they tried to get some sleep. In fact, years later in Llancarfan, then over seventy, he spied one on the opposite side of the road. He seized his rifle, took aim and missed, much to his annoyance.

Towards the end of the War, Maurice Griffiths was taken prisoner at Berry-au Bac. He told me they "would have tried to escape, but our boots were taken!"

<sup>2</sup> That is our founding President, Sir Keith Thomas.

<sup>3</sup> See Newsletter 159.

Then in 1918 came the Armistice, and "M.G.", both battle and mentally scarred, returned home. He was completely lost, and must have taken years to settle down (if he ever did). It was a miracle that anyone came back alive.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) once said, "If a man will begin with certainties, he shall end in doubts; but if he will be content to begin with doubts, he shall end in certainties." I am content to begin with doubts but end in certainties.

It is a certainty that by watching and following Glamorgan Cricket over the years, this proved therapeutic, and helped his rehabilitation. His greatest thrill, I think, would have been in 1948, when Glamorgan won the Championship for the first time. He would travel regularly to Weston-super-Mare for the annual Cricket Festival. He would have witnessed Glamorgan's game with Somerset on August 7, 9 and 10, which Glamorgan won by just 8 runs - a crucial game in the Championship. In the following game, Surrey beat Somerset by 8 wickets, with such illustrious players on the Surrey side as Fishlock, Squires, Laker, Bedser and Surridge and - for Somerset - Buse, Tremlett, Lawrence, Wellard and Hazell. Maurice Griffiths would certainly have followed, by radio and in the press, the Bournemouth events in 1948 when Glamorgan clinched the Championship! He passed on this news to me too.

In the *Glamorgan Yearbook* of 1949, the late John Arlott reflected (typically) on Glamorgan's Championship win, rounding off his thoughts as follows :  
 ". . . There of all people was Dai Davies, umpire and former Glamorgan player, beaming a broad smile from a sunburned face . . . The game might perhaps, more happily, have been played in Wales, with Maurice Turnbull there, but neither Wales nor Maurice Turnbull have ever been selfish where Glamorgan Cricket is concerned." (The reference to Turnbull is poignant, for as a Welsh Guards Major, he died in 1944 after the Normandy landings.)

Those who fell in The Great War were unselfish too. And cricketers. The Great War Poet, Siegfried Sassoon loved playing in the game. (In fact, another War Poet, Edmund Blunden, once played on opposing sides to Sassoon in a game at Heytesbury.)<sup>4</sup> And in Llancarfan, especially fortified by Glamorgan cricket, Maurice Griffiths followed the cricket until his death in 1983. My uncle is probably watching still!

### **POST SCRIPT**

Our Committee member Andy Farquarson returned in July from official visits to Mametz Wood and to four more Welsh memorial sites. He said that he and colleagues found playing 'The Last Post' at locations which marked so many wartime tragedies a moving and emotionally draining experience.

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<sup>4</sup> See for instance *Final Wicket: Test and First-Class Cricketers Killed in the Great War* : Nigel McCrery

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

### CHURCH NEWS

**9 to 11 Sept** welcomes visitors to a **Flower Festival** across Llancarfan, Llantrithyd, Penmark, Porthkerry & Rhoose churches. A £5 ticket covers all venues. On **9 Sept** too St. Cadoc's echoes to a **Bella Donna & Early Byrds** concert. Then **Mid Sept** celebrates a restoration of *daily open church doors*.

### LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

**23 Sept 2016** sees our **annual dinner**, this time at *The Six Bells, Penmark*, 7.00 pm for 7.30. It costs £22 - *book by 16 Sept*. Diarise the **Christmas Social Evening** : 2nd of December. And (with thanks to Rhodri & Viv Price) the **petanque piste** now has a new smoother surface for village boules tournaments. News also that **Gwyn Plows**, our diligent secretary, while still juggling many village roles (including Village Hall duties), is retiring from her secretarial post (though not her welcome social entrepreneurialism). Our bountiful thanks to Gwyneth. Gratitude is thus due now to **Katherine Kemp**, who has agreed to dedicate *her* own wisdom and Biro to secretarial matters.

