

LLANCARFAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 175 SEPTEMBER 2018



*Save Our School!
How's this for a proper
rural school sports?
9 July 2018*



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MEA CUPULA

No, I don't mean that. I mean 'sorry' in Latin. 'Culpa'. A 'cupula' is the dome of St. Paul's, isn't it? But anyway, it makes the point that, me having at last embraced antiquity, I can't always find the word I'm looking for. Or – in the case of our new Chairman – I didn't notice that I'd written '*Graham Kemp*', not '*Gordon Kemp*', in the last newsletter. This is not considered a tactful way of welcoming him to the ringmaster's seat! Sorry, Gordon. (I'd like to pretend that this was a subtle reflection of the handover period in which our beloved last Chairman, Graham Brain, gently cross-faded responsibilities. Rather like a new mayor shadows a retiring one. But it was a slip of the brain, wasn't it?)

Sadly though, the other Society Committee members who retired from the committee this time round are far too young to blame senility for their withdrawal. Andy & Becci Farquharson have had to rescue time from their busily successful lives to (not least) devote their remarkable efforts to **fighting for the school**. And Rhodri Price has (understandably) heard the call of the cattle. But your committee looks forward to benefitting from the pragmatic new minds of Canon Derek and Mrs. Penny Fell. The evolving team thanks you all.

Still, I do suggest there has to be some value in confusion (see the '*Blessings of Ambiguity*' piece below). Impaired perceptions can bring insights. What you might risk calling the poetry of visual confusion. As for failing ears, what one half-hears offers many more possibilities than the bare facts. Discuss! Loudly!

SAVE OUR SCHOOL!

<https://savellancarfanschool.wordpress.com>

Action Group dates : 3rd Sept : 'consultation' report published. 17th Sept : cabinet decision & statutory notice issued. 27th Sept : next chance to ask council meeting questions. 13th Sept : deadline for filing questions.

CAMPBELL REED last contributed to this Newsletter in September 2016. *Campbell, you will recall, is the nephew of Maurice Griffiths of Bridge House¹. Here, writing from Stafford, Campbell introduces the memories of his friend Iain Woods – for reasons that many in Llancafarn could echo in their own family history, and which Campbell needs hardly to explain :*

It was recently pointed out to me, *writes Campbell*, by my loyal friend Iain Woods, that it may be appropriate to put into context a visit he and I made to northern France three years ago. Appropriate enough now, as we approach the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War. It was Iain who took the trouble to organise our moving visit, when we visited 40-odd Commonwealth War Graves Cemeteries.

However, instead of my writing it, I asked Iain. He graciously agreed, and you will see that he too had strong and pertinent connections with the War. Apart from his interest in the Great War, he has a razor-sharp mind, an excellent intellect, and most of all, admiration for those who fell, and those lucky enough to return.

It begins here, and I commend it to you . . .

A WAR THAT SHAPED US ALL

IAIN WOODS

David Rhys Davies lies in a Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery called the Royal Irish Rifles Graveyard in Laventie in the Pas De Calais. He is just one of the sixteen men remembered on Llancafarn's war memorial. He was son of the school headmaster, Rees Davies, and his wife Mary. Both he & his brother Tudor were killed, David aged 20, Tudor 19 years.

That Laventie cemetery, in keeping with all of the sites, will be immaculate, lovingly cared for by an army of local gardeners who ask for no more than a 'thank you' or a handshake in acknowledgement of the love and care they bring to their task for men they never knew but in whose memory they toil.

The Villers-Bretonneux that Campbell and I encountered would have been unrecognizable to Lance Corporal Maurice Griffiths. Tranquil, almost silent, birdsong in the air, none of the incessant noise, the screaming shells, the groans of the wounded and the dying that would have filled his senses.

Above all, we, the twenty first century visitors, feel no fear. But did Maurice survive unscathed? At what cost did he come back to Llancafarn?

As a boy, Campbell knew that the shouts that echoed through the night in the house that they shared for almost twenty years after the end of The Second World War were a manifestation of past experiences but they remained unspoken. Maintain a stiff upper lip and soldier on were the watchwords.

¹ See : *An Old Sweat & Glamorgan Cricket* : Society Newsletter No 167.

