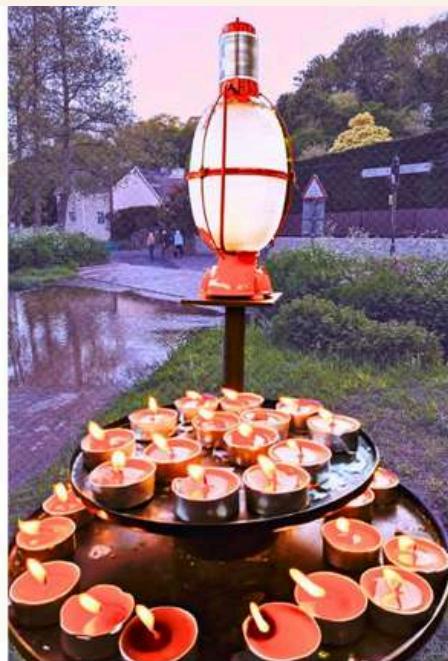




LLANCARFAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

August 2025. Issue No 194





As part of the VE Day commemoration, the Society organised a colouring competition for primary school children. The task was to colour in a "Lamp Light of Peace" picture. The winner, Abbey Drummond, aged 10, was presented with her prize by our Chair, Katherine Kemp. Congratulations, Abbey!

VE DAY LAMP OF PEACE

The village was fortunate to have the Lamp Light of Peace by the ford, designed and crafted for our VE Day commemorations. By the talented Scott Croll. Many people remarked on its beauty and the moving atmosphere it created as it illuminated the nights. A big thank you must go to Scott.



As part of the VE Day commemorations, we organised a colouring competition for local children. The winner was a girl called "Lily" from the "Lamp of Peace" group. Lily, now 10, was presented with a £50 gift by our Chair, Katherine Nutter, at the recent service at St. Mary's Abbey!

Ian Fell writes :

I'm not someone who wishes to impose rhymes on occasions such as this. Honestly.

But I was in fact asked to write something and – clearly – I didn't have the taste to decline the offer.

Well – conscripted to write this, I decided to find out who might have celebrated in Llancarfan in 1945, just like us today. You probably know that there's a list, called The National Register, of people in Britain – conducted, in Llancarfan's case, on October 4th 1939. In some ways it's quite an ominous report, because (among other things) it allowed the listing of human resources – i.e. people – available to fight a war. Even available, of course, to die in one. As did some 50 million people around the world.

On the cover of the 'Registration Transcript Book' is a pencilled note : 'Total 215'. Which is roughly the number of eligible people listed here. (And yes, that list does include at least one youngster here with us today!).

It also included the name of a young man, Robert Griffiths, one of the four local men mentioned on the side of our churchyard memorial as dying for their country.

What struck me overwhelmingly on our list was that, children apart, at least 90% of those listed had their 'Occupation' recorded as being involved in Agriculture. Whether noted as 'Farmer' – a 'reserved occupation' – 'Dairy Farmer', 'Poultry Farmer', 'Agricultural Labourer', 'Dairy Maid', 'Cowman assisting Farmer', 'Market Gardener', 'Horseman', 'Ploughman', 'Butcher' – nearly all are here, man and woman, servants of the soil.

So what did Llancarfan feel about the war it found itself in? My rhyme is just a gentle exploration of the village's possible feelings – about both the conflict, the service, and the relief at being able to celebrate its ending:

I did not volunteer to write these lines.
I was conscripted, like the millions more
Whose letterboxes gaped in '39
With 'call up' challenges to fight a war.

Here in our fields, some people thought the state
would march us all like honking walls of geese
To cackle at the Nazi cabbage heads.
No 'call-up' shaped our pledge to plough for **peace**.

But then, how could these landscapes fight our foe?
How could our cultivators wield their hand?
Should they take arms against a troubled sea -
Like Shakespeare said - **or could they feed the land?**

Well - fifty thousand farmers joined the ranks -
But countless came back home to nourish peas,
Maize, wheat and barley - **Home Front** food
To save those starved by fire-infested seas.

'We were not soldiers,' said plough-pulling men,
Called to knock fields, not p'rade grounds, into shape.
'We were not soldiers,' cried the women folk
Who soon would breathe explosives in their sleep.

But they were soldiers, sure as eggs is eggs,
Fighting to feed an island seized by seas;
And girls were soldiers, priming powder kegs -
Shells for the beaches, guarding liberties.

'A People's War', they claimed in '45' -
(Even taught babies, cosseted in sleep!)
'Here is your future. **Earn** it with your lives.
This your inheritance of peace to keep.



Note from the Editor

This past summer in Wales, what can you say? It was a heatwave, yes, but not over and done with in a dramatic sweltering few days. No, this was something more generous, a long, sustained positive forecast, if you can still believe it. The Met Office, in its own methodical way, confirmed it: the warmest on record, not because of a single day where the tarmac melted. But because of steady warmth that went on for months, a genuine invitation to sit in the garden.

Having **not** been born in 1976. I cannot compare to the legendary heatwave that everyone still talks about..(Peter). The drought and the water rationing. I mean, having to "share a bath," can you imagine? That was all part of its drama. This year was different. There were no national gestures. Even with a drought declared in South Wales in July we had no hose pipe ban. So, something must be working within Welsh Water. All that happened is that the sunshine just stayed.

