

# LLANCARFAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 172

DEC 2017



**STOP PRESS  
FRAN CAN  
SAVE LIVES  
AND SO  
CAN YOU.**

The big picture is not, we admit, the finest view of an archaeological dig alongside the route of the new Five Mile Lane Road improvement Scheme. But on reading that the dig 'is sensitive in nature and commercially confidential' even the least inquisitive village magazine has to poke its nose over the distant hedgerows.



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## EDITORIAL

I've never until now grown a beard. I assumed I could, in that two sons had afforestation around their chins. But until my retirement my razor reared its head with a tedious regularity, and only recently has my whisker-harvester lain temporarily dormant. True, it'll be a far-off day before a village tractor has to carry off my beard to a silage mound of hair. But nowadays I can ward off winter's chill by indulging in this experimental growth.

And now reality strikes home. My chin is fringed with a blanket of snow. Festively white.

Back in the late sixties, when male long hair was seen as revolutionary, I *did* risk long gingerish sideburns. Back then though, as Aquarius dawned, many shed their clothes to songs of hairy freedom, & celebrated the anarchy of un-cut locks. Back then I was hairily allowed to read the local lunchtime news on the telly, proving that the groovy BBC was 'with it' enough to inform, educate and entertain even via fashionably rebellious hair.

But no, I never grew a beard. Except a false one. That was when I stood in for the real Father Christmas at the National Museum's Christmas party. And *that* beard offered more than was desirable. True, youngsters didn't complain, but the beard had not visited the laundry between seasons of stardom. And clearly, after suffering hours of squirming infants, a previous Santa had restored himself with a plentiful stream of Christmas spirit. The rising aroma of alcohol from my hand-me-down beard inspired the following rhyme:

*My portrayal of Santa was fun bent  
Though performed with both body and bum bent.  
Just one caveat crude -  
That my beard was imbued  
With the breath of its former incumbent.*

Happy Christmas!

## WHAT'S OCCURRIN'? OR MAYBE EVEN OCCURR'D!

### SOCIETY DATES

**Fri 1 Dec** Christmas Social Evening : all welcome in village hall.

### LLANCARFAN SOCIETY THEATRE CLUB

***The Roar of the Greasepaint, The Smell of the Crowd!*** Don't miss out on your Society's latest adventure! We've recently formed the ***Society Theatre Club***, commandeering a coach from the *Fox & Hounds* to enjoy some of ***theatre's finest offerings!*** Our ***community impresarios***, *Shelagh Hughes* [01446 781663] and *Kim Barry* [kimbarry@hotmail.com] have provisionally pre-booked ***Thirty Millennium Centre Tickets for 2018*** :

**7 April 1430** Matthew Bourne's ***Cinderella*** ballet. Stalls £47.

**14 July 1430** The National Theatre's ***War Horse***. Stalls £55.



Please ***contact Shelagh or Kim NOW*** to join these grand outings – and to share suggestions for future escapades! **Payment due 31 January.** Our first, ***booked-out*** outing is to ***Miss Saigon*** this 6 December.

### LLANCARFAN COMMUNITY CINEMA

**Thur 7 Dec** *Loving Vincent* His last days, stunningly animated in his style.

**Fri 15 Dec** *Beauty & the Beast* Live-action family version of ancient story.

### FESTIVITIES OVER CHRISTMAS & BEYOND

Church events are on the *enclosed greetings card*, and also enclosed is an early-bird introduction to the categories in *next year's Village Show [20<sup>th</sup> Aug]*.

#### STOP PRESS COVER STORY : SECONDS SAVE LIVES

The Llancafarn Public Access Defibrillator is now here, thanks to very generous donations, including one from *The Cerys Potter Golf Day*. It will sit on the *Fox & Hounds'* outside wall.

