



**LLANCARFAN SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER 173
MARCH 2018**



IF WINTER
COMES, CAN
SPRING BE
FAR BEHIND?

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EDITORIAL

I had a cautionary reminder of approaching antiquity when meeting friends of Clare & Gordon Emerson in the 'Fox' on New Year's Eve. The visitors happened to live at Cow Ark on the Lancs/Yorks border, one of the lovely limestone haunts of my teenage biking & caving years. We turned out to know people in common, including the gentleman described as 'the old farmer' living just up the road. This 'old farmer' proved to be Dave Calvert, my 1950's classmate. Hey ho.

Still, it has somewhat justified my admitting to our Society Committee that I won't be editing this newsletter after the end of 2018. It has been a tremendous privilege for me to learn how to do it, hopefully to the liking of kind readers who have indulged my quirky attempts to record the history of these villages in the Vale. Given there's much more 'then' than 'now', we still manage to discover 'new' history to record.

But as for me as editor, in this brave new world of 'social media' there's definitely a need for a new eye on the present. And there's surely a call for some so-called 'succession planning'. So, in the optimistic tradition of 'over by Christmas', I intend by then to exit editorially - unless of course the AGM fires me earlier. Though I *do* hope that a new editor might still let me offer the odd 'historical detectorist' piece.

One reason for moving on comes from considering whether it would be sensible to live rather closer to our children's growing families. Our boys, their ladies & our grandchildren have homes on the outskirts of London, two in Waltham Cross (1 of 12 crosses marking where Queen Eleanor's funeral cortege rested in 1290 on its sad journey from Lincoln to London. Eleanor died giving birth to her 17th child. Her last stop was Charing Cross.) And to my surprise, I learn of a link to Llancarfan, which encourages me to include in this newsletter some background to a Waltham Cross / Cheshunt author who took a curious interest in our own Valley of the Stags.

LLANCARFAN SCHOOL TO 'MIGRATE'? A CUT & DRIED CLOSURE?

Not wishing to teach future editors to suck eggs, they should be alert to the fact that there is frustration in 'not being political'. This newsletter serves as an historical record, not a rabble-rousing propaganda sheet. Sometimes though, in trying to record the facts about important village issues, one risks being labelled 'insufficiently objective'. Reporting on current proposals for the future of the village school is such an issue. It is (as previous debates have shown) one which responsible villagers care deeply about. Your newsletter cares too, but will aspire to balanced reporting.

Implications of the 'shock' January announcement that 'Consultation is set to begin on proposals that would see Llancarfan Primary School move into a new state-of-the-art building' - a new-build in Rhoose with 210 places for a restructured school catchment area – seem to have taken some time to sink in.

Several caring villagers did turn up though, apparently unexpectedly, to listen to discussions at 16 February's *Llancarfan Community Council* meeting. '**Llancarfan Primary School Migration**' headed the Agenda, and we were left in no doubt that our representatives felt the Vale's notification had been badly handled. It appears that, according to a reply to our Community Council from Vale Council Leader, John Thomas, a press release 'had gone out shortly before the report was published'.

This meant that details appeared on *The Gem Online* **in advance of our representatives learning officially about the proposals**. A 19 January letter from Robert Carter, Clerk to our council, rapidly informed 'the Vale' that our LCC members felt 'the Vale Council's approach and timing regarding disseminating this information **lacked sensitivity, and demonstrated a complete disregard for the communities which would be affected by the proposals.**' Mr. Thomas replied confirming his regrets 'that press reporting did not fully align with the publication of the actual report'.

Once bitten, villagers and our representatives are surely now duly alerted to the need to **take serious advantage of a 'statutory consultation' set to run for seven weeks from the 5th of March**. On 16 February our Community Councillors still did not know what form the consultations would take. Councillor Penrose, Cabinet Member for Learning & Culture, enthused in the announcement that 'this project will see Llancarfan Primary School move into new ultra-modern facilities'. In response, our Llancarfan Councillors expressed to the Vale an anxiety that Councillor Penrose 'could be perceived as **pre-judging the outcome of the consultation process**'.

