



LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

Newsletter 48 June-July 1992

The Barbecue was held on the most beautiful summer evening at Abernant, attended by over 100 people. Phil and Ruth Watts have asked us to thank all who came and made the evening such a success and the helpers whose hard-work made it all possible. Gwynne Liscombe yet again displayed his talents as barbecue chef and never seems daunted by numbers or a growing queue and, sensibly, he also insists that everything is very thoroughly cooked. As darkness fell a small band of late-stayers retired to the "boule court" at the front of the house and, as the editor left for his drive back to Pembrokeshire, the summer dark was ringing with the thud of metal on gravel. On an evening such as this we realise just how successful the Society has become and how many people of different ages and from different times in the village have come to know each other and value old and new friendships.

ANNUAL DINNER

The dinner will be on Friday, September 25th in the Village Hall. If you want to attend please complete the enclosed slip and return it to Phil Watts (address below), together with payment. Numbers are, perforce, limited so you will need to reply quickly to ensure your place.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

The next LLANCARFAN SOCIETY WHIST DRIVE will be in October or November and the DUCK EGG RACE, as usual on Boxing Day, December 26th, will finish at the Fox and Hounds.

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. We will also be pleased to print short announcements of village functions but they must be sent in writing, at least 6-8 weeks in advance. Subscriptions and problems with mailing: to the Membership Secretary, Phil Watts, Abernant Bungalow, Llanarf, Barry, South Glamorgan, CF6 9AD. Agenda items and correspondence for the Committee to Barbara Milhuisen, 73 Tynwydd Road, Barry, South Glamorgan, CF6 6BA. Arrangements for visits to sick members: Len Fairfax, Summit View, Aberthin, Cowbridge, S. Glam. (Cowbridge 772654).

A LETTER FROM SOUTH AFRICA WRITTEN IN 1970 BY IDRIS LEWIS

Introduction: In Newsletter 45, Phil Watts wrote about the map of Llancarfan which Mr S. P. Perkins drafted in the late 1960's. A few weeks later, Ann Radcliffe, Penmark Place (nee Williams, Aberogwrn), passed-on to the editor a 1970 press cutting, from the Barry and District News. This was a long letter written by Idris Lewis of Durban, to Mr Perkins who had sent him a copy of the map. Mr Perkins correctly assumed that it would be of interest to readers and forwarded a copy to the newspaper. Idris has lived in South Africa for many years and is the son of the late Jehoida Lewis, the last blacksmith to work in Llancarfan. With Idris' permission, the letter is reproduced below:-

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Dear S.P.P., - What a wonderful and unexpected surprise it was to receive today a copy of your beautiful map of the Parish of Llancarfan and to learn that Dad has cooperated so closely with you in its preparation.

What a worthwhile project to have embarked upon and to have carried out so well. I wish that more people, young, middle-aged and old, would set out to perform worthwhile work instead of frittering away their time and energies on worthless pursuits. There would be much less mental malady, thrombosis, general ill-health and delinquency.

You were right to forecast nostalgia. The map brought on a very intense attack of hiraeth. My mind wandered back over many years. It roamed those fields, those woods and those paths of Y Fro. I saw them all in spring, in summer, in autumn and in winter.

Now I see again vividly many people with whom it was an honour to have had association. One of my earliest recollections is of our "front room" in Chapel House. and I was barely five years old. There was a "big meeting" of Bethlehem and there in our front room were assembled the doyens of the Baptist Churches of East Glamorgan. Their names now are like honey on the tongue.

The Moses of the group was Morris Isaac, of Philadelphia, Cadoxton. He feared God and no-one else, smoking his cherry wood pipe and keeping the intellectuals at bay with his quick wit and repartee. A man amongst men and, to a young boy, the fact that he owned a monkey made him almost a god in his own right.

On one Sunday Morris Isaac stayed with us between morning and evening services. Just before the evening service my mother asked him if he would like a wash. "Wash? why should I want a wash? I washed this morning."

M. W. Mollin, the intellectual with more Catholic views was there. The father of David Mollin, I was privileged to enjoy his close friendship for many yers.

E. J. Llewellyn, of Barry, a "clean" man in every sense of the word. He walked with God as one of his disciples.

E. Sorton Davies . . . to have overcome a physical affliction to such an extent that others hardly notice it indicated a man of sterling character.