Saving lives comes naturally to former nurse Fran Winterbottom, but training is not essential for using the Defibrillator. **However, knowledge saves seconds.** There was a poor turn-out for November's demo, but villagers are **urged to turn up for a New Year training session - TBA.**

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NEXT COPY, NEWS &  
LETTERS DEADLINE :  
21 MARCH 2018

## OVERSEERS & EAVESDROPPERS : THE WORLDS IN THE MARGINS

**Because there's so often a need** to make notes from books, I quite often read historical non-fiction on my *Kindle*. I was of course brought up to respect a printed book, so I inherited a particular aversion to adding marginalia – in my case left-handed scribbles – around its edges. The *Kindle* however will let you highlight passages, note your own comments, and then retrieve them electronically, thus spoiling nothing.

Anyway, the most recent *Kindle* e-book that I bought is called *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* by Michael Camille. (It did seem a bit ironic for me to be reading this book, which is about the intriguing images that our mediaeval ancestors drew in their margins, whilst I myself was trying to avoid besmirching the borders of a printed book! But there we are.)

**Now I don't know about you,** but I find it intriguing that even the most pious of mediaeval books is so often illustrated with marginal pictures of the most dubious nature. Put it this way, that while many of those rude images might besmirch the anarchic pages of *Viz* magazine, they are certainly decorously banned from your newsletter! Time and again the ancient decorations in those mediaeval margins deliberately seem to try to undermine or maybe counterpoint the main text.

To illustrate a mild example, consider this illuminated page held in the British Library. It is from a *St. Omer Book of Hours* (c.1318-25). Here we see a classic image of the Adoration of the Magi. Meanwhile, outside this elaborately framed scene, the prayer book's owner kneels in reverence. So far so inoffensive.



(c) The British Library . Add\_ms\_36684\_f046v

But what else is beyond the frame? The praying lady is, as so often with the mediaeval illustrative convention, a picture *outside* a picture. She overlooks the frame of the religious illustration. And under her, supporting the platform on which she kneels, is a monkey. Strange! Yet this monkey is not the most curious example here of ‘monkey business’. In the margin beneath the depiction of the Magi are three more monkeys. These, says Michael Camille, literally ‘ape the gestures of the wise men above’. There is a one-footed monster too, presenting a golden crown in mockery of the gift-bearing Magi.

Well, if you think this is just the French taking the Saint Michel, pensez encore. There’s even a 14th century Pilgrimage Window in York Minster which shows a ‘monkey’s funeral’ – a parody of the funeral of the Virgin Mary – attended by squirrels eating nuts and monkeys carrying urine flasks, said to be satirizing the medical profession. Which underlines the fact that mediaeval churches all seem to have dubious margins into which the very opposite of the central religious themes & depictions were allowed to thrust their way.

**This observation might help us** to throw light on some conventions behind *our* pictures on the St. Cadoc walls. Our walls are layered, not just with limewash, but with overlying layers of meaning. True, if we judge from what has survived, Llancarfan’s church seems to have indulged in only a limited scurrility. Its eavesdroppers are a few tongue-sticking sculptures, a displaced



gargoyle, & the pagan hangover of our Green Man who serves as a roof-boss. However, *just* like the prayer book margins, the ‘post-modern’ conventions of the St. Cadoc’s wall paintings allow them to illustrate multiple layers of worlds and times.



It was the accidental discovery of part of its vast red ochre frame that led to the revelation of our wall-painted drama of St. George and the dragon. In fact, nearly all the wall-paintings are defined by a frame. But, in contrast to the heavy, image-confining, frames of Victorian art, these sophisticated mediaeval frames are restrictions neither to space nor time.

The most obvious example of this mind-set is, of course, the fact that the dragon’s head breaks through the frame into the window surround. This, I suggest, does not mean that the artist ran out of space in his defining square of wall. He revelled rather in the well-established mediaeval tradition of

invading the margins. He brilliantly chose to heighten the drama and power of George's thrusting lance by forcing the dragon's head through the graphic bounds. (I always remember as a child being so impressed when Maddock's 'Four-D Jones' climbed out of his comic strip into the *Daily Express* margins, presumably using his time-travelling 'time hoop'.)

