

LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

Newsletter 32: October 1990

**FUTURE EVENTS:**

WHIST DRIVE There will be a Whist Drive in the Village Hall on Friday, October 26th at 7.30 pm. Refreshments and raffle. Tickets £0.75p from Barbara Milhuisen, Phil Watts or on the door. If you haven't yet seen the refurbished hall, this is your chance.

Monthly Gatherings: On the first Tuesday of each month a few dedicated members of the Society usually gather in the Fox and Hounds for an informal evening together, from about 8.30 pm onwards. At the Annual Dinner, various folk said that they were unaware that these gatherings were still held (despite the fact that the "Rubbish Walk" was announced in this context in the last Newsletter). Members of the Society are welcome, and doubly so if they bring items of interest - photographs or copies of documents such as deeds, pertaining to the parish - several useful discoveries have been made in this way.

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A tribute to Bill Rees, Ken Vincent, Mary Booker and Joan Harray

by Phil Watts

It is with the deepest regret, and sympathy to the families that we have to announce the deaths of four well known people - Bill Rees, formerly of New Mill; Ken Vincent, Middlecross, Mary Booker, Redholme Cottage, Llanbethery and Joan Harray, St Athan.

Bill Rees was 87 and died in mid-Wales having moved from St Athan after the death of his wife Alice, to be with his son Berwick.

Bill, sometimes known as Bill Durham, will be remembered as a baker's roundsman for Tudor Liscombe and later, for himself in his own right, taking bread out of the Bakehouse on Mill Road, Llancartan. His father in law, Jack Durham was the baker. When Jack retired, Bill took-up driving lorries for Melhuish Milk Lorries, then American supply lorries during war time and finally, until his retirement, Aberthaw cement lorries.

After his retirement he could be seen around the Fox and Hounds doing all the jobs that kept the "Fox" on the top mark.

Bill always took an active interest in sport but had to carry a suspect knee. He threw a nifty dart when dart-teams flourished in the village in the days of David Harris and Charlie Bryer in the Fox and Hounds.

Ken Vincent died tragically as a result of a boating accident in West Wales. He died doing something he loved and enjoyed with great enthusiasm, as is true of everything that he did in social life as well as family and business.

He served Father Field as Vicar's Warden and also as a member of the Parochial Church Council for many years. He was a regular worshipper at St Cadoc's Church and he will be long remembered in Llancarf.

Ken supported the Society from its early years and recently we developed a

working partnership for the Church Barn Dance and Society Craft Fair. His organising ability invariably made the Dance a success and his negotiations for bands extended far afield. Any doubts about the playing ability, the range of music that could be performed by the groups, and the number of decibels that they could produce, were always dispelled on the night. We were never let-down; Ken never let us down and the Barn Dances will not be quite the same without him.

The last time I spoke to Ken was at the Society Barbecue at Abernant on August 19th. As everyone knows it was a very wet day and we teased him about not saying the right things in Church that morning, but we did manage a couple of hours around mid-day when it did not rain so heavily. After complaining to Ken about the lack of communication with the "Above" about the weather he said he would not take any credit for supplying the farmers with the much-needed rain. He turned to leave but came back and said he would take a "bit of credit" for our little break in the weather. His "bit of credit" will be sadly missed by his family, people of Llancarfan and all who knew him.

Mary Booker's sudden death was a great shock to us all, not least to Roy. Mary was known to many people over a wide area. For many years, with Alice Rees, she was one of the dinner ladies at the village school. The children knew where they stood with Mary as did everyone else. There was never a grey area - everything was black or white. She was a striking person to look at with an upright carriage and her blond hair glistening in the sunlight, even though a little grey in later years. She did a lot of charity work through Llancarfan Ladies' Tuesday Club. Exploits will be recounted of happy days on Mystery Train Trips, Jumble Sales, Cheese and Wine evenings and the excellent Christmas meals put on by the Tuesday Club for the Senior Citizens. Another character to be missed.

Joan Harrny (formerly Palling) was born at Whitton Lodge and then moved with her parents to the lower cottage at Ford Cross where they lived for many years. They then moved to Pembroke House and after the death of Joan's parents she and Les moved to Bonvilston. After many more years they moved to St Athan.

