

LLANCARFAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 168 DECEMBER 2016



Cathy Thomas's
Cristesmasse
Arrangement :
Flower Festival,
9th September
2016

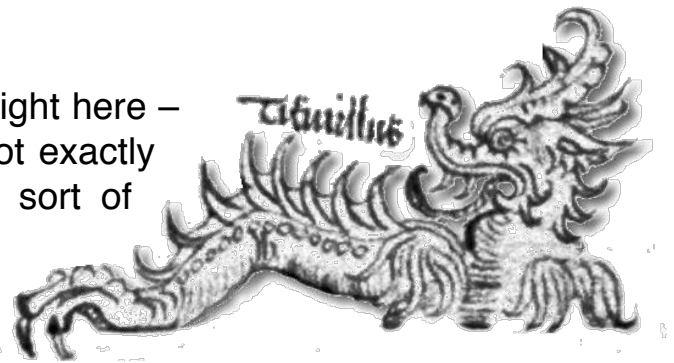


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EDITORIAL

I have to admit that the scaly monster to the right here – known as the recording devil *Titivillus* – is not exactly the most festive of creatures. But he *is* a sort of sponsor for this newsletter edition. You see, in an attempt to pull up a cosy fireside chair for a Christmas ghost story, I found that instead I'd summoned this former spooky



resident of the mediaeval church. Titivillus is the (variously spelt) devil whose job is to collect 'idle chatter'. He *has* been described as 'The Patron Demon of Scribes', and could clearly be useful in running his eye over this very newsletter. Being notably hot on misprints, literals, & omissions, he would be well occupied herein.

Titivillus claims to be a strict critic of 'ungodly men who have forsaken the law of the Lord most high.' Well, I am not qualified to say whether we've forsaken the law of the Lord in this Annus Horribilis of 2016. But to paraphrase Oliver Hardy, 'Here's another nice mess' somebody's gotten us into. We were sleep-walked into an ill-informed *X Factor*-inspired referendum, prompted by a Prime Ministerial need to placate his parliamentary party differences, and then (like the Iraq war) nobody had any plans or even desire to deal with the consequences, good or bad. All this happened amid the obscene and rampant horror dealt out by so-called 'religious' extremists, and this in a year which commemorated World War One without learning any of its lessons. For heaven's sakes, let's make a better fist of 2017.

As you know, I'm not encouraged to make political comments here. So the above is objective historical analysis, OK? Happy Christmas!

FROM CHATTERING STATUES TO GOSSIPING CONGREGATIONS

“A great church in the depths of winter is a discouraging place at the best of times; the cold of a hundred winters seems to have been preserved in its stones and to seep out of them.”

So begins Chapter III of Susanna Clarke’s beautifully strange story of *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*. You may recall that it is an epic tale of magicians and the ghosts of lost magic, the 800 pages of which book were transmuted into a disturbing BBC series shown in the Summer of 2015. Even in 2015, occasional outbursts of sunshine could not dispel the narrative chill evoked around the York Minster of 1806, the year in which the story begins.

Now it cannot be denied that such churchly shiverings were once, maybe still are, commonplace among the congregations of St. Cadoc’s past. And although our congregation would never wish to be associated with matters magical, it doesn’t take too much suspension of disbelief to imagine certain *Jonathan Strange* fantasies happening even within our own ‘great church’.

Perhaps you remember the opening of the ‘*Jonathan Strange*’ tale? The Learned Society of York Magicians has decided that magic no longer exists. In their rational ‘where there’s muck there’s brass’ world, magic is relegated to the antiquarian study of past beliefs, but is not a present day phenomenon. Then, amid the legion of carved stones in York Minster, a deeply-learned magician called Norrell conjures up a frightening challenge to disbelief :

“ As the sounds of the bells died away, a voice began to speak from somewhere high up in the gloomy shadows Hardly had the magicians had time to digest this and to wonder who it was that spoke, when another stony voice began Mr. Thorpe, who was a valiant gentleman, peeped into the chancel alone . . .

‘It is a statue,’ he said.

