



## LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

### Newsletter 54 April 1993

This Newsletter is a bit shorter than usual as we wanted to be in time to advertise the May Day walk once more. Sadly, the thinner envelope also reflects a lack of contributions from members but the editor lives in hope.

#### MAY DAY WALK

Please come to join us in this sixth May Day walk to meet some old and new friends. May Day is on Monday May 3 and the walk will commence at 10.30 a.m. (hope you were not confused by the p.m. in the last Newsletter!). We shall set-out from the Community Hall after a cup of coffee and a biscuit. The walk will be via Ford Farm, Broomwell and Penylan Barn, returning down Cross Green Hill. If the weather is fine John Etherington will talk about wildlife and points of interest. The Community 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". If the weather is bad we can have a morning get-together, anyway. However, none of the previous walks have been rained-off and for at least two we have had superb weather.

#### OTHER DATES FOR THE DIARY

**GARDEN OPEN DAY: LLANVITHYN HOUSE:** Sunday, 16 May - by kind permission of Lawrie and Eleanor Williams the garden will be open from 2-6 o'clock and teas will be available if it is fine. There should be a large selection of shrubs in flower, some unusual, and early herbaceous flowers. The open day is in aid of the National Gardens Scheme, the proceeds of which will go largely to the McMillan Nursing Appeal.

**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, wearing her Wildlife Trust hat. The party will be restricted to 12-15 people but if more are interested, Joan will 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. It would be appreciated if you could let Phil Watts know that you are coming. Phil tells me that Geoff and Sue Evans have offered a viewing of Garnllwyd house to those who attend the walk and there will be a glass of wine for participants provided by the Society - not by Phil and Ruth as stated last time! (hope the wine offer doesn't lead to overbooking!).

**BARBECUE:** Phil and Ruth Watts have kindly offered another barbecue at Abernant on Sunday, 13th June at 12.30 p.m. Chef Gwynne Liscombe.

ANNUAL DINNER: The 24 September is almost booked-up so we shall certainly be holding a second dinner on November 6. We hope to welcome our President, Professor Sir Keith Thomas to the second dinner. A returnable slip was enclosed with Newsletter 51 and confirmation of booking will be needed before August 31, 1993 (a request for confirmation of your booking will appear in the Newsletter a couple of months before the dinners). Cost will be £10 for a similar roast meal to the one we had last year. Bookings to Phil Watts at Abernant.

-2-

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, CF62 3AD. 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).

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND ILLUSTRATED TALK

The Annual General Meeting was not very well attended despite being moved to a time of year with lighter evenings and better weather. Those who came spent a pleasant evening in which the formal business was discharged quickly, mainly because the majority of the Committee were willing to continue and were returned unopposed! This was followed by an illustrated talk on historic gardens, given by Mrs Patricia Moore the County Archivist, and the evening closed with a buffet and wine. More details of the formal AGM will appear in the next Newsletter.

Mrs Moore's talk was a delight for those who are interested in gardening or local history. She started by telling us a little of the British Historical Gardens Society and then her slides took us back into the past with some garden archaeology. A wall painting from Livia's villa at Porta Prima, near Rome, dating from about 25 BC showed the origins of the enclosed "ordered wilderness" which was probably similar to the garden excavated at Fishbourne Palace in Sussex. The Late Iron Age and Romano-British settlement at Whitton may well have had gardens in some of its enclosures - also the Roman fort at the Knap.

Later, medieval times saw the development of the geometrical garden in which wild nature was not allowed to penetrate into the calm and beauty of the walled garden - all was controlled and safe - perhaps a retreat from disorder without? An early painting of Conway castle showed just such a garden beside the castle walls.

Closer to home, Raglan Castle originally possessed a huge expanse of gardens and a very large lake, now hidden beneath pasture land. CADW in conjunction with the British Historical Gardens Society may be able to restore all of this in the near future. A little outside Wales was the wonderful formal water garden of Westbury Court, on the Severn,

which the editor remembers in total dereliction during the days before the M4 allowed us to by-pass Gloucester on the way to London. The National Trust has marvellously restored these gardens using species dating from pre-1700, including fruit trees. A worthwhile afternoon-out from Llanarfarn.

After closing her talk, Mrs Moore was enthusiastically thanked and the audience then explored her series of display boards featuring the historical gardens of St Fagan's, Wenvoe Castle, Dyffryn, Llanfihangel House, Miskin Manor and Margam amongst others. Gardeners were particularly fascinated by the antique seed-purchasing lists from the Margam gardens while any photographer

-3-

would have been intrigued to see colour photographs of the rose-gardens at St Fagans, taken at the beginning of the century by the old Autochrome process one of the first commercial colour photography systems.

