



## LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

### Newsletter 51 November 1992

With this Newsletter is enclosed a sheet of three returnable slips for renewal of Membership, provisional booking for the next Annual Dinner and a recruitment slip for new members or folk you feel might like to see a trial copy of the Newsletter. Also enclosed is a list of Society members which may remind you of old friends or tell you just how many people the Society now serves: some of the names just identify a "mailbox" from which the Newsletter circulates through many hands - we believe our readership is now several hundred.

#### DATES FOR THE DIARY.

**CAROL SERVICES:** will be held at St Cadoc's, Llancarfan, on Sunday 13 December at 6.30 p.m. and St Iltyd's, Llantrithyd on Tuesday 22 December at 7.00 p.m. There will also be a Christingle service at St Cadoc's on Sunday 20 December starting at 4.00 p.m. - this will be suitable for children of all ages from 9 to 92. The Christmas Eve service will be at 11.45 p.m. and Christmas Day services at 9.15 a.m. at St Iltyd's and 11.00 a.m. at St Cadoc's.

**DUCK-EGG RACE:** The annual race, organised by Gwynne Liscombe will be on Boxing Day morning, proceeds to be shared between Physically Handicapped and Able Bodied (PHAB) and the Margaret May Memorial Trust for Respite Care. The Trust was set-up by Barbara Milhaisen commemorating Margaret May who looked after handicapped children in Gladstone Road for many years. The race will start below the upper ford and finish at the Fox and Hounds Bridge as usual lucky numbers from Gwynne Liscombe or at the Fox and Hounds before or on the day.

**WHIST DRIVE:** Another Whist Drive will be held in February - date to be announced.

**SOCIETY A.G.M.:** to be held on the evening of March 12 at the Village Hall the entertainment, speaker and other arrangements to be announced later.

**MAY DAY WALK:** the walk will start at the Village Hall with a cup of coffee and a biscuit then to Ford Farm, Broomwell and Penylan Barn, returning via Cross Green Hill. The hall will be booked for the whole day and it is suggested that members might like to return after the walk bringing their own refreshments for an "indoor picnic".

**GARNLLWYD WOOD WALKS:** Monday, May 17 has been decided on for a look at the wildlife of Garnllwyd Wood which is a Nature Reserve of the Glamorgan Wildlife Trust and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The leader will be Joan Raum, of Walterston. The party will be restricted to 12-15 people but if more are interested, Joan has kindly offered to lead a second walk on Tuesday 18th May. We aim to start at 7.00 p.m. from the yard of Garnllwyd, by kind permission of Geoff and Sue Evans. Names should be given or sent to Phil Watts or Secretary, Sheila Mace (address above).

If you are coming, please bring insect repellent, protective clothing and wellingtons or walking-boots. Please do not be put off by this as we are told you will be well rewarded for the effort. In the words of the Salvation Army "Come and join us".

-2-

BARBECUE: Abernant in June, chef Gwynne Liscombe. Details to follow later.

ANNUAL DINNER: this was so popular that a preliminary booking list is already open for next year: names and numbers are being taken by Phil Watts for 24 September, 1993, with a maximum number of 60 as we were a little overcrowded in the Village Hall this year. A returnable slip is enclosed with this Newsletter and confirmation of booking will be needed before August 31, 1993. Cost will be £10 for a similar roast meal to the one we had this year. If there is a substantial overbooking we shall hold a second dinner. It is a pity the hall is not bigger but isn't this a remarkable tribute to the enthusiasm of all our members, five years into the existence of the Society? As usual more details and booking slips will appear in the Newsletter a couple of months before the dinner.

In the last Newsletter the editor wrote of our awareness that we seem to do the same things each year: Phil Watts tells us that the Ladies Tuesday Club is thinking of taking a Paddle Steamer trip on the "Waverley" sometime next year. At the last meeting, our Secretary was asked to contact the Tuesday Club stating that some of our members might be interested in joining the trip and offering to publicise it in the Newsletter once a date is available. This would certainly be different!

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, Llancarfan, Barry, South Glamorgan, CF6 9AD. Agenda items and correspondence for the Committee to the Secretary, Sheila Mace, Pel y Dryn, Llanbethery, Barry, South Glamorgan. Arrangements for visits to sick members: Len Fairfax, Summit View, Aberthin, Cowbridge, S. Glam. (Cowbridge 772654).