When the idea of a Llancarfan Society was first thought of, Joan was the first to make contact and has been a loyal member since the beginning.

After the formation of the Society it has been necessary for me to locate various people who have moved from Llancarfan, usually knowing only the street they live in, or sometimes only the area. One of the things that I have learned is that people from the village keep a good garden and, when they move, they take the pot with them. So, when I look for the house of a person from Llancarfan I now look for the garden. This was certainly the case when I had to discover where Joan and Les lived.

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Barbecue. The day of the barbecue was forecast to be one of wind and heavy rain. Well, it was a bit damp but the wind did not blow until later-on, and Gwynne Liscombe did the cooking under the shelter of the garage at Abernant with very few problems. More than 60 people turned-out on a less than promising day and we all enjoyed ourselves. Thanks to Phil and Ruth Watts for the invitation, to Gwynne for his skilled barbecuing and our generous portions of spare rib, sausage, beefburger and bacon. Many others helped with the bar, organised a raffle, did the washing-up and all the other necessary backroom work. We didn't make a large profit but on day with such a poor weather forecast we were expecting to lose money, so anything better was success indeed. Thank you all

for coming.

Annual Dinner: For the first time we have been able to hold our Annual Dinner in the refurbished Village Hall. It was a bit more cramped than the hall at Rhose which we have used for the last two years, but it is ours, and holds many memories for older members. Everyone enjoyed themselves as usual: no, more than usual because the dinner was "at home". It was the first time we have seen the hall laid-out with tablecloths and flowers on all the tables. Very attractive it looked and we all realised what an asset the village has acquired.

Thank you to Beryl Price and her assistants for providing an enjoyable meal with great efficiency despite lack of space. There were 76 of us, which is just about the maximum that could be coped with in the hall if space is to be kept for a bar, and the kitchen used for preparation. Thanks also to the usual crowd for help with arranging the hall, running the bar and organising the raffle.

As a result of seeing some "specials" which Ruth Watts had made for the raffle, several people asked if we had any of the commemorative mugs which the Community Association had made for the opening of the hall. There are plenty left and we shall obtain some to offer at our next few functions. They are £2.00 each. One of the raffle prizes was an enlargement of a 1950's photograph of the centre of the village when it was an empty Botais (Broadhayes) field. Sheena Etherington won this copy (no corruption!) which attracted considerable attention and there is obviously scope at our functions for selling copies of the many old photo's which exist. Some, we hope, will also appear in the compilation which we ultimately hope to publish as a book.

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The Opening of the Village Hall: a warm, sunny afternoon made the Opening Ceremony, Children's Sports and Street Party a very enjoyable event. The Hall was officially declared open by Councillor Jeff James, Mayor of the Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council, after an introduction by Graham Brain. Father Feild gave a short Service of Dedication and the children then repaired to Culvery Field which Frank and Joyce Jameson had kindly made available for the sports. The opening was not without humour for, during the ceremony, the Hall was referred to as the Village Hall by Graham Brain, the Community Hall by Jeff James and the Church Hall by Father Feild! It was a pleasure to see our M.P., Mr John Smith, taking an interest in a local event despite the fact that world-stirring events are afoot.

In the evening a large crowd gathered in the Hall for a buffet meal and unlimited talk. For many it was the first visit since the refurbishment and the end of a most enjoyable day. We are all indebted to the organisers of the Opening for a memorable day and to so many more for all their work in the past.

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Ty Uchaf, Moulton: In the last Newsletter there was a comment that Ty Uchaf farmhouse at Moulton, which is being rebuilt, was once thatched. Just a day or two after the Newsletter was written, a lorryload of Somerset thatching reeds arrived to restore the old house to its traditional roof-covering. The last thatched house in Moulton was the Three Horseshoes which met a fiery end in 1963 - the destiny of so many of the Vale's thatched cottages.

By the way, our building and do-it-yourselfing members must wonder how the roof of any house ever stayed-up if they have noticed the literally gigantic steel girders which have made the new ridge of the Ty Uchaf roof!