In a manner of speaking, so many mediaeval paintings had their 'time hoops'. Whether it be wall-artists or manuscript illuminators, perhaps it was the intense effort involved in creating these one-off illustrations that led to their cramming in inventive challenges to time and space. However, it seems that the mediaeval mind was far more adjusted than many are nowadays to the co-existence of parallel worlds. *Of course* there was the Heavenly plane, *of course* there was Hell, *of course* countless saints, spirits and devils, good and evil, were leading parallel lives in the margins of our mundane existence.

The mediaeval church was the physical medium for making these invisible worlds visible. Those who knew best, the monks & clergy of belief, had established a power structure that identified, materialised, displayed, interpreted, owned and manipulated those invisible worlds. The marginal parallel worlds of spirit were as deep-seated in mediaeval life as the invisible mechanisms of broadcast and the internet are now intrinsic to ours.

**There are several examples in our paintings** of inventive 'time hoops', and indeed 'space hoops'. In the St. George mural, despite the tale that George did not convert the dragon-infested city to Christianity until *after* rescuing the princess, yet both our startled queen and kneeling princess are painted with crucifixes around their necks. Two layers of time are being illustrated here.

Then too (very much like the prayer-book reader in the *Book of Hours* above) the St. George scenario also has a visitor, outside as it were the picture, in both space and time. In the top right hand corner is a depiction of the Virgin Mary **[1]** blessing St. George's endeavours. She is there, from another world, urging him on in his conquest of evil. It seems that this is the only known British wall depiction of Saint Mary endorsing Saint George. Nevertheless, the picture is created in a well-established convention of visitation.

The Virgin Mary is not the only bystander. In fact, if one looks at the surviving Acts of Mercy, opposite the Deadly Sins, there are at least two layers of onlookers. Layer one shows our (the viewer's) stand-in, dressed it would appear in the traditional clothes of a pilgrim. In two out of the three pictures he - our 'everyman' - is observing two exemplary scenes of charity, learning how to care for the sick and the dead. Then in the third painting he reaches through time, as it were, to lend a hand in clothing the naked or the poor **[2]**. No longer a marginal observer, he is getting his hands dirty and doing good.

This is where the next time-traveller from a parallel world appears. He is an angel, again approving and giving benediction to our pilgrim's act of charity. But then, the angel is not alone in endorsing the virtue of the Acts of Mercy that we, the observers, should be practising. Look above each surviving illustration of Mercy, and you will make out a hand, approving each depiction of charity, using a two-closed-fingers gesture of blessing **[see 2 below]**.



1



2



3

**When our pictures were painted out**, probably around 1549, it would take several layers of limewash to positively hide the poor people's pictorial bibles. Our conservators may be able to confirm just how many layers later the literate would allow instructive words of advice and moral guidance to appear on the church's whitened walls. Today's church visitors can see some of those fragments of surviving text which are deliberately retained there, over the earlier paintings, as evidence of post-Reformation thinking.

One fragmentary island of text **[in 3 above]** suggests we might read it 'put thy truste in chr . . .' The instinct was to extend the apparent 'chr' into 'Christ'. But research by Professor Maddy Gray appears to confirm that that this quotation mirrors Psalm 20 Verse 7, specifically as translated in the Book of Common Prayer. The 'chr' turns out to be the 'cha' of 'chariots'. And our full wall text therefore probably originally read 'Some put their truste in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the Name of the Lord our God'.

Don't put your trust in horses? Written over St. George's finest of steeds? Could it be then that St. George's wonderful beast, or its memory, had not been entirely eradicated by the layers of limewash, and that the reformed text was another pointed rejection of the degenerate paintings of the past? In short, yet another piece of marginalia, or graffiti, that even the mediaeval artist would not expect to intrude upon his time-&-space-travelling paintings.

## RECENT LLANCARFAN ENTHUSIASTS . . .

All those who show an interest in our patch are of course very welcome, not least the regulars. These three notables were amongst recent visitors.

