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EDITORIAL

Shiver our timbers! At least, that's the message behind this Christmas 2021 cover. It was snapped at a time when ice flowing from the Fontygary cliffs met the salt waters of the Bristol Channel. And shiver our timbers too, because **for this issue only** your Deputy Editor Penny Fell has given your esteemed Editor Matthew Valencia a Christmas break in which to address the demands of his proper job. Penny has temporarily drafted in a re-cycled editor, aka her bio-degradable husband lan, to help reflect the Yuletide doings of this delightful village.

Owing to the miserable cloud of Covid which still hangs over us, the village attempts at 'doings' of any sort remain, if not wholly suppressed, valiant triumphs over adversity. Congratulations then that the Christmas trees have again sprouted in the churchyard (though presumably they do not replace the lost carbon offsets of the recently cleared village shrubbery).

Society wise, several of your committee members resolved some months ago to risk a life-enhancing jaunt to foreign parts, courtesy not least of your chairman and secretary, Gordon & Katherine Kemp. That is why we found ourselves in France in this late November, brandishing our Covid vaccination certificates in every shop and restaurant visited. The French proved admirably thorough in checking both the French locals and all Brexited invaders. The gendarmerie were more than diligent in warning the un-certificated of a 150 euro fine, and any landlord breaching the rules risked a fine of 1,500 euros. In Bayeux we met John & Sue Millard for a lovely lunch. They are now retired in France, and were decidedly pleased to be no longer pulling pints behind a bureaucratic bar. But they did send us home to the 'Fox' bearing Christmas cheer! So, from them and us – a Happy Christmas all!

RENWICK ROOTS ON THE MOUNTAINS OF WALES

This autumn, William Renwick caused a media furore by running the 189 mountains of Wales for charity in 22 days. It was the feel good story of the season. Will grew up in Pancross, son of Nick and Ceri, child of Llancarfan. He is now editor of 'Outdoors Magic' and President of 'Ramblers Cymru' - and has become something of a celebrity. Penny Fell (just) caught up with him to ask about his Llancarfan roots.

Will, what made you do the mountain challenge?

I love exploring Wales. I think the passion was first ignited when I walked the length of Offa's Dyke at 19. It all went quite badly but I think the mishaps all contributed to making it feel like a proper expedition. Then came the Wales Coast Path, and then the Cambrian Way. After that, I thought I'd had my fill, but then I read a news story about two men who had walked over all 189 of Wales' mountains on foot. The seed was planted, as they say.



Were you an outdoors child?

Very much so. I have incredibly fond memories of my childhood exploring the valley.

To be honest, I always felt I had free rein over every field, copse and woodland. I'm not sure the landowners saw it that way but I was never told otherwise!

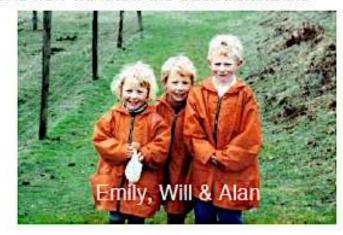
What is your earliest memory of the village?

I love Laurie Lee's book *Cider With Rosie* in which he recalls growing up in the Cotswolds. The picture he paints, to me, resembles Llancarfan and my own upbringing.

When I think back to my childhood, I think of summer evenings after school. We'd normally be out building dens in the woods on Pancross hill, or we'd be down the Goblin Path, which is how we knew the track behind the

mill! Every time I smell wild garlic now, I think of those evenings.

The Vale's just that - a vale. And flat. How did your mountain passions arise? I think the Vale has its own charms. Having seen most of Wales, I'd actually say it's quite a unique part of the country; where you have these nucleated



villages, beautiful fields and woodlands, hidden valleys and then that spectacular coastline. I'm probably most drawn to Wales' mountains though. Although you can have an adventure anywhere, the mountains certainly make for a very good place for one.

What was the hardest part of the Mountain Run?