Then all the other statues and monuments in the Cathedral began to speak, and to say in their stony voices all that they had seen in their stony lives They moved it seemed with as much ease as any other creature, and yet the sound of so many stone muscles moving together under a stone skin, that scraped stone ribs, that clashed against a heart made of stone . . . was quite intolerable . . . ”

I have been told that there was a time when the churchgoing youngsters of Llancafán were, even in St. Cadoc’s, a little frightened of our church’s small but enigmatic collection of heads carved in stone. And having written about heads in the last newsletter, I now notice that I did not do justice to some of

the characters who stick their heads out of the church's central piers. I must herein apologise for such rude neglect. I have never heard our carvings talking, but now understand why two of them are poking out their tongues.



Now as noted in the editorial, this piece was meant to be a slightly ghostly tale for Christmas, not an in-depth treatise on our dubious carvings in stone. Well, you can be confident this will not be an academic tract. But once the questions begin to haunt the mind, it is an entertaining relief to at least sketch out where future investigation might lead. Surely many have wondered why these tongue-stickers are there, stones determined to offend a congregation who sought the church as a peaceful retreat from the crudities of daily life?



Now. Rick Turner's *Church Archaeological Report* (2012) proposes that the Llancarfan heads were carved about the 2nd quarter of the 13th century – that is *before* the present south wall was re-built to widen the south aisle. In short, our wall-paintings had yet to be created. The stoney heads ruled the roost.

The tongue-stickers were therefore of course much nearer to the church's southern entrance, and one theory suggests that they were placed there to scare away evil spirits. But chances are their purpose was much closer to that of our moral paintings, which by C14th would augment their role. The heads gave 'visual support to the church's moral teaching . . . an element in the medieval Church's campaign against immorality'. I quote from an authoritative book called *Images of Lust*, but will not elaborate here because the book's illustrations of church warnings against sin leave nothing to the imagination. Visitors to Kilpeck Church in Herefordshire will understand.

It may though be a relief to know that the tongue stickers of St. Cadoc's are about the mildest form of sculpted warning which the mediaeval church chose to display. *Images of Lust* says that 'sculptors then, as workers now, did not carve what they were not commissioned to do.' And such images represented a deeply entrenched belief that (to quote the gospel of *St James III*) :

'the tongue can no man tame. It is an unruly evil full of deadly poison . . . So is the tongue set among our members that it defileth the whole body . . .'

Examining the company that the tongued sculptures normally keep – mouth-pullers, beard-tuggers & foliage-disgorgers are the least disturbing – it appears that their main intent was to put us off lust. But the church also wished to warn us against the main product of the tongue – idle chatter.



St. Georg, Reichenau-Oberzell: Nordseite des Langhauses, "Kuhhaut"

Time then to re-introduce Titivillus. He took his place among the many devils which the priests would confirm inhabited and oversaw all churches. Titivillus developed as a compendium of two sin-monitoring functions. His dual role was firstly to record all the words and phrases missed during worship by monks and priests; then secondly, he had to transcribe all the idle chatter spoken by gossiping worshippers during the services and sermons.

The mediaeval church was rich with sung & spoken liturgy, a Latin complexity of repetitive prayer and plainsong. It was a simple matter for a cleric to chop off a syllable, syncopate a verse, skip over a word or two in pious murmuring. But Titivillus was ever on hand, ready to fill his sack with priestly stutterings. Often Titivillus would complain that he was over-burdened by these verbal fragments : ‘I must each day bring my master a thousand pokes full of failings . . . and else I must be sore beaten.’ Nevertheless, his task would be rewarded by pouring out this sinful evidence again, claiming that his diligent records would damn ten thousand souls an hour at the Last Judgement.

It seems that the earliest *text* known to use the name Titivillus (or ‘Tutivillus’) was apparently written by a Welshman – Johannes Walensis. He named him in a Latin treatise on ‘Penance’ around 1285. So bi-lingualists beware, because we must assume that Titivillus collected fragments of Welsh too.

Meanwhile, featured on the previous page is the earliest known *illustration* of Titivillus’s activities. This South German mural depicts another feature of his trade. It wasn’t just the priest who was monitored in hopes that the Scales of Justice would tip him into Hell. When Titivillus wasn’t filling sacks, he wrote down the congregation’s chit chat (as illustrated) on a swathe of leather.

Now as my wife points out (and I could not presume to argue, at least not during a church service), the verbal exchanges between women have too easily been described as ‘loose talk and chatter’, whereas discussions between men are always regarded as ‘important purposeful communications’. To mankind’s shame, the illustration seems to reinforce this anti-woman prejudice. However, there *are* signs that by the 15th century, criticism for ‘jangling’ – that is ‘idle chatter’ in church – was aimed at either sex.