In a previous Newsletter the editor suggested that most of the old thatched houses in the Vale had a covering of wheat-straw thatch rather than reed. Some recent reading raises doubts - the South Glamorgan County History (Stewart Williams 1975) contains an extract (pp. 143-144) from a bill of disbursement made at Brinhill Farm in 1713 which includes: "Sixteen Score of Reed", "Eleven Hundred of Spars" and "Thatchers Work three Days" - these items totalled £1-3s-3d! However, combed wheat straw is sometimes called wheat-reed or Devon-reed so the issue is confused! Do any readers know more about the thatch which was used in this area?

Note: Great Brynhill Farm, between Dyffryn and Barry, was mentioned in Ernie Badcock's diaries and might still have been under thatch when he worked at New Wallace Farm in the 1920's (Newsletter 6).

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Boxers: In Newsletter 29, Dick Evans recalled some Welsh boxers of renown and it was interesting to note from a BBC radio broadcast on the last Sunday in August, that heavyweight, Tommy Farr had made a gramophone record with George Formby in 1937 - he had quite a fair singing voice - but does anyone know if anything further came of this venture into the entertainment world?

Another recent programme was a Radio Wales biography of Peerless Jim Driscoll, the Cardiff featherweight who died 60 years ago (before Dick's time as he was fighting in the first decade of the century). Peerless Jim was first cousin to the father of Kitty Flynn, landlady of the Royal Oak in Newport Road, Cardiff. The pub is full of boxing memorabilia and it is also a real city pub which has not succumbed to the rising tide of yuppy Victoriana. Jim was the first outright winner of a Lonsdale Belt and in 1908 he sailed to the USA where he fought and won six times, including the world-championship.

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The Locusts are Coming - or are they? since we started the Newsletters, all sorts of animals and plants have come my way with the question "What is it?" This time it was a huge insect: a two and a half inch, leaf-green fellow with long, waving feelers, thigh muscles that would be the envy of any high-jumper, and a tendency to struggle vigorously when picked-up. He was discovered by Georgina Powell under the eaves of High Lanterns and she, quite understandably, was a bit bothered about touching such a ferocious-looking beast. Fortunately the spirit which made Britain great was at hand, and Trudie Fuller captured the insect, put it in a jam jar and delivered it to Ceffyl Du whilst I was out.

When I came home, Sheena asked whether it could be a locust - Georgina and Trudie had decided that it might be. Well, it wasn't a bad guess because locusts are very large grasshoppers and about the same size as our friend. He (or it might be she - this is not sexism - I don't know how you tell!) is often called a Great Green Grasshopper but the book says that the more accurate name is Great Green Bush Cricket. They are only found in southern England and this little bit of South Wales - usually near the sea. They don't bite so Georgina could have picked it up safely.

I have never seen one in Llancarfan before, though we have found them on the



sand dunes further down the coast. I suspect the warm summer has allowed them to breed more freely than usually - there are certainly a lot of smaller grasshoppers and crickets about and Jenny Knott added the observation that she found one of these Great Greens in Pennymead a week or two ago. JRE

Kingfishers. Following the recent note on Kingfishers, Phil and Mary Gammon, Glan yr Afon, told us that they watched them last year visiting plates on which they had left food-scrap in the garden. They are so shy, and usually pretty fussy about eating live fish and other water-life that this seemed really quite odd. Mary said the water was so low in the dry weather that she thought they were very short of food. They were nesting further down the brook below Glan yr Afon where a riverside tree had overturned and exposed the river bank so that they could make a nesting-tunnel.

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Footpaths. Various complaints have been relayed from members concerning blocked footpaths in the Parish. Sometimes it is just locked gates but often barbed wire has been strung across the right-of-way or, in one case a stone wall built. Finding them is sometimes difficult as many of the waymarkers have been illicitly removed or, because they were unwisely put on wooden posts, have simply fallen-over.