#### EXTRAPAROCHIAL LLANVITHYN

During the 13th century, the Cistercian abbot who was tempted to lease land to a tenant would probably have faced a strong reaction from the rector of the parish who might lose tithes from the land let in this way. Such a dispute arose between Gloucester Abbey (rector of Llanarfarn) over "tithes issuing from the lands of the same abbot and convent of Margam in the parish of the church of Llanarfarn". Margam won this case, and it seems that the extraparochial status of Llanvithyn arose as a result (F. G. Cowley, 1977, *Studies in Welsh History I. The Monastic Orders in South Wales 1066-1349*. University of Wales Press.

#### SNAPSHOTS IN TIME by John Etherington

Doreen's Gibbins' article in Newsletter 52 has again reminded the editor that a village such as Llanarfarn, near a big city and with today's mobility of young people or even families, has seen a continuous turnover of its inhabitants. Maybe this is part of a longer history of change: over a century ago the 1881 census shows that a large proportion of the Victorian "Llanarfarnites" were born elsewhere, some in Ireland, some in Somerset and others in various parts of South and West Wales.

Today, even if parents remain, most of our children, like my own, leave to find work elsewhere and it is noticeable that most of those who have written fondly of their childhood days in the village are now expatriates. The majority of folk who live in 20th century Llanarfarn are destined to have a "snapshot in time" of friends and happenings often during a decade or less. Their predecessors and successors will not know of these things.

Doreen says at the end of her article "--- lots of new friends coming into Llancarfan - a lot I don't know now ---". Well, this is what the Society is about: I lived in this lovely village for nearly 25 years but many had gone before and many will come after. Through their writings in the Newsletter, or attendance at functions such as the Dinners, Walks and Fairs I now know many more of these expatriates than would have been the case without the Society and, as I have said before, many friendships have grown-up during the years of our existence. Not many villages bring together the old and the new in this way - it is something we should treasure and, thankfully we have members who are willing to work and give their time to keep things going.

Yes, you can probably guess - this is another request for items of news and memories to fill the Newsletter. This month, as I said above, it will be a bit shorter than usual because we are running-out of material though, just before this Newsletter was printed, I received a fat envelope from Jeff Thomas in New Zealand so there will be at least one full length article next time. What about some more letters and postcards? Any more ideas for the Llancarfan in Literature series - there must be more, if you can let us know.

-4-

#### WENGLISH?

In Mavis Coles' note from the county records (Newsletter 53), Cardiff or Caerdydd is rendered as Kyrdyff. Editor wondered whether this was a phonetic transcription, evidencing the Cardiff accent as long ago as 1304. John Edwards Wenglish was no help and I can find no other reference. Any linguists amongst us with an answer? The Ordnance surveyors in the last century certainly covered Wales with strange phonetic corruptions of Welsh names. On rereading Mavis' contribution I note that the original of this Patent Roll was in Latin - was the spelling original or did it arise later in translation?

#### CHURCH GOODS from Frank Jameson

In Mavis Coles' note from the county records of 1558, various items of Llancarfan Church property were mentioned (Newsletter 53).

Frank Jameson writes:- I expect someone has already written to you re the above. The chalice is probably the gilded silver chalice still in possession of St Cadoc's (now kept in safe custody and only brought out on rare occasions) awarded by Elizabeth I to many parishes which supported her in some cause which I cannot offhand recall. I believe that a number of these survive up and down the country.

The description of the cross fits that now in the church. I seem to remember the Vicar once told me it originated in Spain. He could no doubt confirm, correct or add to the above.

## POWER LINES FOR CARDIFF BAY

Visiting Llancarfan for the A.G.M. I had a bit of spare time before the meeting and explored some of my old haunts around the lanes which we used to cycle. Near the Blue Circle quarry at Aberthaw I noticed that work was being done on the transmission lines from the Power Station. Then, coming down the hill into Penmark and over Kenson Bridge, there was further activity on the power-lines which go along the Waycock valley. It was too dark to see what was happening - except that there was a considerable muddy mess - so I asked during the meeting, to discover that additional power transmission towers are being built to link Aberthaw B to the new Cardiff Bay development. Aberthaw A has closed down and I noticed in last week's press that Aberthaw B may be bought into the private generating sector - anyone know more?

## POSTAL CODES

Just as we have all learned to remember our post-codes, the Post Office in its wisdom, has discovered that more flexibility is needed and has recoded many areas. A recent letter from Llancarfan told me that it had changed from CF6 to CF62. Postcode Update 10 spells out the logic - all Barry codes which were in the CF6 9 group have changed to CF62 3 so Llancarfan village, which was CF6 9AD, is now CF62 3AD! I am grateful to my brother, Peter Etherington, for showing me this.

-5-

## NEWS OF MEMBERS, FRIENDS AND PLACES

The day of the Annual General Meeting saw the riverside daffodils on full bloom. It is a lovely display and has transformed a nettle-covered, often muddy bank into a month or more of wonderful colour. The Society should be pleased with itself. Many thanks to those who were involved in planting the bulbs over the past two years, both here and elsewhere in the parish.