So to sum up, next time you are in church, take another look at those heads of stone. You may think that the other two I haven’t discussed probably don’t approve of their rude companions. But then these are said to be helmeted knights, who surely think they’re on a much higher social, if not moral, plane.

In the unlikely case that these stones *are* in future inspired to chatter in the manner of *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*, we trust that at least the knights will deliver their views and reminiscences with due courtesy and politesse.

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

CHURCH CHRISTMAS CONCERT

7.30 P.M. : Tuesday 13th December. £5.

The revisited delights of an Advent Concert by **BellaDonna and the Early Byrd Singers.**



■ Christmas service times are listed in Canon Derek's church leaflets.

LLANCARFAN SOCIETY CHRISTMAS SOCIAL EVENING

7.30 P.M. : Friday 2nd December.

As has been an annual tradition among members & villagers, we will welcome all to a festive gathering in the village hall. Calendars & newsletters will be dispensed, pies minced and wine mulled. And scenic images of the village will hopefully trigger memories to be shared with all supporters, new & old, of our 29-year-old society.

LLANCO'S PANTOS : FOOLING WITH SCHOOLING



School Administrator Chris Hughes writes :

This year the infant children mount a Christmas production of **Born in a Barn** while the juniors present **Cinderella & Rockerfella**.

Rehearsals are well under way. **All are most welcome to join us** for the dress rehearsals of our shows and to enjoy a festive mince pie!:

- Monday 5th December at 9.30 a.m. :
Born in a Barn
- Monday 5th December at 2.00 p.m. :
Cinderella & Rockerfella

This is very first time children will perform on fine new modular staging, kindly bought for the school by their fabulous PTA.

[Like just what our village hall needs! Ed.]

FIFTIETH SCREENING IN LLANCARFAN COMMUNITY CINEMA

■ **Thursday 8 December *The Library Suicides / Y Llyfrgell (2016)***

Marking our milestone, this is a charity showing of a Welsh-language (English sub-titled) film directed by Euros Lyn (*Broadchurch & Sherlock, &c.*)

■ **Saturday 10 December, 3.00pm *The BFG (2016, U)***

Who'd *not* want to meet Dahl & Spielberg's astonishing friendly giant!

For tickets call 01446 781144 or email llancarfanine@gmail.com.



Jenny Knott & Liz Hunt's arch welcomes visitors.



As do doorkeepers Barbara Milheusen & Gwenllyan Price.



Displays in St. Cadoc's reflect the church rituals, saints & festivities, complementing the floral delights in sister churches at Llantrithyd, Penmark, Porthkerry & Rhoose.



Kay Gay : Easter.



The South Aisle turns green.

Mary Grey & Jane Hutt AM admire 'Remembrance Sunday'.



June Studley : Shrove Tuesday.



Sally Mills : Music Festival.



Audrey Baldwin : Mother's Day.



St. David's Day
Georgina Powell



Ann Ferris : St. Catherine.

Joanna Hannaby



Alison Hannaby



Joann Scott-Querch : Harvest.



Penny McCarthy : Book Festival.

Fran Winterbottom : Weddings.



Red, white & blue tributes to HM the Queen's 90th birthday.

With thanks to Ann Ferris for help with the captions



Sue Taylor

FLOWER FESTIVAL ~ 9th to 11th September 2016

Sheelagh Lewis : Valentine's Day



Melinda Thomas : Baptism



The PCC has confirmed that the flower festival was not only a delight to the eye but a financial success, particularly of benefit to the smaller churches. It will return in two years. Worth noting too is that a recent Early Byrd concert made £400, half going to Amnesty International.



ARISE, SIR SAM

Congratulations to Sam Smith, who has been invested as a Knight of the Order of Oranje-Nassau for 'Consular Services to the Netherlands'. And all this on his 74th birthday!