And in the midst of it all, the village WhatsApp group, felt more alive than ever. We had a few traffic reports I preferred the "sheep in lane" or "lone bull alert". But this summer, it became a shared photo album, a personal display of our village wildlife. We saw hoglets, tiny, determined creatures. We witnessed our regular duck family settle in for the season, this time with numerous partridges for neighbours. There was even a running commentary on two pheasants having a furious, long-winded argument right there on the roadside. As well as brown trout in the Nant.

These little encounters, with the wild, with the small, offered a sort of grounding counterpoint to the more constant news headlines of famine, ongoing war, and political reshuffles. The heat is a fact, any maybe a new reality to be wrestled with. And the hoglets were a presence, in a season of incredible warmth. The pheasants, for one though, were not having it.

If you have any stories, editorial or photos you would like to add to our newsletter, please
email: llancarfansoc@gmail.com
www.llancarfansociety.org.uk

Society Subs: The annual reviewal date will be
7st April 2025

Household / Couple Membership £15 pa

Individual €10 pa

Membership form:

www.llancarfansociety.org.uk

Please return membership form to

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President : Barbara Milhuisen
Chairperson : Katherine Kemp
Secretary : Penny Fell
Treasurer : Graham Brain
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Newsletter Editor : Maddy Palmer
Trip Organiser: Shelagh Hughes

Committee members:

Ian Fell

Anne Ferris

Gordon Kemp

Susan Taylor

Fr. Michael John

Deliveroo for Owls?

Llancarfan has great habitat for wildlife but hungry predators and invasive gardening do threaten the village's bird population. Penny Fell has been checking on feathered friends.

Until 2020, we were obsessive bird feeders at the White Chapel. Conscious that several neighbours offer all-you-can-eat buffets in the garden, we'd joined in enthusiastically. Sometimes in the dark days of winter, the hawthorn bush outside our kitchen window would shiver with fifteen or sixteen species feeding simultaneously.

Then, with lockdown, came the rats. We'd never seen a live rat in the garden before, but suddenly mummy rat arrived with four strapping babies munching on birdseed, suet and nuts, seemingly able to climb any barrier we erected. When mother took to sitting on the kitchen window sill to scan the menu & refused to be pushed off, we took the kind of measures one does (with grateful thanks to Debbie Rees, who wearing her Greener Ways pest control hat, is so brilliant at these times). But sadly we felt we had to also stop feeding the birds.

This has meant that things are very quiet in the front garden. Squirrels and slow worms and the occasional toad - but far fewer feathered friends.

As consolation, we've had our Llancarfan Springwatch camera in the back wood, (as shared on Llancarfan Connected over the last two years,) and watched as a mother great tit battled to bring up her young with scant help from Dad. Only two or three chicks survived in each year. But it forcibly occurred that if all eight had lived, we would quickly have been overrun by tits. And that Nature is really in the business of providing snacks for the animal food chain - Deliveroo for owls. So every bit of help we can give the parents to allow them to raise their young is vital all round: both for the little birds and the bigger ones whose lunch they might become. Brutal but true.



Heron Drying.



The Chaples Resident Great Tit -
Perfect Flower Nest Formation



Same Nest Breakfasting Later That Month.

We have many trees and bushes in the White Chapel wood and it's been frustrating not knowing what's hiding up there. Until, at Easter, we were introduced to Merlin, the app which lets you record birdsong and offers identification. Several Llancarfians already have it – and it is a fabulous free resource from Cornell University (google if you're interested).

Spring and summer being prime nesting time, the results were thrilling. I have not seen the enchanting black cap for four years – but they are up there piping in our back wood – with the song thrush, the gold crest, siskin, chaffinch, house martin, long-tailed tit, kingfisher, green woodpecker, green & gold finches and chaffinches – as well as all the other regular guys. Altogether, the app has listed 35 different birdsongs in the last 12 weeks. And most thrilling of all, it picked up a Golden Oriole, which flies over to west Wales in the Spring and must have identified us as a motorway service station.

So we've learnt big time that even if we can't see the birds – they are with us, and need continued protection and peace during the summer time – with No Mow May now being succeeded by No-Strim Summer to give wild neighbours a flying start.

We monolithed an enormous dying ash tree back in the autumn and thought we might put up a owl box on the 18 foot trunk to see what would happen. But now we know what a starry cast list of chicks is potentially starting life back there – perhaps we shouldn't make the Deliveroo quite so easy?

A Note From Michael John and Our Our New Deacon

For this edition I enclose an article written by Rev'd Rachel Petley. Who is a newly ordained deacon serving in the East Vale Ministry Area, which includes Llancarfan.

So, whilst I hold pastoral responsibility for Llancarfan, Rachel and other members of the clergy team occasionally lead worship and are part of events at Llancarfan, so it seemed entirely appropriate to introduce her to you all through the Llancarfan Society newsletter.

Rachel lives in Flemington and before training for ordination she was a GP in a local practice. She is a delightful and studious person (she is often the star pupil in the Welsh class which we both attend) and we are so excited to have her as part of our clergy team and look forward to her involvement in village life.

The photo shows Rachel (in white) on the day of her ordination in late June surrounded by the other members of the local clergy team.

