



LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

Newsletter 37 April 1991

This will be a shortish Newsletter as we have to circulate it rather close on the heels of the last so that we have time to advertise the May Day walks and the Barbecue which is to be held at Abernant in early July.

FUTURE EVENTS

May Day Walks: These seem to have become a traditional part of the Llanccarfân Bank Holiday weekend. This year the holiday is on Monday 6th May. There will be a walk in Llanccarfân, starting from the Fox and Hounds car park at 10.30 am and another starting from Llantrithyd Church, also at 10.30.

IF YOU WANT TO JOIN ONE OF THESE WALKS, PLEASE COMPLETE THE ENCLOSED SLIP AND SEND IT BACK TO PHIL WATTS AT ABERNANT BUNGALOW.

The Llantrithyd walk will be led by Len Mortimer at the popular request of those who enjoyed last year's visit to the Church, Llantrithyd Place and the ancient wells of Fynnon Echo. The Llanccarfân walk will be led by John Etherington with assistance from other residents and former residents of the village. Both walks are quite short.

We shall aim to finish both walks in time for participants to return to the Fox and Hounds for lunch and a raffle will be drawn at the pub in the early afternoon.

Barbecue: to be held at Abernant Bungalow on Sunday, 7th July at 12.00 by kind invitation of Ruth and Phil Watts. Booking slips will be circulated with the next Newsletter (May). Cost £1.50.

Midsummer Barn Dance in conjunction with St Cadoc's Church: Friday June 21st. More information in the next Newsletter.

Annual Dinner: this will be held in the Village Hall on a Friday in late September - further information in a forthcoming Newsletter.

Enoch Lewis: Members will be saddened to hear of the death of Enoch Lewis who was headmaster of Llanccarfân Primary School for 21 years, retiring in 1974. Many generations of schoolchildren revered and loved Enoch and those of us whose children attended Llanccarfân School under his headmastership have had ample reason to thank him for the education which his pupils received.

When first appointed, he travelled every day from Merthyr, then lived in St Nicholas before becoming a neighbour to George Tucker in Pancross Cottages, finally settling in a purpose-built house next door to Dorothy and Charles Bryer at Maes-yr-Afon, Ford Cross.

He played in the post-war Llanccarfan cricket team, captained by another headmaster, Len Rees, then living at Cross Green.

He served a number of years on the Llanccarfan Parish Council and was greatly involved in the Llanccarfan Best Kept Village winning year of 1963 when he was Chairman of the Committee - also for the subsequent competition for the bestkept village in Wales when Llanccarfan was runner-up. He was an active member of the working-parties of which there are many stories including the painting of everything in sight, amongst which was Ernie Badcock's back door, resulting in a slight altercation! He is recollected as attending the celebration party at Abernant and also a famed "mens excursion" via hostelrys in Merthyr, Brecon, Llandovery, Neath etc. in company with Harry Hughes and certain members of our present Committee to whom this is a very happy memory.

Enoch was a respected member of the Harry Hughes Fox and Hounds consultation and advice committee! PW/DH/JE

Paul Schmit: with great sadness we record Paul's death in the first week of April. During the few years he lived at Brook Cottage, Paul has become well loved by those who knew him. He was a quiet, sincere and artistically talented man with a dry sense of humour and common-sense views on the general madness of humanity. It was a privilege to know him and his going is a loss to Llanccarfan.

How the Newsletter is Produced: The production of the Newsletter is in the hands of John Etherington as editor and Mavis Coles as printer. In practice this means that John receives all sorts of bits of paper, phone calls and conversations which he types onto a word-processing machine. Without this first step it would all be impossible - word processing allows any number of corrections, changes or complete reshuffling of the contents. For example, the article on Walter de Mapes, printed below, was included in Newsletter 35, taken out and put into 36, then taken out again and put in this one!

