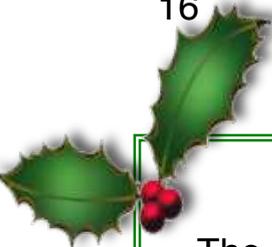


LLANCARFAN SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER 192
DECEMBER 2024



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Society Subs - Reminder of a changed diary date!

The **new annual renewal date** is **1ST APRIL 2025** (easy to remember!)
Still renewing for 2024? You get an extra three months on us....

If you support the village community, cherish its history,
& want to stay in touch with Llancarfan news -
DON'T FORGET to renew your subscription.

Household & Couple membership : £15 pa
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Llancarfansociety.org.uk

To ensure you are on our newsletter mailing list return your form to
The Membership Secretary, Mrs J Scott-Quelch
2 Penylan House, Llancarfan, CF623AH

**In these chilly December nights without electricity,
Storm Darragh has brought us our share of tricks and treats.**
Perhaps this **Hallowe'en** we should have listened to these wise
words from our former Society President, **Sir Keith Thomas** :

'What the religious changes in the mid sixteenth century did was
to eliminate the protective ecclesiastical magic which had kept
the threat of sorcery under control.' We were duly warned!

Religion & the Decline of Magic : 1971

OF GHOULS & SOULS & THREATS OF SORCERY

Ian Fell

Truth to tell, and as our cover illustrates, nobody during this Hallowe'en of 2024 could out-spook the wonderful creation seen at the gates of the village's Chateau Croll. The Croll family has proved ever-inventive in their seasonal garden sorcery – and very good for them. Those of us who weren't vampires even dared to admire their latest spectral monster by daylight.

The fact is, over the years, Llancarfan has never shirked its duties when it comes to tricking or treating its citizens. For instance, the spookytide of 2020 remains particularly memorable for villagers pulling out the stops – or was it the teeth? – for Hallowe'en. And Arianne Barrett even drew a ghostly map to shiver our timbers.



Now, given the life that Hallowe'en & Mischief Night bring to our village, who can deny our youngsters their seasonal fun? On the other hand, I am now rather embarrassed to admit to feeling that there is something rather creepy about our present-day manner of celebrating this ancient turning of the year. Call me old fashioned, but hasn't Hallowe'en evolved into a hyper-exploited commercial smorgasbord of historical confusion?

So, m'lud, I here submit that in Welsh Llancarfan, we have every right to examine our Celtic roots. Backalong, before Julius Caesar imposed his January to December year on this Roman-occupied

Britain, our proper Celtic year began at the time we now call Hallowe'en. This moment in the earth's turn around the sun was declared the start of our Winter, a time roughly at the mid-point between the Autumn equinox and the Winter solstice. It was called (as you may well know) the start of 'Samhain' – the festive launch of the Celtic new year. Our Welsh name for this is 'Calan Gaeaf', 'Nos Galan Gaeaf' being the festival of a winter night. Its themes resemble the world-piercing effects of the subtle knife in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*. Samhain is a particular time of transparency between our world and 'Annwn' – the Otherworld.

I must now admit that while I was writing this I was diverted, and fortunately educated, by listening to a charming radio documentary about exactly the same topic - 'Nos Calan Gaeaf'. This programme, presented (in English) by the singer and actress Carys Eleri, happened to explore some of the themes I was feeling my way towards¹. I learnt that (while Carys Eleri was hiding in a 'spooky' St. Fagan's) Wales has three 'asbyrd nos', or 'spirit nights'. These are the nights when, as noted, the veil between the living and the dead is particularly thin. I dared to wonder if this also applied to 'the Vale'!

Meanwhile, back with that 'smorgasbord of historical confusion', please consider the clutter that has been piled into marking this former Celtic new year. It really is a very puzzled festivity.

Start by putting aside all the trivia of commerce which has become ever more imperative for us to buy in perhaps the last 10 or 15 years. Given that our main role in life is now of course to be a dutiful consumer, we have the social commitment to buy a short-lived array of masks and skulls, prairie loads of pumpkins (it used to be turnips), galleries of ghosts, belfryfuls of bats, hell horns of the forlorn, and to wear the Gothic garbs of the posthumous. Sorry, I just got carried away. All of which must be guaranteed to biodegrade before we're sold equally tatty trappings for Christmas.

