



LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

Newsletter 40 August-September 1991

Amazingly, the summer is almost over; not that we have had too much of it. What price all those forecasts that we could expect summers to be warmer and drier! Best not to believe anything about weather and perhaps those sayings that we printed in a previous Newsletter may be the best way of knowing what will happen tomorrow. A few more Vale beliefs about weather have turned-up in a book by Alun Wooding. "A green winter makes for a full churchyard" - we all seem to think we get more coughs and colds when it is unseasonably warm. "When the fog comes in from the sea the bees would make much honey but if it came from the hills the corn would be good and plentiful." "If the froth on a pint of beer spilled over on St Andrew's Day the year would be wet but if it stayed on top the year would be dry" - we could try this one with the Committee and several pints!

ADDRESSES: Contributions for the Newsletter (which will be very welcome) should be sent to the Editor, John Etherington, Parc-y-Bont - New Buildings, Llanhowell, Solva, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, Dyfed, SA62 6XX. Subscriptions and problems with mailing: to the Membership Secretary, Phil Watts, Abernant Bungalow, Llanccarf, Barry, South Glamorgan, CF6 9AD. Agenda items and correspondence for the Committee to Barbara Milhuisen, 73 Tynewydd Road, Barry, South Glamorgan.

Ernie Badcock's Diaries: The 2nd World War Part 2 1940 -1942

abstracted by Sheena Etherington with an introduction by John Etherington

Ernie Badcock of Great House, Llancarfan was born in September 1902 and died in 1987. He served Llancarfan Parish in public office for almost 40 years becoming Clerk to the Parish Council on July 14th 1949, continuing through the formation of the new Welsh Community Councils and on, almost to the end of his life. Ernie kept a diary from January 26th 1926 until 1987, missing but a few days here and there.

Last month we presented extracts, pertinent to the War, written during the first year of hostilities. This second part runs from 1940 to 1942 after which the entries concerning the progress of the war become much more sporadic and less related to everyday life in Llancarfan. We pick-up the story with the entry, marking the end of the first year of the War, with which Part 1 finished.

1940

1/9 ONE YEAR OF WAR.

2/9 Air raid.

5/9 Bombs on Barry. House in Trinity Street wrecked and also on fields in Pontypridd Road entrance to Porthkerry Park.

8/9 Heavy air raid on London. Much damage. Home Guard all out in morning. Parachute landing rumoured.

8/9-21/9 London being bombed heavily each night.

10/9 Berlin bombed. Cardiff bombed - Westgate Street - dock area.

11/9 Bombs on Cardiff again. Slight damage.

13/9 Buckingham Palace bombed. Cardiff bombed again.

15/9 Buckingham Palace hit again third time. 187 German planes down today. 25/9 Bristol heavily bombed.

28/9 Romilly. Arthur Askey in "Charlie's Aunt".

30/9 Bobbie went Navy as ERR.

10/10 German plane dropped parachute flares.

12/10 Romilly. "Typhoo".

17/10 My Little Chic-a-dee (Fields & West)

24/10 Empire "Tom Brown's Schooldays" and "Curtain Call".

28/10 Italy invaded Greece.

29/10 New landgirl (Winnie) started.

7/11 German bomber shot down off Barry by A.A. gun.

10/11 Mr Neville Chamberlain died.

13/11 Fleet Air Arm bombed Taranto (Italy) and destroyed three

battleships (50% of their capital ships). German raider attacked convoy Armed merchant cruiser "Jervis Bay" defended though heavily outgunned to the end and enabled 32 to escape. Only 2 lost. Captain fought on though arm shot away. Given V.C. German plane machine gunning in Cardiff.

15/11 Coventry heavily bombed. Much damage.

22/11 Greeks driving Italians back. Took Koriza.

24/11 Bristol bombed heavily. Fires easily visible from Romilly Schools. 25/11 Fires at

Bristol again but not so big.

