



THE LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER NO 86
January-February 1999

Editorial Happy New Year to you all - this is the first newsletter of 1999, and enclosed with it is a programme of events from which you will see we are flourishing as well as ever.

It is difficult to believe that five issues of the Newsletter have appeared since the beginning of our series on the *Fox and Hounds*. The last part, which is in this Newsletter, presents Phil Watts' memory of his own involvement with the *Fox*. It is appropriate that the series should close in this way, with personal memories. Did Phil realise when he started to write this account, that its publication would span the centenary of Jane Price's death? Jane was the first publican whose name we know and we have also established that the *Fox and Hounds* was the name of the inn when she first entered its doors.

The Fox and Hounds - Part V. My involvement with the Fox by Phil Watts

I am now in my sixty-eighth year and most of this time has been spent within a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile radius of the *Fox and Hounds*. For better or for worse I have now moved to an address in Barry which has increased the distance from Llancafarn to five miles. I believe that I am able to narrate a lot of the changes that have taken place at the *Fox and Hounds* over the last sixty years.

I am not able to tell, or remember all that has taken place, from the days of the *Sweet Shop* to the days of the fully licensed restaurant. Some of the secrets and memories will never be told but most of the memories are pleasant, and enjoyable to re-tell to friends and neighbours.

I was first introduced to the inside of the *Fox and Hounds* by cycling from *Abernant* to meet my father from work, or maybe to search out my cousin Gwynne Liscombe who spent a lot of his time as a young boy in the *Fox* with the Harris family who ran the pub until 1945. There was always the possibility of a packet of crisps!

Later, when Mr & Mrs Bryer took over the pub, there was the further attraction of a game of darts or "doolies" (table skittles). The cricket team often assembled there and retired there after the game to discuss the sixes hit, catches missed and matches won and lost.

Nineteen-fifty-two was the year Trixie came to the *Fox and Hounds* and the year when Phil and Ruth Watts were married. The bride had a *Pimms No. 1* delivered to *Abernant*, made by Trixie, to send her on her happy way. The wedding was in *St. Cadoc's Church* and the reception in the *Church Hall* where the alcohol was limited to a sherry toast. The guests retired to the *Fox and Hounds* to continue the celebration and wish the bride and groom happiness, when they left for their honeymoon in the South of England. The children at the wedding will recall being fed crisps through the windows!!

Although I remained a customer and regular local , my next major introduction to the *Fox and Hounds* was as evening barman in 1966-67 when I remember the cost of a pint of beer being 1/6d and a brandy 2/6d. This became my part-time employment for the next 16 years. By this time Trixie had developed a family of people who worked together as a great team for the betterment of the *Fox and Hounds*. I considered it a privilege to join this team, with the chance to earn some pocket money in pleasant surroundings and enjoyable company.

Another aspect was the opportunity to meet people when they were out enjoying themselves, and the aim of the *Fox* has always been to increase this enjoyment. It was traditional, and expected, that I would wear a white shirt and tie, this was a different type of labour to what occupied my time at *Abernant* on the garden and farm. So I had to keep my finger nails clean, to present over the bar. The work also helped to exercise the brain, adding-up the prices and remembering the different drinks. Either Mary Lucas or Mary Webber would help me out in making up a *Pimms* until I finally 'cracked' it.

These were happy days and I was happy to be a member of the *Fox and Hounds* staff. There was always a Christmas get-together. After 25 years of Trixie being at the *Fox* we all had a present to commemorate the event. The year, 1977, also celebrated the Royal Jubilee year (in good company as well for this was another 25th anniversary - Ruth and Phil's Silver Wedding).

We much appreciated being allowed to have the first meeting of the Llancarfan Society in the lounge of the *Fox and Hounds* in 1987 when 12 good souls met and started the Llancarfan Society on its way. Joyce Andrews set the standard of hospitality and we still have our monthly committee meetings in the *Fox*.

The *Fox and Hounds* has always been a base for good hospitality and I feel sure it will long continue to do so.

Childhood recollections of the *Fox and Hounds* 1934-42 by Gwynne Liscombe

I have read with interest, Phil Watts' articles regarding the *Fox and Hounds* and, in particular, the excellent discussion he had with Betty Harris regarding the Harris' family occupation of the pub.