Michael John



It was an absolute joy to be ordained as a deacon in Llandaff Cathedral at the end of June 2025 after 3 years of training for ordination within the Church in Wales

By the end of the day, my face hurt from smiling and it took another few days for the reality of it all to sink in, but I'm now just about getting used to wearing a clergy collar and being called 'Rev'. My personal favourite moment from the days following ordination was a child in one of our local schools announcing that my collar meant I am now a 'Bible Story-teller'; a description I love and hope that I can embody through my words and actions.

I was delighted to be asked by Bishop Mary to continue here in the East Vale Ministry Area as assistant curate. And am looking forward to another three years in our wonderful local communities and churches. Working alongside fantastic individuals in both the clergy team and our congregations. But if you're wondering what a deacon is, you won't be alone; I'd not really heard the term myself until a few years ago. 'Deacon' is an ancient role and ministry that dates to the first few decades of Christianity.

It involves individuals being set apart, commissioned and sent out by the church to serve their congregations and wider communities. Including those who might be struggling with health, finances, grief or loneliness. The fact that ministers never stop being a deacon even if they also go on to become priests or take other roles within the church is a reminder that leadership within Christianity should take a very different form to that more commonly seen in our societies today.

Our focus should always be on serving, loving and enabling the flourishing of those around us. Rather than seeking power, influence or any other such end for ourselves.

God-willing, I will be ordained as a priest in a year's time, and I already look forward to being able to bless and share communion with others. But if I lose sight of the fact that Jesus calls me first to be a Deacon (and even before that, a mum, wife, daughter and friend), something has gone badly wrong. God has a wonderful sense of humour, and in case I was in any danger of forgetting this fact it was brought home to me by a bout of illness in the family that meant I spent most of my second week as a Deacon caring for sick children and scrubbing toilets. The irony wasn't lost on me!

'Ministry' is not limited to those who are 'ordained'; only when the church works together and celebrates the unique gifts of every individual will it fully express what it means to be the Body of Christ here on earth. Part of the role of ordained ministers is to enable and encourage those around them to recognise and live into their own gifts and callings. I won't pretend that it's something we always get right, but the hope of seeing those around us free to be who they are called to be is a beautiful and glorious one.

As new deacons, we were called to make many promises in the ordination service, but the rest of the congregation also made one; to support us in our ministry. Part of that includes calling us to account if we lose sight of our role or start taking ourselves too seriously. So when you see me around, consider that your license to ask me how I'm getting on. It is only possible to be a deacon within the context of a community, and it is a real privilege to be part of this one.

Rev'd Rachel
rachelpetley@cinw.org.uk

De sancto Georgio martyre.

This frame was how our talented artist Arianne Barratt responded when she and fellow-villager Hattie Osborne agreed to help excite groups from among the 79 primary youngsters who, on June 10th, came to St. Cadoc's to be 'Monks for a Day'!

In a demanding round of activities, the newly-gowned brethren (from Pendoylan, Peterston & St. Nicholas Schools) lived out (freely defined) aspects of monastic life. This involved hand-bells and tower bells, seed planting & baking, pot-making, brass rubbing, cairn-stone painting – plus here the scripting of books & illuminating their margins.

One of the delights of Arianne & Hattie's sessions was the thought which the 9-10 year olds brought to their 'Monks in the Margins' commissions. They

learnt of the beautiful mediaeval books which monks illustrated - not just with religious themes, but showing all aspects of human experience, and the tackle of our daily lives. Hence their margins could even be invaded by dragons – just like the wonderful paintings on the margins of our church.

Maestro was Father Michael John, who brought delight to this third 'Lifepath' Cadoc's day.



SNIPPETS OF PAST LLANCARFAN TIMES

LLANCARFAN.

THE ANNUAL EISTEDDFOD was held at Llancarfan Baptist Chapel on Whit-Monday. The programme was augmented by solos, gramaphone selections, &c. The singing of Miss Lizzie Pugh, Cadoxton, was enthusiastically applauded; as also was that of Miss May Hopkins, Pancross. Rev Owen Jones, Cowbridge, presided; and the prize-winners were the following:—Singing by girls, Rachel Davies, Cadoxton, and E. Morgan, Llantrisant; solo, "Through all eternity," Miss Lizzie Pugh, Cadoxton; recitation for children, Lena Thomas, Kernix, **Llancarfan**; contralto solo, "Alone on the Raft," Miss A. John, St. Nicholas; solo, Miss May Hopkins; best side-board cloth, Miss Maggie Edwards, Broadclose, **Llancarfan**; solo, "The Beggar Girl," Miss Lizzie Pugh; recitation, "The Ocean," Mr D. G. John, Llancarfan; singing by boys, Glyn Davies, **Llancarfan**, and Ivor Thomas, Kernix; solo, "The Heavenly Song," Miss L. Pugh; soprano solo, "The Better Land," Miss A. John, St. Nicholas. The adjudicator of music was Mr Benjamin Evans, A.C., Landore; conductor and literary adjudicator, Rev Morris Isaac, Cadoxton; needlework, Mrs Price, Llanbythery; and accompanist, Miss J. P. Griffiths, **Llancarfan**.

LLANCARFAN.

THE HARVEST.—On Friday, the 8th instant, Mr Robert Louger, Carnllywyd, cut six acres of wheat, in splendid condition, and a very heavy crop. Although the weather has been so unfavourable to bring the corn to the sickle it is not so late this season as it has been seen of late years.