#### NEWS OF MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Whist Drive: another successful Society event took place on Saturday 14th November, though lacking in numbers - we are told because it was on a Saturday night. Successful, because it brought in members we have not seen for a long time; David Harris, Doreen and Alf Everett (Doreen Gibbons). Thanks to you all for coming on a night of foul weather. Is there any night which suits everyone?

Phil Watts tells us that all of the remaining daffodils and narcissi have been distributed to Llantrithyd, Llancadle, Ford Cross, Penonn and Llanbethery. Crocuses and snowdrops have also been planted along the Church path. We are most grateful to all the folk concerned for help with the planting - an onerous task as some of you will know. Editor

apologises for implying that some of the bulbs would go to Penmark - this was a misreading of Penonn in the Membership Secretary's handwriting - hope it doesn't start a war!

The Society has received a thank-you letter from Mrs Trudi Fuller for the Society's donation to the MacMillan Nurses Fund.

-3-

St Cadoc's Restoration: Father Feild tells us that he has appealed to CADW for a grant to proceed with the first phase of the restoration - a meeting has been held with the Secretary for Wales but Mr Hunt's decision has not yet arrived but hopes are high because of the historical importance of St Cadoc's.

### SCHOOL GARDENS by Phil Watts

In Newsletter 50, Jeff Thomas made reference to garden plots at Llancarfan School. These were in the area behind the low wall at the bottom of School Hill which was split into 16 plots with paths in between. They were allocated to the oldest boys in the school and sometimes plots were shared. The ones at the higher end had the lightest soil as this was where the ashes from the school fires were tipped. The area was later planted with trees, conifers and willow, and used as the site for the septic-tank for the school. After the installation of mains-drainage the tank was redundant and after its demolition, the area has now become part of the garden of David and Kay Gay's house, Stepping Stones, which was built adjacent to the Fox and Hounds car park in Dai, Glanyrafon's field.

I recall sharing a plot with David Lougher. We planted a row of peas - his half came up - mine didn't!! You can't plant peas upside-down can you?!

Len Fairfax, a pupil of Mr Samuel, recalls being provided with clogs for gardening and being told to take them off before leaving the garden so as not to take the soil away from the plot.

### LLANCARFAN IN LITERATURE III

Some of the earliest written references to Llancarfan relate to the Norse attacks on the Welsh coast in the eighth century - they are to be found in Brut y Tywysogyon (The Chronicle of the Princes), a medieval document covering the period 682 to 1282 and based on church and monastic records. The existing translations of the Chronicle are based on an original Latin text, now lost, possibly written in the Abbey of Strata Florida. B. G. Charles (Old Norse Relations with Wales, University of Wales Press, 1934) quotes from this source, as follows:- "St Davids, called Menevia in the Middle Ages, with its ancient religious sanctuary, became the centre on which the Scandinavian raiders focused their assaults from 982 to the end of the century. Godfrey, the son of Harold ravaged the Church in 982. In 988 it was again visited together with four other monastic houses along the coast., viz. Llanbadarn Fawr, near Aberystwyth; Llandudoch (St Dogmaels), near

Cardigan; Llancarfan and Llanilltud, both in Glamorgan." (Godfrey Haroldson, of the Danish dynasty of Limerick, succeeded his brother Magnus as king of the Isle of Man about 977).

The history of the Viking period provided Marianne Spencer with a story which may or may not be a local folk-memory, plausible as it sounds (Annals of South Glamorgan, Spurrel, Carmarthen, 1913):- As early as the year 987 the wealth of Llancarvan was so proverbial that it was attacked by a party of Danish rovers ---- There is a tradition in the neighbourhood, evidently referring to this event, that when a party of Danish or Saxon pirates attacked the monastery one of the monks, thinking to save his own life, went

-4-

out to meet the marauders and show them the way. But even these robbers had their own sense of honour, for they said amongst themselves "Here is a traitor, let us hang him", and they did hang him, and in the field just below Llanveithin, which to this day is known as "the traitors close". Dr Evan Thomas first drew my attention to this story in Spencer's book: I am not sure whether we have already included it in a previous Newsletter.

