



## THE LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

### NEWSLETTER 94 January 2000

#### **Editorial**

Happy New Year to everyone. Sorry you didn't get a Christmas greeting with the last Newsletter. I had expected to produce this Newsletter 94 before Christmas, but a domestic disaster overtook us and stole a lot of time.

Some things in life are beyond explanation. Occasionally we have printed articles of several pages, which pass with little or no comment and yet a single line can set-off an avalanche. Sheena Etherington's enquiry about the Binding family, in Newsletter 93, was one such. It generated eight letters and e-mails, the gist of which appears in this issue as **Unbinding the past**. The article on Llancarfan's 13 neighbouring parishes also drew some responses. One appears below as **Two memories of The Shag**, now **Crossways** and a further article on the parish boundary and roads will appear in Newsletter 95.

**Fox and Hounds 2000** After months of uncertainty and hard-work by the Reynard Group, success has come and the *Fox and Hounds* now belongs to the village. Manager Digby Rees and his wife, Jenny, will be breathing sighs of relief, as their position is now safe. Prophets of doom who forecast imminent closure and arrival of the bulldozers, take note. The Working Group are to be congratulated on their achievement against what looked like considerable odds. It is even more of a pleasure to tell you that the final Parts of the history of the *Fox and Hounds* will appear in Newsletter 95 now we know that it will not be a requiem.

**Annual General Meeting 2000** will be held in the Community Hall on Friday, March 24 at 8.00 p.m. More details to follow.

#### **Local News**

**Mulled wine evening** This was very well attended by more than 45 people who had an enjoyable evening of carols with Molly Vincent playing the organ, and a performance by the Handbell Ringers.

**Christmas Tree** we had the main tree as usual, but with five smaller ones around the village (one in the village hall). The Society travelled around the local pubs singing carols.

**New Years Eve** A huge millennium party was held in the *Fox*, attended by 231 people. It was wonderful, with a cabaret, hot and cold buffets, fireworks and champagne included. The children had a party in the hall and joined us all in church at 23.30 for a short service, followed by the bells ringing in the New Year

**Llancarfan Society Calendar** Congratulations to Sue Taylor who received £3819.00 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund on 30<sup>th</sup> November. We previously applied for this to pay for the Llancarfan Calendar which was planned for 2000 but were turned down. A re-application in September has now been successful, but this is too late for January, 2000. We have until July to spend it, so we now have seven months to prepare a calendar for 2001.

**Rowland Watts** We have heard, with sadness, of the death of Roley Watts of Watts Coaches, Bonvilston. Roley's original connection with Llanccarfan was his parents' tenancy of *Pancross Farm* in the early 1930s.

**Dyffryn** The *Barry and District News* recently reported that the Vale of Glamorgan Council may be made to repay the grant of nearly 1.5 million pounds, which was made by the National Assembly for the conversion of Dyffryn House to a luxury hotel. Seems that some rethinking might be needed at the next local elections!

**Contributions for the Newsletter** should be sent to the **Editor**, John Etherington, *Parc-y-Bont*, Llanhowell, Solva, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, SA62 6XX or e-mail to:- [eth.pbont@virgin.net](mailto:eth.pbont@virgin.net) We will also be pleased to print short announcements of village functions but they must be sent in writing, or given to Alan Taylor, Local Correspondent.

**Contact addresses:** Subscriptions and problems with mailing: to the **Membership Secretary**, Phil Watts, 23 Heol Sirhwi, Cwm Talwg, Barry, Vale of Glamorgan, CF62 7TG.

**Local Correspondent.** Alan Taylor, *Windrush*, Llanccarfan, CF62 3AD or e-mail [ajtaylor@cprop.demon.co.uk](mailto:ajtaylor@cprop.demon.co.uk)

Agenda items and correspondence for the Committee to the **Secretary**, Ann Ferris, *Fordings*, Llanccarfan, CF62 3AD

Llanccarfan Society administrative and web-site e-mail:- [llansoc@llanccarfan.f9.co.uk](mailto:llansoc@llanccarfan.f9.co.uk)

Internet address:- [www.llanccarfan.f9.co.uk](http://www.llanccarfan.f9.co.uk)

### **Re-Casting of St. Cadoc's Church Bells Llanccarfan.** By Phil Watts.

Photos by Alan Taylor

There was an increase in bell-ringing in Llanccarfan in 1991. Ringing and practising took place on an intermittent basis through 1992, until May 1993, when it became obvious that the bell frame and tower was no longer safe for ringing.

