



LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

Newsletter 57 October-November 1993

The first of the two annual dinners was held on September 24. It was much enjoyed by those who attended and proved to be more comfortable than in earlier years, with tables set for just 40 people. It seems much more satisfactory to hold two dinners as we have previously had to refuse late bookings. This year we can accommodate everyone, though the second dinner is fully booked for some 70 people.

Thanks are due to the caterers, Evans of Porth, for an enjoyable meal and very smooth organisation. The usual helpers are owed gratitude for all the work which went into arranging the Hall, running the bar and organising a raffle.

SUBSCRIPTIONS are due in January, 1994 and new members will be welcomed. The charge will remain at five pounds per mailing address or two pounds fifty for Senior Citizens living alone.

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, Lllancarfan, Barry, South Glamorgan, CF62 3AD. Agenda items and correspondence for the Committee to the Secretary, Sheila Mace, Pel y Dryn, Llanbethery, Barry, South Glamorgan, CF62 3AN. Arrangements for visits to sick members: Len Fairfax, Summit View, Aberthin, Cowbridge, S. Glam. (Cowbridge 772654).

DATES FOR THE DIARY

DUCK EGG RACE: Gwynne Liscombe is organising another Duck Egg Race for Boxing Day, in aid of charity. Members of the Society will be assisting as usual and we hope you will all buy some eggs.

CHRISTMAS DRINK: There is to be a meeting of available members for a festive drink on the evening of Tuesday 7th December at the Fox and Hounds.

OBITUARY - DICK EVANS by Phil Watts

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of Richard Evans, always referred to as Dick Evans, formerly of Ford Cross, at Leicester on August 3rd. He is survived by his wife Dulcie. Dick would have been 79 on October 17th.

The Evans family moved to Llancafarn round about 1914 from the Monmouthshire area. Mother's name was Amelia, father's name was George. There were five children; Dorothy, Edith, Dick, George and Glenys. Dorothy became Mrs Jenkins lived at Ty Ucha, Ford Lane and kept the Post Office after becoming Dorothy Bryer. Dorothy was the mother of Barbara Milhuisen (nee Jenkins), Llancafarn

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Society Secretary until she moved to France in 1992. Edith was a nurse and served with the forces in India during 1939-45 War but regrettably died before returning home. She succumbed to a foreign illness - probably malaria. George lived in North Wales for many years but has also died. The only

survivor at present is Glenys, who attends many Llancafarn Society functions. She is married to Trevor Stoneham. They were very well known and popular hosts of the Blaengarw Hotel, Blaengarw.

Dick attended Llancafarn School gaining a scholarship to Barry Boy's. The Society is fortunate having in previous newsletters accounts written by Dick of his early life at sea, including being shipwrecked in the West Indies. After various occupations locally, Dick served in the Army from 1939-45. Dick took part in the initial work at Tair Onen Forestry, bringing piped water to Llancafarn and the building of the St. Athan aerodrome. Service in the army took him to many parts and his escapades included meeting-up with his beloved Dulcie. They married on St. Patrick's Day, 1947. After being demobbed he ran a garage in the Leicester area but most of his working life was spent as a heavy goods vehicle inspector. Since his retirement at 65, much of his leisure time has been spent playing bridge and going on cruises which would often include bridge tournaments.

Although Dick enjoyed living in Leicester it must be said that his heart was always in Llancafarn. He made at least one visit a year to Llancafarn never failing to call on his life-long friend Bill Watts while he was alive, and Doris Watts and family in the years after. All the people that knew Dick will say that he was a kindly, generous, jovial man who enjoyed life to the full loved talking about life, particularly in Llancafarn in the days of his youth. He was an articulate man and had the ability to spread happiness to those around him. In the years prior to his death he had suffered many long illnesses but he never let his discomfort be a burden to others.

He had a wide knowledge of Llancafarn parish, knew all the short cuts: this was necessary when the only means of transport was shanks' pony or a bike. He knew where the best mushroom fields were, where the pheasants roosted, where the rabbits lived and all the best trout pools. I am told he was very adept at tickling trout.