Wales has been well-served by the six volumes of the History of Wales, edited by Professor Glanmor Williams and published jointly by Clarendon Press and the University of Wales Press. It is interesting to note that volume II covering the period 1063-1415 contains six references to our village, volume III (1415-1642) none, volume IV (1642-1780) only two, and volume VI (1880-1980), none. This bald fact reflects the enormous changes in population distribution from the tiny village-towns of medieval times to the centralisation of administration and industry in the great coastal cities of modern South Wales, and also the shift of importance from the Church as a central facet of life to its present existence, almost as an adjunct of the British State

The first reference in volume II (Conquest, Coexistence and Change: Wales 1063-1415. R. R. Davies, 1987) concerns roads and tracks:- "In medieval Wales, Roman roads still probably retained a measure of vestigial importance, especially in the south east, the vale of Glamorgan or around Brecon---". "More important were the tracks and particularly the upland ridgeways which kept clear of the marshy valleys, such as 'the road which runs from Llancarfan to Llanilltud (Llantwit) between the two valleys' ---." Looking at the modern day O.S. map it is not at all clear which route is meant here any ideas?

Changes in the Church were already well underway by the eleventh century:"Bishoprics were still fluid; --- Thus the bishopric of Llandaff was taking shape --- extending its claims and assimilating possible earlier bishoprics and ecclesiastical cults, in the east in Welsh Bicknor and Ergyng, in the south in Llancarfan, and in the west in Llandeilo Fawr." In the 11th-12th centuries despite the Conquest and the subsequent seizure of lands, Llancarfan maintained some considerable claim as a seat of scholasticism "---- even elsewhere - at Llancarfan, St Davids or Llandinam some of the scholarly traditions of Welsh classical learning clearly survived. "It was the master of such a clas school at Llancarfan, Lifris, who penned the biography of St Cadog in the late eleventh century." However:- "the ecclesiastical wealth of the countryside was not exempt from Norman greed:"Many of the conquerors granted the tithes from their newly acquired domains to Norman monasteries and favoured monastic foundations in England, "---especially at the

expense of the lands and resources of former Welsh clasau. St Peters abbey, Gloucester, grew rich from the former estates and endowments of Llancarfan (Glamorgan) and Llanbadarn Fawr (Ceredigion). --- not until the Reformation was there to be a comparably sudden transfer of ecclesiastical wealth in Wales."

Though the creation of geographically well-defined parishes had probably commenced well before the coming of the Normans "there is little doubt that it is the twelfth and thirteenth centuries which were crucial in defining the parochial geography of much of Wales in the form which it was to retain, in many cases, until the nineteenth century. ---- Satellite chapels such as those which were said in the 1140s to have been built 'lately in the parish of St Cadog of Llancarfan' acquired their own endowment and eventually aspired to parochial status."

-5-

By contrast with this rich early history of our village, volume four of History of Wales, by G. H. Jenkins, The Making of Modern Wales 1642-1780, contains only two references to Llancarfan, one, predictably to Iolo Morganwg but this adds nothing to information we have already included in the Newsletters. It also contains an intriguing quote from Edward Lhuyd:- The citizens of Llancarfan were "very subject to toothache and rheums."! This was information provided in response to queries which Lhuyd sent out as a questionnaire and published as Parochial Queries (c. 1700). Lhuyd's questionnaire must have been one of the first ever social surveys?

Toulson and Forbes' The Drovers Roads of Wales II Pembrokeshire and the South (Whittet 1992) just reaches our area, charting routes between Llantwit and Cowbridge. Amongst other interesting details they talk of Iolo Morganwg's days in Cowbridge and his friendships with notable figures of the time: Benjamin Franklin, Tom Paine, Pitt, Cowper and Boswell amongst others. The poet Robert Southey, subsequently Poet Laureate, penned the following verse to Edward Williams.

Iola, old Iola, he who knows  
The virtues of all herbs of mount or vale,  
Or greenwood shade, or quiet brooklets bed;  
Whatever lore of science or song  
Sages and bards of old have handed down.