In my young days at Llancarfan School I remember three headmasters. I knew little of Idris Davies except that he was a keen draughts player and he often played with my father

in the blacksmith's shop over the anvil. Trevor John was a good headmaster and a keen cricketer, but he was plagued by an ulcer which restricted his activities. George Davies was the ideal head of a village school. He was a good disciplinarian and had the interest of everyone inside and outside the school at heart. I can remember my grandfather William Price, the miller, speaking with awe of his headmaster, David Bowen, in the 1880's who never spared the rod. I wonder if he was like a chemistry master in the County School who was reputed to carry a baton hidden in his gown?

Before leaving the village I can recall the smells and the political talks of the blacksmith's shop. The smell of burning hooves, and the smell of burning timber as Dad and I banded wheels on the iron disc, still outside the shop. In that long hot summer of 1936 we banded wheels without end.

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Then on to the Barry County School, 1932-37.

I was fortunate indeed to have had a period with Major Edgar Jones as headmaster. He took us in Latin. VIA EST LATA, but woe to us if our road was not the narrow one. That clear resonant voice calling from his bicycle as he road up Jenner Road in the morning . . .

"Boy, put your cap on straight." Caps were straightened.

My form mates at the time were D. H. Pryce-Thomas, Eryl Hall-Williams, J. Glyn Daniels, Ray Howard, John Gould, David Joslin, Gerald Johns and a host of others, and I think we all worked very well.

After the B.C.S. an apprenticeship at Boots and the Cardiff Tech., during the war, I recall that I and the chemist apprentices studied botany with success in an evening class conducted by your good wife.

On the map you refer to a revision of the parish boundaries in 1931. George Davies, at this time head and also parish councillor, gave me the job to tidy up an old O. S. map and to make a dozen copies of the new version. It is only now that I realise what it was all for. I was amazed that you could still find a handful of Welsh-speaking villagers. Even my grandparents could not speak fluent Welsh and it would be most interesting to find why the Welsh language faded so suddenly in the middle of the 19th century.

As a chemist interested in natural remedies I wonder if your one-time colleague David Walters, passed on to you the best way of making mead. I can remember some of his mead brewing in the fume cupboard.

When I dispense antibiotics today I recall Grandma Price turning out mould from almost empty jam jars, mixing it with home-cured lard to form a good cure for boils and carbuncles. It worked and why not? The very first steps in antibiotics.

I am glad your cataract operation has enabled you to make the map and I hope that Dad's operation will be equally successful. Diolch yn fawr i chi.

Idris Lewis, Rose Glen Pharmacy, Durban.

Editor's note: When Idris wrote giving permission to use this letter he also very generously

sent a substantial donation to Society funds for which we are more than grateful. He also tells us that Gwynne Liscombe picked-up the skills of barbecuing during a visit to South Africa.

PLANNING: L.A.W. APPLICATION AND THE B.A. HANGAR

In Newsletter 46 we reported on the Land Authority for Wales' application for permission to build executive homes opposite New Mill. This has been rejected by the Vale Planning Committee. People must have been quite excited by this proposal: 173 objections were received as a petition and others, including those of the Council for the Protection of Rural Wales and the Llancarfan Community Council. The Chief Planning Officer said of this, and previous applications on adjacent plots: "It is considered that all these sites comprise open land on the hillside, divorced from the main part of the village". (Barry and District News May 28). Did anyone, other than LAW's officials, want this land developed for housing? Interestingly, the editor

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received no response to his request for members views. Probably this will not be the end of the matter as the application will surely go to appeal at the Welsh Office.

The note, in the last Newsletter, on the new B. A. service Hangar at Rhoose Airport brought various letters and comments:-

Gwynne Liscombe - I agree with the comments made about the size of the building, but after all, planning permission was granted. It is my understanding that, in the old quarry on the other side of Rhoose By-pass, where once was an unsightly car dump, planning permission has been refused to site several houses. I am at a loss to say anything further as there seems to be very little sense in it.