26/11 Took father to Romilly to see "Convoy". 28/11

Italian fleet ran from Navy but some hit.

2/12 Bombs on Cardiff (Culverhouse).

14/12 British victory over Italians in Egypt. 20,000 prisoners including 5 generals. Sidi Barrani retaken.

20/12 Shop girl ill. Had to take out orders at night in heavy air raid. Very dark night.

23/12 Bombs on Aberthaw in works quarry.

28/12 Whitley (?) bomber crashed at Llancadle.

29/12 London had big fire bomb attack. Many big noted buildings destroyed including County Hall. Power and light cut-off. Hand milking.

1941

2/1 Heaviest air raid. Llandaff Cathedral badly damaged.

9/1 Fire watching duty commenced.

25/1 Surveyors here for Air Ministry (proposed new aerodrome).

30/1 Romilly. "Gasbags" (Crazy Gang).

22/2 German bomber brought down in Bristol Channel. Blown to bits.

28/2 German plane over in morning.

5/3 LAST NIGHT RAID. BOMBS ON RHOOSE.

15/3 Romilly. Charlie Chaplin in "The Great Dictator".

19/3 Bombs dropped on Porthkerry, Llanbethery & Flemingston. In Porthkerry bombs fell only a few yards each side of viaduct.

15/4 Capitol "North West Mounted Police" (all coloured). 22/4 Raid on St Athan.

30/4 MARRIED AT ALL SAINTS 2PM.

13/5 HESS LANDED IN SCOTLAND FROM PLANE FROM GERMANY. 17/5 Registered for military service.

27/5 German battleship "Bismark" sunk.

29/5 Saw plane crash and pilot come down by parachute. Beau Fighter blew up in air and fell in pieces in Llanbethery. 2 killed 1 escaped.

1/6 11 unexploded bombs in Rhose. All clothes rationed from today without warning. Margarine coupons to be used.

26/8 Short raid warning in night. First for a long period.

6/9 Romilly. "Major Barbara" (Show).

20/9 Registered for Civil Defence (Firewatching).

8/10 Spitfire force-landing on new aerodrome being constructed by Constable, Hart & Co. by Whitehall, Rhose. Pancake landing.

19/10 H.G. and Regulars in "Invasion" practice.

8/11 RAF men (4) digging foundations for some buildings in Whitehall grass.

14/11 RAF and work men still digging in Whitehall grass.

21/11 Odeon "59th Parallel".

22/11 Hut in Whitehall (RAF) finished.

28/11 Bombs on S. Wales (local).

7/12 Japan attacked America.

8/12 Roosevelt & Churchill on wireless. 9-o-clock news over 3/4 hour.

1942

3/4 Short air raid warning.

5/4 Very short air raid alert in afternoon.

6/4 Amazing electric storm in night (12.30-1 a.m.) many barrage balloons burst into flames in air. Cascades of stars. 2 big fires. 25/4 2 warnings. Local AA in action after many months of quiet.

20/6 Spitfire crashed in 4 acre. Pilot uninjured. Narrow escape. 6 acre gets wreckage.

27/6 Air raid warnings in night. Flares over Channel. Weston raided.

Lord Glanely killed.

24/10 Air raid warning first for long period.

17/11 RAF taking about 10 acres of farm for extending runway.

4/12 Work on extending runway started. Hedges being removed.

From this time there are only a few mentions of the war, drawn from radio and newspaper reports.

Footnote - the new aerodrome, now Cardiff, Wales, was constructed on land belonging in part to Whiteh farm.