(The spelling, Iola, may be Southey's whimsy or a mistake by the authors of the book - they spell it this way throughout their text and have already been criticised for careless research. However The Drovers Roads is well worth reading if only for Caroline Forbes' wonderful monochrome photographs of South Wales. I have not yet tracked-down the source of the verse but Southey wrote a massive work entitled Madoc and shared with Morganwg the belief that the Welsh prince Madoc had reached north America long before Columbus.)

VANDAL ROBINS by John Etherington

About 25 years ago, when I first moved to Llancarfan, being a bit on the penniless side, we built our own garage (amongst other things) on the Black Horse Land. Glazing the

window frames took rather a long time as I had never done the job before but, finally, I was quite proud of the polished finish to my fillets of putty.

When I started painting the window-frame which faces toward the high bank at the back of the garage I discovered that half of my laboriously smoothed putty had disappeared, leaving a ragged, pock-marked channel around the bottom of the window and small puncture marks elsewhere.

At a guess it had to be a bird so I replaced all the damaged putty and mounted guard. Within a few minutes the culprit arrived, attracted by the smell of the new linseed oil. What should it be but my friendly head-tilted robin which had spent much of the previous winter sitting on my spade handle looking for worms as we battled away with the Llancarfan yellow clay while digging our house foundations. I gave up and painted over the beak marks; they remained there for nearly twenty years until we tidied-up the house when we moved a couple of years ago!

The thing which brought this all to mind is that I have just finished another garage and, again, I glazed my own windows. The next morning --- well, you

-6-

will have guessed: a long strip of putty was missing from the bottom rebate of the frame and sitting on the overhanging hawthorn bush waiting for the repair was another friendly robin! We now have sheets of blue builder's polythene stapled over the windows while the putty dries.

Various different birds have the same habit - Frank Jameson told us about a similarly obsessed magpie in Newsletter 21 - he found no way to deter it but I think a robin will not be strong enough to get through our polythene!

#### RUTH AND PHIL WATTS' RUBY WEDDING August 30 1992 by Phil Watts

This event has come and gone; there has been reference to it in the Newsletter, indirectly, and at the Annual Dinner in humorous fashion. To recall it as it happened is to say that it was celebrated in France at the home of Barbara Milhaisen where a surprise party with a cake made by Beryl Price, Moulton and transported by Barbara (arranged by Ruth!!) was held.

Those attending were friends and neighbours of Barbara in Senesse de Burge, gathering together in the forecourt of her new home. There was much chatter in broken English, schoolboy and schoolgirl French including a speech, through interpreters, by the bridegroom of 40 years ago. The evening continued with the sampling of the local wine and the toast was made in "Blanquette de Limoux" champagne. Boules de Petanque were played until quite late to end a very happy day.

Later, it was decided, after a visit to the champagne merchant that it would be a nice

gesture to extend the toast to the evening of the Society Dinner. Because the honeymooners of 40 years past were travelling by air, twelve bottles of champagne would be better transported by car to Llancarfan. Barbara has an innocent face and is well equipped to deal with Her Majesty's Customs and Excise. Hence the toast was made in champagne at the Society Dinner, by Barbara to the health of Phil and Ruth.

Notes on Blanquette de Limoux (Limoux 1531, the true origin of Brut). The wine consists of the appellation of 41 villages around Limoux. Surrounding hills protect from the extreme climate of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Vines are planted at the top of south-facing slopes giving best exposure. The soil is shallow and sparse, full of chalk and stone. Vinyards are controlled by quota and the grapes, picked by hand, are the first of the French harvest. Three varieties, Maazac, Chemin and Chardonnay form the basis of the blend for Blanquette de Limoux. Pruning has to be done the moment the harvest comes in and the grapes have to be kept whole. First pressing produces best juice, clear and fruity, called cuvees. Second pressing produces "taille", decanted for twelve hours. Yeasts and sugar induce fermentation and the wine, already sparkling is then allowed to age for between nine months and three years before finally being shipped around the world including Llancarfan.

