

LLANCARFAN



**Legend has it that St
Cadoc was aided by deer
when he built his
monastery in Llancarfan**

SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 82

JULY 1998

This Newsletter opens with a letter written 18 years ago, but which might have been the sequel to Graham Jenkins article on vagrants in the last Newsletter.

Iron Bill, Wooden Jane and Tom Shanks by Dilys Liscombe

This item first appeared on September 24th, 1982, as a letter to the *Western Mail*. We are grateful to the Editor for permission to reproduce it.

I WAS brought up in the Vale - at *Llancarfan* and well remember many of the characters of 40 or 50 years ago. A previous writer mentioned "Swansea" who we knew as "Swansea Royal". He did not pass our way often but the sight of him made children run to hiding, although he was quite harmless.

Some will remember Iron Bill and Wooden Jane - one having a hook hand and the other a wooden leg. Others will remember the witch-like Claudia Pickett, whose purse was hidden under seven layers of petticoat. But the best-known character was Tom Shanks (Thomas Shanklyn) - born and bred in *Llancarfan* and his ancestors are remembered in *Bethlehem Chapel*.

Tom returned from the 1914-18 war, reputedly having spent his gratuity on a *lady* in London. Eventually he made homes for himself in various huts in the parish. He "lived" by working - when he felt inclined - on farms and following the threshing machine - for his food and beer money. For a variety of reasons he had a "reserved" seat in the *Fox and Hounds*.

He was not a lover of work and on one occasion was known to have shortened a gate post which he was erecting rather than dig the hole to the correct depth. He would regularly arrive at my home for breakfast and was never refused, even if there was no work. I vividly remember his sitting with us on the kitchen settle, clay-pipe in mouth, reeking of wood-smoke from his hut fire, and eating the fattest of home-cured bacon!

His big blue twinkling eyes always looked to the ceiling. His wrinkled face rarely saw soap and water - but it had character.

He had few worldly possessions except a few old clothes and his Bible. When in the early 'Fifties he was removed to an old folk's home on the Gower coast his possessions were burnt for health reasons, but his Bible survived that fire. What a pity that Tom now rests in a common grave in West Glamorgan, as he "belonged" in *Llancarfan*.

I doubt whether our commuter villages of today will allow characters like Tom to mature.

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We will also be pleased to print short announcements of village functions but they must be sent in writing, at least 2 to 3 months in advance.

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Tom Shanks - A Postscript To Dilys Liscombe's memories by John Etherington

Tom Shanklyn was born in the late 1880's. The first record I have of his life is in the Census of 1891 when he was three years old. His father, Lewis Shanklyn, came from Pembrokeshire but his mother, Eliza was a *Llancarfan* girl. Well, perhaps not quite a girl, as she and Lewis were 36 and 39 respectively. There were two other children in 1891, William, aged 5, and Ann, 1 year old. All three were born in *Llancarfan*. Eliza's brothers, David and Evan Jenkins also lived with the family and were recorded as "deaf and dumb since childhood". Their home is recorded as No. 1 Cottage, *Llancarfan*, and appears between *Pancross* and *Shop Vawr* (now Hillside). It was possibly *Fern Cottage* but, at that time, there were probably other dwellings nearer to *Pancross* so it is not possible to be certain.

Lewis was an agricultural labourer as was Evan. David was a shoemaker. The deaf and dumb brothers were still remembered in everyday conversation when I came to the village in the 1960s and, even now, must be recalled by some older members.

Until we can see the 1901 Census, the record goes cold, except for Tom. He had a public conscience for he appears in the pre-1939 Electoral Registers, giving the address: c/o Post Master, *Llancarfan*! I doubt whether this would be acceptable today, and it is interesting that, by 1945, he was registering at *Penylan* and continued to do so until at least 1949.

During the 1998 May Walk, Clive Jenkins recalled that Tom used to visit

his family at *Ty Uchaf* and be given a meal. That would be in the late 40s when Tom lived in the corrugated iron shed at the upper, southern corner of Coed Garnllwyd, then owned by the Rowlands family. More or less derelict 30 years ago, it has now collapsed into a heap of scrap-iron.