Snowdonia, as you'd expect, was hard to get through. The weather, unfortunately, was very much against me at that point in the challenge too. The day before finishing the challenge was probably the hardest of the entire trip. I'd left myself with a lot of mountains to climb and a big distance to cover. I guess a bit of finish line fever might've been to blame there. Climbing into my wind

battered tent, soaked to the bone and shivering with cold, I remember feeling so glad that it was my last night. I couldn't have managed another one.

Were you aware of what a media storm it would provoke?

Not at all. OK, I thought if I was lucky I might maybe make it into the Western Mail. But BBC's national news, the Guardian and ITV? I still can't believe that happened to be honest. I've got my sister Emily and my partner Hannah to thank for that – it was like having my very own media team!

Has the media exposure changed your life at all?

The exposure really caused the donations to my chosen charity, Mind Over Mountains, to come flying in, with nearly £13,000 raised so far. The organisation does incredible stuff, providing meaningful outdoor experiences and active counselling to people who are struggling with their mental wellbeing. So, while I wouldn't say the exposure has changed my life I like to think it'll do some good for others.

What next?

I proposed to Hannah not long after I finished the challenge, so there's a lot of wedding planning that will be keeping us busy for the next few months. Hopefully I'll be able to fit in something adventurous though – I do have me eye on a Brecon to Cardiff ultramarathon this winter!



RONALD PRICE 1930-2021

Ron Price, Llancarfan's senior citizen, sadly passed away in July, at the grand age of 91, having spent over three decades in this village. His daughter, Sarah, has sent memories of his life for us.

Ronald Joseph Price was born on 11th May 1930 in Brownhills, Staffordshire, to Joseph and Nel Price. Ron's mother sadly passed away when he was just two years old and he was brought up by his father and stepmother, Edith. Joe and Edith also had a daughter, Doreen, Ron's half-sister.

Ron went to Rugeley Grammar School where he became Head Boy and then on to Birmingham University, graduating with a First Class Honours Degree in Mining Engineering. Following graduation, Ron joined British Coal which was then part of the National Coal Board (NCB) and he rose through the ranks to become the Director in charge of South Wales. This brought Ron and his wife Susan to Llancarfan where they settled in *The Green*, which was to become a much loved family home. Ronald and Susan's three children - Tim, Andrew and Sarah - were regular visitors to *The Green*, ultimately along with their six grandchildren. Ron and Susan quickly settled into Llancarfan and embraced the community, being regular worshippers among those at Saint Cadoc's Church.



They were members of the Llancarfan Society, and regular visitors to the Fox and Hounds with friends and family. When Ron retired age 57, he and Susan travelled extensively around the world. In the latter years this involved lengthy cruising - but they were always happy to return to home to Llancarfan.

Ron was a keen golfer and member of Radyr Golf Club. After Susan's sad passing in 2009, he received a lot of support from his village community. He had many friends whom he enjoyed cooking for on a regular basis. Ron was lucky enough to continue living at *The Green*, supported by Beryl and Carol, until his passing after a short illness on 19th July 2021.

A LLANCARFAN AUTUMN

As scaffolding rises high and trees fall low, timber seems an Autumn theme. Now the Welsh Government has promised each citizen their very own tree, one wonders where Llancarfan sits in the carbonoffset stakes? Ash die-back and Storm Arwen & Co have now threatened some of our more majestic specimens. Perhaps it's time for an inventory of the trees enhancing our village's green status - those trees that we love, those that enrich this hidden hollow - and those we'd rather not have falling on our roofs, newly slated or otherwise.













FAMILIAR TO OUR READERS . . .

[says lan Fell]

. . . is Dai John, the brilliant cartoonist creator of 'Dai Lossin' [See f.i. Newsletter 164, Dec 2015.) Dai John was born here up at Pancross in 1884.

Dai's son, Godfrey, born in nearby Fonmon, served in the RAF, gained a Cambridge degree, and was a British amateur boxing champion. After his father died (in 1958) Godfrey moved to the USA, and became recognised as a poet of distinction. Five years ago I was lucky enough to be in touch with Godfrey's daughter, Kristen [Traherne], living near Toronto — but for shamefully forgotten reasons, I didn't turn things into a Newsletter piece.