A LETTER from Dick Evans:

Dick has been one of our most faithful contributors and has also been a regular attender at the annual dinners. He also usually writes to Phil Watts with a letter of thanks after the dinner and contributes another of his memories. This year he writes as follows:-

-7-

I was interested to read in the Newsletter (49) about the shop belonging to the Fox and Hounds. The pupils of my school class who passed the 14-exam for entry into Barry County School (including George Durham, Bryn Williams, Gordon Gregory, Cliff Morgan and myself) celebrated with "pop" at the shop. I am not sure if Bellona Price came with us, although I remember she passed the exam. I recall the smell of the liquorice which we called "leather-mehome" and there were "gob-stoppers", "lucky potatoes", "sherbert fountains", "Turkish delight" and many more assorted sweets on which to spend our halfpennies and pennies.

One thing I remember vividly, in the shop was a wasps' nest made of wood-pulp suspended from one corner of the ceiling.

Talking of sweet things reminds me of the lovely strawberries grown by Tom Griffiths of Pembroke House, next door to the shop. We used to come out of the Fox and Hounds and pick them from the front garden, reaching them over the wall. Tom got wise to this and placed several mouse-traps among the plants, giving us a nasty surprise!

WASPS' NESTS by John Etherington

Dick Evans' recollection of the wasp's nest, in the previous article, reminds me of several things which happened during our twenty three years at Ceffyl Du in Llancarfan.

As July and high-summer came upon us, wasps would appear in the garden around the pear tree, getting into our beer and attacking our outdoor meals. Usually a search would reveal a nest in the hard, cracked black soil under the hedge behind the house, with a

steady stream of wasps flying in and out of a round hole. I could rarely bring myself to harm them but once or twice they got a bit too much for us and after "gassing" them you could dig-out the football sized wood-pulp nest made up of layers of grey paper "honeycomb" in which the young were raised, the whole thing surrounded by a spherical thin paper wall. All of this paper was made of wood chewed from surrounding fence-posts and dead branches and often the patches of different colour would identify the different sources of wood.

One year, in the 70's, it got a bit more exciting as a queen-wasp must have found a way behind the cedar boarding on the pine-end of Ceffyl Du and, by early summer, there was a steady stream of the black and yellow insects, in and out, and our living-room was constantly full of wasps. Our old Labrador, Peta snapped at one and was stung. This was too much and, after a failed attempt at getting rid of them ourselves, we called in a gentleman from the council - he came whilst I was at work so I don't know how he did the trick but there were no wasps the next day.

These wasps which make nests in the ground or holes in houses are mostly the Common Wasp and the German Wasp. There are another two wasps, the Tree Wasp and the Norwegian Wasp which hang their wood-pulp nests in a bush or tree. Just once, one of these two (I'm not entomologist enough to know the difference) started its lovely nest, not in a bush but hanging in the open under the very deep eaves of Ceffyl Du - in a couple of weeks it grew to the size and shape of a very large, beautifully symmetrical apple, but sadly the wasps either abandoned it or died - perhaps because it was not in a bush?

-8-

This outdoor nest was only about 30 yards from the site of the one Dick remembered in the Sweet Shop. We kept the nest for a while as a memento of these visitors which I suppose not everyone would have welcomed.

Interestingly, and fortunately for our more relaxed life-style here in Pembrokeshire, wasps seem less happy with our open, heathy countryside. Far less often do we find them swimming in our drinks, attacking the breakfast marmalade or lunchtime ham. We do have tiny, solitary, Digger Wasps which excavate little holes in our sandy banks but these are much more congenial neighbours, never bothering us at all.

#### DOES ANYONE REMEMBER

A day or two ago, I discovered that Ashtons, the Cardiff fishmongers took advantage of one of the first local bus services, started in 1920 by South Wales Commercial Motors. Ashtons placed the following advertisement in the Company's first timetable:- "For your health's sake have a fish meal at least once a day. Living in the country this was not always possible. These Motor Buses will now bring it to you." (Glamorgan Historian vol. 1)



This must have been the beginning of the "mobile shop" tradition. Can anyone remember any early deliveries of this sort to Llancarfan? Most villages were well served by the late 1930's, there was a partial hiatus during the War when petrol was rationed and deliveries then became commonplace again. Did Llancarfan follow the same pattern? Older members recollect Tudor Liscombe's bread deliveries and more of us remember Mike Jankovic's mobile shop in the late 60's; the mobile library has visited for many years but what else has there been in this line? Except for the bread round this seems to be something that no one has mentioned except in passing.

Any offers?