Acting on the advice of Mr. Hughes, Whitechapel Bell Foundry, we ceased to ring from May 1993. Under the direction of Mr. Jim Goodfellow, Llandaff, the bells were adapted for chiming in September 1993, and continued to be chimed until June 21st 1999 when they were removed and taken to Whitechapel Bell Foundry, London, to be re-cast from a four, to a ring of six.

Using Steve Powell's transport, Phil Watts, Rev. Malcolm Davies and Andrew Nicholson as driver, the bells left for London on 22nd of June. The bells were dismantled and loaded onto lorry by local labour supervised by Andrew Nicholson, Bellhanger, who was contracted to house the re-cast the ring of six in the tower. Among the many labourers were Alan Taylor, Brian Vincent, Edward Knott, Robert Hutchings, Malcolm Davies, Phil Watts, Jim Veysey and Andrew. All were grateful for the use of Tony Thomas' low loader.

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By September the bells had been re-cast in Whitechapel and transported to Bridport Dorset where the frame was constructed and bells tested on site. at works.

The bells, with frame, arrived in Llanccarfan at 10 a.m. on Monday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, and during the next three days the bells and frame were assembled in the tower by Andrew Nicholson

assisted by Rev. Malcolm Davies, Andrew Knott, Jim Veysey and Phil Watts. The work was completed by November 23rd and tested by a team of ringers.

I am grateful to have had the privilege and opportunity to be associated with the fund-raising, organisation and installation of St. Cadoc's Church Bells for the Millenium. My grandfather, William Liscombe, *Llanvythin Mill*, was associated with the installation of the previous ring of four during the time of Vicar Alfred Hughes in 1890. I am also grateful to him and my mother, Doris Watts, for passing on a set of hand-bells which I will pass on to my son Russell. When it became known that 50% funding could be obtained for bells re-cast to ring in the new millennium, the Restoration Committee had the courage to combine the reconstruction of the tower with a new set of bells.

It is with thanks to the initial exploration of the restoration problems by Father Feild and carried on enthusiastically by Rev. Malcolm Davies, supported by the P.L.C. that today we have the newest ring of six bells in Wales, or could it be the UK? None of this would have been possible without the aid of many people from far and wide who have the interest of St. Cadoc's Church and Llanccarfan at heart.

A plaque to commemorate the re-casting and installation of the bells with names of those who have been associated with the Church, bells and the village, will be placed in the tower when complete. We all look forward to the ringing and chiming of our re-cast bells in the new millennium. Thanks to everyone for a magnificent effort.

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**Pictures** Ringing the bells. l. to r:-  
Phil Watts, Sue Evans, Phil Gammon, Georgina Powell, Robert Harris and Roger Harris.

Hand Bells. l. to r:- Jennie Knott, Debbie Schmidt, Brian Vincent, Sheelagh Lewis and Phil Watts.

**Stop press** . The new Bishop of Llandaff, The Very Reverend Barry Morgan, blessed the bells just before Christmas. They sound magnificent and the ringers are performing well, A short service was held on New Years Eve at 11.30 p.m., followed by the bells ringing in the New Year.

**Unbinding the Past** with help from Keith Binding, John Cann, Mavis Coles, Gwynne Liscombe, Barbara Milhaisen and Phil Watts

The editor never ceases to marvel at the funny little things, which help to unwrap yet further layers of our communal history.

This time it was Sheena Etherington (née Bowyer), who recollected sitting with her feet amongst the cabbage leaves in Bertie Binding's horse-drawn cart, as he delivered green-groceries in Barry. This would have been about the mid-1950s, when Sheena was three or four, and it prompted the note in Newsletter 93, asking whether George Binding of *St Aubyns*, Ford Lane, was related to Bertie.

The answers came flooding in. Yes, George was Bertie's brother and some of the vegetables grown at *St Aubyns* smallholding were sold from the cart. George was known throughout Llanccarfan as Dai but how he obtained the nickname we don't know. Another brother, Bill, is remembered in the Vale, erecting agricultural buildings and other well-designed steel-work, despite the disability of a leg in a calliper, consequent on T.B.