### MIKE & JAN

Our hearts went out to Jan & Mike Crosta when we heard that our former chairman was undergoing his recent life-changing operation. So many villagers have been anxious for the well-being of these good neighbours as they have dealt with their struggle, and we all again add our very best wishes for a good recovery as Mike convalesces with us back in the village.

### DID HE, THE EAGLE? TENNIS CLUB FUNDRAISER FILM : 17 JUNE

Rarely has Llancarfan Tennis Club known such a cliff-hanger. Not even in the nail-biting world of Murray & Del Potro did such tension grip an audience. Not an Olympic combat this – but the thunderstruck moment when a power cut froze *Eddie the Eagle*. He was just attempting a 90-metre ski-jump when the screen bolted into blackness. *Well, Eddie? – did he or didn't he?* Despite Jim the Jenious, the Blue Ray refused to play the movie's final scenes! All must surely come clear at the *Community Cinema's AGM, 1800 Sun 4 Sept*.

### BUT A NEW FILM SEASON IS UPON US

***Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory [1971]* : Sun 18 Sept., 3.00 pm**

Supported by *Film Hub Wales*, and as part of a Road Dahl on Film season, the village hall becomes a chocolate factory (with a chocolate fountain!). Those dressed as a Dahl character (from any film) will be up for a special prize. All profits will go to our local charity, *The Cerys Potter Foundation*.



***Er cof cariadus / In loving memory of***  
**NON WATKIN EVANS : 30 January 1943 to 13 July 2016**

*Nigel Booth, Non's dear partner, has bravely shared some memories of Non, to whom the family & the community said farewell at Coychurch Crematorium on July 28th. All the Society's sympathy is with Nigel, and with Non's family :*



January 1943 : Non was born in Bangor, moving after a few years to Blaenau Ffestiniog, where she went to school. She and her older brother Rhys lost their father due to illness as Non was growing up. She later moved to Radyr, training as a teacher, and marrying John. They had a son, Dylan. One day they were out for a drive when they spotted a house for sale in Walterston. Non instantly loved this house, and (though now pregnant with daughter Lowri) next day they bought it. Trewallter Fawr had leaking roofs, windows falling out, no heating – but over the hard years these issues were addressed. Later Non found herself going back to work, to bring up her two children. She later met Nigel, and they had good times together. She retired at 60, and really lived life to the full. But Non became ill in 2014, and was diagnosed with lung cancer. Non lost her fight on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July 2016.

**MORE SAD LOSSES**

As we go to press, we learn of the death of Brian Pullen, who moved very recently from Nauvoo, Llancarfan. His funeral is on 2<sup>nd</sup> September at Barry Crematorium. Our deepest sympathies go to Betty. Our condolences are also due to the relatives of 87-year-old Heather Lowe (néé Morgan), who is fondly remembered from her days in The Green, Llancarfan, then in Wolverhampton. Towyn Williams, formerly of Ford Farm, later in Wenvoe, has also died, aged 90. Some of his memories featured in Newsletter 123.

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***NEXT EVENTS COPY DEADLINE PLEASE : 21 NOVEMBER 2016***

## BUSY BEE BRAINS

Our revered chairman Graham is bringing new energy to your Society – plus tens of thousands of bees. The *St. Cadoc's Honey Farm* (working title!) is now busily buzzing in Kay & Graham's garden.



Graham unmasked

Bee boffin Harold Williams helped the bees into the first (of 3) hives in late May. Armed with smoking Kay & sting-suits, the intrepid team gently wrangled the bees into their new home. But on July 16<sup>th</sup>, Graham's *iPhone* rang bearing daughter Lucy's image of a *new* bee swarm, just arrived on the garden fence. Which made busy Brains even busier!