Church Bells again: The last Newsletter posed a question about itinerant bellfounders and how they carried on their craft. They travelled from place to place, collecting materials as they went (presumably accompanied by a waggon-train or at least a convoy of pack-animals). A temporary furnace would be set-up close to the church and the bell-moulds were lowered into an adjacent pit so that the melted bell-metal could be run into them. The mould was a two-piece structure with a framework core, covered in a mixture of clay, sand, straw and horse-manure, carefully located over an outer mould of similar construction. The reverberatory furnace was built of stone, clay and turf. A dome-shaped sloping roof directed the heat from a charcoal or timber fire onto the metal resting in the hearth. The furnace must have represented a substantial investment in time, materials and skill. Presumably a bellfounder would set himself up at a suitably central site and remain until orders ran out. According to T. S. Jennings (1988) *Bellfounding*, *Shi Album* 212: "Locally cast bells cost as much as those from established foundries and there could be additional overheads. For example, the parishioners often collected the raw materials together or engaged furnace building and digging the bell pit. When the founder brought his family with him their board and lodging became a charge on the parish."

Interestingly, when John Woods was excavating for the construction of the tennis-court, adjacent to The Old Parsonage, he unearthed an area of burned soil and old stonework which he suggested might be the remains of a lime kiln (Newsletter 21) - it could equally well have been the bellfounding site, as the churchyard would probably have been too wet and the steep bank of the field would have reduced the need for digging a bell-pit. JRE

Farms: Tenants and Owners in Llancarfan by Phil Watts

We have recently enrolled as a member, Mary Pritchard of Vines Hill Farm, St Nicholas, who was formerly Mary Maddock of Llanvythin. When I was making out the membership receipt I was reminded of Rhys Maddock's coming to Llanvythin in about 1937/8/9 - I am not sure of the date - perhaps someone can put me right. It coincided with a number of farms from Abernant to Bonvilston and St Nicholas having foot and mouth disease which meant that there was a restriction on the sale and movement of animals over a wide area. Rhys Maddock had taken possession of a 300 acre farm and no animals but there was a large crop of apples that year. Rhys came from Brombil Farm, Margam and he was the proud possessor of 4 or 5 shire horses - the favourite was Blossom.

Mary came to Llanvythin as a baby, Catherine was born there and they both attended Llancarfan school. Mary married Bill Pritchard who is well known for taking many of the dairy prizes at Cowbridge Show.

Rhys farmed Llanvythin for over thirty years with great diligence and hard work. One of the hardest jobs on Llanvythin Farm was to walk home to the buildings on the top fields. Rhys was a devoted chapel man at Zoar and, in spite of war-time pressures and the eternal Welsh weather he never worked on a Sunday. This in modern times could be called a restrictive practice!

The workers I remember were Reg Clark - I think he was passed over with the farm from the Lougher's, Charlie Wheeler and Peter Newton. In spite of the hard labour all three stayed a long time. Len Mortimer used to come over from Caemain to help out with the harvest, as was also my lot because in order to harvest our few acres of hay at Abernant, it was necessary to have the assistance of a larger farmer. My hours of labour carrying bales of hay, pitching corn and helping at threshing times had to be set against the use of the baler, mowing machine, turner etc. This resulted in a head to head meeting in Llanvythin House just before Christmas.

We worked hard and did not waste much time talking but when a few words were said they were well meant. At the top buildings was a fine big Dutch Barn which was filled, bay by bay with bales of hay. Peter Newton was usually in charge of building the bales in the barn, locking the corners and keeping the bales in a line inside the metal uprights. One day Rhys was heard to say to Peter "Keep the bales in - what do you think the the posts are for?" Peter retorted "To keep the roof on!" At this remark Phil Watts nearly fell off the load laughing and Len Mortimer collapsed on the rick. There were many such happy stories as this.

Len Mortimer will say that when we went in the house for tea the weather forecast was always of heavy rain coming in from the west in the night. This would mean that no bales could be left out to get wet or, as a compromise, they would have to be stooked - one on the floor, two to each side, one at each end, knots down and out.

During the years that Rhys Maddock was at Llanvythin, William (Bill) Evans farmed Garnllwyd. Bill's loving care of his milking cows could be greatly strained at times - his favourite trick if the cows would not move the way he wanted would be to wallop them with his cap.