Once the Newsletter is complete it is stored on a magnetic disc which is posted to Mavis who uses her word-processor to cut Gestetner stencils from which the Newsletters are printed. This is back to ancient technology for, since the 1960's when "xerox" photocopying came in most people have stopped using stencil copying as it is messy and fiddly. However, for us, the blessing is that it is cheap.

The reason for writing this note is that Mavis and John are dissatisfied with the quality of the printing. In the early years, up to about Newsletter 26, before John had retired from the University we had access to cheap photocopying (3p a sheet) and the quality was generally better than we manage now. The problem is that a modern word-processor daisywheel printer will not cut stencils as well as a steam-age typewriter.

In February, the duplicator which Mavis used died on us. Temporarily we have another Gestetner machine on loan from David Gay and we are now faced with a decision. Either we buy David's machine and continue as we are, though Mavis hopes that she can improve the stencil quality. Alternatively we could farm the copying out to a firm of printers but

this would probably treble the original photocopying cost - each Newsletter involves more than 1200 sheets for an eight-page issue! The annual subscription would have to go up. Any offers from members? Does anyone have free time on an automatic, back-to-back photocopier which we could use at cost (about 3p a sheet)?

New Settlements in the Vale: the original article on the Parc Dyffryn proposals (Newsletter 27) sparked off a great deal of interest and we have carried several letters and comments since then. The Parc Dyffryn proposals have been withdrawn (Newsletter 36) but South Glamorgan's attempt to amend the County Structure Plan to permit such new developments is still in the pipeline. Apparently there was a fairly vociferous response when the suggestion was opened for public comment and MP John Smith (reported in the Barry and District News of April 4th) seems confident that the amendments will not be made. Amongst other reasons, he pointed out that new Welsh Office guidelines for planning will make it difficult for South Glamorgan to adopt measures which allow such new development in open countryside.

Phil Watts noted that the withdrawal of Parc Dyffryn and the end of the Gulf War were announced in the same week "but doubt if both have gone away for ever!"

Walter de Mapes by John Etherington

Whilst searching for a reference to Walter de la Mare in the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, I came across Walter Map or Mapes fl. 1200. The single quotation attributed to him was "If die I must, let me die drinking in an inn.", from *De nugis curialium*.

Most people who have lived for long in Llancarfan will have in the backs of their minds the suggestion that Walterston was named after Walter de Mapes (or de Mappes). Who was he, other than a man with a Norman name? Was the quotation written by the same Walter who supposedly built the original Walterston Fawr farm-house? It might easily be an ancient Vale sentiment! Stan Awbery's *Llancarfan, Village of a Thousand Saints* acknowledges Walter as one of "Two Great Historians of Llancarfan" and gives his dates of birth and death as approximately 1140 and 1208. Because much in Awbery's book is whimsical and not always accurate, I looked further but at first with no luck.

However, amongst the collection of Society records, we have a notebook on Llancarfan history, compiled by the late Enoch Lewis whilst he was Headmaster of the School. Before he and his wife left Llancarfan, they gave us the notebook which contains a most useful synopsis of the published history of the village.

The following extract is illuminating:- "Walter Map (or Walter de Mappes), mediaeval ecclesiastic, author and wit, who flourished in the latter part of the 12th century and the early years of the 13th century, is said to have been connected with Llancarfan and to have been the son of Blondel de Mapes y Flur, daughter of Gweirydd ap Seisyllt, Welsh lord of that region (this differs from Awbery's account but is in agreement with Clark

(1865), cited below).

Probably from about 1140, he studied in Paris under Gireaud la Pucella and was at the court of Henry II about 1162. He was Clerk to the Royal Household and Justice Itinerant in 1179. Map held a plurality of benefices. He was Archdeacon of Oxford, Prebend of St Paul's, Canon and Precentor of Lincoln and Parson of Westbury. In 1199 (Awbery says 1189) he was candidate for the Bishopric of Hereford.

He wrote a number of Latin poems, and to him is assigned, at one time or another, much of the prose of Arthurian Literature. He is believed to have been responsible for the story of Lancelot.