The latest swarm



12 JUNE 2016 :  
A NEW GENERATION  
PARTIES FOR  
THE QUEEN'S 90<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY



## COED GARNLLWYD NATURE RESERVE

by Sara Tickner



Gareth & young William

Undeterred by the damp finale to the Llancarfan Society's May Day walk, we were keen to also take part in this year's Vale of Glamorgan Walking Festival, which ran from 19<sup>th</sup> May. This featured 23 walks in varying terrains, packed across four days, & run by the *Valeways* charity.

A Saturday walk around a nature reserve on the edge of our own village was too tempting to miss, and thus shortly after lunch we set off on foot to join the party assembled in the village car park. From here, Vaughn Matthews, of the *Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales*, and Rob Nottage, one of the site's wardens, led an exploration of the Trust's reserve at Coed Garnllwyd.



We had barely even made it across the bridge beside the ford before Vaughn was sharing his knowledge with us, pointing out an example of Britain's most poisonous plant, Hemlock Water Dropwort. This was seen growing at the water's edge, its parsley-like leaves and pretty umbels of white flowers almost indistinguishable from many similar native wild flowers, some of which are popular with foragers. However, the plant is also known as *Dead Man's Fingers*, in reference to the long white tuberous roots which are the most toxic part of the plant. It is not to be mistaken for wild parsnips or water parsnips, as even a small amount is fatal when ingested!



Duly warned, we continued up the lane towards Walterston, heading for the most accessible entrance to the site. As we walked, Vaughn mentioned that he hoped to spot yellowhammers during our trip; indeed just a few moments later his wish was granted, and he brought us to a pause to watch a few pairs of these tiny yellow birds flitting in and out of the hedgerow ahead. An auspicious start to our walk!

A public footpath runs through the centre of the woodland, from the Llancarfan / Walterston lane, down to the house at Garnllwyd, with a further permissive path forming a circuit around the edge. We entered the site from the north along the public footpath which begins near Middle Hill, and we then joined the circular route around the woods to return the way we came, the lower access being rather swamped by recent rainfall.

Once beneath the woodland canopy, Vaughn gave us a brief introduction to the nature reserve, which is being gently renovated with an ongoing maintenance programme, recovering small areas of meadow which had become overgrown, and coppicing selected clearings to support a diverse range of wildlife within the wood. Our group then proceeded, spreading out along the narrow footpath, stopping to ask questions and to observe various wildflowers. These included the unusual and hard-to-spot Goldilocks buttercup, Herb Paris with its intriguing four-probed flowers and leaves, and the first early purple orchids, alongside their more ubiquitous bedfellows, the flowers of wood anemones and bluebells, both just beginning to fade.

Light rainfall began as we reached the midway point and soon turned heavier, until even the dense canopy of the trees overhead couldn't protect us from the deluge. We were forced to pick up speed to complete our now rather muddy circuit, and returned to the village in a torrential downpour.

No amount of rain could wash away the magic of walking in this lovely unspoilt woodland though; even our usually rambunctious eighteen-month-old was enraptured by the sights and sounds, lush vegetation and birdsong, and despite this unceremonious end to our visit, it was a truly enjoyable experience. It's all too easy to forget that we have such a gem on our doorstep, but it's somewhere that we shall certainly visit again in the future. Thanks must go to Vaughn and Rob for sharing this site and their knowledge with us, and to *Valeways* and their Festival for creating the opportunity.

## **SHOTGUN WEDDINGS**

Zena Maureen Morgan, who lives in Lymm in Cheshire, is granddaughter of the Prices of Middlecross. While kindly asking for copies of my newly-published *Sins of St. Cadoc's*, she mentioned one of the church's less-sinful activities – marrying people! 'When my parents were married in 1924, they left the church in an open Sports car. As they started up the hill to Middlecross, a 'double barrel' was fired over their heads.' It also happened to her grandparents in the 1800's. 'I think the whole idea was to frighten away any bad luck.' Zena wonders about the name of 'the gunman' who 'lived in a cottage on the corner, and there was a half-door'. A Liscombe? A Lougher? *[No chance I suppose that it was Maurice Griffiths? – see Page 4 above. Ed.]*

## SO FAREWELL, THEN, JOHN & SUE

Ian Fell

I think it is fair to say that many of us were 'slightly foxed' by the hasty June 6<sup>th</sup> departure, after almost 15 years as hosts in the *Fox & Hounds*, of our friends Sue & John Millard. Their weeks spent in exhausted anticipation during the protracted negotiation of lease and tenure suddenly came to an end. And so, bounced into a sudden gathering of villagers on 5 June, pub emotions ran almost too high to face proper goodbyes. The next day John & Sue had vanished, perhaps profoundly relieved to be free of the daily grind. This however left several villagers with an unresolved sense of loss.