Dick grew up with the Harris family of the Fox and Hounds, various branches of the Griffiths family, Pallings, Williams, Hughes, Hopkins, Lewis etc. These are names that could be seen on the belfry tower wall. Dick rang the tenor bell which is the biggest one. It is ironical that he has died at a time when the St. Cadoc's bells have been silenced due to the unsafe nature of the frame. The family have indicated that they would like to

commemorate his life in some way and, if the bells are to be restored, they would like his name to be associated with a bell restoration. For one who enjoyed life so much, communicated with joy, there could not be a better way to perpetuate the life of Dick Evans than to hear the peal of the church bells.

I do not apologise for writing at length on Dick Evans because I feel that for the likes of him Llancarfan Society was formed. We shall miss his writings, we shall miss his annual pilgrimage to Llancarfan but we are grateful for being able to share a part of his life.

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OBITUARY - LADY ANN BOOTHBY by Phil Watts

Recently we have heard of the death of Lady Ann Boothby. She took a great interest in the activities of the Society and supported us most generously. She will long be remembered as a member of the hunt which gave her a great knowledge of Llancarfan parish. She worked very hard and was often to be seen at the farm markets buying and selling. A look at the fields she farmed will tell you that she knew what she was doing. My personal recollections of her is being thanked for opening and closing farm gates on hunting days. If I remember rightly, she rode side-saddle.

I think there is a Newsletter invitation for members who had a closer knowledge and association of her to write in.

APOLOGY: In the end, the last Newsletter was almost as long as usual, despite the dearth of contributions. However, in rushing to fill the space by finishing my article on the May Day walks, I became very confused and managed to identify our Membership Secretary as the Treasurer - several years out of date! Sorry, Phil.

EARLY PICTURES OF LLANCARFAN by Gwynne Liscombe

I was interested to read the Editor's comments regarding early drawings of Llancarfan. He referred to early illustrations of the village. It is of some note that the Editor's father did a number of interesting sketches of the village in the late 60's and early 70's. I have one of these in my possession from which it is apparent that changes have taken place to Brook Cottage and the Fox and Hounds. I am sure that there are other sketches and photographs from about 1900 and after, which show changes which have taken place.

I also have a lithograph of Llancarfan Church in my possession, clearly produced when the Rev. David Morgan was the Vicar. I am not sure of the date of this, but it is the same as the one in the Church and I believe there may be one or two others in existence. Interestingly it shows Broad Hayes with a thatched roof and the original toilets of the Fox and Hounds, which still exist.

I believe it also indicates that some changes have taken place to the top window of the tower.

Editorial note: the sketch which Gwynne has, done by my father Herbert Etherington, was one of several which were put together in preparation for a six-foot long acrylic water-colour panorama of the village completed in 1971. It is entitled "Llancarfan Fantasy", acknowledging Dad's artist's licence which has unfolded the village into a linear representation of its circular form and only including those houses and features which he liked. It is a sad memory that he was so distressed by the aftermath of my mother's death in 1966 that, in later years, he could not remember painting this remarkable work.

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REMINISCENCES by Dr. Evan Thomas, Tyla Rhosyr, Cowbridge

The request for material for the Newsletter prompts me to add further recollections of a "Llancarfan Boy" in addition to snippets already contributed in past issues.

My interest stems from the fact that both my parents came from Llancarfan, my mother being the daughter of William Lougher, Llanvithyn, one of the Garnllwyd Loughers, while my father was brought up in Broadclose Farm Moulton, at the turn of the century. On marrying they took over the tenancy of Llwynhelig Farm, Cowbridge, a part of the Homfray Estate, where my two sisters and I were born. Unfortunately in 1916 my father died at the age of 39 and mother decided after some thought to give up the farm and we moved to a house in Cowbridge.

This period was in the middle of the 1914-18 War and times were hard, so my mother was glad to fall back on the support of her father at Llanvithyn and we went there as often as possible.

Travelling was the problem as there were few cars, which meant taking the Taff Vale Railway Cowbridge to St. Athan train, getting off at Llanbethery Halt and walking. Early in 1918 there was a flu epidemic with a very high death rate - the number of deaths exceeding the total of fatalities during the whole of the war. My grandmother was one of the unfortunate victims, so my mother and we children returned to her old home to care for her father and brother.

I was now eight and went to the village school where I became friendly with the other village children - some of whom are still friends. One, Richard John of Flaxland Farm, I often meet on a Tuesday at lunch, while the widow of another (who lives in London) rings me every week or 10 days for a long talk - mainly about the world in general - she believes one of her husband's ancestors, who lived in Llancarfan, was present at the American Declaration of Independence! (in 1776).

