



LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

Newsletter 73 May-June 1996

This Newsletter marks a new departure in production and copying. Mavis Coles who has been a tower of strength, typing and duplicating Newsletters since 1990, has resigned from the onerous task. Our very best wishes and thanks to her for so much hard work. As I write the draft of this Newsletter 73, I have no idea quite how the final version will be produced or what it will look like, but hope it is delayed no more than the editor's laziness has already managed!

Since the last Newsletter, Phil Watts has led a very successful May Walk to explore the valleys of the Carfan and Waycock Brook. Geoff Burrows and Mick Mace organised a Treasure Hunt for the evening of 14th June and by the time you read this Newsletter yet another annual barbecue will have taken place. Rapidly approaching its tenth birthday, the Llancarfan Society goes from strength to strength and has its largest membership ever.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

HOG ROAST, 7.00 p.m., Friday, 2nd August at Pennon Farm by kind invitation of Arwyn and Margaret Rees. Cost £5.00 per head.

ANNUAL DINNER, 7.30 for 8.00 p.m., Saturday 28th September in the Village Hall. Cost £12.00 per head.

Booking slips for both of these events were enclosed with Newsletter 72 or from Phil Watts, Abernant Bungalow.

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

OBITUARY: JOYCE ANDREWS by the Committee, Llancarfan Society

Joyce died suddenly on the 14th May, 1996, in Holme Towers, Penarth. She was born in and lived in Barry, attended Barry Girls' Grammar School, worked in Cardiff for the Welsh Office and married Norman, whose war service ended with his imprisonment by the Japanese. Tragically, Norman also died suddenly and at an early age.

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After marriage, Joyce worked in Norman's architectural business, which she carried on after his death and also brought up two daughters, Jenny and Sally and cared for five grandchildren, taking up a grandmother's right to spoil them.

Before taking on the running of the Fox and Hounds at Llancarfan, Joyce built up a strong connection with the village by becoming a friend and business associate of Trixie Phillips. Norman was in fact the architect involved with the alterations to the Fox and Hounds.

Joyce was the landlady of the Fox and Hounds when the Llancarfan Society was formed. She provided room for the dozen or so of us who met for the first time in 1987. She also agreed to send us on a May Day walk with coffee and biscuits, a non-alcoholic encouragement to follow the trail of John Etherington, Andrew Griffiths, Phil Watts, Gwynne Liscombe and Len Mortimer around some of the undiscovered parts of Llancarfan. Joyce joined the Society, served on the Committee and became Treasurer until March of this year.

In all that she did, Joyce was a professional and she spared no effort to see that the Society's finances were on a firm footing, with accounts presented so magnificently. She resigned from her Treasurer's duties in March so that she could devote her energies to being President of the South Wales District of the Ladies' Inner Wheel and we expected her to resume when this tour of responsibility was complete.

Joyce did the ordering of food for most of our functions, always accurate, enough but not too much! Her birthday fell near the time when we held our Society Barbecues; she never reminded us of this but some of us knew!

It is sad to think that this June, at our Barbecue we shall be without three stalwarts of the Society, Joyce Andrews, Len Mortimer and Roy Booker and we are thankful to have had the service and company of these wonderful people.

LLANCARFAN AND SHIPPING by John Williams, Old Orchard

Your note on the activities at the port of Aberthaw, in Newsletter 71, was of particular interest to me and I wonder if I may add a little to the record of that place. Further I will add a few items concerning ships with local connections, but in more recent times.

Firstly, and with regard to Aberthaw, did you know that ships were built there? There is a record of a ship built to order of Bristol owners launched in 1768 names the "BRISTOL PACKET" regrettably there is no record of the name of the builder. Such information was not listed in Lloyds Registers at the time. This ship was active in the Irish wool trade on occasion and is recorded in the Liverpool Wool Registers in 1768 and again in 1771. The purpose of this Liverpool Register was to legalize the use of the vessel for trade in Irish wool, but to be delivered to U.K. ports only, and to prevent such wool from being exported to Europe to supply foreign wool industries. (Lloyds Register 1776 and Cymru a'r Môr No. 12 (1989). ADD: The Liverpool Plantation Registers Project. University of Liverpool)

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On a personal note, and interestingly, part of the dock wall of the old harbour is still to be seen if anyone cares to search for it. Further, there is a vessel's stern-post to be seen embedded in the sand but well above the reach of normal tides. I wonder if this gives us a clue to the site of the ship-building yard which would have been located clear of the proper harbour anyway. I find it a haunting place.

Now to the twentieth century and the S.S. LLANCARVAN (sic). This ship was owned by the W. Thomas SS Co. Ltd and was built at Stockton in 1904. She was of 4749 gross tonnage and during the first world war was armed for defensive purposes (not all ships were armed thus). Whilst on a voyage from New Orleans to Gibraltar with a cargo of barley and steel billets she was sunk by torpedo attack. This was on 16 May 1918 and in position off the Azores where she now lies. No lives were lost as a result of this attack. I cannot give any more information about the owners but suspect the company were part of the Evan Thomas Radcliffe Group of Cardiff.

The S.S. BONVILSTON. was another armed merchantman but she had a far more eventful time of it and led the enemy a bit of a dance.

On 23 April 1916 whilst in the Mediterranean she was attacked by submarine but the torpedo missed.

On 12 June 1917 whilst off Gibraltar she was attacked on the surface (presumably the U-Boat had run out of torpedoes) but the ship's gunner responded with such good effect that the attacker withdrew - hit perhaps.

The saga continues for on 1st December 1917, when in the English Channel she was attacked by submarine but the torpedo missed.

Finally on the 17 October 1918 again in the English Channel she met her end as the result of torpedo attack.

Remarkably no lives were lost as a result of all these attacks.

(British Vessels Lost at Sea 1914-18)

A CORRESPONDENCE between DAVID EVANS (formerly of Garnllwyd) and JOHN ETHERINGTON, Llanhowell (without his editor's hat)

Nostalgia is one of the activities which seem not to damage laboratory mice. (Dennis Norden, introducing a recent radio programme.)

David to the Editor (Lougratte, France, March '96)

May I comment upon the entire page devoted to the late Len Mortimer, living in my day at Cae-maen. From my experience his knowledge of game conservation was limited to a one man crusade pursued with a relentless fanaticism, to exterminate the fox in the Vale. It really is extraordinary how some people possess the paysanne antipathy towards this generally beneficial animal. As Irene Porter said, "Ignorance is no excuse, it is the real thing".

Nostalgia ain't what it used to be, but it continues apace in the Newsletter for the old Llancarfan. We need to remind ourselves perhaps that it was millers' sons and cousins who became land developers in recent decades, thus

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altering the face of the village for all time. One cannot have it both ways. No field, hedgerow or spinney was spared. Nature and history were in retreat. Paths for essential deliveries to outlying farms had become signed routes for wardens, guided walks and other petty ruralities. Llancarfan as we knew it has gone forever. Nostalgia itself is a seductive liar. Altruism, surely not, we people of stone picking on Good Friday are no longer naive. We have grown old. It's not nice but it's interesting, and anyway real old age is always fifteen years older than any of us.

Editor to David (Llanhowell, March '96)

You raise a number of points which are controversial and which I comment on in this letter. I would like to include these comments in the same Newsletter as yours, making the point that it is not an editorial view but personal opinion.

Since 1987 the Society has gone from strength to strength and this year's membership is the largest ever. Nostalgia is what sells it, particularly to some older folk whose early lives were distinctly hard. Despite this, many of them look back to the years between the wars as a time of happiness, selfsufficiency and contentment. This is something modern life has taken from us - perhaps we mistake comfort for reality - perhaps it is not such a bad thing to be reminded of better times?

The Newsletters are only the tip of the iceberg - there are a large number of social functions each year which have not only brought together old friends but also made entirely new friendships between folk who lived in the village at different times: nostalgia or not, this is a valuable community activity filling part of the social vacuum which exists in many commuter villages and it reaches out in a way the old communities could not. It is too easy to point the finger at those who sold small farms in the 50s and 60s - had they not done so the Receiver would often have done it for them and their lands, small near-village fields, would have made the same transition into developer's hands. We may see it as undesirable, but it has happened to almost every village in Britain within reach of a town. If anything was wrong it was the contemporary attitude of planning-committees but then we usually get the government we deserve. Arguably, if villages had not grown, they would have become the retreat of the very rich to a greater extent than they are today?

