



LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

Newsletter 61 May 1994

Spring has come and then gone again! - as I write this introduction the wind is rising and the next rain showers are beginning to spot the window beside me. When he last wrote, Phil Watts said:- "I frequently think of our editor when I hear the weather forecast say that rain will spread into the rest of Wales from Dyfed, reaching eastern Glamorgan by mid-morning - as it has done today". Well Phil, I think you've upset the weather - since then it has done nothing but blow a bitter wind from the east, veering and backing from south to north and bringing repeated doses of cloud and rain from east Wales! As Phil added, in his letter, it is difficult to remember when we had so many floods but I bet he was wrong to say that we shall be able to use hosepipes freely this summer!

Enough of the weather - the good news is that various people have sent me items for the Newsletter and we are now about one issue ahead of ourselves. Further contributions will be welcome - if writing is not your forte, some notes can always be turned into something by the editor or you could even send a cassette recording - as we have said before, anything is welcome, even complaints!

DATES FOR THE DIARY

BARBECUE: This will be held at Penonn Farm on Sunday, 12th June by kind invitation of Margaret and Arwyn Rees. A booking form was enclosed with the last Newsletter: tickets are £3.00 each, gates open at 12.30 pm. Please make a previous booking otherwise latecomers will go without food! We shall be grateful to any ladies who will provide various salads.

ANNUAL DINNERS: provisionally, these are on Saturday 24 September and Friday 4 November. Details of cost and booking arrangements will appear in the next Newsletter.

WHIST: A Whist Drive will be held in mid- or late October, date to be announced in the next Newsletter.

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, CF62 3AN. Arrangements for visits to sick members: Len Fairfax, Summit View, Aberthin, Cowbridge, S. Glam. (Cowbridge 772654).

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1994

About thirty people attended the AGM on 11th March and spent a pleasant evening eating and drinking the Society's profits, talking to each other and enjoying an illustrated talk by Joan Raum.

The formal business of the evening was concluded very quickly, the previous year's Officers of the Society being returned unopposed by a block vote. If any of you feel that this is less than democratic, please make some formal proposals next year and come along to the meeting. We could do with some new blood and certainly with additional pairs of hands at busy times.

Joan Raum talked to us about the activities of the Glamorgan Wildlife Trust and showed us slides of many of the Trust's reserves throughout Glamorganshire. At a time when we are losing so much traditionally managed land and wildlife to mechanised agriculture, the extractive industries and other developments, we are fortunate to have such an active local Wildlife Trust which is able to safeguard at least some of the more precious areas for our descendants. Reflect for a moment on the outcry if historic buildings, churches, cathedrals, castles and others could be destroyed at private whim and yet they are more easily re-created than even the simplest natural woodland or grassland with their hundreds of different plants, thousands of mainly invertebrate animals, a myriad of micro-organisms and soils which have taken many hundreds of years to form.

We are grateful to Joan for an entertaining and thought-provoking evening. Our thanks to all those who helped with food, running the bar, raffle and generally managing the event.

DEATHS from Phil Watts

This month, with great sadness, we have to record the loss of two of our older members. Edward Williams, formerly of Ford Farm, son of Tom and brother to Towyn, Lyn, and Bryn who was a pilot killed during the 2nd World War. Edward took a great interest in the affairs of Llancarfan and was a loyal attender at the memorial to the fallen in November each year. He was living in Michaelstonle-Pit and about to retire. Our sympathy to the family.

Herbert Thomas was, I believe, our oldest member. He had lived in semiretirement for a number of years at Brocastle just outside Bridgend. Herbert's roots were in Llancarfan parish: In writing for Newsletter 9 in 1988 Herbert told us that his father was born at Broadclose, Moulton and his wife, formerly Audrey Lougher, was daughter of Margaret Lougher of Cross Green, herself eldest daughter of Robert Lougher of Garnllwyd.

Audrey's father Jack (John) belonged to another branch of the same family. Herbert was a jovial man who had enjoyed life to the full - his voice would be heard in a crowd long before he could be seen because of his small stature. The family is known throughout the Vale as Herbert Thomas, Auctioneers and Estate Agents, but those of us with a long memory will remember him as Thomas the Bank and a little later he was better known as 'Herbie'. Another character exits from the Vale stage.

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THE MAY DAY WALK AND CHANCE CONVERSATIONS by Phil Watts

Another May Day has come and gone. The common factor of the Llancarfan Society May Day Walks has been the fine weather, the popularity and consequent success of the event. The latest May Day was no exception despite the fact that this year's walk was an "away match" at Heol-y-March in the Parish of Welsh St Donats.

The walk was led by Tony Woods of Owls Lodge who has a wide knowledge of the area and lived in the forestry for many years. Tony is no stranger to Llancarfan having frequently helped-out in bellringing and he is currently Tower Captain of St Mary's, Bonvilston. He is also training our Llancarfan lady ringers who now carry the label, "Bonvilston Belles". Tony made an excellent leader and very good company.

As I mentioned earlier, the weather gave us one of the warmest days of the year. Some walkers met first at the Village Hall, Llancarfan, for coffee or tea, others at Owls Lodge and a loyal band later returned to the Village Hall for an indoor picnic-lunch which turned-out to be an outdoor even: the weather was so nice that tables migrated to the grass on the churchyard side of the Hall. Have we created a precedent by using this patch of grass?

Nobody made an exact count of the walkers, firstly because there were two assembly points and secondly because there were some late starters and some early leavers! We were pleased to have a number of children, some babies and one or two dogs. Nobody got lost or left-behind but one dog was mislaid or suffered a temporary loss of memory as to his whereabouts halfway through the walk. As usual a number of snippets of gossip were heard en route.

One query was, why, in writing of the school, has no-one mentioned the girls flower garden on the school site? Perhaps it is because only men, or former boys have done the writing? (not true - Ed.) Are we being accused of sexist writings?! Let me now put the record straight by saying I recall the flowergardens being split up into many oval flower beds connected by grass paths. When the class was detailed for gardening the girls would attend to their garden under the supervision of Miss Connie Griffiths and Miss Morfydd

Thomas (now Watts). The flower beds were situated between the two dividing walls running down to the girls toilets from the steps leading to the garden from the senior master's room at the rear of the school. Needless to say, the girls garden was always a colourful display.

Returning to the walk - we had the pleasure of the company of our future vicar, Malcom Davies and his wife Jean. He is looking forward to commencing his duties, probably at the end of July and seems fully aware of the task and not a bit discouraged. We seem to be fortunate on two counts. One, to be granted the services of a vicar and two, to be granted the services of Malcom Davies and his wife. May they have a happy and successful stay.

Another item of discussion was: what should we do for future May Day Walks? Should we venture further afield or should we return within the parish boundaries. We seem to be of the opinion that people like to be organised and will be happy to do whatever is suggested. One area considered is the Heritage Coast in the vicinity of Llantwit Major. What do members think?

Yet another matter discussed was the state of footpaths in the Llancarfan area. We are told that some are overgrown, others are wired-up and some not identifiable. No doubt we shall have more to say because the Community Council, by law, soon has to make a report on the state of the footpaths and

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collection of information is very much under way. Volunteers are still needed for this job - please contact Mrs Joan Quelch, Clerk to the Community Council, Penylan House or Gwilym Phillips, Broomwell.

THE NEW VICAR OF LLANCARFAN AND RECTOR OF LLANBETHERY by Geoff Burrows

The Reverend Malcolm Davies has accepted nomination to the vacant living of Llancarfan with Llantrithyd. As incumbent he will be Vicar of Llancarfan and Rector of Llantrithyd. The two parishes are grouped as hitherto with no change of structure.

Father Davies was born in 1935; was at Saint Michael's College, Llandaff, 1982-84; was ordained deacon in 1984 and priest in 1985; was an assistant curate in Roath (Cardiff) 1984-88; has been Vicar of Pentre (Rhondda) from 1988; and is an Air Training Corps Chaplain.

TUESDAY CLUB by Audrey Porter.

Tuesday Club celebrates it's 25th Anniversary this year and will be holding a tea party in the Village Hall on Saturday October 22nd. Invitations will be sent to all past members.

Our Jumble Sale was a success once again and we took a total of £340 of which £200 is earmarked for the Church Restoration Fund. We would welcome all villagers and friends to our SILENT AUCTION on December 16th. Wine and beer on sale, plus refreshments. Please support as all profits go to local charities.

We would welcome new members and visitors to our monthly meetings. A programme will be on the notice board as soon as completed up to Christmas.

DISTANT RELATIVES by Megan Hamber

Sometime ago Phil Watts was in the local hostelry when he got into conversation with a gentleman who had come to Llancarfan to find out more about his forebears in the village.

Phil referred him to me knowing that I had connections far back. Now we have discovered that Gary Williams from Tonyrefail is a relative of mine who I didn't know existed; his great grandmother was my Father's sister. Her surname was Halfyard - a very peculiar name - when he mentioned that, I knew we must be related. She had 17 children (we used to say, one more and they would make a half mile). He was delighted to see old pictures of my Grandfather and Grandmother who were buried in the Baptist graveyard.

We went back to my Father's Grandfather William Jenkins, who was a shoemaker in the Village, and a deacon of the Baptist Chapel for 40 years. So my great Grandfather was his great, great, great Grandfather (if you can work that one out).

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So thank-you Phil for quite unknowingly finding me a relative, and a very charming one at that. We also uncovered a rather disreputable ancestor but we won't go into that.

MEMORIES OF LLANCARFAN by Margaret Rees

I must be one of the lucky ones - I lived in Llancarfan from 1945-1960, having a very happy childhood here. Little did I think I would ever come back - and to live in the same house 27 years later. At Pen-onn.

Pen-onn, then, consisted of 3 houses our farm house, Bryn Iolo and Ross Kear. My father, Tom Morgan, and mother, Joan, came to Pen-onn from Doghill Farm, Dyffryn. Both were from farming backgrounds. Dad from Upper Farm, Rhoose, and mum from Tynycoed Farm, Bonvilston. My mum and her two brothers went to Llancarfan school as children

and used to walk there with the Moffat children from Whitewell and the Watts children from Abernant. My two sisters and I were brought up in a very happy home.

Dad was a keen member of Wenvoe Agricultural Show (since gone), N.F.U., a founder member of the Glamorgan Farmer's Club, and on the Llancarfan Parish Council. Always a jovial man he loved to support Cardiff rugby team each week with Dan Thomas, Flaxland Farm, and Doug Rees, Penmark Farm, then adjourn to the Three Horse Shoes in Moulton for the evening. In those days women did not frequent pubs like we do now!! My mother led a busy life. Mum was a dab hand at driving the tractor and trailer, with the bale loader attached to the side of the trailer - she was the only one who could do it properly!!

Llancarfan School was a happy one. Mr Samuel (Sammy behind his back) was Headmaster, Mrs Blackman and Miss Connie Griffiths, Bridge House, the other two teachers. Mr Samuel had a cane which he did use on the boys, and sometimes on the girls - I only had the cane on my hands!! During one period dinners used to be cooked in St Nicolas and brought to the school, then we graduated to the Church Hall where the dinners were eventually cooked.

"Dinner Hour" was always good fun. We didn't have to stay in school and went fishing for minnows in the river - lifting the stones, cupping our hands to catch them and putting them in jam jars, also playing "Fox and Hounds" up the dams, up on Penylan and down Broomwell. None of us possessed watches so we were often in trouble for being late back for lessons.

Grampa Durham was a wonderful character and loved by all the children. He remembered all our birthdays, sending us a card, he'd write a little poem inside and often ask where was his piece of birthday cake!!

Uncle Joe (Lewis) was the Blacksmith and Baptist Sunday School Superintendent The Blacksmith shop was always a place where everyone gathered - we children used to watch him shoeing the horses and pumping up the bellows. My father used to sometimes let me ride the mare down to be shod.

Aunty Evelyn and Uncle Joe (Davies) of Middle Cross Farm spoilt a lot of us children. Aunty Evelyn would take Godfrey, John and Andrew Griffiths, Top End, Jennifer Griffiths, Fern Cottage, Meryl John, Corner House and myself to see Father Christmas in Cardiff every year. She would treat us to see Father Christmas in Howells and Morgans, dinner in The Louis, then we would wander around the Museum.

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Every year we held an Eisteddfod. Most of the children and adults participated We children would sing, recite poems and tell a funny joke David Morgan, The Green, was good at that!! I remember the Granddaughters of Mr Williams, Ford Farm, Elaine and Susan, who would always win the singing competitions. I seem to remember that we had a proper Bard Chair.

There were film shows held in the Church Hall, also Whist Drives and the Sunday School parties. Usually, the Church and Chapel would hold one each at Christmas. There were always plenty of sandwiches and delicious cakes made by our Mums and we children played games such as musical chairs, Bobby Bingo and Spin the Plate. The children would then be presented with a book for regular attendance at Sunday School throughout the previous year. There were a lot of children living in Llanbethery and Llancarfan at this time and most of them went to Sunday School.

I always went to the Baptist Chapel Sunday School and eventually helped with teaching the other children. Uncle Joe (Lewis) was "in charge" and Uncle Les (Griffiths) played the organ. In the summer months we loved to get to Sunday School early to look for grass snakes basking in the sun on the graves!! We had our Sunday School Outing to Porthcawl. Again, the Church and Chapel held an outing each and everyone went to both. The Sunday School would give us all 2/6 and Mrs Griffiths (Bridge House) would often give us 2/6 as we got on the bus - so this money with what we had managed to save ourselves would be spent on the Fun Fair.

On arriving at Porthcawl (we usually had 2 buses to take us) we would congregate in a big circle sitting in deck chairs on the beach. We children would be racing back and fore to the sea, having a ride on the donkeys or playing bat and ball during the morning and early afternoon as we were not allowed to go up to the Fun Fair too early. Our mothers always brought lots of food and drinks and it was shared by us all.

The Fun Fair was always the highlight of our day. I loved every minute of it. Our money seemed to last out until we boarded the bus to go home.

Another great day was November 5th. We had a big bonfire on "The Tump" - by the school. I remember someone (who must remain nameless) letting off a jackey jumper firework behind Mrs Evans, Broadhayes, who was a little lady. Every direction she ran the firework followed her! I would run down the road in the dark when I could see the bonfire lit and think nothing of it - I don't think I would feel safe doing that now.

Every Monday my mother would ride her bike with Megan Richards from Moulton to go to Social Seives in the Chapel Vestry. All the ladies used to go and I think they sewed and made things and had a cup of tea and a chat.

Sports Days were also held in the village. We all took part and I enjoyed it all. I remember a Fancy Dress Competition and one particular time when Bell May, who worked for my father, dressed up as Lady Godiva and rode our cart horse!!

At one period the Llancarfan Cricket Club was held on one of Pen-onn's fields. The refreshment room and changing room was an old double decker bus.

I know I must have left out an awful lot but, perhaps, some of my contemporaries can fill in the gaps.

Additional notes on Margaret's article by Phil Watts:

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Joan Griffiths' (Morgan) brothers were Noel and Rhys and the Moffat children: Hugh, Molly, Ian, Leslie, Stanley, Isobel, (and Margaret and Douglas who were too young to be grouped with above). This hoard passed Abernant where it gained Mary and Kathleen. Philip was too young at this stage but often looked through Abernant gate at this fearsome crowd that he would have to accompany to school on reaching age five.

Margaret's grandfather, Ted Griffiths, Tynycoed Farm, as well as being a farmer was the local butcher who used to visit the farms to kill pigs. Owen Richards from Moulton, brother of Megan mentioned in Margaret's article, was another person I remember killing pigs. My father also had been known to kill pigs at Abernant during the wartime so, perhaps, it was unofficial and helped the war effort. Everyone enjoyed the fat bacon, sides of ham, faggots, black pudding etc nothing went to waste from the pig. I do not know what training my father had perhaps just something that had to be done. I know it was always a big struggle and a lot of squeaking getting the pig on to the bench for the operation!!

25th ANNIVERSARY: FOX AND HOUNDS RESTAURANT, LLANCARFAN by Phil Watts

Twenty five years ago, on April 1st, the Fox and Hounds opened the restaurant in the old upstairs games room. A kitchen, bakehouse and storeroom had been built-on, replacing a garage and toilets which in former years was the cowshed area, a stone barn opposite the Wesleyan Chapel surrounded by stone wall already gone to make way for the first car park. Edgar Balchin was introduced as Restraunteur and his brother Bernard the Headwaiter. Trixie Phillips invited staff and friends to what would be called in modern times a

"dummy run". We enjoyed an excellent meal and company as so many thousands of people have done since that evening in 1969. At that time the restaurant could accommodate 35 to 40 people at one sitting, although two sittings at 7.30 and 9.30 was the usual pattern. The restaurant very quickly became popular. Edgar already had a following from Machen etc. and this was greatly increased in the Llancarf, Vale of Glamorgan area, and indeed from all over Wales and sometimes England! So it became necessary for extra dining space to be made. The Whitton Room was built over the Fox lounge which had been Trixie's lounge when she lived in the "Fox". The steps over the lounge leading to the games room were done away with and stairway and bar accommodated below the Whitton Room.

These were "swinging" days following on from the swinging sixties. Everyone came out to the country for a good time and people did not take too much notice of the drink and drive restrictions - the "law" were very accommodating. There seemed to be fewer accidents

drink-related than there are now. Is it true that one drives better when "well-oiled"?

At the same time, Bill and Betty Hill ran the Fox and Hounds bar downstairs. Betty controlled the bars while Bill looked after and carefully nurtured the H.B. in the cellar, as well as producing some magnificent home-baked bread in the bakehouse, now used as the Fox and Hounds kitchen near the car park. Locals will remember tapping on the bakehouse door and being supplied with Bill Hill Special Bread. Bill made the rolls and loaves that were used to make up the wonderful display that used to be on the end of the bar. The contents and taste were different from anything you could get anywhere else

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and used to attract people from many different parts. Mabel Liscombe used to assemble the rolls in the Fox kitchen under the direction of Bill and Betty, the end product was something unique to the Fox and Hounds.

The Fox and Hounds in those days used to be very crowded indeed, it would be a common sight to see Bernard holding his bill board high aloft in an endeavour to find his customers. The visitors' book shows many notable and famous visitors have passed through the door of the Fox, and many stories can be told of wonderful evenings and company enjoyed there. Friendships made friendships cemented even to the extent of leading to weddings. Wedding receptions have been very popular in the restaurant since the Whitton Room was built; able to accommodate 80 guests sitting.

It is a great credit to Edgar Balchin that he has been able to maintain such a high standard of cuisine over the past 25 years. Although there has been a great turn-over of staff over the years, various people have remained loyal and faithful through this 25 year period, namely Enid Williams and Barbara Evans in the dining room, Ruth Watts and Sheila Prosser (retired) in the office and Sally Jones and Pam Jones, morning girls in the dining room.

The two inaugural dinners of the Llancarfan Society were held in the Fox and Hounds restaurant in September and November of 1987 and we all remember what memorable occasions they were.

Llancarfan owes a lot to the entrepreneurial skills of Trixie Phillips and Edgar Balchin for putting the village of Llancarfan high in the esteem of thousands of visitors as well as the folk who live here now and those who have moved on to other parts. May I on behalf of us all, through the means of the Llancarfan Society Newsletter thank then both for all they have done, Trixie since 1952 and Edgar since 1969. Many, many thanks.

I have written the above because I mentioned in the committee meeting that the Fox and Hounds restaurant had been opened 25 years on April 1st and the committee said something should be written about it. I have written what I can think of at this time: there is much more which could be written by others who know more and are better able to write. I invite criticisms, corrections, improvements, anything at all that will tell us more about the "Fox and Hounds". I have made a start now come on all you diners, drinkers,

staff, customers, landlords, managers, workers, historians, tell us what you know about the Fox and Hounds!!

BURTON BRIDGE by John Etherington

Sometimes it is a nuisance being so far away from Llancarfan - four years ago I could have jumped on a bike and checked the following bit of information which I found in a book called *The Ancient Bridges of Wales and Western England* by E. Jervoise (1936). He wrote:- "About a mile from its mouth the Thaw is joined by the river Kenson, over which, in Leland's days (mid-1500s), there were two stone bridges. Pont Britoun now called Pont Burton, had one arch but Pont Kenson was then a two-arched bridge. The existing ones are fairly modern but about 50 yards below Pont Burton the abutments of a former bridge can still be seen. Its overall width was about 9 feet."

Nearly 60 years later are those abutments still there? The construction of Rhoose by-pass left Burton Bridge in limbo but probably there was no interference with the river below it. Anyone care to look?