BINGO RAISES £405.56 FOR YOUR SOCIETY

It's not every chairman can devise a Random Number Generator, disguise it as a Bingo display, and attract a riotous assembly of villagers to a very jolly evening of shouting 'House!' in the village hall. And it's certainly not every member can bring her charms and polite Brummie articulation to calling out Bingo numbers and their dubious traditional rhymes. So thanks are due to Graham Brain and Becci Hemming, brilliantly supported with music & lights from Andy Farquarson, and by an attentive team of food conjurers and bottle openers. Perhaps the funniest twist was when James, landlord of *The Six Bells*, **himself** won the prize our Penmark pub had donated earlier – a meal for two! They generously re-offered the prize for auction. Pictures are on the back page.

THE LLANCARFAN SOCIETY 2017 CALENDAR

Our front cover promotes the newly-compiled Calendar, available on December 2nd. Masterminded (again) by new committee members Andy Farquarson & Becci Hemming, it is a dry run for next year, when we hope to feature family members' photos taken here in 2017. So make sure your cameras are fully charged to capture high resolution village delights from New Year's Day onwards. Our only request is you keep them scenic, free from people's close-ups, and with a total ban on Selfies! As for this year's calendar, one is FREE for each society membership (up to date 2016 subscriptions only). There are extra copies for sale at £5 each, or 3 for £12.

MICK MACE :

DIED 26 NOVEMBER 2016

As we (literally) go to press, we are shocked to hear of the death of Mick Mace, a much loved & distinguished resident of the community, and a stalwart of our villages and the church. Mick died in Llandough Hospital, having been admitted after a mid-October car incident on Pancross Hill. We aim to pay proper tribute to Mick in our next edition. However, the Mace family (to whom we offer our sincere condolences) have kindly sent us the following:



Mick's fine
Remembrance
Reading :
13 November 2011

“The Mace family would like to extend their gratitude to all who have befriended Mick during his time in Llanbethery.” Underlining how he loved to support his community, they give a poignant mention of Mick’s determination to be first at the door for the Community Cinema. Their observation that “Mick was one of a kind and will be deeply missed” is echoed by us all.

BRIAN PULLEN : DIED 17 AUGUST 2016

The Rev. Malcolm Davies kindly passed on an account of Brian’s life in the Vale and Llancafarn, where he was a long-time resident of ‘Nau Voo’. Brian was born in Penarth, and after schooling began an apprenticeship with Currans Engineering in Cardiff. National Service brought time at sea as a chief engineer. Then he opened a successful business, E. C. Wood Engineers, making heavy duty hydraulics on No. 2 dock, Barry. In retirement he enjoyed classical music, and Spanish holidays. The family recently moved to Barry, but sadly Brian was soon admitted to the Heath Hospital. Many weeks later he returned to the family’s new home, where he died. The Society offers condolences to Betty his wife, and to his children & grandchildren.

JUDY REID : DIED OCTOBER 14TH 2016

The sudden death of Judy Reid, wife of our very recent contributor, former villager Campbell Reid, also summons our sadness and condolences. Viv & Gwenllyan Price were able to support Campbell at the Stafford funeral.

ANDREW VICARI : DIED 3RD OCTOBER 2016

One ‘village’ death that should not slip the records is that of Andrew Vicari. He set up a studio in Llancafarn in the 1960s, and was once the UK’s wealthiest artist. We hope to recall the ‘Painter of Kings’ in our Spring edition.

READERS’ RESEARCHES :

Lorna Muir emails :

My mother was Elsie Harris, the youngest of six children of David & Amelia Harris who ran the *Fox and Hounds* in Llancafarn. I read some information in relation to my family from the information Aunty Betty gave to you, but would be very grateful for any information you have about my grandparents, great-grandparents and further back if possible. Kind regards, Lorna.

Avril Downes emails :

I am researching for Mr. Davies, a descendant of the Morgan family, who lived in Treguff Farm and Llancafarn. William Morgan married Margaret Williams in the parlsch on 22.12.1827. Wm. Morgan said on the marriage certificate that he was farming at Treguff. Margaret’s parents were Sarah & David Williams. They had a child named Ann, baptised on 30.8.1829. She married Edmund Stephens at St Johns Church in Cardiff on 1.5.1848. Might anyone know where William, Margaret & Ann lived in Treguff or Llancafarn?