I was brought-up in the 1930s at *Woodlands* and we were close neighbours of the Harris' family . I well remember the childhood pleasures of being involved with most members of that family. Some of these, I think, reflect the friendliness and goodwill existing between families at that time, and the childhood experiences which ensued. Articles such as Phil's act as wonderful trigger to memory.

I remember the cows in the cowshed and standing for Betty to squirt the hot milk from the cow directly into my mouth. My first taste of brawn, chitlings and fat-bacon cut from the flitch - there was always a plentiful supply of flitches and hams hanging from the ceiling of the kitchen. Perhaps most memorable was my introduction to laver-bread. It was collected from the Leys, boiled and prepared, and fried in oatmeal in the bacon fat. I now know where it came from but a vivid memory is asking Betty's father about it:- "Well Gwynne", he said, "you know when the cows go up the road, we then collect what they leave behind and prepare it."! I'm glad to say that this has not dented my life-time fondness for laver-bread, something enjoyed most Christmas mornings, as well as other occasions.

Mrs Amelia Harris was a good friend to my mother - in those days we were usually short of something - no Tesco! - and lending, borrowing (and returning) was quite a common feature - I often was sent to the *Fox* to see if Mrs Harris had "so and so" and invariably she did.

This brings me to my first memory of being in bed with a woman other than my mother, and that was Betty Harris. Mrs Evans of *Ford Cross* (Grandmother of Clive Jenkins and Barbara Milhuisen) came to borrow an onion one evening and sat down, became ill and sadly died. I was quickly taken to the *Fox and Hounds* where I spent the night with Betty in her bed.

What of the other Harris family members? David, I remember being woken by his father most mornings, presumably after milking the cows by the loud call of "Dai'o", presumably to get him up to go to work at Aberthaw. Just as well he did, for David carved out a very successful career there. David, I remember too, being of "brittle bone" with a particularly bad break to his leg and being in the bedroom of the *Fox* with his leg up in the air, encased in plaster. I believe he was something of an artist and he had a drawing of the widening of Pancross Hill - I wonder if that still exists?

Calvert's departure to World War II is interestingly mentioned in connection with George Pickett - who remembers the pennyfarthing bike George had at *Brook Cottage* and Mrs Pickett kindly giving apples and gooseberries to all and sundry (and sometime, to me, an old knife of George's but, before I could take it, having to return home for a halfpenny or penny as you could not transfer something sharp without payment)?

My great memory of Calvert is the day he returned to the *Fox* from Dunkirk - I believe he walked into the village, and I remember him with full kit, including his rifle, but most of all the celebrations in the family, and village, that he had returned safely. Another trigger -no pun intended!:- it was at about this time that the Llancarfan Home Guard received its rifles - Lee Enfield .303s I believe. I remember them arriving in long, strong, wooden boxes (the boxes remained for many years in the *Church Hall*) packed in a brown, greaseproof type of paper and smothered in grease - thankfully never fired in anger, they brought a sense of purpose to the local section.

Elsie Harris (Little Elsie, to distinguish between her and Big Elsie - the late Milward's wife) I seem to remember singing duets with Idris Lewis and I have an early photograph of them as a couple sitting on the window-sill of the *Fox*. Elsie had a lovely voice - probably still has, and of course Betty's musical talent on the piano is well known - she would sit straight-backed at the piano or church organ.

Dollie Harris, I heard much of as a child - in some wonderment then - as she was nursing abroad - in darkest Africa - Nigeria I believe and I remember meeting her when she came home. The family were devastated by her early death.

I remember the *Fox* being a place of refuge during the War where my mother and I went to go down to the cellar if an air-raid was expected - I think we also sought refuge in the *Fox* if there was a heavy thunderstorm, my mother being very frightened of such storms. I enjoy a pint of beer - maybe these early experiences gave me the taste and even, maybe, I was given a sip. What is certain is that I do not like cider. An early memory is being on the *Broadhayes* hay-field at the rear of the *Fox and Hounds* and being given cider to drink. I remember being taken home rather ill. Bob Griffiths, *Top End*, father of Godfrey, John and Andrew and husband of Mary was there. Whether he was responsible I do not remember, but as many from the village turned out to help in a 2 1/2 acre field, it could have been anyone. The war years brought a great

sadness to the Griffiths family too, as Bob was unfortunately killed, the news reaching Llancarfan as a V.E. Day celebration was taking place.