Also at this time Dilwyn Griffiths farmed Pencarreg and Greendown and later Greenway Farm in Bonvilston. He was a Cardiff Rural District Councillor and very fond of a game of darts. His

portrait, by Geoffrey Evans of Western Mail and Echo fame, hung for many years in the Red Lion at Bonvilston, holding a dart in his hand.

Frank Rowland farmed Ty-to-Maen and Gowlog. Frank was very attached to his pipe and he kept an immaculate farm.

Some of the smaller farmers in the village at this time were Melvin Morgan of The Green; Lil Evans, Broadhayes; David Harris, Fox and Hounds; Ernie and Blodwyn Badcock, Great House; David Griffiths, Glan-yr-Afon; Billo Griffiths, Broomwell; Ivy and Arthur Jenkins, Cross Green; Dilwyn Griffiths of The Talbots (now called Middle Hill); Joe Lewis, Penylan Farm; Tom Williams, Ford Farm; Tom Morgan, Penonn Farm; Vivian Thomas, Pancross Farm; Dilwyn Lougher Cliff Farm; Edward Williams, Croston Farm; Tom Tucker, Croston Buildings; Clem Harbottle, Llancadle; Ted Williams, Llancadle Farm; Ivor Davies, Middlecross; Emlyn Williams, Aberogwrn Farm; Tom Lougher, Treguff; David and Gwilym Thomas, Llanbethery Farm; Bob Hughes, The Vines; Owen Richards, Moulton Court; Lynus Price, New House Farm and Dilwyn Price, main farm contractor in the area; Gwyn and Edmond Richards, Whitton Rosser; Gertie Davies, Whitton Bush; Griffiths Butcher, Tyn-y-Coed; Edwin Morgan, Walterston Fach; Howells, Walterston Fawr; Arthur Jenkins, Flaxland Fach; Tom and Dan Thomas, Flaxland Mawr; George Gibbon, Middle Hill (now called The Talbots).

I have given a fairly comprehensive list of the farmers in the area in the hope that readers will have their memories jogged and recall some of the events surrounding these people. Perhaps some people will remember their wives or sons and daughters better. I apologise if there is anyone left out

or incorrectly quoted. I feel that John Etherington, as editor, would like to hear from you, our readers, of days and happenings of yesterday.

As a footnote I recall a name which is not heard nowadays: Ty Isha Gwyn - the hill passing Pencarreg and Tynycoed on the road to Bonvilston. Once, when riding my bike home from school with John Rowland, down Ty Isha Gwyn, there were two ladies walking their dog, half way down. The dogs got in the way, Phil flew over the handlebars and slid along the road in the mud. Ladies came rushing up - "Are the dogs alright?" - little regard for speeding schoolboy!

Some Thoughts on my Childhood in Llancarfan by Kate Harber (was Katie Laws)

My mother and her brothers and sisters were born in Fern Cottage. When my father died, my Grandmother had us all to live with her. The cottage was small which meant that there were eight of us living there at first, as Grandfather and Uncle David were living there also. Eventually my brother went to live at Broomwell Farm with my mother's brother, Uncle William. Some year or so later my Grandfather died.

At the other end of the village my mother's sister, Aunt Maggie and Uncle Johnnie lived with their five children. The cottage was called Caradoc Cottage after the poet. We had a small-holding there. Two cows, pigs, a pony and trap, a cart horse, chickens etc. My aunt made her own butter and cheese and there were always fitches of ham hanging from the beams.

I spent so much time there that eventually I lived there. I would go out with the boys in the morning, fishing for trout from the brook running near us or going up the marshes for eels. At other times we would go mushrooming. What feasts we had for breakfast, plenty of bacon and eggs and milk as well.

We did of course have to go to school. We were taught by a Mr Davies and his daughter who lived in Oxford Street, Barry, at that time. They both cycled every day through all weathers. We children noticed that his daughter, Alice, was always drinking medicine. She was very pale and could not have been strong but she must have had guts. I enjoyed my school life and was good at maths. Unfortunately at the age of 14 I had to come to Barry to earn my living.