In a brief chat over last orders and tributes, Sue summed up her '14 years and 9 months' in Llancarfan by saying that 'the dynamics of the village have changed, but the people who matter most are still here today.' True to her nature, which always gave compassionate support to neighbours in need, Sue remained still analytical as to the qualities of her clients! Dear John as ever wisely kept his counsel.

There might be re-visits (for Melinda Thomas's September birthday party for instance), but as they left, Sue seemed blithe as to a future life. 'We are going to squat in John's sister's house in Normandy. Then three weeks after we get to France, we're going south to celebrate John's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. Then John, Ben the Dog, and I are going to do absolutely nothing for a few months but travel. All over Europe.' Our hostess hardly disagreed when I asked if she was re-visiting her teenage back-packing days? 'Well yes,' she laughed. 'I wanted a VW camper van, but John won't have it!' So where then were they going to settle? 'Who knows? We might be nomadic, don't know. We're just going to enjoy doing nothing.'

I *did* presume to confirm the village's affection with a kiss on both cheeks (such gestures will of course be banned post-Brexit). Perhaps Sue had a farewell message? 'Yes. I'd just like to say that we couldn't have found a more beautiful place to live in for the last 14 and a half years. And the friends that we have made here we will treasure for ever. And - I'm going to cry.'

## AND A WELCOME TO WHO?

We must still find the best time to chat to Chef James Milward and the new owners about their plans for the pub's future. Villagers were surprised when the front-of-house manager, Morganne, moved on after just two months in the job. (We are told she starts a degree course this September.) Hopefully we can share some tasty answers to our curious questions in the next issue?



## TALES YOU MAY WIN, BUT HEADS YOU MOST CERTAINLY LOSE

I did a head count the other day of painted characters currently starring in the dramatic presentations on our astonishing church walls. There are some fifty of them – a star-studded pageant of saints, royalty, assorted sinners, diabolical tempters, the sick and the dead, choristers, multiple dragons and at least three hands of God. All human (and superhuman) life is here.

However, this particular think piece is not about doing a 'Where's Wally?' on our church walls. This is to reflect on several of the other 'headed' characters realized in the stone and timber of St. Cadoc's. In particular it's about the lost head of St. Cadoc himself, the vanished icon of the church's patron saint. We think that the cry must be heard out loud :

**'Bring me the head of St. Cadoc!'**

For a reminder of the carved head count, here's a visual roll call of a few . . .



*From top left : a tongue-twister on the west pillar of the central arcade, a Green Man above north aisle, a gargoyle from the roof, a grotesque on west pillar, royalty on central arcade, and an effigy, drawn for 'Rambling Sketches' by Charles Fowler in 1896. Fowler states the arcade heads are 13th century, & affirms that the effigy is 'no doubt' of St. Cadoc.*



*Head of  
effigy in  
Niche over  
South doorway  
Slancarvan CW*



Now it won't have escaped your notice that the head of St. Cadoc missed the roll call. It has disappeared, sometime after it was drawn by Fowler, and after it was photographed, again in the 1890s, by Thomas Mansel Franklen of St. Hilary. The image below came to light in 2015 as part of the National Museum Wales's Esmée Fairbairn digitisation project (published with the museum's permission in our March 2015 issue). This section here, clipped at the bottom of Franklen's glass slide, shows how it nearly didn't get photographed at all.