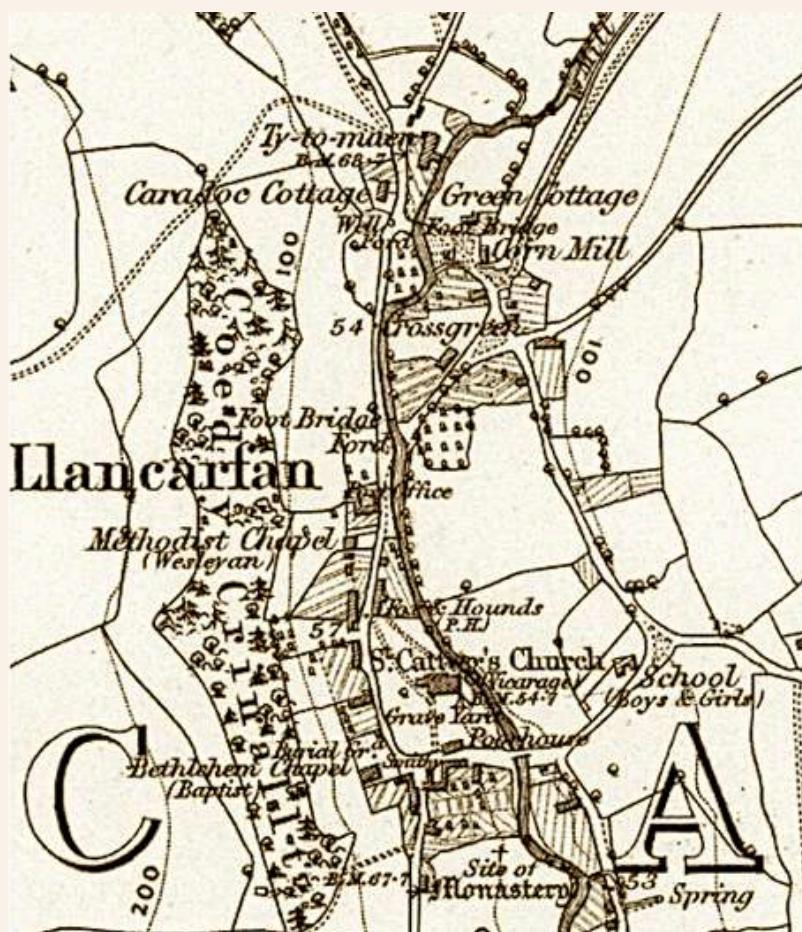
Mr. Fracombe.

LLANCARFAN.

THE MARQUIS OF BUTE, K.T., has an article in the current issue of the *Scottish Review* on "Brendan's Fabulous Voyage," in which he says that Brendan after being brought up by a Nun was placed after his ordination at the head of the celebrated Welsh Monastery at **Llancarfan**, which by the way was the first established monastery in Wales.

THE MAY WALK THAT BARELY WAS. IAN FELL

We were full of good intentions, those of us planning and gathering for the long-established May walk by society members and other interested villagers. My Goodwife Penny devised the trail – then owing to her having a nasty jolt involving the car, I had to stand in and pick up her planned footsteps.



Our hopes (for an un-ambitious trail of village houses and corners not covered in last year's anecdotal walk) were yet again to enrich our wander with the reminiscences of village elders. And this was meant to be a strong encouragement for all to collect memories of a changed village – not least because one of the village guardians of memory, Clive Jenkins, died early this year. Barbara – our President, née Jenkins – yet again received our sadness and condolences

But the weather had other plans, as after a coffee-fuelled gathering in the village hall, we began to make our way northwards to the walk's original starting point. This was the curiously once-named 'Witches' Barn', renamed 'Ynysdawel' when Graham & Kay Brain moved into their house exactly 40 years ago. (I also, when I did the poster, rather liked the repetitive 'W' of 'Witches' Barn to Workhouse' – having been assured that lively posters still have some effect, fluttering on our telegraph poles!)

Any road up (as us Northerners say) it didn't work out that way. In fact we began with 'the Workhouse' – more correctly recorded as the village 'Poorhouse'. This of course is so named on the fascinating 6"-to-the-mile map of the village, shown here.

I'd also (having found the 1939 survey of Llancarfan villagers in hopes of reflecting the VE Day 80th Anniversary) noticed that the last page of this 'National Registration' was blotted out by notices saying 'This record is officially closed'. So I wondered, foolishly and surely against the odds, whether these were sensitively protected 'Poorhouse' people, even as late as 1939. Tony Thomas (he and Nicola joined the gathering) quickly put me right that there was no poorhouse in 1939! (I now must surely assume that the page is in fact blotted out to stop anyone writing false information in it.)

Anyway, it was at the poorhouse in the churchyard that we stopped first, because we knew that this melancholy site (even if it was thought of as an 'Alms House') used to stand immediately next to the Village Hall. And what did prove interesting, as Mike Ponting pointed out, one could make out the burn marks of the footings of this vanished building (just visible in this picture too)



According to (the well-meaning but indiscriminate) **Stan Awbery**[1] this 'Church House' was demolished very early in the 20th century. Well, obsessive as ever, and knowing that no significant Society write-ups have appeared about this 'Poorhouse', I had managed to find some intriguing Glamorgan Archives' entries. These are not direct references to the Poorhouse's confirmed inhabitants, but they read for example as follows :

[1] **Llancarfan : The Village of A Thousand Saints' : 1957.**
Awbery was also an MP for Bristol at the time of his history writing for The Barry & District News.