Next Events Copy Deadline Please : 21 February 2017

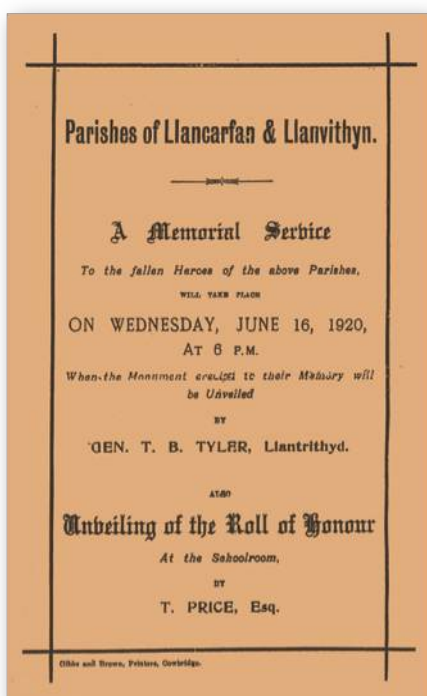
WAR MEMORIAL : *Parish & School pay tribute to our heroes*

As with each Day of Remembrance, villagers gathered again this year (on the closest Sunday to the 11th) to take part in a moving ceremony which paid tribute to the people who gave their lives in the First & Second World Wars.

Before the formal village tributes, on the 11th of November itself, fourteen of the school's Year Six children laid a remembrance wreath for those who died in conflict. The children read poetry & at 11.00 a.m. held a two-minute silence. Mrs Ruth Davies kindly donated the wreath. In the preceding week the School Council sold poppies and wristbands, and raised an impressive £164.20.



Joann Scott-Quelch has confirmed that, helped by part-Grant funds from the *War Memorials Trust* and *Cadw*, the Llancafarn Community Council was able to commission refurbishment of our War Memorial earlier this year. The laurel hedge, which was causing some damage to the Churchyard wall, has also been removed. Joann has expressed satisfaction that 'as was intended when it was erected in 1920, the Memorial is, once again, a fitting tribute to the fallen from our community.'



TWITTER ACCOUNT

This Autumn, Llancarfan neighbours have got all of a twitter about a hooter. And with very good reason. The hooting of owls is often a welcome sound as dusk falls on the village. But how rarely do you see owls in broad daylight?



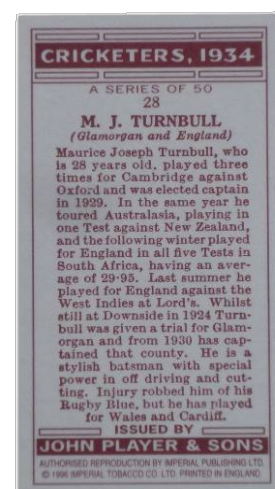
Melinda Thomas spotted her 'village owl' on Pancross Hill, and thought it was injured. But it emerged that it had downed a pigeon, and was 'mantling' its catch – in other words, hiding its prey under its wing! Melinda thought it might be a female long-eared owl, known to roost in a barn at Pen'Onn.

On the other hand, the owl also photo'd by Georgina Powell at *Ty Uchaf* adds to the debate. Alison Hannaby (she has photos too) suggests it is a 'Eurasian eagle-owl', a view which others agree seems to fit the facts. Not native, so perhaps an escapee, there are apparently several now at large in Britain. One just hopes that the owl's venture into daylight hours has a happy ending.

OF WILLOW & WAR

The article in our September Newsletter - 'An Old Sweat & Glamorgan Cricket' - reminded Gordon Kemp of his own cricket and wartime investigations. These were into Maurice Turnbull, (1906-1944), who was a cricketing star both on the cricket green & on the cigarette card :

Not (*writes Gordon*) that I saw him play; he died before I was born, and well before I became interested in Glamorgan Cricket. My memories are of an attempt to visit his Normandy grave in the late 1990s. As Campbell Reed described in his article, Maurice Turnbull was Glamorgan captain from 1930 to 1939. He also won 9 caps playing for



England (1930 – 1936). As Club Secretary he did much to keep the Club financially alive. Back then too it was possible to play more than one sport at the highest level, so he played rugby for Cardiff, and won 2 caps for Wales.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Maurice joined the Welsh Guards, and rose to the rank of Major with the 1st Battalion - in 1944 part of the Guards Armoured Division. On the 5th of August 1944 he was killed leading an attack on German tanks, near to the village of Montchamp in Calvados.