One of his principal works was *De Nugis Curialium* and he is credited with the authorship of the drinking song *Mihi est propositum in taberna mori* (of which the translation approximates the embroidered quotation at the head of this article - ed.). He is believed to have written a treatise on Welsh agriculture.

Walterston (Tref Walter) in Llancarfan is said to have derived its name from him and tradition credits him with building or rebuilding Llancarfan Church.

All that can be gleaned from his writings concerning his origin is that he called himself a "Marcher of Wales". He appears to have died about 1208-9."

Enoch Lewis gives no sources for this information, but the wording suggests that it was not taken from Awbery's book. We also have to be careful as the original suggestion that de Mapes built Walterston Fawr is believed to have come from Iolo Morgannwg who's writings are now known to be a little more than whimsy! He "--- manufactured hundreds of documents of various kinds, and those which were printed --- were accepted by most literary historians until the end of the last century ---" (G. J. Williams (1960) in: *The Cardiff Region*. Ed by J. F. Rees).

I consider myself far from being a historian and so, readers, over to you. Is there any more recent historical evidence concerning either Walter de Mapes, or the origin of the present-day 16th century house of Walterston Fawr? What about the name Walterston, which is now doubled with Trewallter on the O. S. Map? The house itself became Trewallter Fawr in the early 1970's though it should be noted that Clark rendered it as Trev Walter in his 1865 *Archaeologia Cambrensis* article. As for Iolo Morgannwg, Stan Awbery certainly fell for much of the created history but how far was Clark, in the previous century, misled? Part of Enoch Lewis' note on de Mapes was probably derived from Clark's papers.

A letter from Dr Evan Thomas.

Evan wrote to Phil Watts about the name Tyn-ty-Gros which Phil remembered in his tribute to Mardi Jones (Newsletter 34):-

Like you, I always called it Tyn-ty-Cross (sic) and of course it was always used by anyone

walking to the village from Llanvythin. My sister and I crossed it every morning on the way to school. The name is possibly a Welsh version of Traitors Close - we always regarded it as the spot where the monk was hanged as described by Marianne Spencer in Annals of South Glamorgan:-

"As early as the year 987 the wealth of Llancarvan was so proverbial that it was attacked by a party of Danish rovers on the way from the west along the South Wales' coast ----. There is a tradition in the neighbourhood evidently referring to this event that ---- one of the monks, thinking to save his own life went out to meet the marauders and show them the way.

But even these robbers had their own sense of honour for they said among themselves "Here is a traitor let us hang him" and they did hang him in the field which to this day is known as Traitors Close."

Although my memory is now failing I can always remember those early years when we lived at Llanvythin - they certainly served me in good stead in my subsequent career.

Charity Cycle Marathon: The annual charity cycle ride seems to have been adopted as a village tradition. Participants have pedalled twice from Birmingham to Llancarfan and this year will be no exception to such strenuous goings-on. The ride will be on 15th June and Graham Brain, Ynysdawl, will be looking for sponsors so, hands in pockets!

A Llancarfan Artist: Those who lived in the village during the late 1960's will remember Andrew Vicari living at the Wesleyan Chapel (now Whitechapel). The Daily Telegraph of 20th February reported that Andrew is currently court painter to the Saudi royal family and has been commissioned to produce paintings immortalising the Saudi "triumph" over the Iraqis. The largest of his Saudi works is a 60 painting interpretation of Saudi history called the "Triumph of the Bedouin". Thanks to Phil Watts for the press-cutting.

Auction: An auction of 180 items was held in the Village Hall during the last week of February to raise funds for the Community Association. It was a great success, the proceeds totalling £435 - might have been more had the bar opened earlier! The hall was full with people standing in the balcony and bidding from there and many bargains were obtained. PW

A note from Phil Watts: Now that the Society has formally committed itself to producing a book, I feel we should have more information on the Church, Wesleyan Chapel and Fox and Hounds. I wonder whether another appeal in the Newsletter would

bring offers of help in this direction?