While a pupil at the school, my basic education must have been sound, but like Jeff Thomas, late of Gowlog, as boys we followed country pursuits, including bird nesting, and the prize of my collection was a heron's egg collected by my father in his youth from a nest on Llanbethery Moors. It is sad to think on reflection that our efforts helped to contribute to the decline in the present bird population. Fishing was another pastime and I was very proud of my first rod made by the postman, the late Mr. Buckley, who lived in the village.

The mention of Gowlog reminds me of fellow pupils Tom, Jack and Mary Griffiths. The reference to the "Annals of South Glamorgan" written by Marianne Spencer is also of interest because much of this book, at least the chapter on Llancarvan (sic), was written at Llanvithyn and the author presented my mother (as thanks for the many meals she had provided while it was being written) with an autographed copy. This was one of my treasured possessions which I lent to someone who did not return it, although he said he had done so. I mentioned this story to a friend and he had a copy which he gave me, although I still hanker after the original.

Without the benefit of mechanization for ploughing, cultivating, reaping etc. farm workers were required to work long hours for low wages. One of these was Johnnie Wise, who worked most of the daylight hours for his keep, a few shillings a week and one ounce of Franklyn's shag for his clay pipe. Some, at

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harvest time, were itinerant workers who slept in the hay lofts but were well fed and cared for. This placed a heavy burden on the domestic staff who (apart from local girls) were usually recruited from the "Ely Homes". They normally remained until they married, often to local men, and there must be some of their descendents living in the area at the present time. If it were not for their invaluable help it would not have been possible to produce so much butter and cheese etc. and to deal with the curing of the bacon at pigkilling time - usually in the early months of the year. The whole pig was put to good use for food, including the blood for Black Puddings. We children were given the bladder which was blown-up and used as a football! The fitches and hams were salted and dried for use throughout the year.

Bacon and egg breakfasts were commonplace while the bacon joints were much in demand during the harvest period.

Transport at that time was limited to a trap, drawn by a well loved horse with a flowing mane called "JOKER" which did the regular Thursday trip to Barry. This was necessary not only to take the surplus butter, cheese, eggs etc. together with the garden produce and apples from the orchard, but also to buy the groceries for the next week (and other foods) from Dan Evans and other shops.

In 1921 my uncle Walter bought a Ford Model-T car which solved the problem of transport. The purchase of this car is much in my memory because one Thursday my grandfather was standing seeing them off to Barry when he dropped dead he was 81.

About this time my uncle married, so we returned to Cowbridge with my mother again. This did not mean that I severed connections with Llanvithyn and I returned at every opportunity, spending most of my holidays there helping out on the farm and assisting in cutting down the rabbit population with my gun. At that time they were so numerous and cartridges were so costly to us that the object was to shoot two or more with one shot - my record was six. At harvest time when the corn was out it was not unusual to catch 50 or more rabbits with the aid of dogs.

On my return to Cowbridge I was between 11 and 12 years old and I was fortunate enough to "pass" into the Grammar School. I matriculated in 1926 at the age of 16. A decision had to be made as to whether I return to school to read for Higher Certificates or apply to Medical School. Against my mother's wishes I did the latter on the condition that I give up at the end of my first year if it did not work out. Unfortunately she died three months later but I continued my medical studies and qualified 60 plus years ago. One of my recollections on my first day was meeting fellow student John Owen, father of Lord David Owen, whose mother later became a personal friend as she lived in nearby Llandow Rectory.

My career since qualification is another story. Suffice it to say that everything went my way, despite a hereditary complaint which sometimes made life difficult. Although no longer able to drive, I return to Llancarfan at every opportunity and am delighted to receive the regular "NEWSLETTER".

I am related to our hard-working Membership Secretary through his grandfather, the late William Liscombe who kept the Old Mill which was in regular use, and the flour used for baking at Llanvithyn was ground there, the grinding stones being driven by the large water wheel with water from the mill pond.

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Most of the flour which was ground came from wheat grown at Llanvithyn and local farms and was baked into bread at the factory by the late Mr Durham and this bread was sold by "Uncle Tudor" around the Vale and even when we returned to live in Cowbridge we ate bread made from the Llancarfan wheat.

May these few reminiscences be of interest to my fellow readers of the NEWSLETTER.