As we took our separate ways around the magnificent Australian National Memorial and Cemetery I knew that Campbell would be lost in his own memories of his Uncle Maurice. Rejoining him I was aware of how overwhelmed he was, reddened eyes betraying the depth of emotion he felt. We paid our respects to those who never left these fields and to whom we know we owe a debt we can never fully repay.

My interest? My Great Uncle Joseph is one of the 72,000 *Missing of the Somme*. Serjeant Joseph Woods of the 17th battalion Lancashire Fusiliers died on The Somme on 31 July 1916, four weeks after the most fateful day in the history of the British Army.

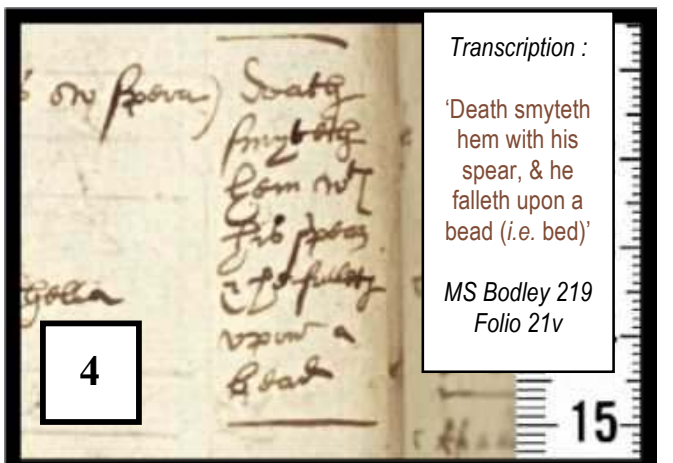
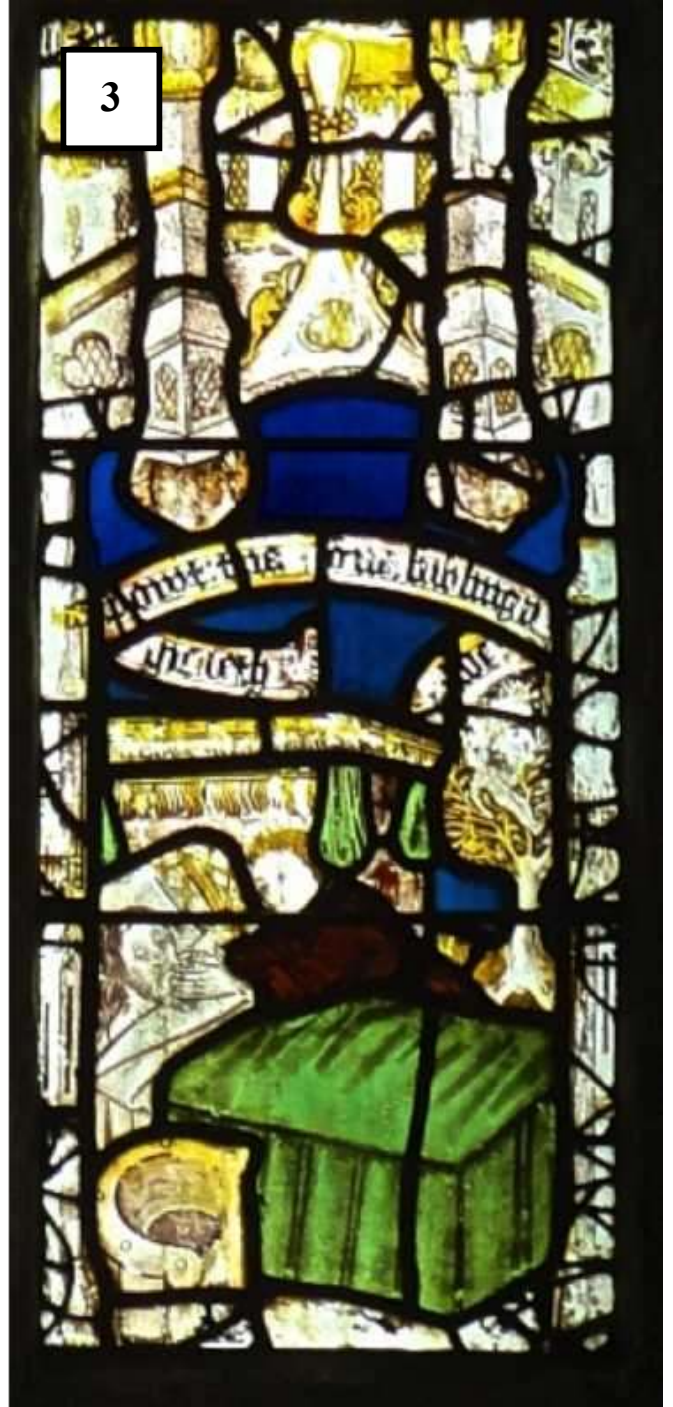
In Kipling's evocative phrase Joseph is one of so many to whom "the fortune of war denied the known and honoured burial given to their comrades in death". Standing underneath the 16 piers of the Lutyens-designed Thiepval Memorial to *The Missing of The Somme* it is my turn to weep for a man I never met, but whose name I am proud to carry forward and whose memory I cherish.