Having read about Maurice Turnbull, it happened that a match in Cardiff finished early (in those days often with a Glamorgan victory), so I asked the office if they knew where he was buried. This drew a blank. However, a little detective work produced a quick result. Or so I thought. Finding where he died was straightforward, and a map showed a Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery nearby at St Charles De Percy. I knew that British dead were usually buried near to where they died, so this seemed the obvious location.

Next time in Normandy a visit was decided and agreed upon – at least by me. My daughters & friend seemed less enthusiastic, but off we set, with Katherine navigating. The cemetery was reasonably large. It contained 809 burials, including 44 Welsh Guards killed in August 1944, together with others from the Guards Division - but no Maurice Turnbull. There *were* other officers, one being a Lieutenant from the same battalion, and a Captain Homfray, of the 2nd Armoured Battalion, from Cowbridge. But no Major Turnbull.

Back home, as I should have done at first, I contacted the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The information came back promptly. Major Turnbull is buried in the Bayeux War Cemetery, the largest in Normandy, with 4654 casualties. (It must be remembered that at this time the excellent CWG website was not available - which would have given the answer in seconds.)

Looking now at the website I can see that he & 5 other members of the Welsh Guards were originally buried at Montchamp, but reburied at Bayeux on the 20th February 1946. Why not at the closer cemetery of St Charles De Percy it doesn't say - perhaps it was the wish of the families. The date of death is given as 4th and not 5th August, presumably a mistake, as all other sources say the 5th. Our visit to the Bayeux Cemetery took place the following year.

Now you might ask what this has to do with Llancarfan. In my defence I can say that my late father-in-law told me that during the 1930s, Maurice Turnbull was often seen in his car, in and around the village. One wonders why? No doubt even in days before the 'instant celebrity' status of today he would have been well-known as Glamorgan captain. Others might be able to tell us if he had any closer connection with the area?

DIAMOND GEEZERS

Your first challenge is to identify this happy couple, captured around the time of their wedding ceremony, only six decades ago. (To be fair, the bride does literally look a bit astonished to be 'captured'. Then again – with good reason - the groom shows every sign of being the cat who got the cream!)

If this picture doesn't clear things up, try the wintery one of the same young man below. Clearly getting the cream (and the churnfuls of milk) to the customer has been a family calling for countless years, come snow, come rain, or come shine.

All of which is a windy way for the Llancarfan Society to congratulate Joan & Tony Thomas on just having celebrated their Diamond Wedding anniversary. (You will find a present-day image of the happy couple, in colour, over on the back page.)

Sixty years ago, our Pancross neighbours Tony & Joan were married in Maudlam Church, near to Kenfig. They honeymooned in London, described as 'very adventurous in those days'. But we are assured that, back then when dozens of dairy farms served the Vale, the milk continued to arrive on Llancarfan doorsteps. Once back in Pancross, Tony & Joan have called this village home through married life.



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SCHOOL PLANTS FOOTBALLING ACORN!

One from which we think a mighty oak will grow! Barry Town United Ladies' Football Club staged a primary girls' competition at St Cyres School in Penarth on 21st October. Our team of seven girls was cobbled together at the last minute, and had only achieved twenty minutes of practise before the big event! Three closely-matched, friendly, energetic games followed - of which Llancafarn won one and narrowly lost two. The performance inspired the formation of a new Girls' football team. So with a bit of practice, who knows what wonders can be achieved?



DAHLISCIOUS DRESSING UP DAY!



Pupils turned Cancer Research UK's Non-Uniform Day (21st October) into a memorable day by dressing up as their favourite Roald Dahl characters! Everyone joined in the fun, and the BFG, Willie Wonka, Fantastic Mr Fox, & Matilda were among the characters turning up to school! Our After School Club celebrated too, holding a 'Lotions & Potions' night to make gruesome concoctions like George and his Marvellous Medicine! Each £1.00 donation went to Cancer Research UK.

FUNDRAISING FUN!



As Jackie Prole's & Kay Brain's photos show, fundraising is fertile in the village. An event (L) in November presented £1,000 to Velindre Hospital, while the lunch was in aid of Diabetes Cymru, the next project on the Llancafarn Fundraisers hit list. As for the outbreak of Bingo (R), see inside for the full story.

AND BY JINGO IT'S BINGO!



Joan & Tony Thomas
celebrate sixty years
of togetherness



Big Screen Bingo promotes
the NEW Society Calendar



Becci Hemming
calls the tune

... AND A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR READERS!