Walter Binding, father of George, Herbert (Bertie), Bill and seven other children, came to Barry from Somerset to work on construction of the docks and railway in c.1890. The family lived first, at 45, Queen Street and then, in about 1912, moved to *No. 2 Smallholdings* (now the end of Peterswell Road), off Pontypridd Road. Walter would have known Sheena Etherington's grandfather, Tom Bowyer, who also came to Barry to work on construction of the docks and railway, and lived at 52 Queen Street which is still owned by the Bowyer family, almost a century later.

George appeared on the Llancarfan electoral register at *St Aubyns* in the mid-1930's. He married Elizabeth (Betty) Palling (sister of the late Joan HARRY) and they remained at *St Aubyns* for many years, raising six children. Betty Binding now lives in Barry where she continues in good health. The *St Aubyns* smallholding was in full production during the war years and Barbara Milhaisen remembers her mother helping to harvest vegetables aided by Barbara and brother Clive.

Mavis Coles also remembers the Bindings, because she lived next door to the Palling family at *Ford Cross* for about 4 years. "Betty [née Palling] and George had a market garden at the top of Ford Lane and I used to be sent up there for lettuce etc."

When Walter Binding died in 1955, Bill and Bertie took-over the Peterswell Road smallholding. Bertie had the market garden, with pasture and stabling for a horse. Bill had the workshops and house, where he lived alone.

Deliveries by horse and cart went on until the 1970s when a van was acquired. Bertie ran the business until the 1980s and died shortly afterwards, in 1984. Barbara Milhaisen also passed on the story that Bertie would call at the *Park Hotel* for a drink after a hard day's work and, like so many cart-horses, "Dolly" knew the way home when the time finally came.

Gwynne Liscombe recalls that Bill left his mark on Llancarfan, the steel hay-barns at *Penylan* and *Middlehill* (now *The Talbots*) being amongst his handiwork. The barns were built with railway-track uprights and pitched roofs usually incorporating salvaged timber. The uprights were placed in position, before setting in concrete, using a crude but effective crane, which Bill had also built.

Despite his disability, Bill would climb about the skeleton of the barn with the agility of a cat and could be seen measuring the correct depth of holes for the uprights using one leg as a measuring stick with the other stretched out flat on the ground!

Bill had tractors, ploughs and a combine with which he undertook contract work throughout the Vale and he built other items for farms. The Amelia Trust, at *Whitton Bush*, is currently restoring a tipper-wagon, which was built by Bill. It was found derelict, in a hedge, in the Vale! When the restoration is complete it will be used for giving rides to children around the area. Keith Binding writes:- "I am certain that [my uncle Bill] would greatly have approved of the restoration of his original wagon, the purpose of this project and the skills required to do such work."

### **Two memories of The Shag, now Crossways** by Gwynne Liscombe

The reference to *Shag* in the last Newsletter took me back a long way. Mr Creech lived at *The Shag*, as we called it – he was the steam-roller driver and as a young child I remember being greatly excited when he would arrive in Llancarfan with great clanking and steaming, towing the "caravan" – a hut-type trailer behind the engine. He would park, at night but I can't remember whether he stayed in the caravan or went home to *The Shag*.

My father delivered bread at *The Shag* for many years. Behind the door hung a “bunch” of hot cross buns, held together by string. They had apparently been there for many years and I remember it being said that they brought good luck and, if they were removed, misfortune would befall. A strange memory, but I well recall them: a local superstition, I suppose.

**Editorial note:** This was a new one on us but we searched, and found that “Hot cross buns made on Good Friday were supposed to be made of the dough kneaded for the Host and were marked with a cross, accordingly. As they are said to last for twelve months without turning mouldy, some persons still hang up one or more in their houses as a “charm against evil”.

The superstition was pre-Christian. The Greeks offered similar cakes (called *bous*) and (it is said) they never grew mouldy. The bun represents the moon, and the cross cuts it into the four quarters. Offered to Apollo, Diana, Hecate and the Moon.

{Brewer’s *Encyclopaedia of Phrase and Fable*, 1959}.

**Treguff 2000** by John Etherington

A few years ago, *Treguff Farm* was sold, so ending about 150 years of occupation by the Lougher family. The new owner, Andrew Plant has embarked on a substantial restoration of this ancient property, which has revealed details of its history in which a century and a half is a mere nothing compared with its documentary records extending almost to the Norman Conquest.