The Fox and Hounds. Part I - Jane Price, Susannah and Evan Griffiths
Research by the late Joyce Andrews and Diane Morgan. Text by John Etherington

Two 16th century inns stood almost facing each other, *The Fox and Hounds* and *Y Ceffyl Du*. Grandma Price c.1880 controlled both inns, custom was poor, so the *Black Horse* died. (Sid Perkins, 1969)

“The *Fox and Hounds* was run by a mother and daughter who, between them, had more than twenty children.” (told to JRE by several different villagers)

Just over two centuries ago, J. M. M. Turner journeyed through South Wales. He paused at the remote village of Ewenny, near Bridgend, and gave the world a painting which depicts an almost medieval style of life: *Ewenny Priory* was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1797. The ethereal quality, for which it is famed, conceals the fact that the floor of the priory is a farmyard upon which a woman feeds chickens amongst the abandoned remains of agricultural implements.

Fourteen years after Turner’s visit, a girl child named Jane Griffiths was born into that other-time Ewenny where hens probably continued to peck at the *Priory* floor. We don’t know how she came to Llancarfan to marry David Price, farmer and publican, but we do know that she had a long and successful life which remains in our village as the folk-memory of “Grandma Price”.

There may even be a little myth surrounding the circumstances of her life. “The *Fox and Hounds* was run by a mother and daughter.” people have told me, “Between them they had more than twenty children.” Yes, she and her daughter Susannah did run the *Fox and Hounds* but I’m not sure whether they had all those children. We shall look into this later on.

David and Jane were landlord and landlady of the *Fox and Hounds* at the time of the 1841 census. David was either successful, or already well-off, for subsequent events suggest that he owned the *Fox and Hounds* which remained in the hands of his descendants until the 1950s. David was born in Llancarfan, in 1810, and it may be that the *Fox and Hounds* was his family home*.

In the 1851 census, David was described as publican and farmer and the house was named as the *Fox and Hounds*. In 1861 he was listed as a farmer of 36 acres and a publican. After David’s death, Jane continued to run the *Fox*. In 1881 she was the publican, helped by her daughter, Susannah and her husband, Evan Griffiths, who shared the house, together with two of the Price grandchildren.

Jane was a survivor. The 1891 census came and, at the age of 80 she was still the publican of the *Fox and Hounds*. By then Susannah and Evan were in their mid-30s and soon to build *Glan-yr-Afon* which is remembered by older members of the Society as the home of Dai, *Glan-yr-Afon*. Dai was the oldest son of Susannah and Evan, his proper name being David Price Griffiths.

Jane Price almost lived to see another census. Her gravestone reads:- “In memory of David Price of this parish

who died September 12th 1880 aged 70 years --- Also Jane, the wife of the aforesaid, died 4th February 1898 aged 87 years.

What about all those legendary children? Susannah was 37 in 1881 and had only three children then. I can track-down another six, born to Jane. We suspect that there were earlier Susannahs who died in infancy - the parents repeating the name with a later-born child (done commonly then, though strange to us in softer times)**. Probably no more than a dozen children, but again we know that various Price grandchildren lived with Jane and these may well have been added to the score.

The enigmatic quotation from Sid Perkin's 1969 illustrated map of Llancarfan which commences this article suggests that Grandma Price also controlled *Y Ceffyl Du* (subsequently the *The Black Horse*). Sid Perkins obtained much of his information by word of mouth and spoke to villagers with a personal memory of Grandma Price.

The censuses show the *Black Horse*, in 1851, tenanted by a George David and in 1861 by Elizabeth Griffiths, probably young Evan's mother. It is no longer mentioned by name in 1871, 1881 or 1891, but that last census showed the house to be occupied by Grandma Price's widowed daughter-in-law, Mary, and five grandchildren - William, Morris, Llewellyn, David and Thomas. Some of those children had lived with Grandma Price and were to go on to found branches of the Price family at *Penylan*, *Middlecross*, *Newhouse* (Moulton) and elsewhere. That must be another story but the five boys probably added to the legend of all those children. Bet they were a handful!