Presenter **Charlie Ross** helped our own bargain hunt by buying booklets, and filming a 'Bargain Hunt' insert to be transmitted later in Spring 2018.

**Kenneth Clarke MP** was tempted here by village friends, and was knowledgeably delighted with the paintings, while of course reminding us of St. George's international credentials.

And a visit by **Martin Crampin**, author of his stunningly researched & illustrated book on *Stained Glass from Welsh Churches*, underlined the fact that St. Cadoc's found its visual celebration not in colourful windows but up on the walls.



BARGAIN HUNTER CHARLIE ROSS



AUTHOR MARTIN CRAMPIN



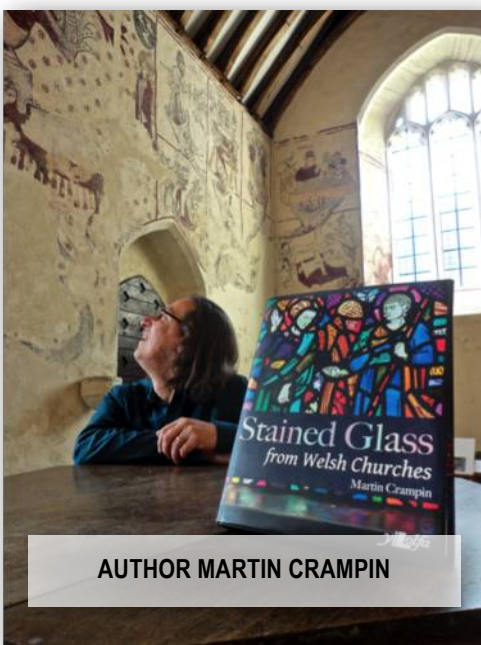
Photograph courtesy of Holy Cross, Cowbridge

## ST CADOC'S CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

Plans are underway for a tree festival, with donations going to support both **the Church and The Stroke Association**, which supports **Life after Strokes** in our area. We must also continue to raise money to keep the church going, and maintain the wonderful works on our walls. So - **we appeal to residents to sponsor a tree**, eight in total, their lights creating a special Christmas ambience. Please contact Kevin Barry, Church Warden, via [kgbarry2010@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:kgbarry2010@hotmail.co.uk) or ring 07598649629.

## CHRISTMAS DOOR WREATHS

The **Llancarfan Flower Arrangers** are making Christmas Door Wreaths in aid of the **Bobath** charity, helping children with cerebral palsy. The wreaths cost £20, and are available in early December. Please order from **Jenny Knott** – 01446 -781473 or **Mary Grey** - 781936.





# LEST WE FORGET . . .



Bugler Thomas Evans [left] plays *The Last Post* during Sunday the 12<sup>th</sup> of November's Village Remembrance gathering.



And on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November members of Llancarfan School Council left remembrance messages with a memory tree of family members lost in conflict.



## LOST TO THE VILLAGES

*This has been a particularly saddening last quarter of the year, seeing the loss of several people well known to Society members, and much loved by our communities.*



### **WILLIAM PHILIP THOMAS, Priest**

Bill Thomas was ordained Deacon in 1970, and while Archdeacon of Llandaff from 1997 to 2008, he led many Llancarfan services. Born in 1943, Bill's spirited life was duly celebrated, and unanticipated death duly mourned, in a 27<sup>th</sup> of September Requiem Eucharist in Llandaff Cathedral. Bill is embedded in the affections of so many in the parish. In recent years, not known to many, he has continued to support Llancarfan with fund-raising bids and tireless paperwork linked to the wall-paintings. No self-promoter, this snap shows Bill with Sam Smith, both serving as visitor guides to St. Cadoc's and its antiquities.

However, telling visitors about the church was but a fragment of his role in the community. Bill was educated at Lichfield Theological College; and ordained in 1971. After curacies in Llanilid and Pontypridd he was the Vicar of Tonyrefail, then Rector of Neath until his appointment as Archdeacon. On his retirement he took on responsibility for the churches at Llantrithyd & Llancarfan, and became a very important and much loved part of the church community.