The Harris family not only traded in milk, beer and tobacco but also in sweets. The *Sweet-Shop* opposite the *Fox and Hounds* was run by Betty sherbert and brass scales a poignant memory. Liquorice too. The shop itself, a wooden structure, moved to *Hillside* with the family and remained there for many years. Writing of sweet-shops I remember Mr Lougher, *Llanvithyn*, telling me of an earlier sweetshop between *Ceffyl Du* and the *Woodlands*, the ruins of which, close to the road, remained there until the early 1970's (when *Dan y'r Llwyfen* was built). He said he had attended church one Sunday morning and when he came out the chimney had fallen down through the thatched roof - date I don't know but probably now not in living memory,

Finally, my connection with the Harris family surfaced again during my social work career when we appointed a certain Angela Harris (daughter of Calvert) to work in my office in Barry. She came from a hard social work patch in Glasgow. At the time I made no connection with the Harris family but soon found out and was amazed by the resemblance (in my childhood memory) to her grandmother Amelia. I continue to think that, and am delighted that the friendship to people and the caring attitude survives in Angela who is making a great success of a social work career.

Notes on Newsletter 83 - Long Room - *Fox and Hounds* p. 4

I remember some talk of the club-room being called the Long Room and it was there that justice was dispensed - not beer etc. Was this the place where the Parish Overseers met, I wonder to administer Victorian Poor Law?

Foot and Mouth Disease p. 5

I remember the precautions and that you could not proceed beyond *Top End* shed or garage without proper protection and reason. I also remember the cattle being burned at *Abernant* - a shocking event - perhaps even more dramatic than BSE today; perhaps more easily eradicated but none the less costly to the farming community.

Sleeping Beauty - the 1999 Pantomime

A full account of the pantomime will appear in the next Newsletter but some idea of its success may be gained from two letters written by Councillor Jeffery James to the *Western Mail* and the *Barry and District News*.

Councillor James and his wife much enjoyed the performance which "was well attended by people of all ages who eagerly took part, including shouting out things like "Behind you", and "Oh yes it is" etc." Councillor James' letter extended thanks to all the LADS (Llancarfan Amateur Dramatic Society) for the immense amount of time, effort and humour which went into the performance.

Obituary: Melvin Smith by Phil Watts

It is with regret that we have to report the death of Melvin Smith on November 14th Melvin was one of our younger members - just 60. In his young days Melvin lived on the Ford Lane with his mother and sister Brenda. Some of us remember that the Mobile Shop, run by Milivan Jankovik, was the original business run by Melvin Smith and Clive Jenkins, and that Clive is married to Brenda, so it was a real family affair. It is particularly sad for Melvin's son and

daughter (Mark and Amanda) because Liz their mother died only a couple of years previously. People of Melvin's calibre have many stories of Llancarfan to tell, but alas now gone silent.

What they think of the Vale I

Raewen Henry, wife of the Wales' rugby coach, explained why they would not be looking for a house in the Vale: "Graham finds the small lanes confusing".

What they think of the Vale II

Gladys Pugh of *Hi-de-Hi!*, raven-haired Ruth Madoc, who is appearing in a new BBC Wales drama, *The Gatekeeper*, has dyed her hair for filming in Penarth and describes herself now as "Vale of Glamorgan blonde, rather than brassy." Well! Quotes from the *Western Mail*.

A Conversation With George Wood by Phil Watts

When Harry Hughes died in 1975 he left a half finished bungalow alongside the *Carpenters Shop*, once occupied by David Griffiths, wheelwright and carpenter. Harry's possessions had to be sold to settle his estate. The bungalow and site had a definite value and a price could be fixed, but the *Carpenters Shop* contained many old tools, machines and other things that had been stored in case they were needed (we presume this is why Harry and his predecessor, Dai Carpenter kept them?).

The *Carpenters Shop* was offered to the Folk Museum at St. Fagans but unfortunately they were not interested and, finally, all the contents went in different directions, many people acquiring bits and pieces.

George Wood bought Harry's Raleigh bicycle, at a cost of £2.50, for his son Robert to ride back and forth from the *Fox and Hounds* to Llanbethery. Robert used to help out in the *Fox and Hounds* when at home from college in the summer months. (Robert was accidentally omitted from the *Fox and Hounds* account in Newsletter 84 for which we apologise).

We are told that Harry used this bicycle to carry out many of his tasks in the village before the days of his green truck. Robert Wood took the bicycle back to college and used it round and about in Nottingham which, we all know, is the home of Raleigh Industries, who have established a Raleigh Bicycle Museum, and that is where Harry's bike is today.

Robert donated the bike to the Museum. on completion of his University studies. Robert worked for Raleigh Industries on the assembly line screwing on bells, brakes etc., also between studies.

George remembers it as having a 28" wheel and Sturmy Archer hub gear; it was a man's bike but unusually for a mans bike, it had a guard around the rear wheel to prevent long clothes catching in the wheel. Many ladies bikes had skirt protectors but this was not necessary on a man's bike!

So St. Fagans Museum's loss was Raleigh Industries' gain. Perhaps we can find out more about this bike. Did Harry own it before he had the carpenters shop, or was it part of the deal when he took on the carpenters shop?

As a post-script to this story and thanks to one of our members, Mrs. Biddy Renwick of *Ty Mawr*, Llanbethery, we have now obtained a photograph of Harry, taken a year or two before he died in April 1975. Harry did not like his photo to be taken so this is rather unusual.

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Harry Hughes, who died too young, in 1975, photographed by the field gate opposite his <i>Carpenter's Shop</i> and new bungalow. We miss you.. Photo by Mrs. Biddy Renwick
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Obituary: Letty Gardner by Phil Watts

It is with great sadness that we report the death, on New Year's day, of Letty Gardner at the age of 87.

Letty was born in 1911 in the thatched cottage where *Kenson Cottages* now stand in Llancadle. She lived at *Fairview* and *Cuba Cottage* with her mother, Elizabeth Bealing, brothers Evan and George and sister Catherine (Cassie). Her married life and widowed years were spent in *The Manse*, Llancadle, bringing up John and Brian. Before she was widowed, Letty nursed her husband for many years and helped him to put up a brave fight.

Letty came from a hard-working family. I remember how her mother Mrs Elizabeth Bealing would cycle from Llancadle to Church when she was over 80 years of age so it was no wonder, when Charlie was called up to war service, she saw the need to earn more money to subsidise the meagre soldier's allowance which, I am told by John was as little as 10/-.

She went to work for Mr David Mustoe in St Athan and ran a café on the square in the village. There were thousands of RAF personnel stationed at St Athan during the war and often their route back to camp was from *Gileston Station* back through the village to the camp main gate on the St Athan/Cowbridge road.

David Mustoe had a good eye to the business. He had two bites of the cherry for the hungry RAF boys for, when the café wasn't open, he got Letty to run a mobile canteen at *Gileston Station*. There was a healthy Vale Railway then. Later, David Mustoe had a café near the main camp entrance and Letty helped to run that as well. She later bought his business, and ran it with the aid of her family, until ill health forced her to retire.

The 1914 school photograph shows Letty in the front row with a tear in her 'posh' dress. She had been brought to school on a home made trolley by her brothers but unfortunately the dress got caught on a jagged corner of the "box on wheels" (Newsletter 78). She told me these things when I visited her in 1997 when she was waiting to go into hospital to be treated for cancer. Letty loved driving her car, just as her mother rode her bicycle. During the illness of just 12 months she believed that she would drive her car again but it was not to be.

Letty was a person of strong will, character and faith. She had a strong partnership with work, family and God - the combination of those things are unbeatable. Thankfully she died peacefully and has joined the majority. Thank you Letty for your exemplary life.

More on floods

Gwynne Liscombe's article on floods, in Newsletter 85, was accompanied by one or two notes which we did not have room to publish. Some of these deserve an airing so here they are:-

The Hollies' well no longer emits water to the road. In Sam and Patsie Smith's Community Notes in the *Gem* (Nov. 12) there is a jocular reference to a ten-foot high flood wall! I hope it will not be to prevent the water from rising from the higher tides in the future!

Margaret Evans (*Old Mill*) remembers a ditch which went through her property, and presumably took the water from the mill wheel to the river. It was probably filled-in when the house was built but can anyone remember?

Maybe someone has the correct dates for the 1950's flood which also ruined the Church under-floor heating system and floated some seats?

Editor - There have been other articles on floods and roadwater, notably in Newsletters 34 (1990), 35 (1991) and 64 (1994). In the 1990 article Lyn Price recalled eight feet of water in the *Old Parsonage* and Llew Griffiths added that the water once overtopped the slope between *Old Mill* and *Broadhayes*. None of these articles answer Gwynne's question about the date of the 1950s flood.

Gwynne is not the only one to have noticed the failings of modern-day road-verge maintenance. On December 17th the *Barry and District News* headlined an article:- **Blocked drains cause havoc after downpours**. This related to flooding in the Fontygary-Rhose area, particularly the area outside the Fontygary in and at the bottom of Fontygary Road. Councillor Jeff James of Rhose has written an open letter to Deputy Director of Highways, Rhys Davies asking for drains, gullies and culverts to be cleaned regularly. A Vale spokesman was reported as saying that all necessary work would be done.

Gowlog - origin of the name translation by Non Evans, text by John Etherington

The *Western Mail* publishes occasional Welsh articles under the title *Ditectif Geiriau* (Word Detective). During last summer, an explanation of the place-name, *Gowlog*, was contributed by Gwynedd Pierce, author of *Place-Names of the Dinas Powis Hundred* (1968).

I am most grateful to Non Evans of *Trewallter Fawr*, Walterston, who helped me by making a literal translation of the article, from which the following synopsis is taken.

Gwynedd Pierce suggests that the map-name, *Gowlog*, originates from the non-Welsh pronunciation of the Welsh *-aw-*, the correct form being *Gawlog* (an English-speaker would pronounce the *-aw-* as *-ow-*, rhyming with 'cow').

Several early forms of the name give evidence of the original Welsh spelling, for example:- *The Iawloge Lands* (1657), *Gawlog & Gawlogg* (1670s) and *The Gawlock* (1753).

It seems certain that the name is derived from the Welsh word *Cawl* by a soft mutation and addition of the suffix *-og*, to denote "a place where something is present in quantity". In this case, the "something" is a plant of the cabbage family. *Cawl*, in its modern usage means a stew or soup with leeks and cabbage, but the older form meant "cabbage" from the Latin word *caulis*, akin to English Kale and Cauliflower. In the name Porthcawl (*Porth-y-cawl*), for example, it means sea-kale.

Presumably, here, the name denotes the abundance of a cabbage-like plant.

Two other comments can be added to Gwynedd Pierce's article. Firstly, in spring, the cliffs to the south of our parish are brilliant yellow with the flowers of wild-cabbage, notably near Summerhouse Point and Llantwit. Did this plant grow further inland before agriculture converted the land to its modern condition? I have always believed that the *cawl* of Porthcawl was wild-cabbage, rather than Sea Kale, which has always been rare and is now, probably, extinct on the Vale coast.

Secondly, pronunciation by English people caused another, later, change in the written name. Several documentary records from the 1890s to c.1935, render *Gowlog* as *Gold Oak*. The late Les Griffiths told me this when I was puzzled by an early electoral-register entry. He remembered that the name *Gold Oak* was in current use when John Griffiths (not related to Les?) was a tenant of the farm.

The Memories of Ernie Harber. By Phil Watts (October 18 1998)

Today I met Ernie Harber, husband of Katie (Laws), who wrote in our Newsletter some years ago about her association with Llancarfan and, in particular, Leslie Griffiths' family. He told me that he would be 97 the next day (19 October) and that his wife had died seventeen months ago, one week before their 70th wedding anniversary. He showed me a letter from the Queen congratulating him on nearly 70 years of marriage.

Ernie was married on May 25 1926 in *Bethel Baptist*, Harbour Road, Barry. He reminded me how his wife, Katie's parents died when she was seven years old. This brought about their connection with Llancarfan. They moved from Rhoose to be brought-up by Maggie Griffiths, Leslie's mother at *Caradoc Cottage*. Katie had a sister, Winnie, two years younger and a brother, Llewellyn, two years younger again.

Ernie recalls how John Griffiths, Leslie's father would be preparing his sermon for evening service in the Baptist Chapel and there would be many children running around - four of the Griffiths and three of the Laws families. Katie's mother and Maggie Griffiths were sisters, hence the reason for the move to *Caradoc Cottage*.

Leslie Griffiths wrote, in Newsletter 11, of how his parents took on the running of the small-holding and the looking-after of Robert Griffiths and bachelor brother, William, in 1910. My calculation is that the Laws family came to Llancarfan in 1913. It is not certain how long this arrangement continued because, when Katie met Ernie, she was living with uncle Llewellyn in Salisbury Road/Pontypridd Road (bungalow). Llewellyn did not like Ernie, with the result that Katie moved out and went to live with Ernie's mother in Glamorgan Street off Park Crescent, also in Barry, during 1922.

Ernie's mother came from Ilfracombe and his father from Cheltenham. He was born with yellow-jaundice and the treatment, at that time, was to be washed in salt water for the first two years of his life (anyone else heard of this care?).

Ernie started work in 1916 with the Barry Railway Company as a locomotive engineer. His work was dirty and this was the main cause of uncle Llewellyn's dislike of him. After serving his apprenticeship with Barry Railway Company he obtained a position as Fourth-Engineer with Hain Steamship Co. of Cardiff and he was employed by this firm from 1923 to '27. Their ships had a black funnel with a white 'H' on it. He showed me a photograph of S.S. *Boyne*, one of the ships that he served on. His salary, as a Fourth-Engineer, was £11.0.0 a month. The company recalled him from his honeymoon in Ilfracombe to bring a ship from Antwerp to Cardiff.!!

Ernie worked for a total of 40 years on the railway - Barry Railway, G.W.R. and British Rail, until the Beeching axe fell in 1961. The offer they made him was a pension of 7/4 a week or £300 lump sum. He took the £300 lump sum - he says it seemed a lot of money then. He was a member of the A.E.U. for over 40 years. His first payment, as a member, was 4d per week and when he finished it was 5/- a week. He says that he receives a pension of £1 per week from the A.E.U and that it is his only private pension.

Some of his years of work were spent in the Caerphilly Railway Sheds where he had the opportunity to work on some of the bigger rolling-stock than could be found in Barry Dock. He recalls fitting the first sliding doors to be installed in trains whilst working at the Caerphilly Sheds. After his redundancy from B.R. he worked for Hodges Ship Repairers in Barry Dock until he retired at the age of 67, along with two other railway workers, Donald Coates and Hugh Clark, who is still alive, in Queen Street.

Ernie reckons he had a good deal from the A.E.U. for his 4d a week at work to £1.00 a week, pension. It does not seem a just reward for a man to work all his life as a skilled tradesman and to receive no pension!

He is a deacon and elder of the Baptist Chapel in Harbour Road and has many of the records of that chapel. He informed me that one of their ministers, Rev. Sorton Davies (1931-55), who had a birthmark on the side of his face, used to preach at Llancafán Baptist Chapel, and used to visit Joe Lewis at the *Blacksmith Shop*, in his three-wheeler car.

These notes do not have many close links with Llancafán but are typical of what has happened in the surrounding areas. As for Ernie, he is a very sprightly young man!! - and, if a betting man, I would back him for the hundred years and a telegram from the Queen.

Editorial notes I looked-up the S.S. *Boyne* to check the spelling and discovered that the Hain Company vessels all had names prefixed *Tre---*, thus *Trevelyan*, *Tredinnick*. etc. (*Cardiff Shipowners* .J. & D. Jenkins, 1986, National Museum of Wales).

John Williams (*Old Orchard*) has kindly resolved this mystery. The Hain Steamship Company owned a total of 45 vessels, and most of them were named with the *Tre—*prefix. However, there were eight which did not have *Tre—* names, the oldest being the S.S. *Boyne*. She was built in 1910 and no longer appeared on the register in 1932, presumably having been broken-up by then.

In 1923-7 Ernie's pay was £11 per month- equivalent to c. £3000-3500 p.a. today. His 1961 £300 lump would be about £3000 and 7/4 per week, £3.14 today

Llancafán Fossils I - our oldest plant? by John Etherington

Houses in Llancafán were formerly built from slab-like blocks of Blue Lias, a limestone rock quarried close to the village. It is part of a rock formation which geologists have named Lower Lias and legend has it that the name is derived from the West Country quarryman's pronunciation of "layers" - certainly this is how it looks in the sea cliffs which line most of the Vale coast. The Lower Lias is about 195 million years old and belongs to the Jurassic period when the dinosaurs were the dominant land animals.

The limestone is full of fossils - mostly sea creatures like the coiled shells of ammonites, beds of mussel-like "devil's toenails" and a few giant clam-like shells, almost as big as coconuts. These were all fossilised in mud which sank to the bottom of a warm, shallow sea quite close to a coast. Occasionally, bits and pieces of land-plants and land-animals would float down a river to join the dead sea-creatures.

One of these was the piece of plant, looking like a fern, shown in my photograph. This was found in a slab of stone removed from the old roadside wall of *Ceffyl Du*, opposite the churchyard.

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The fossil was quite perfect when we found it, as it still is 30 years later. Not just a moulded impression in the rock but a real plant preserved as brownish, carbonised tissues. It is named *Otozamites* and despite its fern-like appearance was related to modern pine and fir trees.

It is tempting to imagine that a dinosaur, grazing by a riverside, might have pulled down the branch on which it was growing and allowed a few leaves to fall into the water but, fantasy apart, this fossil must be one of the oldest plants in the village - if not the whole parish.

Ridwells, Redwell or Redwalls by John Etherington

At intervals during the past ten years we have speculated about the ownership and site of the land on Pancross Hill which Joe Lewis, Blacksmith, used to call "*The Ridwells*".

More information has turned up in a paper on the Welsh language in the Vale by Brian Ll. James and in an 18th century, estate map which was found by John Cann in the County Record Office.

Brian James wrote:- "A long line of poets arose from among the craftsmen and farmers, from William Roberts of *Redwell*, and Edward Williams of *Middle Hill*, both in Llancarfan, in the mid-18th century, to Gwilim Ildid and Dai 'r Cantwr in the early 19th century --" (*Morgannwg*, 1967, p. 27).

I know nothing more of William Roberts but *Redwell* is another variant of the name we have seen many times before.

Dai 'r Cantwr (David the Singer) is another matter. Born David Davies of Llancarfan, he achieved local fame as a balladeer and singer but became infamous as the violent Rebeccite who spread mayhem and destruction in Cwm Gwendraith near Carmarthen together with his giant companion Shoni 'Sgubor Fawr (Johnnie Great Barn).

The map which John Cann located in the county archive tells us a little more - it shows the crossroads at Pancross with buildings only on the south side of Pancross Hill opposite the present day *Pancross Farm* house. A little further down the hill is an enclosure with a building which our evidence suggest to be *Ridwells* or *Redwall*. Sadly the tithe-map of 70 years later is ambiguous about the naming of this land so some small doubt remains. I shall continue to search.

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A portion of a 1770s Manorial map of Llancarfan, showing Pancross. The inset is taken from the original title-plate of the map but has been “touched-up” as the original copy was very messy. *Redwalls Farm*, known in modern times as *The Ridwells*, is believed to be the triangle or “gore” of land tapering down to the bend in Pancross Hill. A single building is shown. The present day *Pancross Farm* house is not shown, but there appear to be buildings on the road-front opposite.

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Pancross Farm as it was in the 1970s. The gore of the *Ridwells* is still there, but several hedges have vanished, the cottages have been built, and the farm has almost reached its 1990s size. At this time *Pancross Barn* had not been converted into a house.