Before we leave this story of a village where everyone was related to everyone else, it is worth recounting the connection with the blacksmithing dynasty. Young blacksmith, Evan Griffiths, who married Susannah, was the son of Morris Griffiths, blacksmith and publican of the *Red Cow* in Penmark. Morris was closely linked with Llancarfan. His father was another Evan Griffiths, the blacksmith who bought the *Blacksmith's Shop* and other property in Llancarfan, in 1828. The *Glan-yr-Afon* parcel of land was part of that empire-founding purchase. It was willed to Richard, old Evan's youngest son, from whom Susannah and young Evan bought it in 1897 thus keeping it in the family until the 1950s.

Evan died in 1913 and Susannah survived until 1933 when David Price Griffiths must have become the owner of the *Fox and Hounds* as it was bought from him in 1952 by Norman Hardy of Barry who later sold it to Trixie Phillips in the 1960s - a story for Part III of this series.

* Another explanation is that the *Fox and Hounds* belonged to the Griffiths' empire. Was it leased to Jane Price until Susannah married Evan?

** Graham Jenkins' searches suggest that there were other infant Susannahs.

Llancarfan Reflexions by Campbell Reed

I first really encountered Llancarfan when I went to live there at about eight years of age, although I had flirted with it before, on visits to my grandparents.

I had come from a town where there were street lights and noise and terraced houses. But Llancarfan wasn't like that. The air was fresh, the ground was rich, especially after rain, the

nights were dark and stars were beacons.

Now, over fifty years later and sadly no longer a Llancarfan villager, I still treasure it. Why should that place have left such an indelible memory? I discussed this some years ago with my good friend of yesteryear, Clive Jenkins, also a former inhabitant, and we both agreed that things always make an impression in one's formative years, but there was something special about Llancarfan. Both Clive and myself have been accused by our respective children of being chronic sentimentalists when reminiscing!

Many experiences in those early years were new and fresh. Everywhere one went was like going through a door and not knowing what was on the other side. I remember going into a field known locally as the "rabbit field", for the first time, *en route* to *Gowlog*, and suddenly seeing apparently hundreds of them just bobbing about. I remember being alone, walking through a field at *Penylan* and seeing fantastic carpets of cowslips, seemingly stretching for miles. I can see that beautiful yellow still! I recall *Pancross* wood covered with bluebells, only the paths were clear. And remember the endless raucous noise of rooks and crows in that same wood. Then there were the friendly primroses all along the river banks, especially in the *Top End* area. There was also the sight of yellowhammers, jays, kingfishers and skylarks to add to the general hue. But most of all, it was the solitude, silence and beauty that I remember most.

I also remember the days when horses queued outside the shop of the blacksmith, waiting to be shod - sometimes they would stretch, apparently as far as *Fern Cottage*. How

excited we were watching the blacksmith shoe those horses with such skill. What strength he had to calm the nervous and the angry ones.

Every grown up, practically, seemed to be my uncle and aunt, though not blood relations. There was a fantastic sense of community or curiosity - if anyone was ill at *Top End* we, in the other part of the village, would soon hear about it. An "aunt" of mine who lived quite near knew my "0" level results almost before me!

What of school days? My first date with the education world was at a large pulsating Council School in Barry. So it was quite a transformation to be thrown into a three-class school in Llancarfan. But we had lots of fun as well as heartache. I recall one pupil being chased by the head-teacher across one of the top fields for some misdemeanour or other. Then there was cricket in the playground, often, when we imagined ourselves to be Test cricketers, at least!

The Parish church and its connections featured prominently in my early life in the village. I remember the formation of the choir with various people urging us to "sing up" and our being confronted by the liturgical language of the Prayer Book which we failed to understand, and being forced to wear uncomfortable cassocks and surplices. I remember the great Llancarfan flood in the late 1940s when we saw heavy pews floating in the church!