*The full plate of Franklen's photograph is on page 5 of Newsletter 161*

Heads you lose? Back in March 2015 we wondered whether the Reverend Hughes, he who reportedly painted out a Virgin Mary in the late 1800s, had taken into custody - or even destroyed - the head of St. Cadoc at some time in his 43-year incumbency? The full photograph shows that it was roughly stored somewhere with the surviving carved stone (now to the left of the Raglan chapel altar), and the 3-key locking system of the church's ancient oak chest. But where has it gone since then? The niche in the church porch is crying out for at least a replica.

Thinking about this reminds one that objects associated with St. Cadoc - not just a stone head but even the very relics of the saint - have since the church's earliest days been quite literally 'bones of contention'. And that is where the tales come in . . .



*Two statues from Gouesna'ch in Brittany offer rather different images of Llancafarn's saint.*



'After the Conquest the newly-introduced Norman clergy were uniformly dismissive of native saints.'<sup>5</sup> Perhaps this prejudice applied in the case of Llancarfan incumbents, whether served by Walter the Chaplain (pre-1183), or his successors. But somehow St. Cadoc managed to hang on in here. Sometime after 1067 Lifris – 'magister sancti Catoci', meaning 'teacher at the Llancarfan school', wrote his *Life of St. Cadoc* 'with the plain purpose of defending [the monastic house] by exalting their early saintly founders and heroes, and the antiquity of their endowment'.<sup>6</sup>

If one is re-establishing a religious foundation in the name of a saint, it greatly enhanced your business plan if you owned relics of the saint. With luck, these relics would become objects of reverence, blessed with miraculous potency, and could in time become the focus of pilgrimage. So, an 1847 *Edinburgh Review* discussion of 'Saints' Lives' can assert that 'the period during which the greatest number of relics were . . . miraculously discovered, was that of the rebuilding of the monasteries which followed the devastating invasions of the Danes and Normans.'

The fact is, when it came to acquiring saintly relics, our mediaeval ancestors were inventively indiscriminate. They would claim a potency for just about anything that *had* been, or was *believed* to have been, in contact with the saint. And of course by far the most treasured relics were bits of the saint's body itself.

Let's face it, our Welsh Organ Donor Cards pale into insignificance against the collectables of an assured saint. Once the saint was dead, and his sanctity duly confirmed, every bit of his body was deemed charged with curative & transformative powers. So it could be monetized, was tradable, ownable, giveable, even of course stealable. Even as far back as 386 there was a Roman imperial ruling that 'no-one should divide up or trade in a martyr'. It, and similar orders, were reliably ignored throughout the centuries. Clearly the propagation & distribution of bodily relics thrived until the Reformation drove such beliefs back under the protection of folklore.

But what of St. Cadoc, said to have died in 570? Yes, he was duly exalted with a *Life*. But such were the tales told about his last years in Llancarfan that his relics rapidly became the subject of disputed ownership. Tale-telling problems began when an angel told Cadoc that 'God has decreed you shall now leave the land of Britannia'. So the saint left suddenly. He rose above Llancarfan in a 'nubes lucida', a bright cloud, having bid farewell at 'Pistyll Catwg', Cadoc's well or spring.

We are *then* told that the cloud deposited Cadoc in an inconveniently distant monastery in Benevento, which is southern Italy, where (re-named 'Sophias') he became bishop, then pontiff, before 'after a little time' being invited to choose the nature of his death. Cadoc opted for martyrdom, and was duly slain by an invading horseman (in a marketably similar manner to the death of Thomas Becket).

It was a key feature of St. Cadoc's dying request that all who 'shall possess some

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<sup>5</sup> So says *Relics of Glastonbury* in *Arthurian Literature XVI*, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Tatlock, J.S.P., "The Dates of the Arthurian Saints' Legends", *Speculum* 14.3 (July 1939 : 345-365)

part of my bones, or the bones of my disciples, may perform miracles' – 'virtutes faciant' – 'may drive demons far away, and be far removed from every pestilence.' So Cadoc clearly knew that he would become a reliquary.