However, setting such cynicism aside, consider the conflicting activities that centuries of politics have glued to the Samhain celebrations. At least the Christian glosses managed to re-package with some respect the sense of paying tribute to our ancestors at this

¹ 'Nos Calan Gaeaf : The Welsh Halloween' : *Hauntings, folklore and ancient rituals*.

turning point of time. They renamed the first three days of Samhain as Hallowe'en, All Saints' Day, and All Souls' Day, and borrowed the ancestral traditions. Fair enough.

But then in 1605, as a consequence of the Anglo-Protestant neurosis about others who performed their rituals of worship in a different and lavishly decorative way, the Roman Catholics felt the need to blow up the House of Lords. Consequently, to remind the public that such practical gestures were not necessarily the best approach to good government, the Jacobean authorities perverted our inherited Celtic bonfire tradition, and turned the fires into emoticons of threat aimed at any Roman Catholic of a pyrotechnic persuasion.

Until about 1800 the Protestants didn't mince their words; indeed, they roasted their mince and underlined their message by **burning an effigy of the Pope** on our bonfires. On November 5th 1679, for instance, Abergavenny proudly pioneered the first Welsh Protestant experiment in Pope burning. This happened during the 'Popish plot' paranoia, and didn't end well.² But as I understand it, it wasn't until about 1800 that the minor regicide, Guido Fawkes, replaced the pope in the hot seat on the bonfire's faggots.

Now you'll probably tell me that in recent years, given all the elf and safety problems and so on, bonfire night has gone up in smoke. It could be that the Guy Fawkes distraction from Samhain may ultimately disappear. But of course one cannot for a moment not respect, despite its coincidental closeness, the 'eleven eleven' memorial remembrance of the last century's wartime dead.

But what if in Wales we wished to reclaim the admirable tradition established under 'Samhain' of taking a few hours to consider and pay tribute to our ancestors? Yes - by all means let our youngsters dress up in cadaverous carnival if they wished to do so (they still take this seriously, we are told, in Mexican and Mayan communities.) But this still leaves me wishing that we could now purge those pastimes of the current Americanised commercialism.

Anyway, to return to Carys Eleri's BBC programme about 'Nos Calan Gaeaf' - among the excellent people she interviewed was Kristoffer Hughes, Chief of Ynys Mon / Anglesea's Druid Order. One might

² (Memo : When the Abergavenny Local History Society comes to see our church paintings – members are booked in for June 2025 – one must ask if the practice is as yet discontinued.)

sink into further cynicism when considering some druidic activities, given that our own Iolo Morganwg (proud as we are of him up at Penn Onn) indulged in much wishful-thinking Druidic invention of alleged antiquity. But here, Kristoffer Hughes commands respect for his narrative & analysis of pagan tradition.

One of the observations that Hughes made to Carys Eleri was about lost Welsh practices once marking this seasonal turnabout. He believed that, prior to World War One, Wales was (his words) 'riddled with all manners of Calan Gaeaf rituals'. The management of these memorial ceremonies, he said, had usually fallen to the men. And these were now the fallen men. The traditions – 'Native communal traditions that connect them not only to a sense of place but also to their ancestors' – had disappeared in Flanders Fields.

Kristoffer now hopes & practices to revitalise these tropes. He says his Samhain rituals focus on the people he has loved and lost. And also on those ancestral influencers who shaped his present life.

Apparently one of his chosen rituals, I recall, is something like 'Bwyd i gynulliad negeswyr y meirw', which he translated as 'Food for the assembly of the messengers of the dead'. In other words, he said, bake Welsh cakes! Well, you can't argue with that. These were then apparently 'given not only to the poorest in the community, but also as *energetic* offerings to the dead.' He suggested that such acts of remembrance, done as a ritual sharing of a communal sense of loss, could gently resurrect our relationship with our lost friends.

To be fair again to the church (which is not something I'm always moved to be, given its despotic history) I can relate to this. To illustrate. Almost exactly a hundred years ago, in a similar Celtic community of St. Hilary (this one near Penzance in Cornwall), a vicar called Bernard Walke wrote plays for the newly-created BBC.