Back then, Kristen emailed me to say that she grew up with 'Dai Lossin' as 'part of the family'. However, she said, 'I've never fully appreciated what my grandfather's cartoons meant to the Welsh culture!' Perhaps now, in hopes of re-opening connections, but with no permission yet to print all of Kristen father's essay, may I whet appetites with just a few snippets from Godfrey's nostalgic memory of living as a youngster in Fonmon and the Vale? Godfrey John's reminiscences were published in 1977, in *Five Seasons*, a book of his poems & essays collecting works first published in the *Christian Science Monitor*, and still I think obtainable from Massachusetts' Longyear Museum.

Dai Lossin - Caricature and Fact - by Godfrey John

- "... In those days, DG had his studio out in the orchard of his Glamorganshire home. It was a little hut that he had built complete with anthracite stove. During the football season, when he was most active, he would isolate himself there drawing through the hours . . ."
- '...Only once can I remember that he let me stay while he began a cartoon. I watched him lift a quill and start swinging his arm across the paper as if he were conducting.

He would draw from the shoulder, his lines swept or flicked into meaning without any break . . . the floor of the hut was covered with pieces of paper bearing bold, cursive lines . . . '

'... My brother and I would venture out from time to time into the Welsh countryside in search of stray goose feathers or reeds which we would bear back with boyish triumph and watch him fashion into the tools of his trade with quick, short stabs of his knife.

Years cannot snuff out genuine affection. As the originals on my wall bear witness, the work of this Welsh cartoonist continues to embody

a whole dimension of national character . . .

In his weekly delineations of Dai Lossin you felt some twenty years of affection and purpose behind each vibrant quirk of the quill . . . '

WINTERTIME











In the window afforded by the brief Iuil in viral and weather warnings, winter celebrations stormed ahead. 'Trick or Treating' resumed this year with high standards of spookery. Top right: Tomas & Filon Hughes; Bottom left: Chioe & Elia Croll. [We've yet to identify the couple on the Bottom Right!]



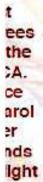
From December's first
Sunday, 25 sponsored trees
made a festive forest in the
churchyard, c/o the LDCA.
Our tree by the ford once
again heard sounds of carol
singing. And the Flower
Arrangers' unique garlands
were again on sale to delight
our doorsteps.



Winners of the Tree Festival Birds' Buffet (top right) was World' was the theme as T galvanised us into donating fare to supply the food b











stival were the Barratts, whose
) was a work of art. 'Feed the
as Tudor Barratt (right) also
ating a mountain of Christmas
ood banks of a tough year.







In the September Newsletter your Editor kindly let me share the strange account of the Second World War experiences of our German 'refugee' friend René Halkett – let's face it, strangeness shaped so many people's lives between 1939 and 1945. We left René near Bletchley, broadcasting black propaganda to Germany, and writing a curious booklet aimed at disillusioned fighters in the German army. We also left his cousin Adrian in Wales, locked in the Island Farm Prisoner of War 'Generals' Camp' at Bridgend. Neither René nor Adrian knew of, or would dare to whisper of, each other's fate.



As for the book that René devised, you can judge from this montage of its many editions (kindly provided by Lee Richards of the *PsyWar Society*) that it proved a very popular tool of propaganda. Krankheit rettet — or 'Malingering Saves Lives' — was designed to encourage an out-break of 'swinging the lead'. It was to be the

textbook guide to malingering for any German soldier who now realised that Germany was never going to win the war. What follows is René's personal account of how he wrote it:

'Now I showed you, didn't I, a copy of this 'Malingering' handbook? It began with a visit by a Dr. McCurdy, who was this strange apparition, a fantastic sight when he appeared at RAG¹, draped in a long black cloak with a lion's head clasp. He came, I was told, from Canada - where he'd been psychological adviser to the Canadian Army Medical Service. Though he was now retired, his wartime contribution was to draft this malingerer's handbook. He was supposed to think up ways of scientific malingering, how to produce the *symptoms* of certain complaints by whatever means. But in reality he just sat there and couldn't move, because he always had lumbago. He did though make some tentative suggestions — and then I think he just went back to Canada. Anyway, I never saw him again. But he did manage to leave with us a list of illnesses and symptoms that could be reproduced.'

Then of course the actual book had to be written - how to behave, the psychology of malingering, how to approach the medical officer, this kind of

¹ R.A.G _ Rookery Apsley Guise near Bletchley, key base for Sefton Delmer's propagandists..

thing. The eminent Canadian doctor *had* promised to write all that, but his manuscript never arrived – so in the end Delmer said 'Why don't you write it?' So I sat down and wrote it. I wrote every word of it. After all, every old soldier knows these things, you don't have to be an eminent doctor to malinger.'

What did René's 'guide book' suggest?

pressure on the proper nerve; or you could use plants that were readily available, like foxglove for instance – and there were prescriptions – so many centimeters of foxglove leaf would slow your heart down considerably, but not kill you, things like that . . . But the point was that some of these things were a bit unpleasant – meant to produce the symptoms of herpes and so on. And you might have to go through some nasty procedure to poison your skin to produce the necessary skin eruptions.'

Well, for example, you could paralyse your arm by exerting

Readers may recall that René's wife, and the wife of the man known at RAG as *The Sergeant*, were both neighbours in Du Cane Court. It was 'the Sergeant' who had volunteered to test the processes:

'But,' said René, 'He got cold feet and backed out. So I went through the whole lot. I simulated every illness that could possibly be simulated. I still have a scar on my left arm to show for it.

Then afterwards, after everything, Delmer gave Dr. McCurdy all the credit.'

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Now clearly this *Llancarfan Newsletter* must not encourage any reader who might be seeking a day or two off work to study Halkett's book. (If however an English translation were required, Lee Richards, guardian of the *PsyWar* website, is worth tracking down for his edition of *'Illness Saves by Dr Do Good'*.) But here's a warning: if fancying a malinger, then *do* follow the [quote] 'fundamental rule of never giving the doctor his own diagnosis ready made.' (It's perhaps a good rule with any medical authority.) You *must* let the doctor unravel your disease for him or her self. You yourself must seem eager to shake off the sickness and get back to the front. That said, should you accidentally happen to be genuinely ill, it would do the British no harm if you returned to duty with a contagious disease to spread among colleagues.

As it happens, René observed (as have others) that the malingering campaign did have an Achilles heel: 'The Krankheit book was ultimately the 'Black Boomerang' after which Sefton Delmer named his biography. First of all, one bag was mistakenly dropped in this country from a plane, full of those books. And very soon a French translation appeared, then an English translation . . . and which army in the world is without malingerers?'

You may be relieved that René never completed the other book he was asked to draft. That was the one about how to poison the enemy:

'Somebody else, a botanist, delivered yet another ordered manuscript. Delmer said I should see what I could make out of it . . . to poison a whole canteen, or give them diarrhoea for a week, you know. All the various things listed. Like - something looks exactly like parsley, but if you eat it you're sick for a week. This looks like dill, but if you use it, it will kill you.

We decided in the end that it couldn't be used because it would amount to chemical warfare. A war crime. So the plan was scrapped – and I pinched that manuscript. But then a couple of years ago I found it in the upper drawer there, I said "well, this is a nasty thing to have lying about." So I burned it.'

It is of course rather ironic that when I knew him, René lived in Camelford in Cornwall. Dying in 1983, he was never to know about the infamous poisoning of Camelford's water supply with 20 tonnes of aluminium sulphate in 1988.

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Delmer's outfit was dissolved with the German defeat. And what use did Britain then make of its ex-Black Propagandist? René's next job was to identify films suitable for showing in the devastated zones of British Occupied Germany. A fascinating topic, and too complex to discuss here — but if René's bosses thought that 'Blithe Spirit' and 'Brief Encounter' could 'reeducate' a spiritually shattered Germany, René knew it was a thankless task.