I am a man of West Bromwich, just as Campbell's wife Judy was a woman of West Bromwich. Judy's death, at the end of 2016, leaves an unfillable void in Campbell's life. But I hope the bonds of friendship we share provide a small measure of consolation as we continue our journey through life.

Whatever our town, city or village, we know that we shall never have to face the horrors that confronted Maurice, David, Tudur, Joseph and their comrades.

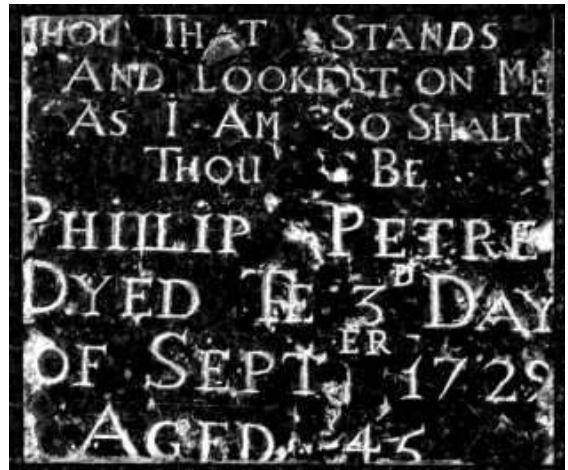
ONE PICTURE, THREE STORIES – THE BLESSINGS OF AMBIGUITY



AMBIGUOUSLY SPEAKING, It is almost too obvious to note that the pictures on our church walls don't (except for a hint of Latin) have anything in writing to tell us what they're all about. Of course there *are* many mediaeval graphic tales which do either illustrate or are complemented by narrative versions. But these texts were only of use to those of us who could read. And as John Etherington recorded [*Newsletter 7:1988*], even as late as 1802 only 28% of Llancarfan's villagers were readers. So what use were captions in the 1400s?

However, *sometimes* in our church, works of art, craft and other media can augment the meaning of the walls. Few couplets, for instance, could more disturbingly underline the message of our 1480s' painting of *Death & The Gallant*. This 1729 warning here concerning Philip Petre is carved into a slate in St. Cadoc's south chancel :

'THOU THAT STANDS AND LOOKEST ON ME
AS I AM SO SHALT THOU BE'



But the main point of this present piece is to remind us that our images don't always over-explain themselves. This had (and has) its benefits. The most obvious blessing was for the preacher, who was ever more obliged to reach beyond elite sacred rituals to teach his congregations through sermons. He doubtless improvised around the paintings' ambiguous features and moral potential. Clearly we don't know *exactly* what the preacher told his St. Cadoc's flock when for instance he pointed at Death on the Wall. But he would surely have underlined that the Cadaver is dragging the proud Gallant to miserable doom in the churchyard, the priest's own sermon drawing perhaps upon others developed, preached and indeed written down over the previous decades :

'Sirs' - he might say - *'the third thing that letteth a man from leaving off his sin is hope of a long life. These young people weneth [think] that they shall never die, and specially afore that they be old. And truly they been often beguiled.'*²

However, not being limited by captions, the flexibility of pictorial interpretation was of benefit not only to the preacher. Surprisingly too, as is particularly well demonstrated through at least one of our own painted examples, the flexibility of a picture's reference, in that it might be able to illustrate more than one story, proved helpful to the craftsmen commissioned to paint our pictures.