Walke in fact turned out to be a pioneer of broadcasting. He was persuaded by the BBC to let them transmit a live performance of the local dramas which he initially wrote for his St. Hilary congregation. He first captured his national audience in 1926 with a Christmas Nativity play, broadcast 'from the Land's End' and 'across the magnetic mass of Dartmoor'.

For five more Christmases, British wireless audiences 'listened into' and cherished his simple nativity play. Then, in 1932, Walke was

able to broadcast his (often to be repeated) 'Miracle Play' of 'The Eve of All Souls'.

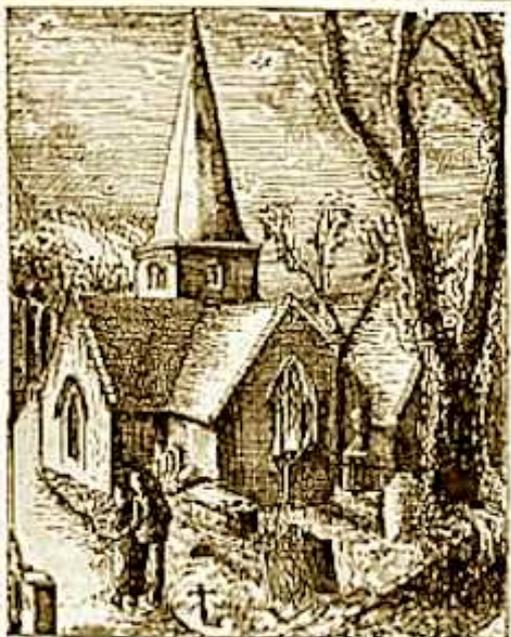
This play was transmitted across Britain on the First of November, which was of course the self-same *Eve of All Souls*, or alternatively the start of *Samhain*. It is a heart-felt and moving drama, spoken with true Cornish accents, and it featured a humble marriage between Mary & John, their union made on the same day that the Celtic Cornish heard the 'voices of those who died in the Parish during the year'.

I first warmed to the play 50 years ago. Promoting its first broadcast *The Spectator* wrote (29 October 1932) that the performers of the *Eve of All Souls* 'include a farm-hand, a tin miner, a postman, and the champion butter-maker of Cornwall.'

Mary : Herken to the bells . . .

John : I do harken to them, Mary, but I never heard them sound like that afore. They can't be our bells for there en't no ringers in the tower. They must be the bells of Paradise what is ringing now.

Perhaps, here in Llancarfan, we might just – who knows? - want to re-discover a similar way of thinking at Samhain of those of our ancestors who we would wish were with us and who we remember in reverence.



'THE EVE OF ALL SOULS'
A Miracle Play in Four Scenes
by
BERNARD WALKER
CHARACTERS
(in order of speaking) :

Mary Tregerata, the Bride	
Her Mother	
Her Father	
Sarah Jane	} Neighbours
William Henry	
Daft Willie	
Silas Penberthy	
John Treverrow, the Bridegroom	
Voices of those who have died in the Parish during the year	
Priest, Choir, Bell-ringers and Villagers	

SCENES :

Scene 1. Dressing the Bride
Scene 2. Outside the Church during the Wedding
Scene 3. The Home of Bride and Bridegroom
Scene 4. The Church at Night

Produced by Bernard Walker. Directed by Filon Yevog.

Performed by
THE ST. HILARY PLAYERS
and relayed from St. Hilary, Cornwall,
TONIGHT AT 9.20.

**CANON DEREK BELCHER : PRIEST IN CHARGE
PENMARK, LLANCARFAN with LLANTRITHYD : 2015-2020**

A personal reflection by Fr Kevin Barry

On 30 September, 2024, I was taken aback when I received a phone call from Pam, Derek's wife. She told me that Derek had passed away the previous day. Although Derek had some long-term health conditions, and was in hospital for another procedure, his death was unexpected.



Derek was influential in my journey of discernment and road to Holy Orders, and he played a big part in Kim and Olivia's life as well, after we moved back to Wales from East Sussex. He took Olivia through the stages of confirmation, instinctively knowing how to explain and teach Olivia so that she was able to go on to be confirmed, along with many others from the village, by Bishop Barry Morgan.

I started working with Derek as a Church Warden alongside Sue Taylor, in 2016. Derek was very good at getting people signed up to get things done – and he persuaded me to take up the role, at first on a part-time basis, as I was splitting my time between Llanccarfán and East Sussex. He let nothing get in his way if it benefitted the church.