### **AUDREY JOYCE PORTER**

Audrey, who died aged 90 on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September, was movingly remembered in a tribute by her sons and families shared with many attending the St. Cadoc's funeral on 12 October. Born to a sergeant's family at Bovington Camp, as a child she survived an Indian earthquake during her dad's service in India.

Growing up back here – in Corsham, Aberdare, then Cardiff – she met her future husband when working for the Inland Revenue. She became Mrs. Porter in 1949, and after several moves they brought the product of their union – Stephen, Simon & Timothy – to Mill Race Cottage in 1972. Audrey was a *tour de force* in village life (fancy dressing for the tug-of-war), and was deeply moved as a Red Cross nurse when volunteering during the Aberfan disaster. Much travelled, she would host 36 for Boxing Day, and delighted in her grand-and-great-grandchildren. Ever a kind & caring hand, villagers join her family in their expressions of sadness, gratitude and affection.



### **SUE EVANS : 27 July 1945 – 7 October 2017**

Following her death, Sue's family paid a very distinctive tribute to an elegant woman, much loved for her "blend of kindness, competence, love, generosity and taste". Many villagers knew her warmly from family years at Garnllwyd, and then more recently in her Llanbethery home. All were shocked by Sue's painful decline into Alzheimer's disease. But it was not through a string of easily forgotten dates that her family chose to pay tribute. They elected to add to our memories *their* evocation of the spirit of a graceful lady, "never resentful, never regretful . . ."



" Susie . . . negotiated the chaos. On any day she drove a tractor, bailed & stacked the hay, rang the church bells, soothed cows in labour, checked ewes in lamb, visited a friend, and laid out tea for us all as if by magic . . . Of course there were things she found confounding . . . the price of everything, driving with a cowboy hat on, Friday runs to Cowbridge . . . the pig Charlotte rooting through the house for a bite to eat. It is so difficult to have someone we love as mother, friend, sister, wife, grandmother, confidant & consoler gradually becoming less of a presence in our lives. But there is a bit of Sue in everyone, & now we can have the conversation with her that could no longer be had."

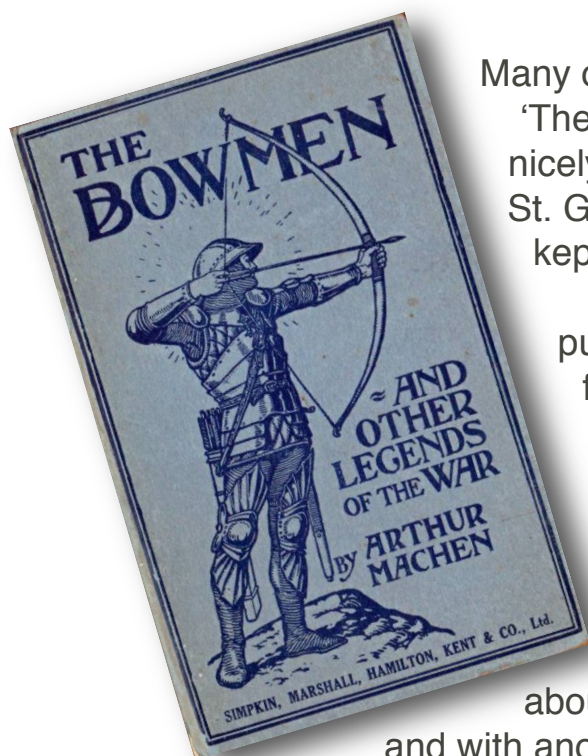
### **JEAN DAVIES**

The eulogy for Jean Davies, wife of Fr. Malcolm (priest in charge in Llancarfan from 1994 until retirement), was heartfelt in its praise of a woman who became a valued member of many local communities. Jean was born on 20 July 1935 in Aberdare, marrying Malcolm in 1959. Following the birth of son Jonathan in 1967, they moved to Rhoose, where in 1973 Suzanne completed the family. It was there that Malcolm decided to enter the Priesthood, training in Llandaff.