People often ask us who were the artists that painted our walls, and we have to answer that we don't yet know. Unlike their contemporary Italians in the Renaissance, very few of these talented British craftsmen are identified. We

² This sermon was probably written for the 1st Sunday in Lent. *MS Royal, 18 B. xxiii. British Library.*

can realise though that they had mastered conventional ways of depicting particular stories – as in the case of the fragmentary but similar representation of ‘our’ St. George’s ‘staging’ at Llanmaes, which mirrors the Llancarfan layout.

On the other hand, why waste a good picture by telling only one story? And this is where *Visiting the Sick* in our *Works of Mercy* offers a classic example.

Compare if you will the three notably similar images at the start of this article:

Number 1 is of course our own image, encouraging us to *Visit the Sick*. The tonsured monk in the picture appears to be administering Holy Communion, placing the host on the patient’s lips. What seems a casket of holy oils sits on the covers. And, ever practical, under or by the bed is the iconic commode or chamber pot. Meanwhile, learning his morals for us, our ‘avatar’ looks on – appearing as a pilgrim or Everyman figure, holding in his hand what may be a staff. Alternatively it *could* be, as Professor Maddy Gray has suggested, a ‘customary candle of your own height which you offered at a pilgrimage shrine’.

Number 2 is a stained glass use of the same motif in St. Michael’s Church, at Doddiscombesleigh in Devon. Clearly (even if through a glass darkly!) this version of the same picture is used for another purpose. Here it is one of seven panels depicting the Seven Sacraments. Now it depicts the Extreme Unction, the dying man raised in bed to take sacramental bread from a priest, his wife in the background. Compare this with ‘our’ image. Our picture may *look* like the last rites, but the same image here is used to portray a sick man who, thanks to our intercessions and mercies, will hopefully get better again!

Number 3 is for me the latest revelation, found in the windows of St. Neot’s church, across the Severn in ‘Celtic’ Cornwall. (I photographed there several years ago, because other windows depicted the St. George legends.) But *now* I find that a St. Neot’s early ‘Creation Window’ also uses ‘our’ same motif to depict ‘The death of Adam’. As also enacted in a rare Cornish ‘*Creation*’ play, the glass reflects the visit to Eden by Adam’s son Seth. Seth receives three apple-pips from the Tree of Life, which he places in his dying father’s mouth & nostrils. The pips grow into the wood of Jesus’s cross, and thus furnish the Oil of Mercy. Spot the Christ-child – the future Redeemer - in the tree’s branches.

Next time I will explore some more drama. But for now look at image **4**, which comes from the Bodleian manuscript of that Cornish *Creation* play. Here an English stage direction appears beside the Cornish dialogue. This says that dying Adam ‘falleth upon a bead’, meaning ‘bed.’ So Adam dies on ‘our’ bed!

Here again then, the motif inspiring *our* painting illustrates yet another story. Whether *Healing the Sick*, *Blessing the Dead*, or *Catching Adam* – all these themes are illustrated by the multi-purpose image that graces our church wall.



TEATIME AT A ROYAL WEDDING

Yet again Llangarfan marked a happy royal union with a fund-raising celebration back on May the 19th.

To the accompanying projection of the televised ceremony, our retiring Chairman, Graham Brain, photographed the village's enjoyment of a delicious tea - surely as nice as the royal feast which followed Harry & Meghan's delightful festivities.

And how clever of the Royals not to compete with Becci & Andy Farquharson's 27th of May 1st year's anniversary!



Becci & Andy

"When love is the way . . . then no child will go to bed hungry in this world ever again. When love is the way, we will let justice roll down like a mighty stream and righteousness like an ever flowing brook. When love is the way, poverty will become history. When love is the way, the Earth will be a sanctuary."

Wedding talk by Bishop Michael Curry.



Fund-raising Frances Valencia

Off to **WARHORSE** : 14 JULY '18



Never mind the wonderful puppet war horses – most of the audience fell in love with the goose!



MALVERN GARDEN FESTIVAL TRIP :

12 MAY '18

Shelagh Hughes writes :

On this glorious early May morning a Llancarfan group headed for Malvern. Refreshments on the journey were kindly brought by Becci Farquarson, & much appreciated. The weather stayed perfect, the show was excellent, and the day much enjoyed. So - a diary date for 2019.