'Civil Parish Records >>Poor Law : Removal Order of Edward Howe, with Cecil and their children, from Peterston-super-Ely to Llancarfan, May 1880'

and again another one reads

'Civil Parish Records >>Poor Law : Removal Order of Tho Evan, labourer, with Jane, and children Tho (5 years), Wm (7 weeks) and Mary (2.5 years), from Radyr to Llancarfan, 30 Nov 1799.'

This last reference seems particularly relevant to a valuable observation made by Awbery. He quotes an unidentified writer as saying that 'at the time of the famine of 1799 ... there were some twelve poor persons maintained by Llancarfan who were legally parishioners of Llan-Oethin', that is the 'extra-parochial' Llanveithin – of which 20 acres then belonged to Neath Abbey. (I'm hoping Mike Ponting will explain the rules behind this!) But I learn that in 1799 & 1800 there was, in Llancarfan, desperate hunger resulting from crop failure. Did these 'poor persons' live in the poorhouse?

Clearly there remains more painful history to unravel about our Poorhouse. And as for the upstairs of this lost building (about which we didn't go into details) this was of course Llancarfan's first schoolhouse.

According to an 'Inquiry into the State of Education', reporting a 15th March visit to our school in 1847, this establishment sounded no more attractive than the ground-floor :

'I found the school-room in bad repair, its lime floor all broken into holes, and the scanty desks down one side of the room much cut and worn. The master's desk was of the rudest description, standing upon three legs.'

Not that the master was there to worry about this. He was apparently otherwise engaged during the inspection, absent 'upon some business of his own in Pembrokeshire.' As for 'the advantages of education', the proto-HMIs concluded that 'among the farmers there is a feeling, that if they educate the children they shall lose them as labourers'.

It was around this time that I realised we should have advertised 'from the Workhouse to the Witches Barn', not the reverse, and that our planned history stroll was all arsy-versy. And once we did manage to stride out (with welcome narratives from Tony Thomas & Barbara) towards the Ty-To-Maen end of the village, there came the downpour. This historically-delayed April shower proved determined to put an end to good intentions. Many sensible walkers retired from the deluge, but ten stalwarts clung on to walk nearly as far as the site of Caradoc Cottage, where again we had intended to link up with the much more recent past – taking the chance to recognise the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

It was here that we had planned to hear Barbara's own VE Day recollections (her anecdote was in fact dispelled by the rain), hoping to put a record of celebration into context. In fact, of that original VE Day (8 May 1945), Barbara's childhood memories were definitely crossed by sadness :



"I was walking with Clive, and Margaret and Beatrice Griffiths, taking off our socks and shoes and paddling through the river. (No time for our game of stabbing eels with forks!) Up the road we went, turned right, along to the school, and down School Hill. Then came a blow - half way down the hill, we were met by the police. They took Mrs. Mary Griffiths away with them. They told her that her husband, Bob Griffiths, had been killed accidentally by Canadian troops"

Mrs. Griffith's son, young Andrew Griffiths – seen here in this composite photo, front right with sister Jennifer and brother John – was born later in 1945. Andrew of course never knew his father, now one of the four names remembered on the Second World War flank of our churchyard memorial.

Well, as our washed-out walk came to an untimely end, us stragglers (still fortified by the staying power of our elders, Tony & Barbara) retreated to the village hall. We sat in a circle with a second round of coffee. And again we were warmed by more memories, one in particular previously related by Barbara's much-missed brother Clive.

Tony Thomas, welcome as usual, was sharing his reminiscences about milk rounds (and indeed

Tony was commenting on the 1940s outbreaks of tuberculosis, a hazard of drinking unpasteurised milk). This 'period detail' served as an introduction to one of Clive's own recorded schoolboy anecdotes – a milky smile at the end of our wet walk :

'Milk was supplied daily to the school by Mr Williams of Aberogan,' had said Clive.

'He was grandfather of Evan Williams, and father of my great friend Rees. It was collected by the school bus. I remember one day though, the milk wasn't ready when the bus passed. So the Headmaster, Mr Samuels (Sammy), told Rees to go home and collect it, and take a friend to help carry it. The friend was me.'

'On the return journey, we took a short cut through Pancross Wood. We dropped the churn. Panic! Our solution to replace the spilt milk was to fill up again from the river.'

'Mr Samuels did complain that the delivery wasn't quite up to the usual hygienic standard – but we all survived . . .'



The Enduring Legacy of the Bramley Apple

When we moved into 'The Green,' the house contents held little in the way of history. All we found were old photographs of the property, a curious statue of a Welsh witch (a story for another time), and dozens of demijohns with cider labels dated from the 1980s. It was then that we truly began to appreciate our Bramley apple tree. A magnificent specimen. It is large enough to comfortably host three swing chairs and stands at a height of around 12 meters.