In 1984 Jean embraced her evolution from Penmark Playgroup leader into a full-time vicar's wife. They moved with the church to Pentre in the Rhondda, but returned to the Vale in 1994. In Llancarfan & Llantrithyd Jean was immersed in a life in support of ministry, making very special friends, not least at 'Keep Fit Classes' (with added Cake!) Dogs competed for love with the infamous & widely travelled Red Citroen 2CV. In retirement years, Rhoose & its sea views were again her daily delight. She died (of cancer) aged 82, knowing that her first great-grandchild was on its way, and with fond allusions to the Ogmere Vale stepping stones, seeing them as the stepping stones of life.

## ON FAILING TO TELL A CHRISTMAS GHOST TALE



Many of our readers will know the supernatural story of ‘The Angels of Mons’. This was a tale which fitted in nicely when first we discovered the church’s stunning St. George painting, remembering how the image still kept its spirit-stirring potency when Britain faced the pain of war. The Welsh author Arthur Machen published his tale, set in the battle of Mons, a very few weeks after what *Wikipedia* describes as the British ‘mythic’ and ‘unlikely victory against overwhelming odds’. Machen’s story gave a miraculous account of a battlefield appeal to St George, drawing emotive parallels with the archers of Agincourt. He describes how there appeared ‘a long line of shapes, with a shining about them. They were like men who drew the bow, and with another shout their cloud of arrows flew singing and tingling through the air towards the German hosts.’ A stirring vision.

Machen’s spectral story first appeared in *The Evening News* of 29 September 1914. And it seems - such was the home-front’s need for spiritual affirmation - that this journalistic story-telling (‘fake news’ if you wish) *became believed as absolute & un-challengeable fact*. It possibly still is in some circles.

Well, given that the bowmen of Agincourt were significantly mercenaries from Gwent, this seemed as good a reason as any to share with readers again this spectral ghost tale. I had found the book above, published by public demand in 1915. The original edition even had a flash across the cover – ‘Do you know the wonderful story of the angelic visitation which happened during the retreat from Mons?’ No pricking of myths here then, in this 1/- net promotion!

But then I read Machen’s *Introduction*, printed inside. Here he tells how he read ‘on that hot Sunday morning between meat and mass’ an ‘awful account of the retreat from Mons’. As he sat in church, he was sorry to admit to ‘making up a story in my head while the deacon was singing the Gospel’. To cut 28 pages of *Introduction & Postscript* short, Machen then categorical asserts that the story ‘*had no foundation in fact of any kind or sort*’. He then adds an elaborate account of how *no one would believe him*. The printing of the above book for instance coincided with an *Occult Review* assertion that “Everybody has seen them who has fought through from Mons to Ypres.”

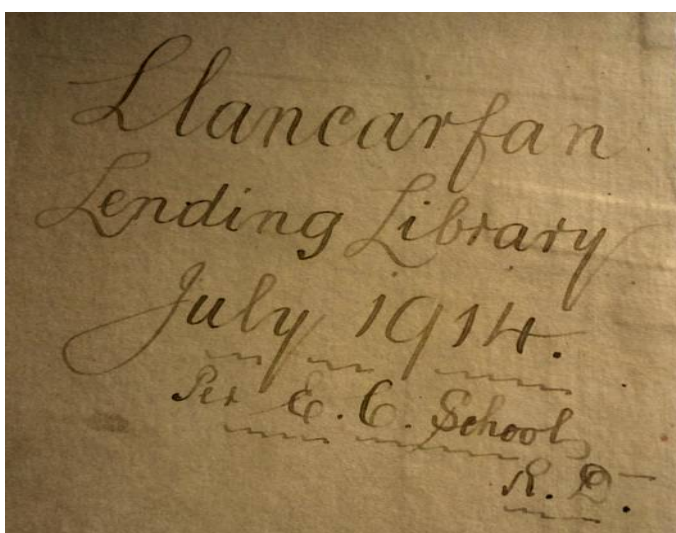
In short, people believe what they need to believe. So how could I possibly add to the rumours by pointing you at this ghostly tale for Christmas?