RUTH WATTS boule through bars

AND THE SCHOOL HAS OUTINGS TOO!

Alfie Bilney reports :

A day in the wilds!! On 10th July Mr Bilney took Hazel class out on a bush craft session for the day. We learnt to build shelters, we had a bug hotel building competition and we even made self-portraits from the things we could find around us. We finished off the day by building a campfire and toasting marshmallows. It was a fantastic day out learning in a very different way.

See back page for more pictures & further adventures.



THEN THE THROWN OUTINGS

Nothing to be pleased about, but on 18 July, such was the inadequacy of Vale 'responses' to our lodged questions about the ongoing **threat of village school closure**, that some of us protesting villagers proved more vocal than the council meeting welcomed. Our reasoned dispute continues.



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

SLIPPERY SUBS

Membership subscriptions for the current year were due on **1st January 2018**. **But a number of members have not yet paid.** As production & distribution of this newsletter depends on these fees, we *do* need people to pay up if they wish to stay members. [Next year's Subs are not due until **1st January 2019**.]

THIRTEEN 'NEWYDD' RURAL AFFORDABLE HOMES IN LLANCARFAN?

The Community Council invited residents to attend a presentation on 24 July in the Village Hall about a possible housing development on land adjacent to the Tennis Club. The Council have yet to hear any more on this proposal. The text below sums up the Community Council guidance circulated via *llancarfanine@gmail.com*, after their initial meeting with *Newydd* :

- The Vale of Glamorgan Council requires that the developer for rural exception sites reports back on community engagement and responses to this engagement.
- The proposal was for 13 rural affordable homes, 4 x 1 bedroom flats, 5 x 2 bedroom houses, 2 x 3 bedroom houses and 2 x 2 bedroom bungalows, with 24 bedrooms.
- These homes would be for social rental only, with no means to purchase.
- The proposed development was outside the village boundary recently agreed in the Local Development Plan.
- Normally a developer would not be able to build on this site.
- However due to the type of development proposed, pre-application discussions with the Vale of Glamorgan planning officer indicated that the application *would* fall within planning policy.
- While other recent developments by *Newydd* were in areas with local public transport, there is no such transport available in or near Llanccarfán. In this respect, proposals for affordable housing *should* provide reasonable access to local services by private & public transport.
- All residents of this development would need a car.
- If residents were to have any employment, as there was none or little [transport] in the locality, they *would* have to travel.
- It is considered that the site has insufficient parking provision.
- The number of houses proposed and the layout was not thought commensurate with the village as a whole and would not comply with building within the conservation area. This development would increase the number of houses in the central village area by more than 25%. In this respect, proposals for and the scale of development should complement the surrounding built form.
- It could also be that *Newydd* are exempt from paying financial planning obligations for a scheme of this size, so would make no contribution to community facilities etc.

19 Aug : The young Mr. Watts consults his crystal boules as *Llanccarfán* teams faced *The Edmunds Arms* in the **Ruth Watts Cup**. New players Kath, Marc & Tom Pugh captured the cup!



LLANCARFAN COMMUNITY CINEMA : AUTUMN PROGRAMME

- 28 Sept *The Guernsey Literary & Potato Peel Pie Society*
A writer bonds with Guernsey folk to record their wartime lives.
- 26 Oct *Walk Like a Panther*
Former 1980's wrestlers re-don the lycra when threats hit their pub.
- 8 Nov *2001 : A Space Odyssey*
An ancient artifice found on the moon promotes a human quest.
- 23 Nov *The Leisure Seeker*
A runaway couple's unforgettable journey in their faithful old RV.
- 21 Dec *Incredibles 2 [to be confirmed]*
Mr. Incredible baby-sits the kids while Elastigirl saves the world.

A TRIBUTE TO ROBERT CARTER by John Angell

Just before our Annual General Meeting on 19th May, *writes John*, our Clerk, Robert Carter, said he felt unwell and could not attend the meeting. To say this was unusual would be an understatement. Robert had not missed a single meeting during his three years as Community Council Clerk. So I went to his house in Llanbethery to pick up paperwork, and he was in bed. Then the Sunday after the meeting Robert drove here to collect more paperwork. He said he was feeling very tired and had had blood tests. He had been told he might have a virus of some sort, and had to go back to the hospital later in the week for more tests. Robert went to the hospital, but did not return home.