It is illegal to block or obstruct a Definitive Footpath: these are marked accurately on the current 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey map and are easy to follow because the field boundaries are also shown. The law is so strong on this point that it needs quite a lot of work by the Local Authority, even to vary the route of a path. The Rights of way Act 1990 further tightens-up the law to assist enforcement. The Vale Herald & Post, 6th September carried an article noting that the new laws make it easier to press landowners into fulfilling their obligations. If you have a complaint write to the County Footpath Officer, Glamorgan County Hall, Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff CF1 5SW. Alternatively, the Ramblers Association, (15 Wandsworth Road, London, SW8 2XX) has a report-form which you can fill-in and they will do the work. If in doubt, the Community Council has a large scale map on which the definitive paths are marked, together with a written specification of each path. To reinforce the Community Council's efforts, we shall try to gather information on the paths which are difficult or impossible to use - let us know if you find one which is blocked. Please write it down and give a map reference.

Credit where it is due: the "long-distance" path between Old Mill and Abernast via Garnisva is now reopened, after many years, by the construction of a stile. The new owners of the access at least as far as here have also built a stile so that they can lock the field-gate but sadly their thoughtfully installed 'dogflap' was vandalised almost immediately.

Black marker: the path between Flaxland Farm and Walterston is blocked by a stone wall and the path from Sffynon y Clwyf (east of Broomwell) to St Ambrose is obstructed by at least one barbed-wire fence.

If you do walk any of the miles of paths around this lovely village, remember that we have an obligation too: dogs and children can frighten or injure stock, open gates can wreak havoc, and the owners of expensive horses have an almost impossible task in protecting them from thieves or hooligans whilst maintaining access.

Llantrithyd - Llantridddy. The last two Newsletters have carried the saga of the disappearing road sign in Llantrithyd. The Local Authority was as good as its word and the sign has now reappeared on the St Mary Church road. However, it is now bilingual. May I stir-up controversy and suggest that this is a ridiculous waste of effort and materials, not to mention introducing yet another unnecessarily large sign into the countryside and confusing visitors into the bargain. The situation is even more difficult on fast main roads and motorways.

Most of our villages have perfectly good Welsh place names which, in many cases were corrupted by phonetic rendering onto Ordnance Survey sheets and the like. Why not revert back to the correct Welsh spellings? In most cases reversion to the original form is unlikely to cause confusion. Where a fully English name or an anglicised Welsh one has a very long historical pedigree, there is a good case for keeping it, particularly if the change involves the coinage of an entirely new Welsh name - has anyone ever called Bonvilston Tresimant before this causes an explosion, and to put the record straight, the editor is an expatriate Englishman who hopes that almost 30 years of working in, and for Wales, represents some measure of naturalisation.

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The Blacksmith Shop - a Look at the Books by R. Gwynne Liscombe

Having read of the editor's shortage of material for the Newsletters, I thought it might be interesting to look at some of the information contained in the books of the Blacksmith Shop and the Baptist Chapel. They throw some light on costs at different times and other interesting facts.

Jehoiada Lewis, my wife's father, started trading at the Blacksmith Shop in 1914. At this time the Shop was already old and the Society has documentary evidence of its ownership going back to the beginning of the previous century.

Some examples of Accounts - I leave the reader to convert to decimal currency:

		l.s.d.
Mr Hopkins, Pancross.		
September 1914.	4 Removes	1.9
	Oil Wheels of Dray (his own oil)	.3
	2 New Shoes	1.6
	4 New Shoes	3.6
Mr James, Broomwell.		
December 1914.	4 New Shoes (Pony)	3.0
April 1920.	2 New Shoes 2 Removes (Cob)	6.6
Mr Richards, Whitton Road.		
1916	New handle in Fork	1.6
	New handle in Grappler (what is a grappler?)	1.4
Mr Liscombe, Little Mill.		

1925	4 Removes	1.9
	4 New Shoes	10.0

Mr Price, Moulton

1930	4 Removes	5.0
	4 New Shoes (Cob)	7.0
1942	4 Removes	5.0
1943	4 Removes 6.0	

Lady Boothby, Fontygary

1942	4 New Shoes (Hunter)	10.0
	4 Removes (Pony)	4.0
	Trim hooves for Pony at Fontygary	4.0
1943	4 New Shoes (pony)	10.0
	4 Removes (Pony)	5.0
	4 New Shoes (Young horse)	17.0

Mr Thomas, Pancross

1943	New handle in Dung Fork	3.6
1963	Repair Scythe	3.6
	New handle in Dung Fork	7.6
	Sharpen 5 axes for Dismounter	5.0
	Bake and rivet handles on two shute	7.0
1966	Shops for Comboid Harvester	9.6
	New handle in Dung Fork	9.6

Mr Thomas' a/c for 1943 totalled £11.9.1. This was settled by contra a/c for service to seven cows (Mr Lewis was also farming Penylan at the time).