Whether or not the romantic tale of the Twelve Knights of Glamorgan is believable, we do know that Robert FitzHamo captured the old kingdom of Morganwg in about 1090 and that its manors were subsequently divided amongst the families of his retainers.

Before he died of a battle-wound in 1107, Robert had made a down-payment on his immortal soul by gifting much land in our parish to Gloucester Abbey. His daughter, Mabel, was married to Robert, Earl of Gloucester, and the benefaction is confirmed in a Gloucester charter, of 1138, which gives to St Peter’s of Gloucester “*in puram et perpetuam --- villam Treigof cum terra de Pennune --- similiter et ecclesiam de Lankarfan*”. This translates as “free from encumbrance, in perpetuity --- the vill of Treguff, with land of Pen-onn --- and in like manner the church of Llancarfan”. [I hope my free translation of the Latin gets me into less trouble than it did at school nearly 50 years ago!]. This confirmation of the bequest followed the terms of Mabel’s will as her father, Robert FitzHamo, had no sons (1)

So far as I know, these are some of the very first written records of our village name and its component manors. Nine hundred years seems a long time!

At the Dissolution (1536), the Abbey properties were made over to the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester (2), in whose ownership *Treguff* was still shown by the Tithe Apportionment register of 1840. Church ownership ended with the implementation of disestablishment in the 1920s and, near this time, the farm was bought by the Lougher family.

During church ownership from the 1100s onward, rental and tithe records were made each year. Andrew Plant has established that these records survive in almost unbroken continuity until the farm passed from the hands of the church. So far as I know, these records have never been published and, one day, may form a remarkable account of the day to day operation of a Vale farm from medieval to modern times.

Considerable structural restoration has been necessary at *Treguff*. The farm buildings are being converted to holiday-cottage accommodation and the house returned to its original form. One

exciting discovery is the chapel, which we know from documentary evidence existed, possibly as a sub-chapel of St Cadoc's, Llanccarfan (3). The remains form part of the structure of the present house and include a newly revealed Norman archway. Much more complete archaeological investigation may be possible in the future.

Discoveries are not limited to ancient history. Whilst converting farmland oak timber to planks, for the restoration, some World War 2 shrapnel was discovered embedded in the trunks and Andrew has now located many bomb-craters, visible as crop-marks on aerial photographs. Buried cables, which served the wartime decoy airfield, have been unearthed and add to the information which the late Millward Harris provided in 1990. For interest this is reproduced below, together with an item from the history of R.A.F. St Athan.

An extract from: **A conversation with Millward Harris** by Phil Watts. Llanccarfan Society Newsletter 36 1990.

Millward recalled that the first bomb of the 1939-45 war to drop on Llanccarfan parish was a single one on Edward Williams' farm in Llancadle, date not known. Some other wartime information that has not been mentioned in our Newsletters was that on *Llanbethery Farm*, in the Downs area, there was laid-out a dummy airfield with sets of lights intended to deceive enemy aircraft at night. It was maintained by two or three airmen, who were billeted at *Treguff Farm*. Apparently there were dugouts as well. On one occasion, date unknown, when enemy aircraft were making a raid on St Athan aerodrome, probably guided by the decoy lights, a number of incendiary bombs were dropped in the middle of the village of Llanbethery. It appears that the thatched roofs in the village were in danger of catching fire and several bombs had to be extinguished before greater damage was done. The procedure was that when the air raid warnings sounded the Air Raid Warden would patrol the area along with elements of the Home Guard. The two responsible for extinguishing the bombs on this night were Maurice Sweet, the Llanbethery Air Raid Warden and Millward Harris as a member of the Home Guard.

**St Athan – an extract from *The Military Airfields of Wales and the North-West***

--- on April 29 1941 --- a dozen aircraft, said to be Junkers 87s, dropped incendiaries and high explosive on the hangars [at St Athan]. Three Hurricanes were completely destroyed and nine other aircraft suffered varying amounts of damage. The earth covering of the 'E'- type hangars proved its worth when many of the incendiaries burned themselves out harmlessly. A second attack on May 11 caused three fatal casualties and hits on two more hangars.