More tests revealed that Robert was suffering from advanced liver cancer and he very sadly passed away on the 8th June. This was a great shock to his wife & family, and a shock to all who sit on the Community Council. As a stalwart of the Council, full of enthusiasm & drive, he felt the Council was very relevant to our Communities, and should reach out for more involvement in village lives.

We miss Robert, and not least his sense of humour. As for me, I miss him both as Clerk, and the friend he became in the few years I knew him. Now, as the work of the Community Council goes on, **Kim Barry**, our new clerk, joins us. Kim feels hard pressed following in Robert's footsteps, but we are grateful that she is more than able to build on the good work that Robert has started. I have now stood down as Council Chair, having served my two years. The new chair, **Martyn Hughes**, will make an excellent job of it.

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Edited by Ian Fell : ian@felltoearth.net

Society President : Barbara Milhuisen

Society Chairman : Gordon Kemp

Society Secretary : Katherine Kemp

Subscriptions & Membership : Joann Scott-Quelch,
2 Penylan House, Llanccarfarn CF62 3AH

Contact : For past issues, queries & contributions,

Please visit our revitalised site at <http://www.llanccarfarnsociety.org.uk>

NEXT COPY, NEWS &
LETTERS DEADLINE :
21 NOV 2018

A WALK BEFORE THE MAST : VALE RE-OPENS OLD WOODED PATHWAY



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2



3



4



5



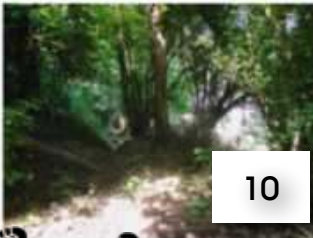
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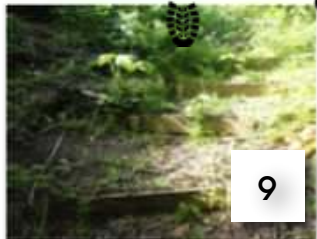
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8



10



9



11



12

A walk has now re-opened in the woodlands above Llancarfan, impassable for some years, but now cleared by the Vale. It is a pretty cut down to the village from the top road, and regular walking will protect its charms. The route shown here (downwards) is way-marked at the start and end, but badly needs signs at 4 & 5, passing the farm. To take it, cross the field from just opposite Crosstown [1-3], through a fiddly gate, down a grass slope to the disturbed site of a new phone mast [4-6]. A kissing gate [7-8] enters the wood, from where steps [9] lead down to a charming woodland pathway [10], which emerges over a good stile [11] & drops into the village [12]. It's a right of way worth enjoying - not least historically, because the rising phone mast marks the site of a once significant Tudor mansion. We do hope that archaeological investigation has recorded the mounds and examined any historical evidence before the mast was installed?



Mast site in April 2012



Hmmm. But here's another possible hazard? Within a few weeks of my taking the pictures for the previous page, I see that in August a notice has appeared, the effect of which might dissuade walkers from using the *Right of Way* across and down to Lllancarfan. Those who like a stride, and care about defending our rights, might care to ignore such (even polite) discouragement.



Just to note that St. Cadoc's appearance on TV's Welsh-produced *Bargain Hunt* has really spread the word about our village treasures. Visitors are flocking in. And we're delighted to boast that the former head of *English Heritage* has kindly called our wall-painting booklets 'fascinating, and a model of their kind'.



KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR DIARY

19 October : Lllancarfan Society Annual Dinner : Menu enclosed herewith.
24 November : Bath Christmas Market Coach Trip : £16 (inc. wine & nibbles)
payable in advance to secure seat. Contact Shelagh Hughes 781663.



DILYS LISCOMBE REMEMBERS . . .

If you live in Lllancarfan, there is a higher than average chance that this lady (seen here some years ago with the rather splendid tapestry kneeler that she made) once inhabited your house.

**Story on
the next page** 🐾 🐾 🐾

Dilys Liscombe is 90 years old, and now living in retirement in Barry.

Back in the day though Dilys, née Lewis, was born in Chapel House, Llanccarfan – and the village was jokingly known as Lewistown!