We have to understand why such traditions were core to the politics & viability of a community. These narratives proved central for owners trying to establish their rights in the face of those who challenged them. As the Normans dominated the Vale, those who had owned land with established rights 'time out of mind' needed the evidence that they should continue to do the same. Religious power structures have had a history of being questioned. So, as we recovered from Viking raids and monastic destruction, *then* had to face the Normans, establishing rights was critical.

It must have been very difficult to do this in Llanccarfan though. Cadoc had taken his relics elsewhere. He had hardly said 'accipe spiritum meum' – 'receive my spirit' – before he was placed in a silver coffin within an Italian sarcophagus, soon to become a focus for miracles. Here the blind were restored to sight, the lame walked, the leprous cleansed, and the possessed were purged of their demons.

The possessed of Llanccarfan, though, could enjoy no such purgation. Why?

**Because the people of Llanccarfan were banned from Benevento.**

The Beneventan monastery had raised a great basilica over Cadoc's tomb, 'in quo nullus Brittanus intrare permittitur' – 'into which no Briton is permitted to enter'. They said this was because a Briton from 'his chief monastery of Llanccarfan' might arrive and decide to steal the 'sacrum humum reliquiarum sui corporis' - 'the relics of his body and its sacred soil'. They feared this would 'cause all the miracles and the grace of that saint to disappear, along with the most precious relics of his body' – 'ad propriam terram suam . . . in qua natus est, apud Llanccarvan demigrare.'

**In short, the miracles would escape to Llanccarfan, birthplace of the saint!**

True, those of a devious mind have suggested that this story *could* be a cunning Llanccarfan cover-up, a diversionary tale to *hide* the relics at times of threat. And a previous newsletter (75) examines the (rather shaky) theory that Beneventum was in fact Roman Bannium, now Y Gaer near Brecon, and not in Italy. Much handier!

Lifris's version of St. Cadoc's *Life* certainly contains contradictory material. It describes invaders arriving in Glamorgan 'in order to plunder and devastate'. Forewarned, St. Cadoc's clergy are said to have fled from Llanccarfan to Mamhilad (7 miles from Abergavenny) 'cum feretro sancti et aliis reliquiis' – 'with the shrine of the saint and other relics'. This intriguing reference implies that relics **were** here to be removed, either to protect them, or to use the reliquary powers on the invaders.

**So**, the disappearance of St. Cadoc's effigy head in the last century is not the first challenge to have faced a Llanccarfan shrine to St. Cadoc. And to thicken the plot, we should notice that Glastonbury *also* claimed to own a bit of our saint, specifically the 'corona Sancti cadoci confessoris'. The 'corona', or 'crown', means a slice off the top of his head. Saints preserve us!



## A SCHOOLFUL OF SUMMER

**27 June** Never mind football at the Euros or tennis at Wimbledon, this was the school's Sports Day, kicking off our 'Healthy Week'. Children took part in sprints, fancy dress relays, egg & spoon and sack races. Our fabulous PTA hosted a refreshment stall, and parents enjoyed a glass of Pimm's before closing the afternoon with the Mum's and Dad's sprint!



'Healthy Schools' Week' added to PE lessons some untried sporting activities like badminton, gymnastics and cricket. A special visitor taught us yard games 'yn Gymraeg'. The school cook also put on a special 'Sporting Week Picnic Lunch', and on Friday 1st July we topped off with a whole school mile-long hike around our lovely Llancarfan village!



**6th July** Parents were treated to a fabulous 'Musical Evening'. The school is lucky to have peripatetic music teachers who teach children with a passion to learn a musical instrument.

The commitment & dedication certainly paid off, and parents heard recitals by violinists, flautists, guitar, keyboard & piano players. The evening ended with an up-beat performance of 'Razza -Sazza' by the school recorder club.

**8th July** Our ever popular Summer Fayre was fantastically well attended and a super success. The usual fun included beat the goalie, face painting and a bouncy castle.

In the week before the Fayre, children's 'Enterprise' classes invented ways of raising funds. Our budding entrepreneurs had ideas for making & selling book bag chains, and for recycling old wellies as designer welly plant holders!



Reports & pictures thanks to  
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Administrator Chris Hughes