A few months ago we wrote of ex-Llancarfan residents, Bob and Sue Watts, who are now running a successful vinyard, the Chateau de Seuil near Bordeaux (Newsletter 50). Bob and Sue recently featured on an HTV programme entitled A Case of Wine. This had a double dose of Llancarfan about it as the presenter and producer were Liz and Bob Stokes, formerly of Llanvithyn Mill. Best wishes and good luck to all these well-remembered folk.

Phil Watts wrote concerning the last Whist Drive on February 26th:- Prize Winners: 1st, 2nd and 3rd Ladies - Mrs Gunston, Mrs Bevan and Mrs Win Jones, all of Rhoose. 1st, 2nd and 3rd Gents: Mr Griffiths, Derek Porter and Alf Everett. Raffle winners Robert Hutchings and Audrey Porter. Best lowest scores: Mrs Joan Thomas and Mr Colin

Roberts. The theme of the Whist Drive prizes was St David's Day and it was well attended by people from Rhoose as shown by the winners list. Perhaps we shall get our own back one day! It is also worth mentioning that the first ladies' prize was taken by a lady over 91 years of age. Welsh cakes were made by Mrs Mary Griffiths and Beryl Price for refreshments, together with the usual tea and biscuits. Look out for the next Whist Drive in October. It was revealed during the evening that Doreen and Alf Everett were married in Llancarfan Church on that day 44 years ago.

More from Phil Watts: Derek Higgs spoke at the A.G.M. to tell us that the Community Council was organising a "clean-up" day for the village which was held on April 3rd. He did not mention that the Fox and Hounds was holding a Beer Festival on the 2nd and 3rd - I wonder if there was any connection between these events? Both must have been well worth taking-part in but probably the clean-up should have preceded the festival!

Yet more from Phil: Another successful event in the village was the Valentine's Day Dance in the Village Hall organised by the St Cadoc's Restoration Committee. We are told that it raised £1237, £531 from the bar, raffle, dinner etc and another £760 from an open prize-draw. Congratulations to all concerned. Everyone was impressed by the music, played continuously from before 8-o'clock to 1 a.m. - there are not many musicians prepared to play for so long without a break - and he sang as well!

I wonder how many people can remember Fred Walker of Penmark playing for the village dances? Fred played drums, usually accompanied by two piano accordionists, Roley Watts from Llantrithyd and now Bonvilston (Watts' Buses) and Peggie Jarret of Aberthaw - apparently she still plays. Fred always started with Quickstep and his signature was "I love to ride a Ferry when music is so merry, there's a man who plays a concertina on a moonlit upper deck arena -- etc."

Phil's thoughts on road signs along Five Mile Lane:- Two useful signs have appeared at Whitton Lodge indicating Walterston and Llancarfan in one direction and Dyffryn in the other. Other signs on Sutton Hill say "Danger men at work" followed by "Mud on road", "Road surfacing" and "Repairs to wires". I am left wondering about the "Danger men at work" and ask myself is it unusual for men to work? Is it always dangerous when men work? and who is

-6-

it dangerous for? and to be sexist, is it only men who work? N.B. The reason for these signs is a new run of Pylons in the Waycock Valley to Aberthaw causing havoc. Supposedly for our future comfort or maybe Cardiff Bay.

#### PRIZE-WINNING PUB

The Fox and Hounds, once again, has been voted the best pub in Mid- and South Wales by

CAMRA, The Campaign for Real Ale. Landlord, Mike Evans has served more than 100 guest beers from all over Britain during the past 12 months. Congratulations, Mike.

The Fox has won the award before, during the tenancy of Joyce Andrews, Peter and Sally Lennox. On that occasion the South Wales Beer Guide for 1987-8 featured the pub on its cover photograph. Long before the days of CAMRA, back in 1967 when I still lived in Cardiff, I remember going to an ex-W.D. scrapmerchant near Witney (Oxfordshire) to buy a trailer which we used in building Ceffyl Du. The owner of the yard asked where I was building a house and then said "That's where the best pub in Wales is!" I soon came to agree with him. Some of you will remember my old wooden box-trailer, built on an army firepump high-speed chassis.

## FIRE SERVICES

The last two Newsletters have contained references to the disastrous fire at the Green Dragon. Phil Watt's comment on the pumping of water from the river reminded the editor that there was a serious barn-fire at Pancross some 15 years ago (I expect Tony Thomas could tell us the exact date). The same problem of water supply arose then, and water was pumped from Nant Llancarfan in the centre of the village and up to the farm, with at least one auxilliary pump in the hose-line somewhere near the corner on Pancross Hill. It is a reminder that the whole of the plateau area around Llancarfan has always been short of water and, of course, this was the reason for the installation of the hydraulic ram in days past (Newsletter 5).

The difference in altitude between the valley-bottom and the plateau makes a problem for the Water Authority which was well illustrated when the waterpipe was fractured by an excavation near Ty To Maen - again 15 to 20 years ago. Returning from Cardiff in the evening, the huge jet of water with the sun behind it reminded me for all the world of that great fountain on Lake Geneva!