I remember one particular fund-raising event, *Pimm's and Panamas*, held on a glorious summer's day at June and Andrew Studley's farm. It was a tremendous success, and a lot of hard work went into raising over £4k for two charities, one being St Cadoc's Church.

At Eastertide, Derek would do his best to get at least one donkey for the Palm Sunday procession of congregation and clergy around the village. One particular Easter, I received a phone call from Sue saying, "Fr Derek is not very well, and he is struggling to walk, but so he doesn't miss the procession, could we arrange a quad bike for him to drive?" Pam proved to agree with us. "Absolutely not!"

“Thank goodness,” she said. “I had this vision of him with a crash helmet on, following the donkey, who would then probably kick off!”

After Derek retired, he stayed in close contact. He saw me ordained as a Deacon and then 7 months later ordained Priest. In January this year, Derek, Pam and son Richard, came to my retirement service at St Cadoc’s. Derek ended up playing the organ for the entrance hymn! Then he’d ring at times to catch up. I’d ask how he was, and he would always reply “Yes, I am ok, but I do miss it....”

As many of you know, Fr Derek was “High Church”: he loved Latin, the incense, the Sanctus bells. And - as we again approach Christmas - I remember Fr Derek would look forward to Midnight Mass on Christmas eve. One year he got just a little bit over excited with the incense smoke. It got so bad that the congregation were coughing and spluttering, and we lost sight of Derek at the altar.

So it was no surprise to me, when Pam asked If I could play a part in the funeral, and that it would be a Requiem Mass. Derek had put his mark on his final service. St Theodore’s Church, Port Talbot was packed with many clergy, including two Bishops. But what Fr Derek would have really noticed was the excellent representation from our village, Llancarfan, who came to pay their respects. I know Pam and Richard were overcome with the turnout.

As a Deacon, Priest (or Bishop) your vocation can often be difficult or lonely. However, there are three of things Fr Derek would say to me when I was struggling to understand the path I had chosen:

1. Always be yourself. God chose you for who you are.
2. Always trust in your faith and people will trust in you.
3. Bring to the table the experiences of your life
and look to understand what part God played in that.

Thank you, Derek, from me and my family, for taking the time.



Our thanks to Kevin for his reflections, which we hope distill for many in the village and our Society the very special warmth so many of us cherished for Derek & his family. Readers may wish to revisit aspects of Derek’s biography in Newsletter 161 from March 2015.

Richard Thomas Walker
1st November 1973 to 17th March 2024 (Age 50)



It is with great sadness that Sarah Walker offers this belated report of her brother Richard Walker's brave fight against an extremely rare cancer, which finally claimed his life this March. Richard's sudden death shocked Llancafarn when he collapsed in the village. Sarah's fuller evocation of his life, heavily edited here for print reasons, is available in her original version on the Llancafarn Society website :

Richard was born on the 1st November 1973. We lived at the Hollies Llancafarn until 1979, then swapped houses with our Grandparents, and lived at Flaxland Farm where Richard would become the 3rd generation farmer. He attended Llancafarn Primary School where he met his cousin & best friend for life, Rhys Price. From school he would cross the road to Aunty Joann Quelch who would cook on demand Beans on Toast.

Richard attended Cowbridge Comprehensive and endured the long journey on the bus to Cowbridge, wondering how many times the driver would get stuck in the ditch on the way to Llanbethery. Ironically, years later Richard, and his pride and joy his Massey Ferguson tractor, would be called upon to rescue people who got their cars stuck in the ditches in the lanes in Walterston. This was Richard through and through.

Before taking over the reins of running Flaxland he and Rhys Price went on a trip of a lifetime time to Australia, Canada and New Zealand, staying with family and friends. A huge part of Richard's life was Maendy Young Farmers. He was also elected the FUW Glamorganshire's County Chairman in 2013, a position held proudly for the decade to follow.

In April 2010 Richard became the proud uncle to my daughter Ella. Richard met his wife Rachel at the Royal Welsh Show 2013 and went on to have two beautiful children. Rhydian born in December 2014 and Meredith May 2016. They married in November 2021.



My brother was always there for me through the good and bad. The brother / sister bond we hold meant that sometimes words didn't need exchanging. As a family we can not thank our family and friends enough for their continued help and support to get us through each day.