I would make the further point about employment. I am sure that the new facilities will bring a number of jobs to the area. The comments about Aberthaw B and the bigger cement works are taken, but they brought employment to the area. I well remember many people from the Llancarfan area being grateful for work opportunities at these centres, and indeed they provided many with a stepping stone into life-long employment. I don't think this factor should be overlooked, but I do understand there has to be a balance.

John Cann - Your comment in the newsletter about the airport building is a universal view shared by everyone I have met. The planning officer (who I talked to about another matter of planning at Weycock Cross) says that the furthest enraged sighting has been from Craig Penllyn. One wonders how we all came to miss the implications of the so called good news of more jobs at the airport. It is a great shame but I can't see anything to be done now but to look the other way.

Editor - the best we could do in the way of foresight came in Newsletter 29 (May 1990) where we wrote: "light industrial development around Cardiff (Rhoose) Airport. --- in view of the employment prospects --- are likely to be supported by South Glamorgan County Council."!!

EDWARD VIII AT BOVERTON a memory from Phil Watts

Curiously, the almost random note on the King's visit, in Newsletter 46, has aroused a great deal of interest. Several comments were printed in the last Newsletter and this one is a personal memory from Phil.

Llancarfan School was taken to Boverton in a bus organised by Connie Griffiths, Morfydd Thomas (Mamie Watts) and George Davies, the teachers at the school at that time.

My personal memory is of a large black car travelling at high speed round the corner near Tyle House, opposite the existing Post Office, leading to the Land Settlement. Travelling so fast that I did not see the King - only the car! Tyle House was at that time occupied by Margaret and Jack Lougher, formerly of Cross Green, Llancarfan.

My other memory of the Land Settlement was being sent there during the war years to obtain a rare commodity at that time - juicy, ripe tomatoes. I was often accompanied by Gwynne Liscombe and Lionel Rees.

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Dr Evan Thomas tells me that the land was owned by Thomas Thomas of Stallcourt Farm, Cowbridge and handed over that day in 1936 to the Welsh Land Settlement. This is confirmed by Blair Evans, Ty to Maen, who was also there that day and he proudly says that he touched King Edward's coat. Thomas Thomas was Blair's grandfather - on his mother's side - Mrs Evans father - a cattle dealer well known in all the local markets and sales - a man with a full beard.

Mrs Letty Gardner has shown me a photocopy of a photograph of leeks, assembled into an arch for the occasion of the King's visit.

Tony Thomas, Pancross Farm, recalls that the Settlement was never agriculturally successful and that it was wound-up in 1960.

RUBBISH DUMPING AT ABERTHAW QUARRY

A planning application is to be made for dumping domestic and trade waste in Aberthaw Cement Works' quarry. This is only a few hundred yards outside the Llancarfan

Community boundary and 1000 yards from Cardiff Wales Airport. The applicant is a Blue Circle subsidiary, Blue Circle Landfill and tipping is envisaged as going-on for 30 to 40 years. Vale planners have recommended that South Glamorgan should reject the application because of the risk of birdstrikes at the Airport, generation of traffic (more than 350 lorry journeys a day), noise and smell and the risk of pollutant leakage in the permeable limestone (Barry and District News June 11).

LLANVYTHIN HOUSE: GARDENS OPEN DAY

On Sunday, 18 May, the gardens were open to the public from 2.00 to 6.00 p.m. in aid of various charities. A number of members took advantage of the good weather to visit Llanvythin Gardens, so expertly kept and well laid-out by Helena and Laurie Williams. If you missed it this year it is a date to lookout for next year - we shall try to announce it in the Newsletter. You will be well rewarded and it is in aid of a good cause.

MEMBERS LETTERS

Renewal of subscriptions always brings a few letters, mostly written to Phil Watts for two obvious reasons: firstly he is Membership Secretary and secondly he is one of the very few villagers now remaining as a resident and also a son of several generations from Llancarfan. One of these is reproduced below:

From David Evans, West Tytherley, Wiltshire - formerly of Garnllwyd - to Phil Watts

It was a great pleasure to read this morning, within Newsletter 44, that you have heard from my boyhood friend Jeffery Thomas. Together with his younger brother Vernon, we would spend many happy hours birds-nesting and exploring the woods rivers and old hedgerows around Llancarfan during the war years. Climbing up over the fields from Ty to Maen, where my uncle Frank lived and kept his immaculate Austin 7 in the laneside garage, Jeffery, en route to his

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home at Gowlog found a Blackcap's suspended hammock nest on the edge of the wood. Here was a blue riband, and I was invited to admire the beauty of its contents, five pink and red blotched eggs glinting in the evening sun.