Attached to the church were the *eisteddfodau*, the Guild meetings, the walks, the fetes, the meetings, the bells and fun. Then there was *Pancross* and *Penonn*, where from time to time we played cricket for the village team. Occasionally we had to fight the cows

as well as the bowlers. This was where a bus replaced a pavilion and where unsuspecting cricketers changed into whites! *Pancross*, too, was where I remember harvesting, minus tractors in those days, but complete with horses. There is so much more, including fishing, the game of "fox and hounds," cricket and smashed church-hall windows, Llanbethery Moors, the nineteen forty seven winter, Christmases and early love affairs.

But time and space does not permit, but one still has the memories!

Advertising sites - the blacksmith's door by John Etherington

Last month Phil Watts wrote of the various advertising sites on barn-doors, telephone poles and the double doors of the *Blacksmith Shop*.

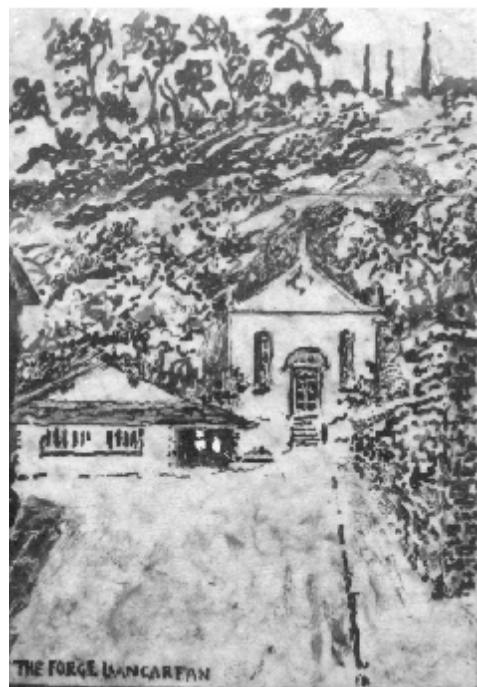
My late father, Herbert Etherington, used to visit us often in Llancafán. Throughout his life he was an artist in his spare time, painting and drawing everything around him. Those who lived in the village through the late 60s and 70s will remember his pottering about the village, sketching on scraps of paper, in a pocket book or even in the margin of a newspaper. Those sketches often turned into finished paintings, the most impressive being a fantasy panorama of Llancafán, almost six feet long which now hangs in our sitting-room..

Several preliminary sketches for that painting were view of the *Blacksmith's Shop*. Dad had been a professional engineer all his life and was old enough to remember village society when it revolved around the work of the smith. One of my fondest memories is of the many chats he had with Joe Lewis, the last Blacksmith to work the *Shop*. Joe

was Dilys Liscombe's father, a man of many parts, and with many distant memories of the Vale.

I expect there must be photo's of the *Blacksmith Shop* which show the doors covered in advertisements but I can't remember seeing one. Dad's sketch shows them, however, and, in another large painting which was derived from this sketch, he was impressed enough to colour one of the posters a traffic-light red as an attractor-point for the eye.

I'm sorry he cannot be with us still to see the success of the Society but perhaps he might have been cross that I have used his sketch in this way - he never really showed his finished paintings to anyone outside the immediate family let alone rough sketches like this one!



This sketch was done in 1972 and was entitled *The Forge - Llancafán*. It became a 2 x 1 foot painting which now graces our guest-bedroom. Three advertising posters are very prominent.

The Griffiths family - another bit of the jigsaw by John Etherington

We came to *Pancross* on March 1st, 1935. I recall Griffiths in *Fern Cottage*, Bridge House, *Glan yr Afon*, (the house) opposite the *Fox*, *Top End (Caradoc Cottage)*, *Brimwell*, *Talbots*, *Pencarreg*, *Tyn-y-Coed*, *Gowlog*, *The Mason's Arms* (now the *Wild Goose*) and, I believe, *Red Holme*. I have probably forgotten a few. Why did they all leave?