Sarah, Peter and Ann

Llancarfan Book Club (writes Penny Fell) has been a firm fixture in village life for a quarter of a century now – nobody can quite remember when it started, due perhaps to the wine consumed down the decades. And only two of the original members have managed to thumb the pages (or scroll the Kindle) throughout all of those years : Patsie Smith and Kay Brain. Members³ meet in the Fox every six weeks or so. Debate *can* get heated, but the best thing about it is that we all get to read books we'd never have opened under other circumstances. The chair person rotates (sometimes literally), the current holder being Mary Grey.



This autumn, inspired by the fact that one of the UK's most celebrated crime writers is also a neighbour – **Belinda Bauer** lives on the edge of the village – LBC asked her to join us for dinner and talk. The evening was a delight. Belinda [seen here presenting prizes at the village show] had never even read a crime thriller until her debut novel was shortlisted for an award in the genre. She told us about her early career as a journalist in Cardiff; a lengthy spell in the brutal world of screen writing, after unexpectedly winning a talent-scouting competition; periods scraping a living by gardening; then the classic breakout success of her first book **Badlands** - which happened to feature a crime. This stormed onto the scene, winning the CWA Gold Dagger for crime book of the year.

Publishers circled - their eye on a new talent in this lucrative area. Her plans to write any other kind of book were quickly disabused. She remains a kidnapped crime writer, albeit one who writes about rich and varied lives which happen to have a crime in them. With ten books under her belt and a huge following, Belinda is now described as “one of the UK's most talented story tellers.”

The Book Club preparation was reading her most recent work, **Exit**. Should you have a Christmas book-token going spare, it's an extraordinarily funny and playful read, given that the subject is assisted dying. (Yes, you read that right.) And it's more full of life than the average romcom. Belinda's next book, **The Impossible Thing**, comes out in February. You *can* pre-order. Book Club will be waiting for this, not least with vicarious pride in a gifted and unassuming neighbour.

³ Actually they are all women, but nothing in the rules insists. For those interested, there is a waiting list for the club – it gets unruly with too many – but another group has now sprung up. Sometimes, we gather, they communicate online (Llancarfan's Dark Web?), an arrangement our original Literary Llancarfanites couldn't contemplate, but hopefully it ensures that the village's reading light shines into the coming decades.

And still in the whirl of books - back in our Christmas Newsletter of 2017 we found ourselves asking questions about the exploratory archaeology which, we understood, was planned to precede the creation of the newly dualled and re-routed 5 Mile Lane (A4266).



The road works were completed in 2019. But what of the archaeology?

Well now we know. A remarkable book was launched back in this September at a presentation held on Penarth Pier (and indeed it's a book massive enough to launch from any pier!) This book holds a wealth of evidence, bristling with questions. **Gordon Kemp** read it :

⌘ A JOURNEY THROUGH 6000 YEARS OF HISTORY ⌘

Those five years since road completion might seem long time ago now, but they are the mere blink of an eye in the history that the work allowed to be uncovered – a period of **some 6,000 years**, from the Neolithic of 4,000 years ago up to Tudor times of the 1540s.

Evidence of human activity was found across these sweeping years. This includes the post holes of a ritual complex in the Neolithic period, through to grain drying kilns which show agricultural activity from earliest Medieval to Tudor times. Earlier signs of human activity were also unearthed in the form of flint artifacts. Flint is not native here, so is more likely a sign of people passing through the area.

The existence of a wealthy Roman farmstead was already known, but the Five Mile Lane works allowed more excavations to be carried out, significantly around Whitton. These revealed extensive burials : indeed 430 bodies have been identified, some being complete or partial, others are cremations. Numerous artefacts emerged, from pottery to brooches, from a golden ring to a burnt wooden comb.