PAROCHIAL QUERIES, EDWARD LHUYD, 1697 by JRE

In the late 1690's Edward Lhuyd circulated a questionnaire entitled Parochial Queries. Some of the responses are printed in an article on Edward Lhuyd and Glamorgan in Glamorgan Historian, 6 (1969). Not only does this describe Lhuyd's visits to Glamorgan but also contains a fuller account of the response to Parochial Queries for the Llancarfan area. This is as follows:

The answers to Lhuyd's Queries relating to the parish of Llancarvan (sic) are also worth

noting here. They provide us, for instance, with useful figures regarding the number of houses and their inhabitants in each of the eight villages which comprise the parish of Llancarvan. For convenience, the figures given have been tabulated thus:

Llancarvan	38 (houses)	115 (inhabitants)						
Llanbethery	20	58						
Llancadle	26	96	Tregoffe	16	58	Liege Castle	12	56
Walterston	14	63	Moulton	20	91	Penon	11	42

In short, we may say that the total population of Llancarfan in 1696 was 579, and the number of houses was 157. The average household would accordingly have been approximately 3.7 persons. These figures, however, must be treated with caution. The inhabitants were said to have been of middle stature, and their complexion was "somewhat fair". Regarding their diet, Lhuyd's correspondent stated that "Antipathy to any manner of meat and drink I find in none but of good digestion considering their slothfulness". Moreover, the inhabitants of Llancarvan were "very subject to toothaches and rheumes especially in the bottome near the river sides by reason of thick misty foggy aere" and consequently "very few nowadays attain the yeares of 80".

The soil was well suited for wheat and oats "but the lands by the sides of the several rivers" were of deep mould "and very fertile soile casting some yeares 7 or 8 load of hay upon acre whole", notes the correspondent, "you may well believe by ye length of Knotgrasse growing on Llanbethery morse which is 9 or 10 foot long" and which "certainly fattens the swine yt feeds thereon".

Editorial note: in 1993 Llancarfan has about 60 houses between the limits of the Ty To Maen group, New House and Ford Cross. Hamlets such as Penonn, Walterston and Treguff are now much smaller than in the 1600's.

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CARADOG OF LLANCARFAN based on a note from Ken Walls, Llanbethery

Ken Walls has sent a copy of a Somerset tourist information leaflet which details a trail based on clues to the Arthurian legend in the County. "The Arthurian Adventure" explores the origins of the legend, dimly lost in the mists of the Dark Ages, and outlines later attempts to lay claim to Arthur as a regional hero. Ken noticed that Caradoc of Llancarfan was named in relation to Glastonbury.

In about 1130, almost six centuries after Arthur's death, William of Malmesbury was commissioned to write a history of the Abbey of Glastonbury and at the same time Caradog of Llancarfan was preparing a life of St Gildas for the Abbey. William's account contains no reference to Arthur but the Caradog "Life" (or a later version which may have been tampered with) claims that Arthur came to Glastonbury and that St Gildas and St Kea had intervened in a dispute between Arthur and Melwas, King of the Summer Country. Melwas was possibly the Medraut of the Annales Cambriae and the archetype of Malory's Mordred, Arthur's unwittingly incestuous son and nephew who was ultimately responsible for the Morte d'Arthur and the destruction of the kingdom - echoes of Greek tragedy?

Ken asked in his letter whether we have ever written about Caradog in the Newsletter - the answer is no - probably because almost nothing is known. The Oxford Companion to the Literature of Wales says: Caradog of Llancarfan (fl 1135), the author of several "Lives of the Saints". The little that is known of him is based on two references, one at the end of *Historia Regum Britanniae* by Geoffrey of Monmouth and the other, in his own work. It has been suggested in some works that Caradog was author of *Brut y Tywysogion* (Chronicles of the Princes) and the Book of Llandav. The Companion suggests for historical reasons that the first of these ascriptions cannot be true.

It is wise to remember, in this legendary story, that we do not know who Arthur was, whether he really existed, or even if he is not a literary synthesis of several warrior chieftens of the Dark Ages.

ST CADOC'S RESTORATION notes supplied by Geoff Burrows and Adrienne Leijerstam

A Vestry meeting was held on September 22, chaired by the Rev. Feild who welcomed everyone and proposed a large scale appeal with possible launch date of January 24 next year. He noted that people generally dig deeper into their pockets in springtime!