Tony Thomas (1988), writing in *Newsletter 6*

According to the 1935 Electoral Register, Tony had forgotten *The Talbots* and possibly *The Shop* (now *Hillside*). There were 31 Griffiths eligible to vote in 1935.

Editor

Researching village history is a bit like doing a jigsaw - you can sit for ages staring at those patches of blue sky and nondescript cloud. Then, without warning, a piece shouts at you from the random heap. It goes there!

The jigsaw in question is the Griffiths family about which Tony Thomas wrote the note which heads this article. In particular, many of you will know that we have been trying to link together the blacksmithing Griffiths with all the others. A dynasty was founded in 1828 when Evan Griffiths bought the *Blacksmith's Shop* together with several houses and other properties nearby. For over a century, much of that property remained within the family but it has dispersed during the past 70 years.

One of my missing jigsaw-pieces exploded on me a day or two ago when I found a record of the burial of Mansell Griffiths, *Caemaen* who died in 1942 aged 70. I had been looking amongst the transcriptions of *St Cadoc's* churchyard tombstones* for Jane Price, of the *Fox and Hounds*,

when my eye was caught by the subordinate part of an adjacent entry which described Mansell Griffiths as the fourth son of David and Catherine Griffiths.

Eureka! I know who both David and Catherine were! David Griffiths was the fifth son of Evan Griffiths, the blacksmith who bought the Blacksmith's Shop in 1828. David married Catherine, daughter of the first Robert Lougher, of *Garnllwd*..

So we have it. The *Caemaen* Griffiths were part of the blacksmithing dynasty and were linked by marriage to the Lougher family.**

I'm sure someone will say "We already knew that.", but no one told me, despite repeated appeals for information! Perhaps it is a bit more like a detective story than a jigsaw - the witnesses are about as forthcoming as the suspects!

* Glamorgan Family History Society Transcription

** The Griffiths family information has come mainly from old property deeds but the Loughers are better documented in Major Edwin Lougher's detailed family tree. Mansell, was the youngest (?) son of David and Catherine, and is remembered by older members of the Society. Catherine's father, Robert Lougher, was born in 1786. Two centuries of history amongst a handful of people!

Gwyn Hopkins by Phil Watts

At a Committee meeting in the *Fox and Hounds* last year we had the pleasure of the company of Gwyn Hopkins, *Windways*, *Llanbethery* Gwyn is one

of the few remaining residents who has lived all his life in the Llancarfan area.

The latest to succumb to the wanderlust have been Phil, Ruth and Kath Watts of *Abernant*, but in these cases the residence was not continuous. Kath lived for five years in Cowbridge when Doris and Bill Watts ran a Bakery business from 38, Eastgate Street. This address is now the site of Thomas the Undertakers. Phil and Ruth Watts lived in Cardiff from 1953 to 1958, Russel being born in 1956. In spite of this, it is difficult to think of us as being anything but residents of Llancarfan. Although we are now living in Barry we still think of ourselves as a part of the village.

In my conversation with Gwyn he revealed to me that he had recently been working in a 150 acre field! Because of the size of the area he said he temporarily became lost - there was an absence of landmarks and he was not sure in which direction to proceed. I advised him on most occasions to take a compass or, if necessary to follow the stars!

Gwyn, as many will know, is the local master of hedge-laying and has worked for almost all the local farmers. He did not think that he would ever be tendering for a hedge around the field of 150 acres.- at the age of 77, he thought he might not have time to finish it,! However, Gwyn is a magnificent advertisement for hard work and its accompanying good health. We wish that long may this continue.

Further investigation revealed that the 150 acre field was the area that was designated as a race-course in the Dyffryn Village new settlement plan a few years ago. This land has now

passed into the hands of Tony Thomas and Son. The major part of *Pencarreg Farm* and a part of *Blackland Farm*, it gives open space from the Five Mile Lane, at *Blackland Farm*, to the Bonvilston-Abernant-Llancarfan Road at a point near *Greendown*.