The items reproduced above raise some questions. Do any older members remember seeing the dummy airfield in operation? Did the array of lights cover land of both *Llanbethery Farm* as Millward recalled, and also *Treguff*, as Andrew Plant's discoveries indicate? How often were aircraft fooled by the decoy and were many bombs dropped on the open farmland as a result?

**References:** 1. Clark 2. RCAHM 3. *County Treasures Survey* (1981)

Note: I'm not sure how *villam Treigof* should be translated. Is it "Vill" in the sense of a feudal township, or is it "a country dwelling" or "farm" in literal translation? Even in 1813, *Treguff* is shown as a large settlement, which could have been reckoned a township when it was larger.

**Dorothy Margaret Evans of Garnllwyd 1905 –1999. Part II** by David Evans.

Continued from Newsletter 93

In the 1930s, of course we had no electricity: lighting was provided by oil lamps, with broad thickly woven wicks which made the lamp bases dark, and swirling shades which reflected upon the ceilings above. The bedrooms which were notoriously cold requiring a certain amount of bravery to enter, since one climbed a stone spiral staircase lacking glass in the early years - just the simple stone slits.

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### Garnllwyd

A medieval first-floor hall-house with additions of the 17th century, and later. It stands on a riverside site to the north of Llancarfan. The house was first recorded in 1441 as *Carne Lloide*, when the possible builder, Lewis Mathew, was in possession (R.C.H.A.M.).

Photo by David Evans.

Decorative metal oil heaters set on three uneven short legs with circular heat outlets also cast phantasmagorian shadows high above, creating a highly fearsome atmosphere as one lay torpid in those lonely faraway rooms with nothing but Tawny Owls and the river for company. Water levels were higher then, before the banks and bed were cleared mechanically. The seven-acre field below *Abernant* would be transformed into a great lake, and the lane, quite impassable for days.

The seasons came and went with three children arriving during those halcyon years of the 1930s. Farming was hard no doubt, but if the standards of living were not exceptional, the quality of life was first class and this surely is a far more important concept. Hospitable neighbouring farmsteads were frequently visited for birthdays and Christmas. *Gowlog*, with

the Thomas family and their adventurous boys Jeffrey and Vernon, *Pancross* with the front-room table groaning with gastronomic delights followed by stimulating games ending in dark damp smelling cupboards where I kissed Isabel Thomas and Mary Maddock, my best love.

Keith Thomas would complain about the corn stooking, with the wicked thistles in the barley, long before the days of the combine harvester, and when boys and girls could talk in the fields and hear one another. Dorothy entered into this rural idyll aided by the indefatigable Eva Durham from the *Bakehouse*. No one could bring up those broad rich ochre dining room tiles like Eva, with her Mansion Polish. Hay making, like the corn harvest required much hand work, and that meant people armed with pikes of varying sizes and age. A strong one would be needed for the wet heavy weed filled outer-row around the great Caefair field.

What a familiar welcome figure mother made, as she walked over the meadows up to the far wind-swept Shortland fields, carrying two large wicker work baskets of great sandwiches and cheese. Brown Brain's beer-bottles holding cider from Bulmer's of Hereford, stored in the cool stone-flagged hall, provided a great treat. Beer was kept cool under the long grass fronds of the rocky-bedded stream, and the talk and banter began. Wandering wooden hay-loaders, extraordinary shaped side-turners, pitching-poles powered by a generous old horse, haunted by persistent horse flies, were all part of the mosaic.

There were the regular helpers who seemed to appear like the cuckoo. Strangers too would enter the scene, some perhaps attracted by the chance of a later order for fuel or feed stuffs when the heat of summer had gone, but the support given was recalled over a dining room whisky. My mother seemed often to be the horse leader for the daunting pitching-pole. Too far forward and the 'grab' of heavy hay would swing out of reach, resulting in a sort of crows nest situation plus the danger that the entire pole and its complicated rope network of support could collapse. Not far enough and the waving hay in its metal embrace would slop against the side of the unstable rick, risking its corners too. All this with an eye on the clouds over far-off Exmoor, and tempers could get naturally frayed. The happiest man was my father when the great thick canvas sheets were tightly placed over finished stacks prior to their thatching, often by the father of Vivian Price, a skilled thatcher and tractor driver too.