He proposed that a team should be formed to handle the appeal and that an appeal brochure should be produced. A team with professional skills is required rather than a committee.

Rev. Feild introduced the architect, Peter Bird of Messrs Caroe & Partners from Wells in Somerset, who said that St Cadoc's was one of the finest churches in the Vale and pointed out that we were sitting next to a Romanesque arcade with ancient associations dating back to the 12th century. The object of the appeal was not to make the Church a perfect building but to keep it in good order for future generations.

He noted that the principal area of concern was the whole of the south aisle roof and part of the nave roof which had been invaded by deathwatch beetle. The original medieval plaster was still surviving and in order to maintain

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this character the walls needed replastering with lime-plaster which would not only be beautiful but academically accurate. External rendering would be required and, desirably, the removal of the wooden first floor of the tower which was added in 1890.

The total cost of the first stage - external work to the roof, repairs to rainwater goods, plaster and drains would be £65,000 plus VAT and would take about four months to complete. He also referred to the three options for repairing the bells which have already been reported in Newsletter 55.

The vicar reviewed the availability of grants including a possible £20,000 from CADW for the first stage, together with £1000 from the Churches Committee. The restoration fund

currently stands at £8,500 and a first phase of work on the south aisle could start with £20,000 - increasing the fund to £10,000 and with a matching amount from CADW could satisfy this requirement, probably by spring, 1994.

Rev. Feild announced that he would be retiring in February and hoped that an appeal would be under way before he left. It was suggested that a fundraising "thermometer" should be placed in a prominent position with a target figure of £250,000.

ST CADOC'S CHURCH BELLS by Phil Watts

I can now give an update on the state of the bells. I have mentioned before that, in response to an appeal in the Newsletter, a number of people came forward to learn the art of bellringing. Members who have taken part are Steve and Georgina Powell, Linda and Tony John, Ros Hunt, Jane Storey and Margaret Fletcher. To be noticed is the predominance of ladies who faithfully turned up on a Tuesday evening from 7.30 to 9.00 p.m. followed by retirement to the pub for refuelling.

When the Llancarfan bells were condemned I was able to make arrangements with St Mary's, Bonvilston, tower captain, Tony Wood, for our ringers to join the Bonvilston band every Tuesday evening and this has continued with enthusiasm to date.

On several Tuesday evenings we have had the advantage of Jim Goodfellow, the master ringer from Llandaff Cathedral, giving us additional instruction. Upon hearing of the sad state of our bells he offered to examine them and help to do some repair work in the tower. I have accompanied Jim on several occasions and the result should be, in the very near future, that it will be possible to chime the bells. This has involved refixing of the pulley ropes and resiting the chiming hammers to the bells. One person will be able to chime the bells from the tower platform. The ringing bell ropes have been removed and stored. It must be emphasised that this is only a temporary arrangement and there is no guarantee that the operation will be the huge success that we are hoping. At least we hope there will be some sound coming from the tower.

In conversation with Jim Goodfellow I understand that a bell conservation committee has been formed in the Diocese that will organize working parties to go out and work on neglected towers. It is looking for volunteers who have some skill, knowledge and time, with a willingness to help.

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NEWS OF MEMBERS, FRIENDS AND PLACES

After 22 years the Rev. Bill Feild is to retire from the Parish on 1st February 1994. It is hoped that the Society will be able to mark this occasion with a suitable presentation. Father Field will remain in the Barry area close to his daughter, Carol. We all wish him a long, healthy and happy retirement.

Phil Watts tells us that further daffodil planting will take place at Pancross in time for spring, 1994.

The Llancarfan and District Community Association has sent us a leaflet containing information on the Village Hall and seeking ideas on extending its use. Many folk worked extremely hard and for many years to obtain the former Church Hall as a village facility and its continuing full use will mark the increasing health of a thriving community. Please contact the Committee if you have ideas or would like to help.

Following the suggestion that a Village Warden should be appointed, a police representative who attended a recent Community Council meeting has also told us that the Chief Constable is anxious to recruit more Special Constables. Any volunteers?

Mike Evans, landlord of the Fox and Hounds has provided a new rope for the Boxing Day Tug of War through the ford. Spectators welcome.

A major footpath survey is to be held. Llancarfan has the greatest density of paths in the Vale - 82 links. The Community Council has been asked to cooperate in the survey and Mr Gwilym Phillips, Broomwell is to play a major part in the organization.