This publication is a work of over 500 pages. Entitled '*A Journey Through 6000 Years of History*' it weighs in at some six pounds. Produced by the excavators, the Red River Archaeology Group, it

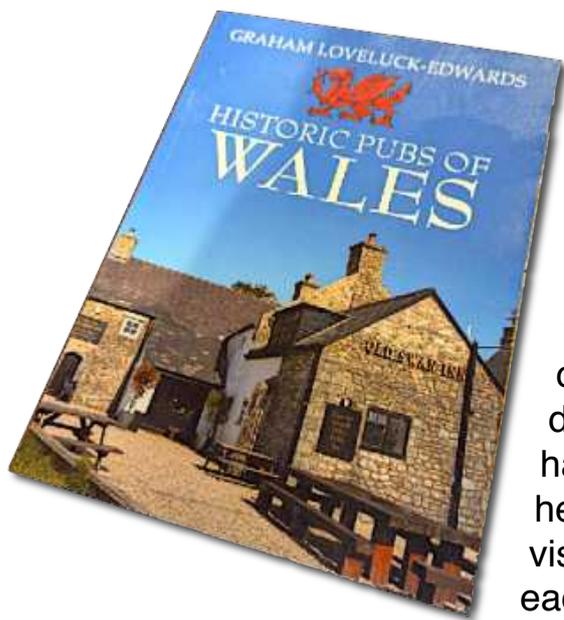
can be borrowed from the Society by interested members, particularly by those willing to write their thoughts. We would of course welcome any reader who could throw light on the countless unanswered questions the evidence poses.

Among the things we are encouraged to bear in mind that the site is located **on or near medieval religious routes**. Archaeologists are wondering about links to Llanccarfan, to its early medieval monastery and its St Cadoc church? Not far away too - at Fonmon - excavations are finding further extensive burials. Might these sites be linked?



Well now - at this stage in our thinking readers clearly need a drink. It's fortunate then that we can hark back to **Graham Loveluck-Edwards**, the illustrious speaker who poured out his knowledge as an appetiser during this year's Society AGM. *Ian Fell* and Society members were more than happy to dip in to Graham's

⌘ HISTORIC PUBS OF WALES ⌘



Graham Loveluck-Ellis's cunningly conceived *Historic Pubs of Wales* has little resemblance to those cocktail table books you're given for Christmas, just because people know you like a pint of *Butty Bach*. This book unearths, for an enticing **89 pubs** throughout Wales, an historical context which only an engaging historian like Graham can devise for our delight & education. Not only has Graham toured every one of these pubs, he's also come up with a time-efficient route for visiting them all! Furthermore, he's wrapped each in genuine history or a diverting mythology.

Now obviously Graham has a lifetime of free beers ahead of (or behind) him, visiting Welsh history societies with tales of local hostelries. When he talked to our *Llanccarfan Society* he'd but time for three tasty histories from local hostelries, though in the book he highlights ten Vale pubs, their number doubtless filtered with great anguish. (Curiously our *Fox* has yet to achieve its own historical inclusion.) Graham, who admits that he likes lists, reckons it takes only 129 minutes for him to drive without stopping - ¿*Que?* - the full

route which passes all his named Vale pubs, starting at *The Jolly Sailor at Newton*, ending at *The Baron's Court, Penarth*, & naturally travelling via *The Plough & Harrow, Monkash*.

Each of the mentioned local pubs is of course well dug into history. So, for instance, one will not be surprised to confirm that at Monkash (prompted by such clues as the giant barn and the charming stone dove cote) the *Plough & Harrow* grew in the ruins of a monastic grange (a Neath Abbey outpost). Evidence in Gents loo!

However, it has to be discomfoting (if entertaining) to read how many of our pubs were apparently frequented and dominated by the piratical mafia of our Vale. Talking of *The Blue Anchor*, Graham has shared a vicar's classification of the citizens of the Vale :

'First they were pirates, next they were smugglers, then they became wreckers, and by this time there is not an honest man left among them.'

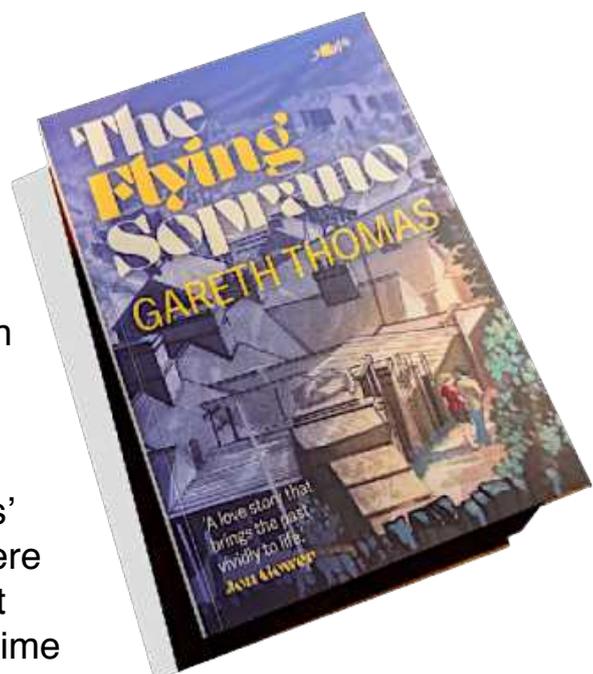
Well now – it is clearly no wonder that Graham has so far had to omit from his bibulous tour the honest, upright, and strictly puritanical clientele of the *Fox & Hounds*.