In our day the Glamorgan Hunt was a very well regarded establishment, controlling the fox, providing a service for the collection of dead animals for the hunt kennels, and good local colour too. The cry of those beautiful hounds, would bring us out of Miss Griffiths and Miss Thomas's class to watch from any high ground and hear their lovely bay. My parents were realists and knew what a fox could kill in the unlocked hen house. They were less happy about digging out when the animal had gone to ground, and one hopes this unsporting end of the chase can be reduced. Hunt dances at Bindles and St. Donats Castle brought families together each year.

The landscape was at ease, hedgerows gave shelter and nitrate pollution unknown. There were always two coveys of partridges above *Greendown* with a third around the Mill fields. This "barometer" bird is just holding on today.

Germany, ever unsettled at the unhappy terms of the Treaty of Versailles of 1919, was creating unacceptable demands upon the weakened bourgeois democracies to the west. Played upon by favourite newspapers and the picture of some trifling wounded pride at home, war looked and eventually became inevitable. My mother's brother Geoffrey, born in 1911 had become involved in the coal business based in Tunis and Algiers, but had resigned in 1936. Unsure of his future Geoffrey spent a summer at *Garnllwyd*, which unfortunately was one of the wettest in memory. This resulted in a decision to join the army and he entered the East Surrey's the following year. After his North African experiences, army life suited him well. One day, mother and his father travelled to Southampton to watch his regiment board a troopship, bound for the Far East. The Coldstream Guards played "Will ye no come back again".

Letters survive from his time in Shanghai expressing uncertainty of the Japanese, in that city Army Post Office No.1. Shanghai Area China Command, 19 November 1938. "The Japanese warships are like the ones the British Navy had in 1873, and a British battleship, near the Bund, looked very modern and powerful compared to them --." Little wonder Winston Churchill could not comprehend the fall of the impregnable fortress, that jewel of the Far East, Singapore. The cruelty of the Japanese is later expressed "The Japanese look very military, all swagger and swords, although the Seaforth sentry, at the other end looked very military too, though in a different way. Our fellows have taken over a sector from the Seaforths and have already seen some of the Japanese terrorism. A girl aged twelve came running over to the picquet last night; she was crying and soaking-wet. It appears she had been raped by six Japanese soldiers, who afterwards urinated over her, and cut her breasts with a bayonet (just sort of knicked them)..She was taken to hospital and her condition is not serious. It just shows what a nice lot they are."

Singapore was very vulnerable to attack from Malaya. All military defences faced southwards to the open seas. Churchill received a message from General Wavell, dated 16 January 1942: 'Until quite recently all plans [have been] based on repulsing sea-borne attacks, and holding land attack in Johore or further north.' Little or nothing was done to construct defences on the north side of the island to prevent crossing of Johore Straits, though arrangements have been made to blow up the causeway. Churchill could not believe that no one had told him of the serious vulnerability of the colony at this point of the island. 'Moreover it had never entered my head that no circle of detached forts of a permanent character protected the rear of the famous fortress. I cannot understand that I did not know this. But none of the officers on the spot and none of my professional advisers at home seem to have realised this awful need. I saw before me the hideous spectacle of the almost naked island and of the wearied, if not exhausted, troops retreating upon it. I ought to have known. My advisers ought to have known and ought to have been told, and I ought to have asked'. (*Second World War. The Hinge of Fate*. 1951).

Dorothy's only brother, just past thirty years, his cousin Paul and their comrades, fought like tigers to the end. Geoffrey was killed defending Singapore at the Johore Bridge. He was posted



missing for four years: anxious days for my mother and her parents, but the inevitable War Office telegram was delivered one desperate day. Another hand-written letter, dated *The Army and Navy Club* 20 September 1946, congratulated them that Geoffrey had received "Mention in Despatches for his outstanding bravery in the Malayan Campaign". My grandfather who had fought in the Great War and had lost his only boy in the swamps of Singapore Island received nothing from the coffers of a grateful nation, not even an old age pension. The vessel that had carried Geoffrey between Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore, the S.S. *Santhia* had also carried troops to the Crimea, nearly a century before.

His father received a letter on 21st March 1946: "Reference your article in the *Daily Telegraph*, seeking your son. There is a man from your Regiment repatriated living near here. He tells me he knew him very well indeed. He saw him on the 10 February 1942, but he was not present on the assembly of the remnants on the 15 February. He was not the kind of man to be taken prisoner, I am sure, and know that he fought to the last. He was absolutely fearless, a splendid leader, and liked by all who knew him. