



LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

Newsletter 66 March-April 1995

Since the last Newsletter we have had a successful AGM at which the existing Committee was re-elected en bloc with the addition of Alan and Sue Taylor. We are also grateful to Norton Evans who, despite ill-health has volunteered to continue as the Society's auditor. All of those who help with the Newsletter during the year are gratefully acknowledged, particularly Mavis Coles for retyping each Newsletter onto stencils, often at short notice, Derek and Pam Higgs for the envelope labelling system and the various folk who have filled envelopes.

Unlike the AGMs of many organisations, we have managed to turn ours into an enjoyable social occasion with a buffet and free drink for everyone and, for the last few years, we have also had a guest speaker, this year John Etherington with slides of the village and South Wales, taken over the past 25 years.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A few subscriptions remain outstanding but Phil Watts tells us that 145 renewals have already been made. So successful is our annual calendar of events that we need not increase the subscription which remains at £5.00 for each mailing address, £2.50 for senior citizens, payable to Phil at Abernant Bungalow.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

MAY DAY WALK: Monday, May 29. A walk will be held, based on the Village Hall where we shall gather at 10.00 a.m. The walk this year will be up Pancross Hill to Crosston, across the fields to the west of the wood (Coed-yCrynallt) and downhill to Ty To Maen Farm, whence back to the village.

The high ground between Crosston and Ty To Maen affords views of the Vale in all directions on a clear day and from the descent to Ty To Maen there are panoramic views of most of the village. Children who grew up in the days when roaming the countryside was a major entertainment will renew acquaintance with familiar ground. Outside the village envelope the countryside has changed remarkably little though the fields are less flower-filled than even 20 years ago.

If possible a member of the Church will be available to give a conducted tour of St Cadoc's with particular attention to the roof-work and the Roof Restoration Fund. If the weather is too wet for the walk, the Church visit will be available as an alternative.

The Hall will be open all day for those who wish to remain or to have a picnic lunch and indulge in a raffle after the walk.

BARBEQUE: By kind invitation of Arwyn and Margaret Rees, the Barbeque will be held at Pen-Onn Farm on Sunday, June 25.

50th ANNIVERSARY: END OF WORLD WAR II: The Community Council will organise local events on Saturday August 19.

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ANNUAL DINNER 1995: Saturday, September 23. Numbers will be limited to 72 on a first, come first served basis. An application form is enclosed with this Newsletter, cost of tickets £10 per head, to Phil Watts by 31st August.

WHIST DRIVE: Friday, 27 October.

DECEMBER GATHERING OF MEMBERS: December 5, Fox and Hounds.

ADDRESSES: Contributions for the Newsletter (which will be very welcome) should be sent to the Editor, John Etherington, Parc-y-Bont - New Buildings, Llanhowell, Solva, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, Dyfed, SA62 6XX. We will also be pleased to print short announcements of village functions but they must be sent in writing, at least 6-8 weeks in advance. Subscriptions and problems with mailing: to the Membership Secretary, Phil Watts, Abernant Bungalow, 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).

LOVE SPOON AND CASE

In the last Newsletter we recorded the auction of a lovespoon, made for the Society by Mike Cram, husband of Val (who older members will recollect as Val Jones, Great House). So sad were we to see this spoon leave the Society that Mike kindly agreed to make as another, for permanent exhibition in the Community Hall. Problems of security have arisen with other items displayed in the Hall and Mike has compounded his kindness by making a display-case for the spoon to deter vandals or thieves (isn't this sad). The spoon and case were presented to Mick Mace during the AGM and will be installed as soon as possible when a brass plate has been made.

CALL MY BLUFF

The BBC are currently repeating the best of the TV team game, Call my Bluff. This reminded the editor that about 20 years ago, on a number of occasions an entertainment was arranged in Church Hall which was a carbon-copy of Call my Bluff. Roy Booker provided words and definitions for the game and, if memory serves, also acted as Master of Ceremonies. Team members included John Cann, John Etherington, Jim Grove and Norma Hughes and others who I have forgotten.

This was at the tail-end of the era of self-entertainment which so many members have recalled. It provided a great deal of laughter for those who attended and sounds like something which the Society could resurrect on an occasional basis?

BOTTLES, BREWING AND BEER by John Etherington

Society meetings such as the AGM are particularly useful to me now as they bring me back from Pembrokeshire to the Vale and, almost always someone reminds me of things which set my thoughts in train for Newsletter items.

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This year, at the AGM, Sue Evans was telling me about work which had been done, tidying-up after the conversion of the two redundant barns at Garnllwyd. During these operations various bottles and other items were found, prompting the builder to say that he had formerly been a publican in the Forest of Dean and that one of his regulars had come in one day with a bottle which had been found on the site of an old brewery in Cowbridge.

Commercial brewing was fairly late arrival to country towns, most beer having been brewed at home on the farms or by individual publicans. Brian Glover's Prince of Ales (Sutton, 1993) mentions a brewery in Cowbridge, started by Samuel Howells, maltster, in Malt House Lane in the 1850's and then continues:- "Another maltster, Lewis Jenkins, quickly followed Howells example with the Vale of Glamorgan Brewery in the High Street. His son, licensee of the Butchers' Arms, started the Cowbridge Brewery in the 1890's further down the road by the bridge."

Thomas Morgan & Son took over the Cowbridge Brewery (Bridge Brewery) in 1906 and continued to trade until 1955 when Bass bought them out and closed the brewery. It seems likely that the Cowbridge bottle came from this brewery.

When we connected Ceffyl Du to the main sewer, about ten years ago, we dug-up a Brains Brewery flagon, probably of the late 1800's (judging from the books I looked-up). However, the Black Horse closed in the 1850's before Samuel Arthur started the Brains Brewery so I think the bottle must have been dumped over the wall with a lot of other varied rubbish which we found at the same time.

The story of the Cowbridge breweries is quite interesting - except for a very short-lived brewery in Barry (1895-1902) they were the nearest breweries to Llancarfan - whether they supplied the six Llancarfan parish pubs I don't know and I'm not sure when the country pubs stopped brewing their own beer. Do any members have knowledge of this?

However, one remnant of the prevalence of home-brewing is the widespread occurrence of hop plants in hedgerows, often close to cottages, pubs and farms. This prompted me, long ago, to write the following article which seems singularly appropriate here.

HOPS by John Etherington

Wild hop-plants grow in the hedge at the foot of Cross Green Hill, beside the brook near Llancarfan Church and at the bottom of Pancross Hill. Hops are used to flavour beer: the flavouring is made from the unfertilised flower "cones" of female hop plants. Though the plant is a wild native in Wales these plants, close to villages, are likely to be the relics of home-brewing by smallholders and publicans. Significantly, the plant also grew in the garden hedge of the Six Bells, Penmark, 20 years ago. It may well still be there.

"An old woman who kept a little inn on Gower gathered her hops wild from the hedge, drying them in bags from the kitchen ceiling." B. Wates (1955) *The Bristol Channel*. Here in Pembrokeshire where the editor lives, the plant is recorded as "on hedges near ruins or houses ---- a relic of the days when home brewing was quite frequent."

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During the hot summer of 1990 the hops beside the river near the Village Hall were covered in "cones". There would have been enough there for a small homebrew. Though I thought about it, we were too busy preparing to leave Llancarfan to spare the time for brewing.

Before hops became widely used in the 16th century, ale must have been insipid stuff, unless flavoured with other herbs. Henry VIII tried ineffectually to ban the import of hops but drinkers had grown used to the flavour a long time before his accession in 1509 - archaeologists found the remains of a hop cargo during the excavation of a tenth-century boat at Graveney in Kent. Henry's opposition may have caused some wag to coin the jingle "Turkeys, Heresies, Hops and Beer All came to England in the One Year". In some versions "heresies" are replaced by "reformation" - depends where you stand!

John Evelyn, in 1670, also shared Henry's views: "--- hops transmuted our wholesome ale into beer, which doubtless much alters its constitution. This one ingredient --- preserves the drink indeed, but repays the pleasure in tormenting diseases and a shorter life."

Some wild herbs were certainly used before hops to give an astringent flavour (and to conceal bad beer?). Sage was one familiar one but the common wild herb, Ground Ivy with its purplish "deadnettle" flowers was another, consequently also named Alehoof or Tunhoof. Gerard wrote, in 1397: "especially about Wales and Cheshire, do tun the herbe ale hoove into their ale."

However, hops grew in popularity so, by 1821, the acerbic William Cobbett was able to condemn the tax on hops, and the enormous tax on barley which had killed the art of home-brewing, encouraged the drinking of tea and the frequenting of public houses.

WHIST DRIVE by Phil Watts

The Society whist drive held in the village hall on Friday April 7th was a great success. There were 11 tables and one gent sitting out; in all 45 people. It was notable for the attendance of one person of 98 years of age and two others over 90. Perhaps more notable was the attendance of young Andrew Gibson taking part in his first whist drive at the tender age of 11. Andrew is Tony and Joan Thomas's grandson. He enjoyed himself enough to say he would come again.

The prize winners were:- 1st Ladies: D. Dally; 2nd Ladies: Mary Lougher; 1st Gents: Robert Hutchings; 2nd Gents: Tony Thomas; Lowest score ladies: Kath Watts; Lowest score gents: Gwynne Liscombe. Raffle: Basket of fruit won by Ann Ferris and Bottle of wine won by Mary Griffiths.

PALM SUNDAY IN LLANCARFAN by Phil Watts:

Palm Sunday was different from all the previous Palm Sundays in Llanccarfán this year - the church service was preceded by a procession round the village by the congregation led by a donkey - just like it was 2000 years ago in the

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Holy Land. The donkey was borrowed for the day from the Amelia Trust at Whitton Rosser. The donkey was led by Tony Thomas who also arranged the transport etc. A similar procession took place in Llantrithyd.

The Abernant donkey, Gronow, was invited but he declined with thanks on the grounds of non-cooperation and a lack of training.

There was a big turn out for the service which was blessed with a nice day and everyone is looking forward to next year.

A LETTER from Jean Hunt

Perhaps the title of this letter ought to be "The night I mislaid Tom"- but, on a serious note, I should like to thank the many friends and neighbours in Llanccarfán for their wonderful help and kindness. Last week, on a particularly damp and miserable evening, about half the village turned out to search for my husband when he failed to return from his evening exercise.

At 7.00 p.m. I had seen him, as I thought, preparing to go out for his usual evening walk up the hill past Ford Farm. Invariably this proceeds at a very brisk rate, and, as regularly as clockwork, he returns home twenty minutes later. Not last Wednesday. I had seen Tom put on his battered grey-green jacket while I was talking on

the telephone in the hall, and so I brought the conversation to an end and went to the back of the house to collect my jacket. When I went into the living room Tom had vanished - impatient, as usual, to "hit the road".

I strolled out, expecting to meet him on his return, but before I left the house I remember giving a disgusted glance at the latest pair of new trousers waiting to be shortened by yours truly. As always, they are identical in cut, colour and material to the style Tom has worn all the years I have known him, and long before. My idea of Hell is an infinity of baggy, brown, cord breeks some 6 inches too long!

I walked well past Ford Farm - no sign of Tom. An hour later after a fruitless search in and around our house I panicked well and truly. Had Tom met with a heart attack - or far worse - a serial killer? Two hours later, three police cars and several search parties of villagers had looked high and low - in fields, gardens, the churchyard - even our horrendous garage and cellar (I should have warned people about the fishing waders hanging from a beam). I still shake when I think of my feelings during these hours. And I can't adequately express my gratitude to so many people including the police who were wonderful.

At 10.30 p.m. I heard the awful words "We'd better give the go ahead for the helicopter". At that instant, thank God, with dawning relief and horror like a light switching on - I suddenly remembered Tom mentioning his annual fishing meeting in Cardiff - and that he would be driven there in his fishing mate's car! At 11.30 p.m. Tom returned - from his fishing club. The police also came back to the house at midnight - ostensibly to "complete our paperwork", but, in fact, to check that "the body" was truly alive and kicking! I leave you all to imagine the conversation that ensued after all this! Apparently, Tom had called out to me before leaving - not realising I was out of earshot.

"But surely, Jean, you had noticed I had changed into my "good" trousers?" -6-

Well I hadn't noticed - for reasons you can guess!

Tom, as usual, almost had the last word, "Oh well, Jean, you have always mislaid things - books, bills, umbrellas, handbags.....(underwear)*..... and this time you mislaid me!"

It is very clear to me that "the village of a thousand saints" is still very much with us in 1995. Bless you all.

* Tom's term is too coarse for family viewing!!

A NOVEL WAY TO SPEND THE DAY

It will be twenty years on the 17th November, 1994 since Alison Clemo and Barry Gibbons first took to the leafy lanes of the Vale of Glamorgan with the mobile library.

Mobile libraries have been opening new chapters in the lives of the residents of the Vale for some forty years. They have seen many families grow, and quite a few diminish. There have been many happy times, and a few sad ones; but in all those years the job satisfaction has been immense. To cheer a person up and give them escapism from their everyday lives is wonderful. Alison and Barry don't know where the time has gone, but they feel it has been, and still is, time well spent.

Our mobile libraries are well stocked and designed to make access easy. Whether fact or fiction, music or spoken word, there is something to offer everyone.

For more information, do not hesitate to call us on 01446-740688.

MORE LOCAL HISTORY by Ken Wall:

In addition to the Roman site at Llanbethery, mentioned in Newsletter 64, there are two other sites near Llancarfan which have been excavated.

One is near Moulton and consisted of 4 dwellings within an area 165m by 119m. The largest of these buildings (map ref. ST 0740 6970) seems to have been occupied until circa 340 A.D. The finds here included large quantities of iron nails, cleats, coloured plaster, pottery, two 4th century coins, a 4th century bronze spoon with decorated handle, a whetstone and iron slag.

The second site is just south of Whitton Lodge on Five Mile Lane (map ref. ST 0811 7133). This is the most exciting of the three sites because it is clear that before the Roman occupation it was an Iron Age farmstead. The Iron Age Britons had begun the camp at the latest by 50 B.C. and had enclosed an area 65m by 60m. Their defences consisted of a bank 2-5m wide surrounded by a ditch 5-7m wide and 2.6m deep.

Within the area defined by the bank they had built a number of circular wooden houses arranged around a yard in the centre of which was a larger house. There was also a well which is thought to be pre-Roman. Pottery, brooches, a coin of the Dobunni tribe and some glass beads were found.

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It was the practice of the Romans to evict the Iron Age folk from their strongholds, which were always on high ground, in order that they no longer constituted a threat to the invaders and their supply lines. In this case however the Romans clearly felt it was such a good position that they should occupy it themselves. They built rectangular timber buildings, the first of which was constructed between 75 A.D. and 100 A.D. Later these were replaced in stone. Sometime after 200 A.D. the ditch was filled in. There was no evidence of tessellated pavements (mosaic) and although there were hypocausts (the

original ducted air central heating! - ed.) they do not appear to have been fired. The site would appear to have been therefore, a basic farming community of which there must have been several throughout Britain to keep the Roman army supplied with food.

What happened to the Iron Age people after their eviction? Since they could no longer occupy the high ground they had nowhere to go but descend into the valleys. Some of them may therefore have been the earliest settlers in Llancarfan.

For assistance in writing this article I must acknowledge help received from The National Museum of Wales and An Inventory of Ancient Monuments in Glamorgan, Vol. 1 H.M.S.O.

MEMBERS, FRIENDS AND PLACES

The oldest airworthy Spitfire in the world has been at St Athan for the past five months undergoing an extensive refit. She was recently flown back to Conningsby in Lincolnshire but, before this, Roy Booker of Llanbethery spent some time looking over the aircraft, renewing wartime memories of his service as a Spitfire pilot. The visit was arranged as a birthday present to him from his son Stephen. Amongst other wartime service, Roy flew on the four and a half hour, longest ever, Spitfire mission from Darwin in northern Australia to Timor Island in the Pacific (over 400 miles each way).

Roy's birthday visit featured, with photographs in the Barry and District News and the South Wales Echo. Roy has kindly passed on a history of Llandow Airfield by Phil Davies which is now with the editor and will make a short note for a future Newsletter.

Following the note which appeared in the last Newsletter, the Society donated £100 to the Fonmon Archive Appeal.

Work is due to start on the Church roof-restoration on April 24. A "buy a tile area" appeal has been launched and contributors names will be recorded, remaining for posterity in Church records - details appear in the short newsletter which is enclosed.

The Society is entering a team of three for the Lord Mayor's Europe Week Petanque Challenge on May 9, to be held in the Pentwyn Leisure Centre, Cardiff. More in the next Newsletter.

Don Hall, landlord of The Six Bells, Penmark, was the subject of an article in the Barry and District News (April 13). Don bought the "Bells" two years ago after holding the tenancy for many years. A great deal of effort has gone into refurbishing and expanding the pub. We all wish Don well for the future.

Expatriate members may be interested to hear that Cardiff (Wales) Airport (better known to us as Rhoose) has been sold into private hands. Shortly after this, British Airways announced that they would create another 300 jobs at the recently built maintenance centre at Rhoose. By 1997 the total number of employees will have risen to over 1000 (Barry and District News). At least this is some consolation for the enormous blot which the B.A. hangar makes on Llancarfan's horizon.

NEW HOUSES

As in the last item, I often write "for expatriate members". It is not until leaving Llancarfan that you realise how quickly some things change so, again for expatriate members here is some more news. Since 1991, when we moved, at least two new houses have been completed one on the site of the demolished Morningside (The Nook) and another next door to Ty Uchaf (Lanterns), redundant barns at Garnllwyd have been converted into a couple of houses and another barn at Caemaen has just been converted. Prior to this, of course, several new houses were built around Ty To Maen and another behind the Fox's car-park. There are others which escape my memory but including that other wave of building in the late 1960s the number of houses in the village has increased very substantially. Perhaps somebody on the spot might like to give a more comprehensive account, with details of numbers and population of the village and the parish as a whole.