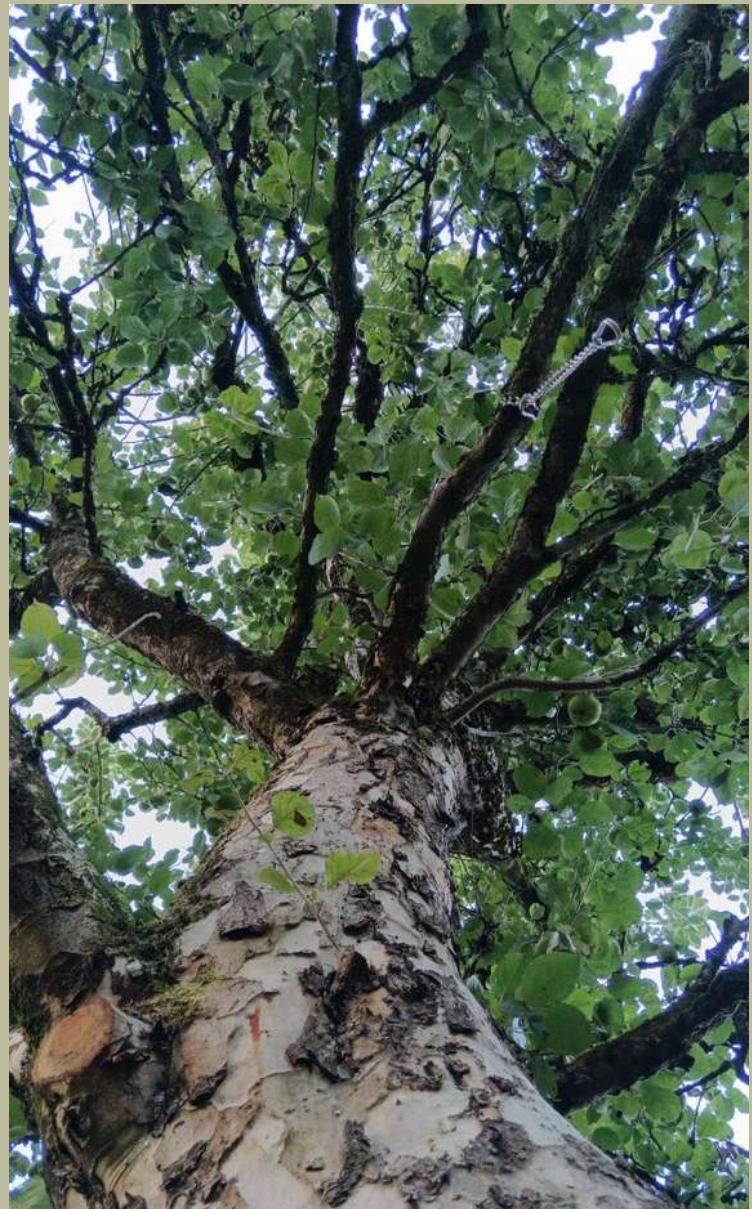
The tale of the Bramley apple is a remarkable journey. It all began sometime between 1809 and 1815 when a young girl named Mary Ann Brailsford planted some apple pips in a flowerpot in her garden at 75 Church Street, Southwell, Nottingham. One of these pips flourished, growing into a strong and healthy tree that would one day bear the fruit we know today.

In 1846 when Matthew Bramley, a local butcher, bought the house. It was under his ownership that the tree's fruit caught the eye of Henry Merryweather, a young nurseryman. In 1856, Merryweather, just 17 at the time, asked for permission to take cuttings. Bramley agreed, on the condition that the new variety would be named after him. And so, the 'Bramley's Seedling' was born. The first recorded commercial sale of the grafted trees took place in 1862, marking the beginning of the Bramley's journey beyond its garden of origin.

I learned this story recently while grafting trees at work. What's most astonishing is that despite its age and history of disease and storm damage, the original Bramley tree in Southwell still stands today. At well over 200 years old.

Also its proliferation is unique. An orchardist would never graft a young tree onto a Bramley apple rootstock. This is because the variety is naturally vigorous, susceptible to disease, and a poor pollinator for other apple trees.

Bramley Apple Tree at The Green



The reason the Bramley may have made it to Llancafan is probably due to World War II. The war effort necessitated a focus on home-grown food to feed the nation during a time of rationing. The Bramley apple was perfect for this purpose. A fruit census in 1944 estimated that there were over two million Bramley apple trees in commercial plantations across England and Wales, a testament to its vital role in feeding the nation as well as my family.

While there is no specific record of the "first" Bramley tree planted in Wales, its introduction was a gradual process, as cuttings from the original tree were sold by nurseries and spread across Britain. This slow but steady proliferation allowed the variety to reach our village, where my tree now stands—a living link to its Nottinghamshire roots and its crucial role in Welsh wartime history.

PAST EDITORIAL HIGHLIGHTS

CARING AGAINST THE PRICKS

Jackie Hartery extols the delights of a prickly pastime

Being a hedgehog carer is not just a prickly pastime, but also time consuming, smelly, mucky, and most of all immensely rewarding!

I started some years ago with a few injured and newly orphaned hedgehogs. Over the last couple of years though I've become involved with taking in 'autumn juveniles'. These are hoglets, born in late summer or early autumn, too small to be able to hibernate, so in need of surrogate parents.

Sadly, says The British Hedgehog Preservation Society, the hedgehog population has declined by 50% over the last ten years. So it is very important to recruit carers, & rear needy ones until strong enough for the wild. Most of 'my' hoglets start off at the tiny weight of 200 grams or less - and they must be at least 700 grams to hibernate successfully. If you can't get their weight up before winter sets in it means caring for them until the springtime.