⌘ THE FLYING SOPRANO ⌘

Finally on our shelf of honour – here is a charming publication from another of the Vale's prolific storytellers, **Gareth Thomas**.

Gareth is a resident of St. Hilary, and he has of course been a great friend of Llanccarfan's history. He it was who secured, with your Society, permission to place a blue plaque up at Pen Onn on the site of Iolo Morganwg's birthplace.

In *The Flying Soprano*, his latest novel, Gareth re-visits his native mining valleys' homestead, discovering (or creating) there a chopsy young lady, Siân, whose talent with her vocal chords carries her to wartime London in the late 1930s and wartime 40s.



Gareth held an innovative book-launch at Cowbridge Library back in October, an event of great credit to the library, Cowbridge Bookshop and History Society. The launch was a rehearsed performance (by Gareth's talented professional friends) of several highly entertaining and dramatic exchanges between the book's characters. Linking the extracts, Gareth talked with fellow writer & historian, Phil Carradice.

It is very pleasing that Gareth's dialogue works as well for home readers as it did for his dramatic performers. His novel relishes an account of Siân and George's developing love affair, counterpointing the very sympathetic valleys' family life of our 'heroine' with the Metroland upbringing of George in stockbrokers' north London.

The 'cliff-hangers' come inevitably from the Second World War (and the less familiar Spanish Civil War). Siân's brother Owain – 'her blacklisted unemployed Communist brother' – echoes Orwellian Catalan memories. Soprano Siân (despite her ultimate D'Oyly Carte successes) joins the poisonous production lines of Bridgend's Royal Ordnance Factory. George learns to bomb a burning Germany – anguished, but with Siân's 'voice on a clear high note bringing a message of hope over the drone of the Lancaster's engines'.



This notice can not be a proper review of the novel. However, the book's evocative storytelling will surely remind older generations, and hopefully enlighten younger ones, as to the vile nature of wartime – and help us to recognise again the idealism that was rescued out of conflict in the form of the Beveridge Report. Once again, all power to Cowbridge library for hosting this, and subsequent, book launches.

ANNUAL SOCIETY DINNER & THE PRESIDENT'S BIRTHDAY

Some 28 members of your Society turned up at the *Fox & Hounds* on the evening of Saturday 23 November 2024 to add a few more memories to the village history. Head Memory-Supplier-by-Appointment was the President, Barbara Milheusen, who three days earlier had celebrated (keep it to yourself) her 90th birthday. Members of her ever-supportive family joined the feast – including her great-nephew Lewis, now a student in Cardiff, and seen here absorbing a word of advice just like the rest of us.



Stalwarts of the Society welcomed the excellent provisions of the Fox's now well-established 'new' Chef, Quentin. He single-handedly created our banquet, efficiently supported by Chloe and Manon, who are following Julie & Andrew's lead in re-establishing *The Fox* as a site of culinary pilgrimage. Thank you all!

Among fellow diners proved (yet again!) to be our local (and international) author, Belinda Bauer. Some of us were not well-equipped to follow Belinda's doggie in a spontaneous conga (Barbara had clearly enticed the hound to lead us astray). This event

tempted some of us to wonder whether our village-show award-presenting celebrity was in fact in the process of researching her next murder mystery. Death? Decadence? Dancing? Ladies of Llancafán fixated on the latest twists and turns of '*Strictly Come Dancing*'? What could the thriller be? Yes! With one bound the plot came to us and the title arrived :

'Strychnine Come Dancing'!

Thank you all for your company,
and A Very Happy Christmas.