## PRESS BUTTON B FOR YOUR BOOK BACK

While we're on the subject of books, I don't suppose many of us borrow from this curious library on the right, with its inventive use of a listed phone booth? It's in Michaelston-le-Pit. In my case though, given that I make regular requests to our Society Committee for a place to locate a collection of books about this village's history, a phone box bibliothèque has its appeal. However, storing & dispersing rather rare books from Llancarfan's phone booth, gently lapped by the Carfan, would be a disturbingly damp archive.



History apart, you have to admire Michaelston's mission to share their reading matter. In Llancarfan (as you know) we do have an active Book Club, resulting I assume in several spare copies of the same novel, read, discussed, and then remaindered in obscurity. Or do they all end up being mass pulped after a Jumble Sale? Now even as a book lover, I can't pretend that a phone booth full of books would add to the aesthetics of a rural village. But then again, St Athan has been even more adventurous, recently running their own voluntary library in the Old School Community Centre. This is one of *five* community-run libraries presently open in the Vale.



To cut to the chase, your Society currently looks after (c/o White Chapel) a mine of knowledge in the form of books aimed at village interest and use. These include many volumes from the late Geoff Burrows' collection, & prize items like Spencer's *Annals of South Glamorgan*, generously donated to our Society by Jeff Thomas of Masterton, New Zealand, once of Gowlog Farm (1937-1945). As

you'll see from this note [above] on the book's flyleaf, even a 100 years ago, as we plunged into World War One, Llancarfan nevertheless had its own Lending Library. Time then for us to catch up with the civilised past?

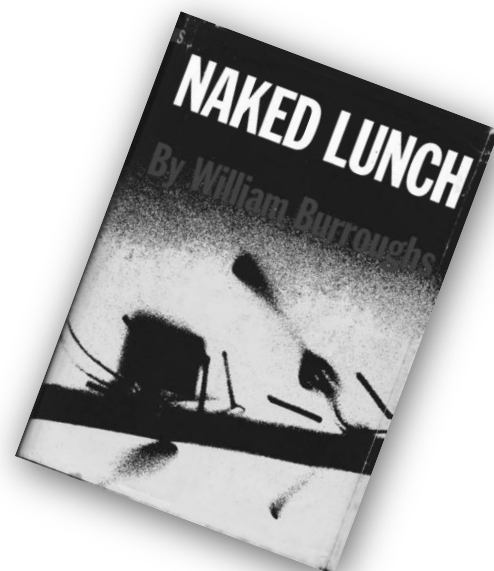
All of which justifies, in a roundabout way, inclusion of this boyhood memory from Mike Crosta, OBE. In our last issue Mike gave a wise & moving account of his surgery. In this case, far from being a call for library access, maybe its right for us to entitle Mike's snippet '**BOOKS NOT TO BE SHARED**'?

Mike writes:

*"I was in Canton High School. When I was in the third class (us upstairs, girls downstairs) our teacher became aware that my grandfather was going on a holiday to New York. Our teacher asked if my grandfather could get a book which he could not lay hands on in this country. A willing pupil, I happily gave grandfather a mission."*

*"When grandfather got back though he was furious and disgusted. The book turned out to be **Naked Lunch** by William S. Burroughs. And my grandfather could not believe what was in the book!"*

*"So much for educating my teacher. As for me, I've never read the book, because I still feel guilty!"*



Well now, Mike has always been a generous sharer of guide books from his and Jan's travels – and, if I understand his intentions aright, he has deposited his unread *Naked Lunch* with the Llancarfan Society's collection! That is the book above. Mike's edition is worth about £40, and all we need now is someone brave enough to read it! (Incidentally, if you think that £40 is a lot to pay for a \$6.00 copy of something to upset grandpa – and many of us *are* grandpas now! - there's currently a signed first edition available on *AbeBooks* for \$20,000.00 (which is £15,672.89 to you and me).