Then the Film Section came to an end . . . so I was introduced to a Parachute Major who had lost one arm. He told me that he was now retiring, and I was his successor, and that I would now be *Head of the Lecture Section*.'

According to the *Manchester Guardian* of 21 May 1947 there were still by then 297,800 German prisoners in captivity in the UK. There remained a massive screening exercise in grading prisoners to determine who might safely run a restored peaceful Germany.

As the unexpected 'Head of the Lecture Section' René's task was to select lecturers who could gently show POW camp prisoners democracy in action, countering the culture of dictatorship. No probs! The *Guardian* already felt that the 'political re-education for fanatical Nazis has been a pathetic failure.' However, it *did* concede that now there was a team of first-class lecturers, and that 'political talks are usually well attended and followed by strenuous debates and discussions.' René it seems was making an honest stab at his new job. And he had no POW 'camp' memories more personal than this:

'I noticed, somehow that there was a camp in Bridgend, where Generals and Admirals and things were kept — and this camp was not on our list for lectures. I thought that was odd, and asked if there was a screening report. No-one it seems had been officially screened there, but the Commandant had probably been asked for a report as to who was a bad Nazi and so on. I found this report contained a brief list of perhaps ten Generals and Admirals who were considered 'hardened Nazis and militarists'. And on this list I found the name of Major General Baron van der Hoop — my cousin Adrian.'

'Well, as you know, Adrian was the one person in Germany I trusted . . . We grew up like brothers. If ever I knew anybody inside out it was Adrian. And it was the most absurd statement. I asked the Commandant 'Who made this list?' I told him I'd found van der Hoop who was the absolute opposite of a militarist and a Nazi. The Commandant said he had asked a trusted German General to make such a list for him. I said I would very much like to see that General, and was told that this was impossible, because when the Papal Nuncio had visited the camp, this General had broken ranks and thrown himself at the feet of the Nuncio, talking nonsense and screaming, and so had to be removed. He was now in a psychiatric hospital.'

'Back in London I reported my visit, pointing out it would be a very good idea to send lecturers to Bridgend. They were not all hardened Nazis, most of them were good professional officers, not terribly interested in politics, and on retirement to their own villages they would certainly be respected. One reeducated general was worth a thousand re-educated other ranks.' But for rivalrous reasons René's report remained unread, and so – 'if a superior officer refuses to read my report, I can't see how I can function'. He resigned.

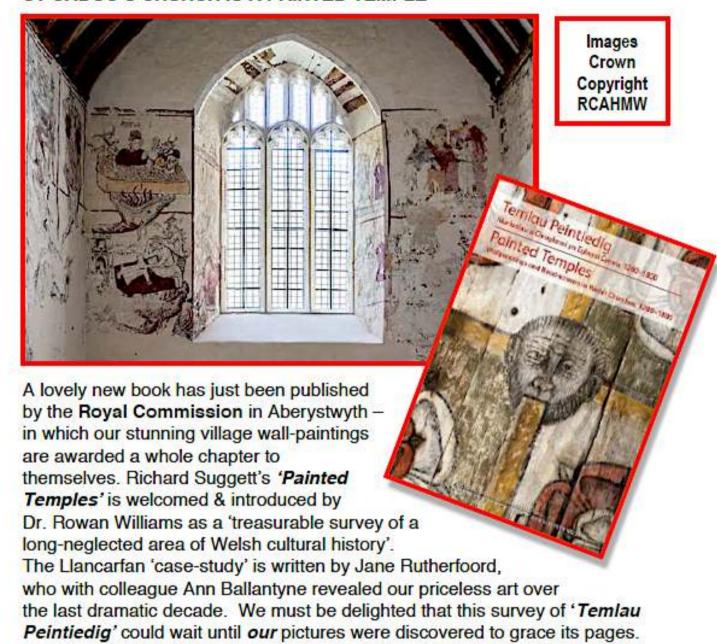
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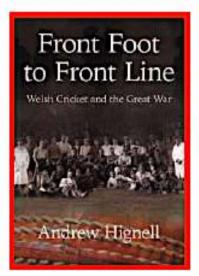
Adrian van der Hoop stayed in Bridgend until May 1948, writing his letters to René, wishing both 'eine recht frohes Weinachtsfest'. He was finally able to retire to the Schmitte, their joint boyhood home. René went on to work at the Nuremberg trials, which proved an even more soul-searching jobs before he became a celebrity broadcaster on the BBC German service. Our friend remained a celebrity, attracting German listener groupies to visit him in Camelford, even when, in semi-retirement, he broadcast on the German Service his charming evocations of rural Cornwall. And quietly sharing with Pen & me his astonishing tales of propaganda in a world turned upside down.