Villagers must be aware that a great deal of evidence needs to be mustered in making meaningful representations to any consultation. Some vigorous catching-up discussion was to be heard at the Community Council meeting, and coherent analysis put forward by members, not least by the very rational and informed Councillor Melinda Thomas. **Councillors will now surely be working and anxious to brief us on any matters relevant to the consultation and debate on 'reconfiguration'**.

In preparation for informing ourselves for any consultation process, it is vital that concerned villagers and school users **Google** to download and read the PDF report to the Vale Cabinet on 'Proposed reconfiguration of Primary Provision in the Western Vale'. The facts & assertions in this document lay out statistics which, even if balanced, nevertheless largely only support one side of any meaningful discussion.

Any consultation must surely assess the cultural values of a school nested in, and sharing, the unique village qualities of a rural environment. We must judge its fitness for purpose for its students, but also the school's value to the village. Many realise that, as with the church and the pub, our school is one of three pillars which support a living community rather than a dormitory suburb. Suburban social planning could throw out our rural babies with the bathwater.

*This village has always celebrated our schools' daily life. So here, as also on our back page, is **more visual evidence from a lively school fostering lively minds.***

YOUNG SCHOOL REPORTERS SHARE NEWS OF THEIR LIVELY LIVES



THE SENEDD

On Tuesday the 6th of February, Year 5 and 6 had the opportunity to visit the Senedd in Cardiff Bay.

We learnt about the roles and responsibilities of the various Welsh Government departments and even had a debate : Should all children who live within a mile radius of their school walk to school? We all gave our views and voted using the consoles, just like real Assembly Members. Our constituency representative, Jane Hutt met with us and held a Q&A session. We loved the Senedd and it was great fun. We would love to go back!

NEW CLUBS

As Christmas holidays came to an inevitable close, the pupils of Llancarfan Primary School returned to school to be greeted by some exciting news: a large variety of new clubs would be starting at the school.

These now include Football, Rugby, Netball, Chess, Media and Minecraft, with French, Chess and Comic Club being offered at lunchtime. We are really lucky to have all these opportunities!



BIRD WATCH On the 25th of January Class Hazel took part in the national Bird Watch campaign, organised by the RSPB to record which of our feathered friends are frequenting our fields. We recorded sightings of jackdaws, crows, black birds, robins, magpies, blue tits and even a kestrel. We appreciate the wealth of wildlife surrounding our school.



WHAT'S A CAR IN?

In our deceptive Carfan river, that's what! A misjudgement of the water level at the ford on 21 January led to another dramatic escape for a night-time driver. Next day Julie & Andrew Archbold's son Kieran braved the car recovery, not without some onlookers' anxiety. Community Council discussion has subsequently considered the need for more sign warnings & a depth gauge at the ford. Many thanks to Kay Gay for sharing her images of the rescue.

SHELAGH, TONY & CAYO LEWIS

also performed a rescue – of straying Scruff back in sunny 2017. He had been dumped in the village churchyard, but now Scruff's paws are well under the Lewis's table.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN, ECCENTRIC? Doesn't everybody keep a Super Soaker Water Pistol in a chamber pot by the bedroom window? How else do you chase the squirrels off the bird food?



WELL BEING IN LLANCARFAN : PROPOSED SOCIETY MAY WALK 2018



No – this isn't about the Public Access Defibrillator installed at Christmas alongside the *Fox & Hounds* beer garden gate. (Thanks *Fox* for the picture.) The Defibrillator will serve present day life-saving.

What we're talking about here is this year's health-giving Llanccarfann May Walk, planned for the May Bank Holiday on the 7th of May. This will be a celebration of the medicinal wells for which the village was once famous. As often, our

President, Barbara Milhuisen, has been a catalyst for this well walk, and will retrace with us some of the (squashy) steps of her Llanccarfann childhood. Regular May Day followers will know that such walks (which are frequently guided by Professor Maddy Gray, who sadly can't be here this year) are very enjoyable, and a valuable trickle-down opportunity for sharing local lore.

So – for our trickling trail we are negotiating access permission with guardians of the land on which the wells emerge, and working towards a non-too-challenging route between Garnllwyd and the Ragwell in Britches Wood. Look for details around the village in late April. Stout dry footgear needed.

To complement the walk, our A.G.M. (1st May 2018) is enriched by a presentation on wells by Grace Edgar of the Cardiff Dowsing & Holistic Group. This could throw intriguing light on our ancient medicinal springs.

Meanwhile, it could be worth looking again at previous relevant newsletters online, the most recent being issues 150 and 157. Then again, very near the opening of this society, back in January 1988, John Etherington mentioned (No. 7) domestic wells and springs, and the 'medicinal' wells too, for which he dryly observed that 'an acclimatised stomach was probably needed to withstand the iron and Epsom Salts'!

In Newsletter 9 Dick Evans then enriched knowledge of our local waters with a quenching draught of places and names. We will hope to compile these items for our Bank holiday walkers.



Image of rag well from p. 40. *South Wales & Monmouthshire at the Opening of the 20th Century* (1907)

MISS SAIGON : LLANCARFAN SOCIETY OUTING

Ian Fell

Well yes, we very nearly did *miss* 'Miss Saigon', owing to the unfortunate breakdown of the ever-willing *Greenways* bus which about fourteen of us had booked to take us to the Millennium Centre. Still, they got us there. There was some puzzlement too over theatre seats – but then the show put all of our trivial problems into perspective with its tale of the 'street children' conceived in Vietnam by American fathers during the Vietnam War.

This topic remains a controversial subject for a musical, being essentially a modern opera by the creators of *Les Miserables*, thematically related to *Madam Butterfly*. It has in the past been criticised as 'racist and misogynistic orientalism'. Which has to give pause for thought.

Nevertheless, 29 years after its premier performance, many of us responded positively to the strengths of the present production. It is dramatic & spectacular, technically brilliant, finely performed, directed & choreographed, and with rich enfolding music throughout. The current GB tour surely placates former 'racist' criticism with its international casting, and certainly gave a 'thinking coach outing' many issues to consider on the journey home.

Did the 'rescue' of the Vietnamese / US war-baby boy 'home' into the land of the American Dream ring hollow under Trump's presidency? Surely the scenes of the US Dream were meant to seem as intentionally tawdry in their staging as those depicted in the bawdy house. But then, this is a show-biz melodrama with a concertinaed plot.

Day after day back in the 60s your editor's job was to watch, before scripting them, the uncensored film 'rushes' from the Vietnam war. I dare say this armed you to discriminate between theatrical spectacle and the vile reality. But surely many operas often require the 'suspension of disbelief'?

I do hope then that others, like me, are grateful to Kim Barry, Shelagh Hughes and Sue Taylor for making this outing possible.

Next trip :

to Matthew Bourne's ballet of Cinderella on 7 April.

Is this a pantomime tale of vicious household sibling bullying, motivated by sisterly hopes of social ascendancy?

Apparently not. Matthew Bourne's interpretation is set in London in the Second World War, a 'magical night for

Cinderella and her dashing young RAF pilot, who get together just long enough to fall in love before being parted by the horrors of the Blitz'.

So – please join us to enjoy a new twist on a cultural coach trip to Cardiff!





The dressing of St Cadoc's trees fired the classes' invention. Their work was highly praised by the Chair of the School Governors, Jill Davies, & tree sponsor David Evans.



Proceeds in aid of the Stroke Association



A re-cycling angel



Find Baby' Jesus in the Nativity Tree



**TREE FESTIVAL
2017
~
LLANCARFAN
SCHOOL
CREATES
A
CHRISTMAS
SPECTACLE**





CHRISTMAS CAROLS BENEATH A SUPER-MOON : 3 DECEMBER 2017

Even under the light of a super-moon, and the bedazzling ford-side Christmas tree, neighbours knew neighbours best by the timbre of their voices, and the ease with which they remembered the verses, some time-honoured, some decidedly new-fangled.

Community Council
Chair John Angell
joins in with
a small sample of
the visible caroling
chorus!



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

SOCIETY DATES

1 May A.G.M. - Holy Wells
12 May Malvern Show Trip
12 August Ruth Watts Petanque
29 Sept Society Dinner

See also pages 6 and 7.

7 May May Day Walk
15 June Mystery Trip
18 August Village Show
4 Dec Social Evening

LLANCARFAN COMMUNITY CINEMA

9 March 7.15 pm *The Death of Stalin* Brilliant Armando Iannucci comedy.
20 April 7.15 pm *Murder on the Orient Express* Stellar cast & more train!

CHURCH ACTIVITIES OVER EASTER

Please see enclosed list with Easter well-wishes and service details.

LLANCARFAN VILLAGE SHOW - 18th August 2018

Ann Ferris writes :

We are pleased to confirm that, after a few years' absence, we will once again be presenting the Llanccarfán Village Show. This is an ideal opportunity for us all to join together and have a truly enjoyable day.

Now is the time to be thinking and planning about your entries. Time to start sowing those seeds, knitting, painting, etc., etc. In order to make the day a success we **need your input**, and so you all have an important role!! There are cash prizes to be won as well as cups & trophies in the different sections.

Hopefully, you will have received a copy of the various classes for entry which were made be available with the Christmas Newsletter. If not, please let us know and we can arrange for you to have a replacement. The official Schedule containing the classes and entry form will be sent out in early June. Let us all join together to make this the best show yet! Let's work together to make it a real FUN day for young ones and the older ones alike!! In order for this to happen we do, of course, need your participation. Although the show is hosted in Llanccarfán it is open to you all, wherever you may live.

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**NEXT COPY, NEWS &
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AUNTY CAROL DUNN : THE LAST OF HER FAMILY'S GENERATION

Llanbethery lost a life-long member of its community last December, when 'Caroline Elizabeth Dunn' died in her home there, aged 96. Known 'universally' as Aunty Carol, she was actually born at Pentre Farm, Llantrithyd, but moved very shortly to Llancarfan's neighbouring village. Her funeral service was held, accompanied by vigorous non-Conformist singing, on the 19th of December, 2017, in the characterful Bethesda'r Fro United Reformed Church, which nestles behind the St. Athan airfield.

Carol was reared as 'a lively country girl' in Llanbethery, where she not only gained knowledge of all things rural, but became a 'fount of historical knowledge', not just about the villages and their communities, but also her own family tree. This knowledge she shared far & wide, as seen in this 'snap' from July 2015. It was taken as she briefed a distant relative, Australian Paul Johns, who was over from Queensland to trace his family's Barry roots.



Aunty Carol shares her research

Much of her own history was recalled in a fine tribute at the service by her nephew & godson, Allun Jones. He described Carol's country childhood, her signing up with the RAF in World War Two, and later her nursery work in Rhoose. The Butlins' arrival on Barry Island brought an opportunity for Aunty Carol to look after the holiday camp's gardens. But her family commitments ran in parallel, nursing both her father and mother, and other relatives, throughout their later lives.

Joining the Bethesda'r Fro service were many far-flung relatives down from Newcastle, her sister having moved there through St. Athan-related RAF postings. As for her antiquarian knowledge, Allun related how, if you asked a question about Llanbethery, Llancarfan, or about the local farming area 'you had to set aside at least an hour for the response, such was the excellence of her knowledge.' A knowledge now lost. However, leavening the sadness with a smile, Allun touched on her less-than-natural talent for driving. Aunty Carol faced the test 13 times, taking to driving 'like a duck to a frying pan'.

The farewells proved a positive and touching send-off for a lady who left this life as she would have wished, dying peacefully in her own Llanbethery home.

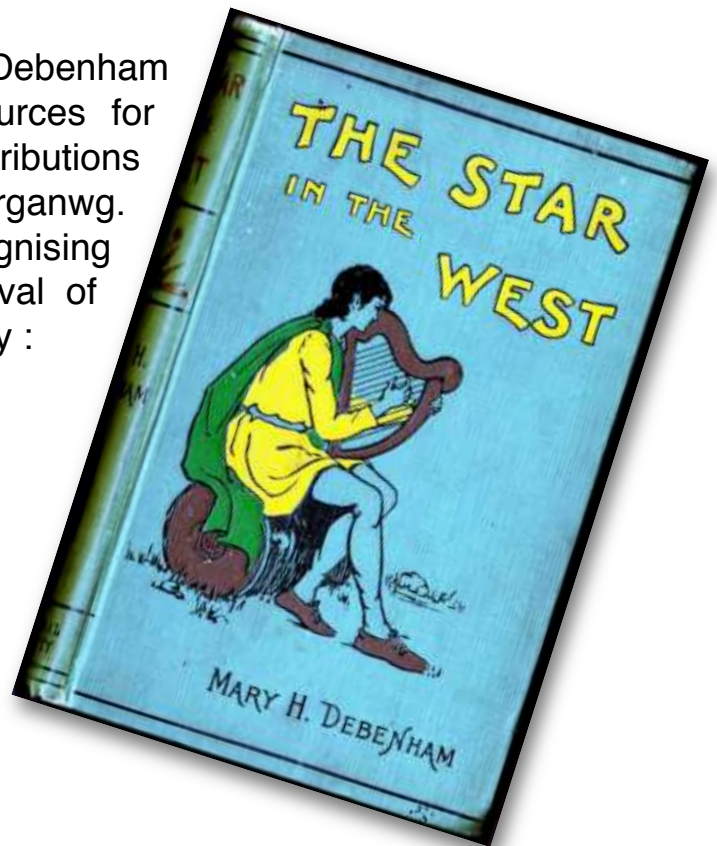
A SUITABLE BOOK FOR LLANCARFAN : THE VILLAGE IN FICTION

Readers of the last newsletter [Christmas 2017] may have noted a passing reference to books which by some were considered unsuitable for sharing. (I blame Mike Crosta, who led us astray with reference to a dubious work of literature sought from America by his teacher!) Anyway, in this issue we try to make amends by re-introducing a book, largely set around Llanccarfán, intended to be of a decidedly improving nature. It is called *The Star In The West*, and was clearly aimed at spreading the gospel of a decent moral life. I even steeled myself to read it.¹

The Star in the West does not claim to be factual. The author is an intriguing person called Mary Debenham (1864-1947). She was careful to note in the book's *Preface* that 'between the wild tales of magic and mystery and the almost equally wild *Lives of the Saints* it is difficult to arrive at anything like sober facts . . .'

In fact, facts were the last thing Mary Debenham might rely on, given that available sources for storytelling included the questionable contributions of Pen Onn's very own Iolo Morganwg. Nevertheless, there is no difficulty in recognising Mary Debenham's evocation of the arrival of Spring in Llanccarfán's monastic community :

" It was one of those mild, sunshiny winter days when the green grass and the soft air make us look forward hopefully to spring-time. The soft, salt breeze blew up from the sea towards Llanccarfán, and seemed like the very breath of life to Essyllt, as she sat in her old place outside the herdsman's hut." p.205.



Some highly dramatic story-telling events are described in the pages before Princess Essyllt, child bride of Owain ap Morgan, is pictured as rescued back to 'her old place', peacefully anticipating Spring in the sanctuary of St. Cadoc's monastic settlement. Essyllt has here endured the fate of Cadoc's own mother, Gwladys. The fictional Essyllt is made to similarly suffer being forcibly abducted by a Welsh prince before, after many adventures, escaping back to

¹ You might in fact be surprised to be reminded how many books have dwelt on Llanccarfán and the Vale. Backalong, in the March 2010 newsletter, I made a brief note about *The Star in the West* (published in 1904). It was a chance to augment the former editor John Etherington's discursive list of largely 'factual' books featuring the village. [See Newsletters 45, 49, 51, 52 & 72 online, which are well worth revisiting.]

Llancarfan. But without getting too bogged down in the complex & melodramatic story line, inspired by but not shackled to the ‘facts’ in *Lives of the Saints*, Mary Debenham composed a novel based around the inter-tribal Welsh brutality of about 550, and the succour offered by the British church at a time of plague and conflict. The book’s last paragraph states its uncompromising message that

“ . . . in the country between the Severn and the sea were brave hearts who held their land against the [Saxon] invaders; that men loved and sang, sinned fiercely and repented deeply; that the [Celtic] Church of the land, though at times her star was dim, still kept her flame alight and sent forth her rays far and wide from her ‘corner of the West.’ ”

I must resist imposing on this newsletter too much mini-biography of the writer of this evangelising novel. But one has to ask, what was it that so interested a 39-year-old author, born 200 miles away to wealthy parents in Cheshunt, Herts., in the legendary aspects of the history of monastic Llancarfan?



Why would someone put so much effort into writing a novel featuring a romanticised St. Cadoc at its core? Not only that, but why in 1908 did she revisit Llancarfan in a shorter story called *The Peace of the Church*?

To cap it all, why did she finally also feature St. Cadoc in what turned out to be a popular and much-performed pageant play about the early history of the Anglican Church?

The answer is rather more prosaic than one might anticipate. Mary Debenham proves to have been a notable professional propagandist for the church. She was astonishingly prolific in her output. It is remarkable that she created some **90-plus full-length publications!**

Most of Mary’s writing appears to have been commissioned by the snappily-entitled ***National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church throughout England & Wales.*** The greater number of her works were published by this Westminster-based body, founded as early as 1811. Mary’s works passed through them from about 1884 onwards, and she continued this association with the National Society until at least 1911.

As an unmarried 'woman of leisure', Mary found an outlet in her morality novels. (Like so many of her pre-suffrage gender, she was in danger of being a disgracefully neglected intellectual resource.) Her writing could easily have become a 'nice little earner', because with the growth of formal education, there was an increased demand for prize-giving books, spreading safe faith and rewarding endeavour. (My copy of *The Star in the West* was presented to Nellie Hatwell by the Holy Trinity Church, Wilnecote, and for instance an author-signed Mary Debenham book was still being awarded by the Girls Friendly Society, Cheshunt Branch, in 1935-6.²)

I suspect though that Mary was not motivated by sales revenue. Her father was a successful London estate agent, who, with his wife Sarah, raised a family of two brothers and four daughters in the fine manor house of Cheshunt Park. When Mary died in 1947 she left £41,437 13s. 1d. I need to do further research, but it would seem that she had both the time & resources to support a professional writing mission, initially in her proselytizing historical novels, and later in missionary outreach, writing for *The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*.

Back with our village saint, Cadoc rears his famous head again as a result of Mary Debenham's enthusiasm for dramatic presentations. She realised that another 'gap in the market' suggested the opportunity to write mini-dramas for church theatricals, and pageants for historical towns. There seems to have been a considerable demand for such potentially epic community projects. No less a celebrity than June Whitfield has reported [*Lambeth Life*, Dec 2006] that 'one of my most enduring memories is watching my mother perform in the Streatham Pageant . . . a play that used to be performed by local people.' A play which was of course written by Mary Debenham.

So – enter Saint Cadoc. He appears in Scene One of *The Coming of The Dawn : Scenes from Anglican Church History*. The author explains that her reasons for writing this work [pictured performed here in the Carshalton Coronation Pageant 1911] were prompted by [quote] 'the idea that the mediaeval Miracle Play,

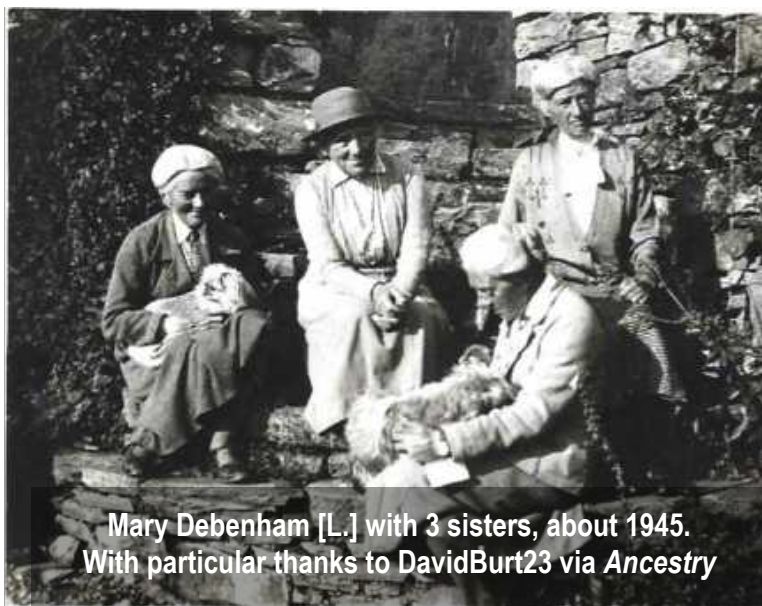


² Does anyone have recollections of the (still extant) *Girls Friendly Society*, founded in 1875 'to protect working-class country girls who left home to take up urban employment'?

dealing with the lives of the saints, might be revived in such a form as to teach the members of the Anglican Church something of her great past by means of a simple dramatic representation.' Simpler times, mediaeval *and* 20th century!

Nevertheless, there *will* be several readers of this newsletter who remember those days before television sucked out all our creativity, when every community had its amateur drama group. (None of us is I think antique enough to recall the *Llancarfan Eisteddfod* of 1859 - which I must write about one of these days! - but the village pantomime is still excitedly remembered from the turn of the millennium.)

Now as it happens, my degree (of fifty odd years ago) involved the study of mediaeval drama, so I can share Mary Debenham's curious enthusiasm. But who might have thought that, from 1908 onward, her obscure little play, written in capable but un-inspired verse, about the survival of Celtic Christianity in the face of the invading Saxon pagans would have found itself an audience? Yet in fact, with its tales of Cadoc, conversion of Kent, Columba's



Mary Debenham [L.] with 3 sisters, about 1945.
With particular thanks to DavidBurt23 via Ancestry

mission, Paulinus, & St. Hilda of Whitby, 'this pageant play is being produced in all parts of England' [said the *Hastings & St Leonards Observer* : September 1927].

The evidence is in the newspapers. The *Hendon & Finchley Times* [22 Sept 1911] reports that money was raised for 'the erection of a Sunday School' by a 100-strong cast presenting *The Coming of the Dawn*. The play we know shaped the 'Carshalton Coronation Pageant'. The nearest performance to Wales seems to have been in July 1912 at All Saints' Church, Pembroke Road, Clifton, Bristol, raising £200 for a decoration fund. As late as August 1932, All Saints, Maltby-le-Marsh, Lincs., performed the play, St. Cadoc helping to raise £1300 'for the repair of the fabric'. The *Lincolnshire Standard* said that 'church & chapel work together in complete harmony' and among 40 performers, 'more than half were chapel folk'.

Anyway, as for the *The Star in the West* novel with which I started this account, if any of the present day poor of Llancarfan wish to be educated about 'the principles of the established church', and to be dramatically entertained by reading it, I will happily lend them the spare copy. Then, like the student bard Peredur in the novel, we might all sit at the fictional Cadoc's feet, and learn through his memorable (if often invented) triads the principles behind shaping a decent moral life! (Or should I mean principles behind raising funds for the church's appeal against the damp?)

Your Newsletter is always pleased to reflect more of the lively activities at Llancarfan Primary School, and Chris Hughes keeps us well supplied with evocative images and impressive student accounts of their doings. Those of us not lucky enough to have offshoots in the school may not know of the excellent web site - <http://www.llancarfanprimaryschool.co.uk/stream/newsletters/headline/1/-//>.

Pictured there was a charming **Nativity**, & a pocket (picking?) **Oliver Twist**.



But the creativity was not restricted to the performances.

It was a great pleasure to receive a description – from **Year 6 Alfie** - of what it was like to audition for the great honour of taking part in the shows. Congratulations to all!



Lawks! I'm the Artful Dodger and I'm guessing you lot are here to read about the year 5 and 6 Christmas play auditions. Well buckle up 'cause after this you'll be wanting more more

.... see what I did there? Our lovely teachers, Mrs Crick and Mr Bilney, held an exciting event 'ere in our very own Hazel class. It was called Performance Auditions. Anyways, as you already knows who I am, you will have guessed that Llancarfan Primary were performing the great Charles Dickens' play **Oliver Twist**. Yeah, you heard me right!

Well, one by one pupils went in they did. Everyone was right nervous 'an I wouldn't be surprised if Dickens heard their legs clattering together from 'is grave! Mrs Crick asked the lot of them who they wanted to be in the play and then they all read out a few lines from the play. Then**THEY ALL SANG!!!** What a lark ... (especially when that Alfred boy sang). They were all right embarrassed. You should have seen the little blighters' red faces as they walked out of the audition room!

Joking aside, I think they was all real brave as it was a nerve wracking experience for everyone. Then they went off to learn their lines and songs! Right, sorry you lovely residents of Llancarfan but I've got to pick a pocket or two. Only hope you made the performance! Lovely pickings there!

The Artful Dodger (Year 6 Alfie)