Now, to get back to Llancarfan. It was a wonderful place for children to live. Never a dull moment. In the summer we played in the fields, picking wild flowers, seeking out birds nests and of course we played all the usual games. For a treat we walked across the fields to Fontygary and we had our Sunday School treat to Barry Island.

We spent hours watching Jo Lewis, the blacksmith, shoeing horses which never ceased to thrill us. Then there was hay-making time. What fun we had. It was not all play though, for we had to carry every drop of drinking water from the wells. We had casks outside to catch the rainwater for other uses. Then we had to bring the cows in from the fields to be milked and take them back again. It was our job to clean the cowsheds and see there was enough hay in the cow bins. We also had to feed the pigs and clean their pens. There were so many other jobs like feeding the chickens and seeing that they were safe for the night from foxes. When it was wet we had plenty of books to read. Some magazines brought from Barry but mostly good books.

My Uncle Johnnie was a local preacher in the Baptist Chapel. He would be writing his sermons at the kitchen table without turning a hair whilst we children would be playing mob and touch, or some other noisy game. We had two staircases in the house. One was a ladder with a trapdoor at the top and the other stair was at the other end of the house, hence the noise. When we ran up and down and across the various rooms. However, my Aunt would only take a certain amount of that. My young sister Doris was very friendly with Noreena Rowlands of Garnllwyd. The girls used to tell us that one of the rooms there was haunted and that a piano played where there was no piano.

The field at the bottom of Fern Cottage garden is called The Culvert which, I understand, meant Calvary because monks had a monastery there and there were underground secret passages to the Church. My Grandmother used to tell us that she could hear spirits singing in the Churchyard at night.

On one occasion my Gran had to go, at 12 midnight, to Caradoc Cottage because one of my Aunt's children was ill. She was walking along a narrow stretch of road when she heard horses and a carriage wheels. On looking back she saw a funeral approaching and she stepped to one side for it to pass. Of course, being Gran, she thought it was a phantom funeral. I have learned since, that it was the custom in some Churchyards to bury at night. I am told that they would travel from Penmark to Bonvilston.

Where our Church now stands there was a wooden edifice where farmers from all the districts around would come on the Sabbath Day to buy or sell all their goods and produce. I am told that cockfights took place there also. (Does this refer to the Tithe Barn which stood in the southwestern corner of the present churchyard? Editor).

Every Easter time they had a fair when they dressed-up and had all sorts of fun and certain customs were carried out.

Before I stop writing I must tell you that my Grandmother was a very clever dressmaker and she was in great demand going around the outlying farms for weeks on end. She did this when she was a young woman before she started her own family (she did not hand her gift over to me!). There was one thing which we were all fond of and that was singing. The whole family would congregate in Gran's house, my mother would play the harmonium and we all sang and sang with great gusto.

The Chapel held what were called entertainments now and then at which my sister and I took part. We were given little bags of coppers of which we were very proud.

So many more things I could mention. You will all know of the priest who was walled-up at Llanveithyn Farm from his pursuers. Poor man, they forgot to get him out.

One other thing I must mention. In a field at the bottom of Penham (Penonn?) Hill there was a well which was called the healing well. What it was supposed to heal I do not know, but people came from miles away and tied rags on the branches of the bushes around the well. Whether they drank the water, again I can't say. Perhaps they said a little prayer instead. However, if they didn't drink the water I see no purpose in going to the well at all - they could have sent up a prayer to whoever from anywhere. They must have had some faith in something to tie the rag in the first place. It must have been the rags they had faith in, or didn't the water work its magic without the rags? (Search me).

Village people were gossippy but kind. They were like one big family and could never do too much for whoever was in trouble. It's a pity that there is not more of this spirit about today. There are, of course, some wonderful people about today for which I at least am very thankful as I have many good friends. I suppose if you look for it you will find kindness in the most unlikely places. Well, I never thought of and certainly did not intend preaching a sermon so please forgive me for meandering on.