Anyway, if its any balm to your conscience, Mike, I did the same thing in the late 1960s, when *Last Exit to Brooklyn* was prosecuted for obscenity in the UK. Pen and I bought a secret copy in New York in May 1968, only to discover that John Mortimer QC (famous for *Rumpole of the Bailey*) had the British ban overturned that very same year. So we no longer had the thrill of owning a banned book (not to mention finding it more than difficult to read)!

Sorry Llancarfan. Not much village history, this. But at least Mike and I had progressive teachers. And I'm pleased to report that Keith Thomas recently lent me *Jeremy Hutchinson's Case Histories*. Lord Hutchinson, QC (who just died on 13 November) was an inspiration for Rumpole, triumphed in many 60s & 70s legal battles, defended Penguin's publishing of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, not to mention *Fanny Hill*, & was involved in the Profumo and Christine Keeler cases. Whatever our views on moral standards, reading it brought back many lively memories of growing up in those striking times of change.

## COVER STORY TEASER : HOW LONG DO YOU SIT ON HISTORY?

Llancarfan has exchanged rumours for months about something very interesting being revealed during the preparation for the significant re-routing of Five Mile Lane. The official reason for opening up three archaeological sites adjacent to the proposed new line appears in a report of 31 July 2017 to the Vale of Glamorgan Council. The exploratory digs were to 'de-risk the route with regard to archaeology in advance of the main works contract award'. In other words, 'rescue archaeology', due to end November 2017.

Having now reached that deadline, the land that shaped our history seems still under the wraps of confidential sensitivity. Why? The Vale appears not to be empowered to reveal discoveries - by Welsh Government instruction?

Our cover picture, little more than a scenic view that will rapidly change over the coming months, is a distant glimpse of perhaps the most sensitive site. Security protects the work of the contractors, *Rubicon Heritage* and *Cotswold Archaeology*. Perhaps some October 2017 publicity from *Rubicon's* website gives a clue to how 'our' digs rank alongside their 150 completed projects :

*"In September alone we have been on the ground in Glamorgan, Monmouthshire, Bristol, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Edinburgh and Suffolk . . . finding some fantastic archaeology along the way."* Significantly, their work has included *"two Roman villas, a prehistoric cemetery and rediscovering the early industrial docks of Leith."*

Below is this October's photo of part of Whitton Lodge Roman Villa, brought to light again following 1956 and 1970 excavations. Might *Coflein*, Wales's online Archaeological list, need to update its record of 'no visible remains'?



Exciting though this is, **the main excitement** may lie further north. Lively rumours suggest this dig fits in with the *Rubicon* note of '**a prehistoric cemetery**'. Locals hold that up to **200 skeletons** have been discovered. Surely then it's time to be told the truth, and dispel the rumours? Protect of course, but isn't this best achieved by keeping us neighbours in the picture?



## LLANCAFAN SCHOOL GATHERS IN THE HARVEST

*Harvest Time* earned a special assembly led by Mrs Ewa Thomas from the Vale Foodbank. This introduction to their good works resulted in an impressive Festival display, when parents and children brought 21 bursting bundles of tins, packets, jars & boxes into school. A celebration followed in St Cadoc's where children sang songs and recited harvest poetry. All items are now with the Vale Foodbank, replenishing, with thanks, their Christmas stock.



## MINORS BECOME MINERS FOR BIG PIT VISIT

*Charlotte [Year 6] reports on a November outing by Years 4, 5, & 6 to Big Pit :*

“ We arrived in a room to be kitted-up with a hard hat, head-torch and gas mask, just like the miners wore! We were then sent 90 metres down the shaft. Parts of the mine were really small, and Mr. Bilney and the other adults had to duck! One guide said she was the first woman to be employed by a coal mine in 175 years! Underground we saw old machines, and stables used for the ponies that pulled the coal carts. Every year the ponies had a holiday. But when the ponies were taken into the light they had blindfolds because the light could blind them, so a stable boy had to slowly take their blindfolds off.”