She subsequently also lived in : The Green, in Pen-y-lan, in Broadhayes, in Woodlands – oh yes, and in Beechcroft. This means that Dilys probably has longer associations with Llanccarfan, and maybe seen more of its changes, than anyone else alive (though we are open to challenges!)

Barbara Milheusen & Penny Fell shared a chat with her about her memories:

Dilys probably won't mind us describing her as a 'sprightly' 90 year old. But then, one suspects she was always sprightly. Born to Jehoiada and Annie Jane Lewis in 1928, by the age of two years old she was running around the village, and at two-and-a half, she had started both school (yes, proper school, Llanccarfan Primary) and music lessons.

“My father was the blacksmith and a pillar of the Bethlehem Chapel. He was religious, oh so religious. Chapel was every Sunday, 11, 2 and 6 o'clock, no argument, when we were children.”

When Dilys was born in Chapel House, it comprised two dwellings, the lower part alongside the road being a one-up/one-down. As years went by, Dilys's father, Jehoiada, sometimes found himself both celebrant and (almost) sole congregant at the next door Bethel Chapel. “He'd always take his dog, Bob, in with him - Bob knew where to tuck himself, under the altar table. And the singing, oh the singing. When the hymns came, you would hear my father's voice ringing out – and Bob would join in, both heard all over the village...”

You feel that, in those days, the village was almost literally an interconnected family, with the Lewis's, Griffiths', Loughers', Jenkins', and the Prices. One big change, she says, in the years since Dilys was a Llanccarfan child, is how much more responsibility little ones were once given. At primary age, she would work the bellows in her father's forge. At six or seven, she acted as the Bethel Chapel organist. “And we didn't have health and safety in those days. My brother Idris travelled to Barry School on the back of Johnnie Jones's coal lorry – imagine that today!” Admittedly, it helped that the motor car had yet to dominate. “There were only three cars in the village. I still remember them ... Mrs Rowlands had a maroon standard BTX715.” A vanished world.

But if family hatchbacks didn't contribute to the village soundscape, Dilys remembers other noises powerfully. **The Ram** (sitting behind the Old Mill, which was used to pump water up to Pancross) :

“It was going all the time – thump, thump, we almost didn't really notice it. And the big threshing machine we called **The Major** – you could hear that

coming far off. And then the *Salvation Army* arriving to play by the Monument, we'd all go out to hear. And cuckoos," Dilys adds a little wistfully. "There were always cuckoos. I haven't heard a cuckoo since I left the village."

As memories ebb, Dilys is eager to record the traditional names of the fields, names now fast forgotten :

"The bit of grass next to the *Hollies* was **The Twyn**. And the field opposite the school, where we used to have fireworks, that was **The Tump**. And walking up to Moulton after the old Post Office was a bank called **The Cynegins**."

Dilys teenage years coincided with World War Two, and even a sheltered Welsh village could still not escape the shadows of war. "I remember evacuees arriving; and we had a Home Guard, you know like *Dad's Army*. My brother was the Intelligence Officer. I don't know what he'd done to qualify for that. They met to train around the Village Hall - and Tudor Liscombe, my father-in-law, he was Captain Mainwaring."

Dilys still finds the memory so funny that one feels relieved that invasion never reached Llancarfan. "We did have a German prisoner of war though, working in the village, from one of the camps." She remembers a terrible punch-up on the bridge one night, between two locals; ironically it was Eric, the prisoner of war, who broke them up and restored peace.

"And of course, rationing affected us. We could kill one pig a year: it was salted in the dairy and laid out for six weeks."

Dilys had a satisfying career, as well as being a village wife and mum. She spent a year reading maths at Bristol University, but was hampered by not having studied physics. She left to join the Inland Revenue, later happily combining marriage to Gwyn with motherhood and a job as school secretary.

The life she looks back on is one of bewildering change; and she relishes the privilege of decades spent in a very special village.

⌘

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Ironic
'Advert'
found in
a recent
*Country
Living*
website
*News
Letter*

ABERNANT by Isabel Phelps, Isabelle Spencer, Alice Davies & Erin O'Hare :

On Friday 13th July Year 6 class went to Manor Adventure in Abernant for a four-day activity residential. Here's what some people got up to :

The Zip Wire was one of the first challenges/activities we did. It was 10 metres high and 70 metres long. The good thing was that we were able to climb it without feeling we were going to fall because we were attached to a climbing rope. For the **Lake Challenge** we had to wear a harness too because there was also a zip wire there. After we'd gone down the wire, we were put on an island and we climbed on a boat for people to pull us across.