Our athletic activities included hunting for the nests of the artful Magpie and only Jeffery could reach these great fortresses, swaying very often at the top of cloudswept branches. The "yuckets" would be thrown out to perish amongst the bluebells and brambles below. We were boys of our time, and in a sense early conservationists. Magpies are a scourge in the district today and nothing at Garnllwyd escapes their evil eye, for without control they are quite fearless. Housemartins bred high on the outside of the corn barn there, and we would reach their mud-clinging nests by hanging onto Jeffery's legs as he leaned far out of

the wood-framed window with nothing but the stone cobbles leading to the stables 35 feet below.

Later, I believe about 1944-5, Jeffery's family moved to Beddau. This was different country with wet meadows filled with rushes, home to nesting Curlews. Contact through daily lessons under the watchful eye of Miss Griffiths and Miss Thomas was broken, so it was indeed poignant to learn that Jeffery has made contact with the Llancarfan Society. Mrs Thomas was an engaging lady and a superb cook. Parties at Gowlog were memorable, as were those of Mrs Thomas of Pancross and Mrs Newton of Bonvilston, whilst flickering oil lamps would reveal jellies, blancmange and apple tarts made from apples stored in the dry back shed.

Llancarfan was composed of families embracing a natural country relationship; perhaps in retrospect the trading fabric of that society had a shrewdness mixed with charming innocence. People had the time to stop the horse or car and exchange daily news. "Evans, Garnllwyd, is cutting the Cae Fair: bit early wouldn't you say?"

NEWS OF MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

After a long illness we are sad to hear of the death of Doreen Clode, remembered as Landlady of the Mason's Arms Llanbethery for a number of years, having served an apprenticeship with Trixie Phillips at the Fox and Hounds, Llancarfan and previously at Bindles Ballroom. After retirement Doreen lived with her husband Frank at Moulton. PW

Another reminder of our mortality comes with the death of "Billy" Phillips. A manager of the Fox and Hounds about 20 years ago, he was previously at the Caesar's Arms, Craigau and, after the Fox, moved on to the Highwayman (Whitehall), the White Lion at Llantwit and the Queen Victoria at Sigginston. A moving tribute was paid to him in a recent letter from Barrie Williams to the Barry and District News: "There are times when the death of one person can have an impact on the lives of many. Such is the case with the passing of "Billy" Phillips, well known by many of the older generation for the pleasure he gave through dances and functions at Bindles. Then, with younger generations captivated by his courtesy, charm and service in various public houses - latterly at the Victoria Inn, Sigginstone - eating out at Billy's and friends became a must for many from as far afield as Swansea and East Cardiff." He will be so sadly missed. JRE

Cicily Tyree posted her subscription from mid-Florida, U.S.A., on April 3rd and it arrived at Abernant on April 6th - how's that for speed of delivery?!

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St Cadoc's Church, Llancarfan. Father Feild tells us that the Church Architect has made an inspection of the Church and the news is that the roof is in very bad condition. All of the slates have to be removed and rotten woodwork replaced. This will be done in two stages,

one half of the church first while services continue in the other, followed by repairs to the bell tower. He says a large sum of money has to be raised but that grants are available. Work will start, hopefully, in autumn this year.

Church bells: Following the note in the last Newsletter there is now a weekly tuition night - details from Phil Watts. The response to the appeal for ringers has been good, about ten people having volunteered. A few stays have been broken but will be repaired in time for the next wedding!

Current status of the Tennis Club is a membership of 134 of which 45 are senior, 13 family and 13 junior with the remainder being social members and a few of the founder life-members. Hard to believe this started in 1967 or '68 as a "knock-about" on a lawn! Congratulations to hard working committee and helpers.

In Newsletter 46 we mentioned an article on Lower Greenway Farm in the Western Mail Business and Farming Supplement which has more recently featured the nearby Hendrewennol fruit-garden (June 11). You can pick your own fruit and enjoy a farm-walk in which many unusual farm animals may be seen. Fruit growing, like the vegetable growing at Lower Greenway, is easier on the sandy, glacially-derived, soils north of the A48 - the editor remembers Harry Hughes saying that a ploughshare only lasted half as long, north of Blacklands Farm - presumably because of the sand in the soil.