I enjoy hand-feeding the babies with a syringe and keeping them warm in small blankets on a specialist heat pad. I have to keep them in their cages all Winter, so I wash their blankets in the washing machine and clean out their cages thoroughly, rather a job!

I do the hedgehog laundry between the family wash, including clothes for my husband Bob. The machine is cleaned, of course,

after the hogs' laundry, but on one occasion evidently not well enough. That was when Bob started yelling! Apparently he had found a prickle in his sock, left in amongst the washing. I won't repeat what he was calling me, but I told him that this was the 'joy' of living with 17 hogs, our guests at that time!

On the whole life runs smoothly, but we *did* have another instant when one of them escaped. We assumed that the cage catch must have come loose, because our feisty hoglet Pippa suddenly appeared while we were eating our lunch. Our dogs don't normally take too much notice, but when they see scampering hoglets across the floor they let us know something is amiss!

These little creatures move surprisingly fast, but Bob and I finally cornered Pippa. I picked her up and she promptly bit me, which is unlike a hog, but maybe not our Pippa! So she is now confined to the 'goose house', an old stone building in the garden, which is a halfway house to freedom. (She now weighs 1 kilo 124 grams, and was just 230 grams when she came to us, so that is another success story to make it all worthwhile!)

Newsletter 145 March 2011

All our past edition newsletters can be found on
<https://www.llancarfansociety.org.uk/newsletter/>

Archibald Ditty.

By Penny Fell

In the year of two thousand and twenty two
When Covid had ravaged the land
The pubs and the inns were all empty and sad
Would nobody take them in hand?

Here in Llancarfan, the lights flickered dim
In that doughty old tavern, the Fox.
Not enough people were downing their pints
Or sinking a scotch on the rocks.

The bar stools stood vacant, the tables were stacked
The future looked hopeless and cold
But hark! Who was this stepping up to the plate?
A tribe by the name of Archbold!

There was Andrew who wasn't a stranger at all
To the customer side of the bar
He'd not run a pub before – who gave a hoot?
With a family like his, they'd go far...

There was Julie, the kindest a neighbour could be
A welcoming light in the dark
They would rush to the rescue and save our old Fox
From a far-flung consortium called Clarke.

There also was Kieran, who people had seen
For months, looking more and more trembly
It turned out he had the best reason of all
The lad had been smitten by ...Emily.

The then there was Scott who was not here a lot
Then he was – all the time. As mine Host.
The family downed tools and spun the bar stools
So Llancarfan could be the town's toast.

They beavered and grafted until the place shone.
They welcomed, as dearest friends do.
They've been saviours and neighbours, landlords and chums.
So, we all say a heartfelt – thank you.

(Here's to the future – there's already a Q)



Fox and Hounds: A New Chapter

Buying the Fox and Hounds pub has been the culmination of a long career in hospitality. I started working for Brains brewery in my late teens before moving to London to complete a hotel management apprenticeship with Red Carnation Hotels which included stints in Hotel 41, The Chesterfield Mayfair and The Ruben's at the Palace. Following this I had a career in Food and Beverage management for the group and other London hotels.

My wife, Chloe, and I then moved back to South Wales and I worked for the Bar 44 group, mainly opening and running Asador 44 and the hotel above, Parador 44 as General Manager.

Over the years there has been a definite squeeze on the hospitality industry. With limited concessions for the industry to keep afloat that you see in other countries. Energy, supplier and labour costs are constantly creeping up and it would be unfair and poor value to pass all of these added costs over to our guests. It's sad to see the amount of restaurants and pubs closing but I do believe that it's possible (I hope that it's possible!) to run a pub with rooms successfully if the offering is right and there's a reason why customers will stay loyal to you.

I believe in a high level of service with amazing hospitality - where you are greeted on arrival and your favourite tipple is remembered. Where the staff are friendly and attentive and the food on offer delicious and good value. Anticipating guest needs and going above and beyond for them should be part of our customer centric culture.

I feel like we are already starting in a good place with the Fox. It's in a beautiful setting and the pub is spacious and full of potential. I knew that the village had purchased the pub for the community, but it's been really pleasing to see that it's still so important to everyone in the village. We've been included as a stop for the local historical walks and asked to join in the local fete and the turnout of villagers for the events we have run has been heart warming.

Our long term plan is to continue with the refurbishment of the pub, bedrooms and garden and this will probably take us a few years. We have concentrated on the kitchen and electrics over the last couple of months, making it fully compliant and making sure Quentin has everything he needs.

We have also completely refurbished bedroom 1 which will be ready by mid July. Our plan then will be to continue through the bedrooms and also redecorate the bar and dining areas to get them ready for the autumn. We are making slow but steady progress (with the old girl giving us a few surprises along the way - a completely rotten floor in bedroom 1 and numerous boiler issues!) but are in a programme of continuous improvement to make the Fox cosy and inviting and something we can all be proud of.

I would like to finish by saying a big thank you to everyone in the village who has supported us so far - it's been lovely to get to know you all and I look forward to many more years at the Fox.