I can't agree with your "No field, hedgerow and spinney was spared". Despite the building of a dozen or so houses in the village, Llancarfan parish has a much greater surviving mileage of original hedgerows than many equivalent parishes in rural England and maps show that very few small woods have gone since the last war. The wildlife of these habitats is still rich and flourishing, but where it really has suffered is in the fields themselves not because of development, but at the hands of farmers who are ratcheted ever further into the thrall of banks, machines and fertilizer.

I dislike hunting and shooting, not least because it is wrong to take pleasure in killing, but it is a bit unfair to judge Len Mortimer's pursuit of the fox so harshly. He was brought-up in a Vale community which saw shooting as a normal activity, and left school at 14 to make his way in life.

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Foxes eat pheasant chicks and they come back, again and again:- Len was doing what he was employed to do. I believe he only thought to question whether it was right much later in life - however, I doubt whether he changed his mind.

David to Editor (Lougratte, April '96)

It is a warm sunny morning down here as you might expect at a latitude south of Venice, and I have just completed an oil of sunflowers and poppies.

I must not be misunderstood. Congratulations for all your contributions to the Newsletter, which fills a valuable communication stream in the fabric of society. I had not actually wished to be controversial, merely attempting to submit an objective view; particularly after reading some of the contents of Newsletter 71. It was the emergence of the syncophantic cant that spurred me to write. I appreciate your advising me how sensitive urban man has become in recent years.

When in recent decades Llancarfan became a cradle for Marbellan architecture, I felt it was an affront to anyone with sensibility. No doubt others of an earlier generation had a similar reaction in their time when those unprepossessing late Victorian-Edwardian houses were constructed. You are again being generous in suggesting that post war development was due to financial pressure. My belief at the time, and nothing since has led me to alter the view that it was undertaken within an opportunistic financial climate. We all know that no one actually does things for money, it just quietens their nerves. Driving through the village today certainly leaves me with the impression that *les riches sont arrives*.

Would I could agree with your assessment of the state of the natural history interest in the district. A few farmers still leave patches of shelter, and resist draining damp spots for wintering snipe and woodcock for instance, but some boast of the miles of hedgerows they have so brutally removed at tax payers' expense through the C.A.P.

I was saddened to read that you do not support field sports. Hunting in particular contributes to a varied landscape, and also to the social scene, giving nationally significant employment in a multitude of industries in a supportive capacity. No true sportsman would willingly snare, trap or gas foxes. There is an important distinction between the control of a species where conditions demand it, and the extermination syndrome. Responsible employers should fence their rearing pens. Wild pheasants survive alongside fox earths. Nature does nothing uselessly.

I trust this postscript will clarify my earlier note, and provide a forum for publication of our clearly multifarious views.

Editorial note: David also added a last paragraph to his first letter, drawing attention to The Diary of William Thomas, featured in the last Newsletter.

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THE FAMILY OF KENNETH HOWELLS

In their role as correspondents for The Gem, Sam and Patsy Smith, Chapel House, recently received a letter addressed to "The Editor, the largest newspaper covering Llancarfan, Glamorgan, Wales." Congratulations are obviously due to our local postmen! The writer was Kenneth Howells of New South Wales, who asked for help in tracing relatives, his family having emigrated to Australia in the late 1800s. Phil Watts was able to help with living relatives and John Etherington produced some information from the 1881 census, taken just before the family departed from Llancarfan. Further help came from Maureen Bullows of the Family History Society while mention in the Gem has located two

cousins, not previously known to each other, in Barry and another in Dundee. Kenneth has offered to give us a family tree when it is completed and, at that time we will give some more detail of this enquiry with its happy outcome.

NEWS OF MEMBERS, FRIENDS AND PLACES

Just before this Newsletter was copied we heard of the untimely death of Norton Evans, The Willows, Llancarfan. Our deepest sympathies go to Margaret, Huw and Rachel.

Refurbishment of St Cadoc's Church continues but further funds are still required. Steve Pierce, Covenant Secretary, St Cadoc's Church, writes that "Covenanting now accounts for the main channel of income for the church and gives clear account of the generosity extended by the village and its friends." Steve asks whether there are still folk who would like to give to the church by deed of covenant, allowing the church to enhance income by claiming-back the tax already paid on the contribution. If you can help, Steve's address is 12 Caerffynnon, Barry, Vale of Glamorgan, CF62 6NS (01446 420822).

Sam and Patsie Smith's periodic reports in the Gem show that quiz-nights at the Fox and Hounds have proved very popular, raising money for the school and for the church restoration fund. Many other items of local interest appear in their reports - I wonder why Llancarfan does not contribute a similar local column to the Barry and District News? Shouldn't we keep up with the Jones in Rhoose, St Athan and Llantwit?

Llanvithyn Mill has taken on a new role in life, Maggie Levy having opened the Little Mill Cattery at the beginning of May. Since its conversion in the 1960's the mill has been a home and it has not earned its keep grinding corn for many years. Very best wishes to Maggie, in her new venture.

St Cadoc's Church has been short-listed for the prestigious John Betjeman Award which is given in recognition of the most sensitive and well-undertaken restoration of a church or chapel. Fingers crossed!

Barry Philatelic Society recently inspected several old pillar boxes in the Llancarfan area including mid-Victorian examples at Porthkerry, Fonmon and Llantrythid.

BARNS by John Etherington

In her foreword to the National Trust's guide to Historic Farm Buildings, Susan Denyer wrote; "The last forty years have seen --- the almost complete obsolescence and abandonment of traditional farm buildings."

In our parish, many barns have become redundant and there is a rising tide of barn-conversions to domestic use. One of the first was the barn at Walterston, now Hen-dy-Gwair, which became a home in the 1970's, followed later by another barn on the opposite side of the road. More recently there have been conversions at Caemaen, at Garnllwyd and of the great old barn between Middlecross and Cliff. A house at Greendown was based on an almost complete rebuilding of an original barn and there is a recent application for conversions at Pen-onn. There are several more, but memory fails me.

In many cases, these conversions have provided new rural homes without changing the face of countryside and has sometimes preserved buildings of historical interest which would otherwise have become ruinous and ultimately been demolished.

Some of the barns were of no great age and perhaps not very interesting but it does strike me that we have no documentation of their history and construction and, in some cases where new roofs and internal timbering have been installed, a great deal of historical information may have been lost. In some of the conversions the masonry has been so extensively altered that this more permanent part of the record has also gone, or been distorted.

Has anyone taken an interest in these and other barns? Are there photographs or any written records? Does anyone know? I shall be grateful for any

comments or records of this

great great change in our

local farms.

ST CADOC AGAIN

The last Newsletter contained a lot on St Cadoc: here is some more: "On the British border, called Demetia, a certain regulus named Glywys Glywysyg reigned over the district of Wentloog, that is all the land between the river Usk and the river Rhymney.

St Cadog owned all of the land from Ffynnon Hen, or Old Fountain, to the mouth of the river, as well as other property.

On Palm Sunday Cadog fed 100 soldiers, 100 workmen, 100 poor persons and 100 widows ---.

(A. Bielski (1985) *The Story of St Mellons*, Alun Books. The author does not acknowledge the source of this information).

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MILKING EWES by John Etherington

We sometimes forget how quickly fashions change, even in agriculture. My generation has seen the end of traditional haymaking, the advent and demise of the square bale, a brief affair with grass-drying, silage and the big-bale for silage and hay. Similarly, new breeds of sheep and cattle have appeared in the fields and, between the wars, the market for fresh milk overtook the traditional preserved milk products, butter and cheese.

Cheesemaking was common to most Welsh farms and ewe's-milk cheese continued to be made in Powys until the 1930s. In the eighteenth century, flocks of milking ewes were kept throughout the Vale. Robert Williams of Llancarfan died in 1709 leaving "30 milking ewes" worth £6. In 1815 Walter Davies wrote:- "In the Vale, many depend more for cheese upon the ewe than the cow --" and goes on to say that they were milked for cheese from the first of May to the 20th of August, twice a day and from then until September they were milked only once and that in the morning. The practice ended in Glamorgan by the end of the nineteenth century.

This information came from the current volume of the journal of ethnological studies, *Folk Life*, 34, in which S. Minwell Tibbot writes on cheesemaking in Glamorgan.