Most country people were deeply religious. We children were sent to Chapel three times every Sunday which we enjoyed because we could wear our best clothes, but second best for Sunday School.

The Fox and Hounds was well attended at night time by farmers who would look forward to their pint and a good gossip about how their cattle were doing or whether their milk yield was good or otherwise, their ploughing or hay making or whatever they were doing.

There was a large family in the pub in my day and we children from the village played a lot in the pub with the Harris children.

Footnote: No dates are given in the article but Kate is writing about the years during and just after the First World War. For our many members who do not remember all the families and events in the Llancarfan of earlier years it is worth mentioning that Kate's Aunt and Uncle, Maggie and Johnnie, were Margaret and John Griffiths, Caradoc Cottage, who had five children, of whom Leslie and Llewellyn are now members of the Society. In an attempt to confuse us, Margaret was named Griffiths both before and after marriage (Les Griffiths' article in Newsletter 11). Uncle William, Broomwell was Billo Griffiths, mentioned in Phil Watts article above. Thus Margaret and

Billo were brother and sister to Kate's mother. Perhaps this sorts-out some of the many Griffiths who lived in the village between the wars.

The article also provides all sorts of suggestions for the future. We have mentioned the wells before, but said little about the tradition of rags and healing. However, we have some information on this, given by Mr Barry Webb, which will appear as an article in the near future.

Following the paragraph on the funeral which Kate's Gran saw, there was another paragraph on "phantom funerals" - to shorten the article this has been edited-out and will be used in a future Newsletter as part of a longer article on traditions, beliefs and legends in Llancarfan and the Vale. Contributions for this would be welcome.

Walter Mapes by Iolo Morganwg: this became a bit of an obsession with the editor. At first it seemed impossible to find the origin of the story that Walter lived at, or built Walterston Fawr. However, the search has paid-off and in the University of Wales Press series devoted to Writers of Wales I found a volume on Iolo Morganwg, written by Prys Morgan in 1975; at that time he was Lecturer in History at University College Swansea.

Of the documents which Iolo is known to have forged, Prys Morgan said:

"The Glamorgan forgeries were part of this intense desire to make great whatever was his own. His forgeries would show that at every stage in Welsh history his own county had played a crucial part, and even his own parish of Llancarfan. Saint Cattwg thus became the greatest sage of the Isles of Britain, and on a smaller scale, Walter Mapes the medieval storyteller was made to come from Walterston on the hill above Llancarfan. The mongrel Vale of Glamorgan was made into the Garden of Wales ----."

"His forgeries in the broader field of Welsh history, the lives of the early heroes, saints and kings, the Druids and bards, form a part of the same pattern --- Wales was Iolo's own country and he felt that he was the man sent by fate to avenge its wrongs."

Well, what a sad ending: Iolo Morganwg made-up the story of Walterston, together with many others. However, he was born in Llancarfan, at Penonn, and as Prys Morgan says in his closing paragraph: "---- he was in many ways crazy, misleading and wrong headed, but he is, I believe, to be considered the true spiritual father of modern Welsh nationalism." For this reason alone it seems sensible for us to have an article on his life in some future Newsletter.

The Vale of Glamorgan Local Plan: last year we devoted a lot of space to the broad issue of planning decisions, particularly in relation to the proposed

Parc Dyffryn development and other threats to open countryside in the Vale. The Parc Dyffryn developers withdrew their planning application but, like Phil Watts in a previous Newsletter, I fear that the whole matter will arise again. There are, also, other sides to the issue - we have some members who would wish to see more freedom for development though a minority I think.

The Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council is preparing a District Wide Development Plan and has recently circulated an Issues and Objectives Document for public comment. If you wish to contribute to this process the document is available from the Chief Planning and Development Officer, P. J. Taylor, Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry. Observations must be submitted by 30 September.