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² I'm grateful to Alison Hannaby for her offer of help (still to be taken up) in translating Adrian van der Hoop's letters from Island Farm. Thanks, Alison!

ST CADOC'S CHURCH IS A PAINTED TEMPLE





MAURICE GRIFFITH: CONSOLED BY CRICKET?

Village cricketers may already have discovered the book on the left, which (says Kay Brain) celebrates cricketers from over 35 clubs in Wales, and in particular those whose lives were lost or changed forever by the First World War. The book includes a fine tribute to Maurice Griffith of Bridge House (now Cottage), and draws in detail on the memories of his nephew, Campbell Reed, who since Newsletter 7 has been a pioneer contributor. As documented in earlier newsletters, Maurice's close friend David Rhys Davies died alongside him near Armentières. Cricket offered solace to POW Maurice on his return to Llancarfan.

CHRISTMAS EVENTS & FESTIVITIES

Please note, queries hover over all planned Christmas activities due to Omicron. Do check the Llancarfan Hub for cancellations or additions.

St Cadoc's 19/12 6pm Carol Service

24/12 11pm Midnight Mass

Llantrithyd 25/12 9.30pm Christmas Eucharist

Fox & Hounds: Boxing Day Tug at 1200 - plus a Duck Race. There will be BBQ and pizza at the Fox after the tug of war.

New Year: Curry Night from 7 pm. New Year's Day: Brunch 10am - 2pm.

If circumstances allow, there will be a Burns Night celebration in January and cinema screenings in February and April: watch for developments.

PLEASE REMEMBER, DON'T FORGET!
RENEW YOUR LLANCARFAN SOCIETY SUBSCRIPTION! DUE 18T JANUARY.
THIS GREAT OLD VILLAGE TRADITION NEEDS YOUR INTEREST TO KEEP IT GOING!

In 2022 our beloved school will close and pupils and staff will transfer to South Point Primary in Rhoose. This Christmas, pupils have been celebrating before packing up: our next issue will be devoted to our wonderful Llancarfan Primary and its memories: see over for latest school news.

More jolly-jumpered Cedar classmates overleaf!



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CROESO I YSGOL LLANCARFAN!

We were delighted to welcome our children back in September. There have been many new arrivals - not least our wonderful Nursery. All here are very proud how quickly they settled in, learnt school routines, and made friends.

Enterprising year six . . .



As part of our enrichment time, where children across the school are given opportunities to experience a wide range of activities, our fabulous Year 6 had the chance to create a 'Young Enterprise'.

With a budget of just £10 per group, our 4 groups prudently decided to pool their money and create a Halloween-themed sale. The children carried out market research, pricing and marketing activities. This culminated in

them selling 'mystery bags' which they painstakingly hand-designed and filled. Their enterprise paid off as they raised a full £138.61 for school funds.

Remembrance Day Each November Year 6 always sell poppies & other items to raise funds for British Armed Forces members past & present. Mrs Ray Evans, who kindly provides the goods to sell, told us the children raised

yet another whopping sum of £111.00! Our lovely children, socially distanced on the school yard, held a two-minute silence. Year 6 pupils paid respects at the St. Cadoc's Cenotaph.

The weather may be damp but it certainly hasn't dampened our spirits or stopped us reaching the great outdoors for *Forest Schools* sessions! Here the children braved the elements to make wind chimes from natural materials.



Finally - A Merry Christmas & Happy New Year from Oak & Cedar Class!