At this spot, it is interesting to note that one of the Point-to-Point races was held this year and, at the other end of the land, on the opposite side of the Five Mile Lane, was one of the sites formerly used for the Llancarfan Ploughing Match for many years. Some of the cups, competed for in those ploughing matches are still awarded at the Vale of Glamorgan Show, formerly the Cowbridge Show. This Show has now come closer to home. It will be held at Fonmon this year, with Tony Thomas as the 1998-9 Chairman.

News of members, friends and places

- Our membership Secretary, Phil Watts, spent a part of the early Summer in Canada. Phil usually helps in distributing the Newsletters and, in his absence, Ruth Watts asks that we acknowledge the help she received from Beryl Booth and Audrey Baldwin who made sure that the Newsletters were distributed quickly. Thank you to all three ladies.
- During the refurbishment of *St Cadoc's* tower, the old bell-ropes were removed. One of these, as a memento, was presented to the *Fox and Hounds* together with a framed history of the church. I can't help recalling all of those who pulled on that rope and then recovered themselves leaning against the bar in the *Fox*.

- The last Newsletter contained a short history of the *St Cadoc's Bells* which was prepared in relation to the refurbishment of the church-tower and its bells. It should be acknowledged that much of the information came from *The Bells of Glamorgan* by Arthur Wright.
- Petanque. On the 4th July, five teams of three met at the *Fox and Hounds* where two *pistes* had been prepared by Gwynne Liscombe and the two Phils:- Watts and Gammon. After an enjoyable knockout battle this same team of three emerged victorious. There is considerable interest in finding a site for a permanent *piste* in the village and a future chance to remove these three sportsmen from their pedestal..
- During the May Walk several participants commented on the dramatic impact which the yellow flowers of oil-seed rape have on the surrounding countryside. Ann Radcliffe, adding the beekeepers point of view, said that it makes quite good honey. She then paused and said that *men* like it. This is interesting, as I know several people, all women, who claim to be allergic to the plant. Despite the fact that it is insect- and not wind-pollinated, they develop hay-feverish symptoms when close to it. Furthermore, my wife says it has a strong and unpleasant smell but I cannot detect this, despite having a normal sense of smell, otherwise. Do we have a new observation here? Is sensitivity to oil-seed rape sex-linked? Our cottage is surrounded by 12 acres of it - in bloom at the moment!

School admissions by Phil Watts

We are grateful to the head teacher, Ms Lyn Smith, for the opportunity of seeing the school admissions registers from December 1921 to January 1985. Any of those attending the recent barbecue at Pen-onn a year or two ago, had the opportunity of seeing their names on the register and to ask the question "Where are they now?" of fellow pupils. Many are members of the Society, others are no longer with us and others have moved away.

The admission register records the date of entry to the school; the dates of leaving and to which school; also previous school also recorded is the name and address of the parent and the occupation

An example:- 5.12.21 Edward Williams, Ford Farm. Date of leaving 2.4.31. Reason for withdrawal, over-age. Class Six. Parent's name - Thomas Williams, Farmer.

Page 1 reveals the following occupations: Farmer, mason, bailiff, baker, coal merchant, cement worker, blacksmith, roadman, labourer, gamekeeper, smallholder, carpenter, haulier. A similar pattern of occupation was apparent until the late 60s and early 70s. From that time it is noticed that occupations change to include: managing director, accountant, architect, consultant engineer, university lecturer, electronics engineer, civil servant, manager company director, engineer at Aberthaw power station, wholesale jeweller, teacher, composer, insulation engineer

The last page carrying the dates from 1980 to 1985 did not reveal one occupation relating to farming. Unfortunately there were also two entries of: unemployed.

The school records are currently being researched by members of the Society and much fuller reports will appear in future Newsletters and *Llancarfan, a Vale Village*.