Family Stability in Llancarfan: long ago (Newsletter 10) we commented on the few families which have remained as a part of the Llancarfan scene over the past century or more. Phil Watts adds the following:

Talking to Jack Richards, Whitton Rosser, at Sarah Sweet's funeral he said that he believed he and Edmund were the only people, apart from Mrs Sweet who had lived all their lives in the same house that they were born in. We were able to find one more - William Lougher of Treguff but I have not improved on this - any offers? Jack and Edmund have now bought a bungalow in Fontigary Road, Rhoose.

Footpaths: the editor has a bit of a bee in his bonnet on this subject which has been mentioned several times in the last year or two. Interesting to see that the storyliners for some of the "soaps" have picked up the same threads. Both the Archers and their TV cousins, the Sugdens in Emmerdale, seem to be having trouble with the footpaths on their farms! They probably don't read our Newsletter so it must stem from the recent changes in law about rightsof-way. The Archers always seem to have used their air-time to publicise agricultural and countryside "good causes".

St Cadoc: when writing to renew his subscription, Hugh Moffat sent the January number of The Welsh Churchman which carried as its Saints of the Celtic Church column, an account of St Cadog. Some extracts are given below:-

Cadog was renowned for his erudition and teaching skills and, on St Cadog's Day (24th January), believers are bidden to pray "for all places of education and learning in Wales".

He was baptised by St Tathan and spent some time in Brecon learning Latin from St Fagan before founding a church and monastery at Nantcarfan. Cadog was a great traveller and churches with his dedication are found in Scotland, Anglesey, Dyfed, Cornwall and Brittany where he was revered as patron saint of Breton soldiers.

Cadog's fame prompted many legends. One tells how the historian and craftsman Gildas made a bell of wonderful tone which Cadog begged to keep in Llancarfan. Gildas insisted on taking it to Rome but there, even in the hands of the Pope, it would not sound. When the Pope heard of Cadog's wish he told Gildas to return it "for the glory of God in the far land of Wales".

More Water Notes: from Phil Watts. Work is in hand to widen and strengthen the bridge

at Abernant. The road will be closed for some time. A problem has arisen in discovering the route of the water main over the arch of the bridge or under the river bed. With all the modern inventions available the only way the contractors saw fit to locate the pipe was to dig a trench across the bridge, causing some consternation - will it weaken the arch? Two markers, my own water meter and the fire hydrant, tell me that the pipe is on the left hand side of the road travelling to Llancarfan. I believe that this is true through the whole distance from Bonvilston to Llancarfan but at the time of writing they are still not sure where the pipe is routed.

When piped water was brought in in 1936 the contractor digging the trench, laying the main and making-good the road was a man by the name of Bowen. I remember my father saying that one of Dick Evans' jobs after his seafaring days was working for Bowen, helping to dig the trench etc. I well remember having to scuffle over this trench on the way to school.

I thought it well worth a 'phone call to Richard to ask him if he remembered which side of the road the water pipe was laid. He tells me that it is on the opposite side to the one which I believed - he says it definitely went on the Bassets Wood side. It will be interesting to learn who is right.

Dick also remembers having to combat a rather violent machine used for pressing down the filled-in trench, called a tamper. This machine caused a number of injuries to contractor's personnel. He also remembers having to rush at the end of a week to have a certain amount of trench completed so that the men could be paid at the end of the week.

One part of the contract involved building a pumping station in Peterston. Dick tells me that the concrete was mixed by attaching a belt to a cement mixer at one end and a jacked-up Morris 8 at the other - the belt attached to the back wheel! No doubt Dick could explain this better.

Ties: A proposal for a Llancarfan Society tie and matching ladies' square was put to the Committee some months ago. With Geoff Burrows' advice we arrived at a delicate little white stag, with golden antlers and hooves, on a dark green ground (remember the two stags, of legend, which helped St Cadoc in the building of the monastery). Once we have a quotation we shall be soliciting orders as we would obviously need to have a guaranteed sale. Hands in pockets again!