The national press recently reported the discovery, on a beach in West Wales, of a case containing "secret" Russian documents and made some play of the fact that the case was intended to explode on unauthorised opening. Editor would have passed this by, except that the Western Telegraph carried more detail and identified, amongst the finders, a resident of Cardigan, Mr Barry Paine. Many readers will remember Barry when he lived with his parents, Stella Paine and her late husband, Sid, at Bluestones, Llancarfan, one of the houses built on Broadhayes field in the late 60's.

MEMBERSHIP OF LLANCARFAN SOCIETY - a note from Phil Watts

Last year the Llancarfan Society Membership had a mailing list of 162 addresses; we are still waiting for a few of these to renew their subscriptions but we have only heard from one person that a subscription is no longer required. I shall be grateful if anyone else who wishes to end their membership could let me know so that we can amend our mailing list (Phone 0446 781336). Non-members in Llancarfan, Llanbethery and Llancadle have recently received a circular inviting them to join and a number have responded. Out of 64 "letter boxes" in Llancarfan, 41 belong to Members of the Society while, for Llanbethery and Llancadle the numbers are 36 and 6, 20 and 2.

RESIGNATION: We have received notice from Barbara Milhuisen that she wishes to

resign as Secretary of the Society. Further details will appear in Newsletter 49.

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THOUGHTS from Gwynne Liscombe

I remember some reference in a previous Newsletter to Japanese Knotweed. It seems to be causing much the same problem in many parts of Wales as Rhododendron is causing in North Wales. I can remember it flourishing in Llancarfan much more than it does now, so at least it is under control. Many people used to call it "Billy Lougher". I assume it used to grow in his garden. Perhaps there were other names for it and some readers may remember what they were?

Boule - Petanque: it was interesting to read Barbara Milhuisen's reference to Boule in a previous Newsletter and by the time the June Newsletter appears, some members will have tried the Boule experience at the Abernant Barbecue, I would remind readers that a Petanque Club already exists within the community, at The Three Horse Shoes, Moulton, and I am sure that anyone wishing to try the game could come along on a Tuesday evening and have a go. It does seem to be a game which is suitable for all ages and even if there is difficulty, as far as stooping is concerned, a special aid is available, which is a magnet on the end of a piece of string which successfully picks up the boule.

A further thought is that the Society could arrange to have a Boule evening at the Three Horse Shoes for any interested members.

ANOTHER FAMILY SEARCH a letter from D G Williams of Rumney

Phil Watts has received a letter from Mr D G Williams of 30 Lancaster Court, Cranleigh Rise, Rumney, Cardiff, asking whether anyone can assist him with details of his ancestors in Llancarfan. In particular he is interested in a Mary Russel who's property was sold, on her death in 1843. Vestry minutes show that some of her effects were bought by her brother-in-law, Levi Jones, who was a weaver and Mr Williams' Great-Great-Grandfather. Levi's wife was previously Jane Russel.

Mary's house was described as "the House and Slopehouse behind which is used as a stable and a piece of garden before the house all situated within the parish of Llancarvan, village of Llancarvan. Robert Williams has taken possession this 30th day of March 1843 at £2.2 per annum." As a charge for rethatching is mentioned, elsewhere, this has to be one of the older thatched houses - Phil suggests this might be either Fern Cottage or Brook Cottage but, of course a lot of older cottages have been rebuilt since the mid-1800's - Rose Cottage for example is now the Hollies - a "garden before the house" suggests that the garden was between the road and the house - not the case for either Fern or Brook Cottages? Many other cottages have vanished, unrecorded.

In his note to the editor Phil also records that Mr Williams visited Llancarfan by catching the bus from Cardiff to Bonvilston and walking via Abernant Road. He brought a flask and sandwiches with him and spent his lunch time sitting in the churchyard on the new memorial seat to Joan HARRY (Newsletter 47) - she would have been so pleased to know that it was already useful and a comfort for others.

If anyone sends information to Mr Williams, the editor will be grateful for a copy of any details.