Mr Thomas' a/c for 1946 was £7.8.7. less service to six cows £4.10.0 net £3.18.7.

Other interesting costs to customers:

1914	3 Pig rings	.6
1915	New bottom on Rugged Dipper	6.0
	New Hay Fork	.6
1918	Hoop Cart Wheel	3.0
1921	21 Yards of Railings at 7 shillings per yard	7.7.0
1926	Wood bucket	1.4
	Hoop Dray Wheel	2.0
1929	1 Gallon of Petrol	1.0
	1 1/2 Pts Castrol Oil	11.2
	3 Gallons Paraffin	5.7.0

Costs to customers over the years show a slight inflationary spiral but in many cases remained static for a number of years. It is interesting to see reference to Scythes and Comboid Harvesters in the same year at Pancross and indeed the increase in the cost of service to cows - showing probably the increase in the milk business in the 1940's. Long owners will note the costs at the time compared with today. Many however were unable to do so. There are many more examples of work done at the Blacksmith Shop in the account books.

Note: the information from the Baptist Chapel books will form another article in the next Newsletter.

Ann Radcliffe, Penmaik has provided the information that 1990 costs are between £16 and £20 for removes (removing and refitting shoes) and £20 to £25 for shoeing!

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John Buckley - Shoemaker. The editor has lived in Llancarfan for only 23 years and I suppose the average age of Society members must be perhaps "middle". Most members are unlikely to remember events much further back than the immediately pre-war days of the 1930s or perhaps '20s and this is near the limit of my second-hand memories gained by talking to people. Consequently, when we were researching the story of Martha Lougher, following the discovery of the gravestone in Brook Cottage garden, it came as a shock to find, in the 1891 census, that her shoemaker father, William, was living with daughter Catherine and a servant, John Buckley, age 26, born in Warwick (Sean Hamber also mentioned this in Newsletter 25).

John Buckley lived to a considerable age; he died in 1935 aged 80. He must have been a character to remember for he has been recalled by Evan Thomas and by Llewellyn Griffiths (Newsletters 8 & 11). Whilst he was inspiring these young men with his love of fishing he lived at the Post Office, the house which is now Hillside. At least one item of his craft survives. Lyn Price, Moulton tells me that he has a pair of John Buckley's leather slippers, now a bit worse for wear as they were once used for ploughing when Lyn had a problem with his feet.

Until you are very familiar with an area, census records, electoral registers and parish records are pretty dull stuff but suddenly the pages come to life with discoveries like this - particularly when it is interlinked with a bit of detectiveing as well. After all, this time last year when Russel Grant lifted the gravestone paving slab from Paul Schmit's garden, we did not have the faintest idea who Martha Lougher was!

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The Rubbish Walk - a Success and a Failure. On the first Tuesday in the month a party of about ten intrepid supporters set out from the Fox and Hounds car park armed with black bags. An hour later we had six bags stuffed-full with litter: mainly cigarette packets, fast-food wrappers and drink cans, thrown from cars. One or two rarities included a bicycle mudguard and a car-exhaust! There were also things too horrible to mention, or touch without gloves. Those who took part deserve a resounding cheer, not least because one becomes an entertainment for passengers in passing-cars - "poor old thing, living from rubbish bins"!

For about one day the village and its approach roads looked tidy but now, a week later some of the favourite dumping grounds have their litter again - the remains of a complete picnic for several people have appeared in the gravel bunker on Pantross Hill! The worst offenders appear to be smoking and drinking car-owners who cannot bear to have their rubbish in the car with them. Do they have a problem?

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The PHAB cycle ride. The Birmingham to Llancarfan cycle ride, reported in the last Newsletter, raised an amazing £2535 which was presented to Gwynne Liscombe on behalf of PHAB in the Fox and Hounds on Friday. Congratulations to all the local lads who took part, to Graham Brain for organising the ride and to his colleagues from SERCO who also rode the 120 miles.

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