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Opening of Garnllwyd Barns

By Penny Fell

Fate smiled and the sun shone on Friday 13 June when the Elidyr Communities Trust celebrated the official opening of Garnllwyd Barns – the new residential home for young adults with additional needs. Five youngsters have made their home there – Edward, Russell, Callum, Rhys and Aneurin. They welcomed us, along with the house manager, Aonghus Andersson, and his team. It was great to see all of them clearly enjoying a special occasion for which they'd been busy preparing for some time. And it showed – their new home was displaying lots of craftwork, the gardens were looking welcoming and the greenhouse was full of life.

The Elidyr Communities Trust is an award-winning charity committed to making happy, life-enhancing homes for those who need additional support, without compromise or constraint. As reported earlier, the initiative was very much pioneered by Isabel and Geoff Graham, whose son Edward grew up in the area, and who is already known to many. The (very informal) grand opening was attended by the Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff, and by Jane Hutt MS: as well as neighbours and representatives of the Church and Community Council, all of whom got to sample delicious cakes & tea.

As many will know, Garnllwyd Barns was formerly the home of David & Heather Stevens who have been actively involved in bringing the project to fulfilment: Rose, Lily and Luke, all three Stevens offspring (whose childhood home this was), sent video messages of wishes and welcome to the new occupants, passing on the torch. And the high point was when Edward and Russell jointly revealed the celebration plaque.

It is great to see that the youngsters are already finding their feet in the neighbourhood. The boys visit a local pub once a week and are made very welcome. They all help with work in Garnllwyd's pretty gardens, go swimming in Fontygary Pool, and make use of the home's craft room; two of them have joined Barry Running Club and take part in Saturday park runs.



“ I like gardening and walking to the church, and being with my friends.”
Edward

“ I like the area. There is so much to do and nice places around to visit.”
Russell



KEN HUGHES. OBITUARY

WORDS JAKE HUGHES

Ken Hughes was a force of nature. In fact, he was many forces of nature.

Born at the foot of a mountain in the South Wales mining village of Abercynon, his childhood was infused with nature, community and adventure: the three mainstays of his life. With a deeply curious and quite scintillating brain, my dad devoured life from the get go.

The first of two sons to Eric Hughes, a miner, and his wife Lilian (nee Roberts), Ken made front page local news when in 1960 he qualified from Cardiff University with a degree in Medicine.

Following Eric's brutal injuries sustained during WW2, the family had experienced hardship. Ken failed his 11 plus, but his intellect was thankfully recognised and he finally got the education he deserved.

During the early years of Ken's life in medicine he found the two passions that would fuel his life forever: Rock & Ice climbing and lyrical verse. The works of Dylan Thomas and Leonard Cohen, and the mountain crags of North Wales and Scotland were his wonderlands. (His ascents of Cenotaph Corner and Vector and his new route on Ben Nevis were impressive rarities at this time).

The other passion he fell upon at this time was my mother, Shelagh (nee Donaghy).

Ken & Shelagh moved to Inverness, Scotland, which is where I, their first child, was born. Ken had developed a fascination for dingy cruising, (he would later sail a 15ft dinghy to St.Kilda!!) and so decided upon Cumbria as being the ideal place to full time work and play.

Barrow in Furness was home to Mum & Dad for the next 40 years, and was where their daughter Georgie was born and where Ken would become such a revered GP and influential rock climber and sailor. Dad was beloved by his patients and all of his many, many friends.

Ken & Shelagh moved back to South Wales, Llancarfan, in 2015. They had wonderful years of happiness and newfound friendships in the village. My mothers care for Dad until his passing last year was unfailing.

Such was Ken's vitality and wit and brilliance of mind, it seems impossible for him not to be existing somewhere on earth. If you gaze at the next piece of wet moss you pass, you may just catch a glimpse of him winking at you. I see him there often.

- Dr. Kenneth David Hughes, GP, mountaineer and sailor, born 22nd December 1941; died 10th December 2024

NOTES FROM THE GREEN' POTTING SHED TO RAKE OR NOT TO..



In my corner of Llancarfan, the arrival of autumn brings a familiar, annual ritual: the falling of the leaves. Each year, the question hangs in the air—to rake or not to rake? For the modern gardener, the dilemma is a powerful one, pitting the neatness of a manicured garden against the wisdom of nature. While the call of the leaf blower is strong, yet another garden tool for Peter to peruse, I've found a more rewarding path.

As Monty Don once said, "Leaves are gold," and he wasn't speaking of their colour but their value. In a world increasingly focused on waste, fallen leaves offer a simple solution. They form a natural mulch, a living blanket that protects and enriches the soil. This improves the clay structure that defines so much of my garden. I have never had soil like this before; Llancarfan, shaped by glaciers, deposited clay-rich materials. So, my leaf mulch is key to enhancing drainage and simultaneously suppressing weeds.

This leaf blanket also provides a safe corridor for voles and hedgehogs, as milder winters caused by climate change can interrupt their hibernation patterns. In my view this natural mulch is a lesson in low effort with high reward.

Now is also a time to think about spring bulbs. Last year we 'Peter' did invest in a "foot bulb planter." This nifty tool allowed us to deposit over 100 daffs in the garden. For our clay-heavy soil, selecting the right varieties are key. In addition to daffodils, bulbs like Camassias and Snake's Head Fritillaries are great choices for our gardens. They thrive in our soil conditions, are great pollinators and if left undisturbed multiply in the garden. These particular bulbs also bloom in the late spring, helping to bridge the gap between early daffodils and the summer perennials colour.

Whatever tool you choose, (maybe that is the question), happy gardening.