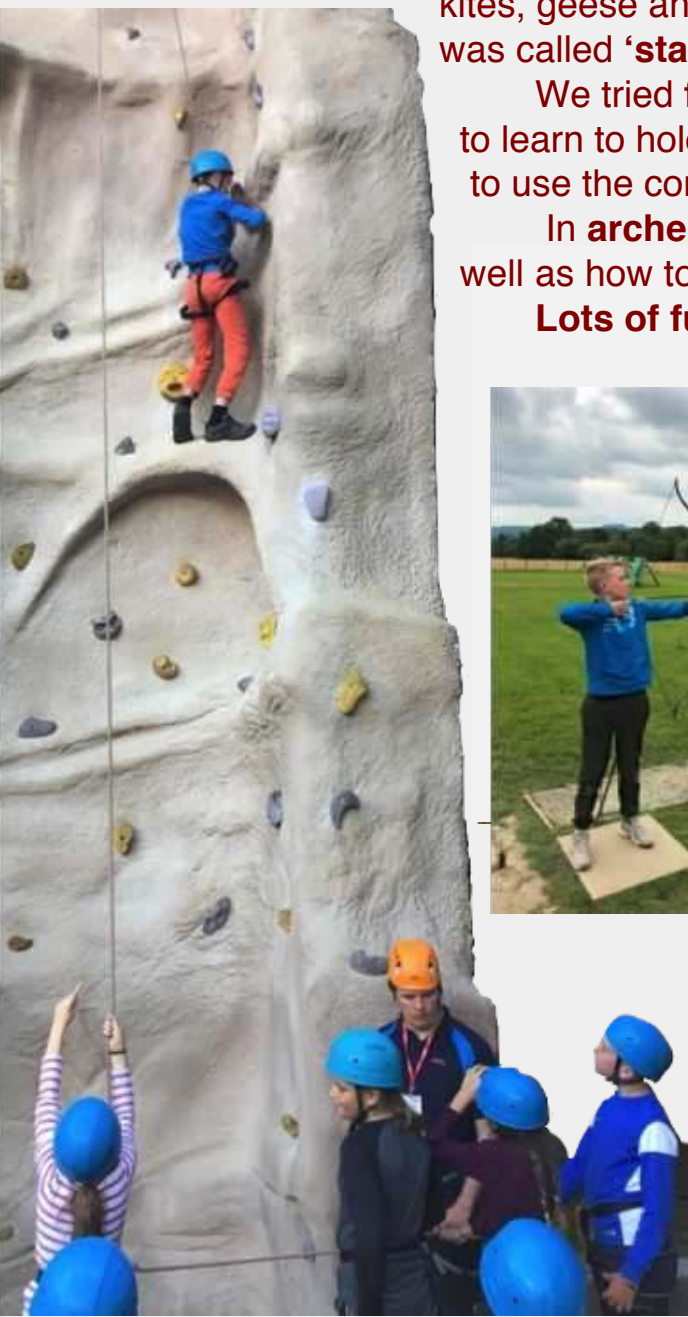
We climbed a **30 foot wall** and really enjoyed it; we were attached to a rope and we had to wear a harness and helmet during our climb up. The next day we went abseiling; we walked up stairs to the top of a 30 foot wall and then climbed down the wall! again.

On the Sunday we did **boating** activities including **kayaking and canoeing**. We played games in our boats such as zombies vs humans. During kayaking we went on an adventure around the lake and we saw ducks, kites, geese and herons. But our first water sport of the day was called '**stand-up paddle board**' and was really fun.

We tried **fencing and archery** too. In fencing, we had to learn to hold a sword properly, to stand correctly, how to use the correct starting position, to lunge and to attack.

In **archery** we had to learn to hold the bow properly as well as how to safely shoot and collect arrows.

Lots of fun!



Beach cricket by Tom Bilney

At the end of June, lucky Year 6 children took part in a **beach cricket tournament**. Barry Island beach provided a fun-filled time with ice-cream (and some shade). The first match was against a very professional-looking side, & we lost by over 30 points. Luckily, after a tasty lunch, we beat the other three teams.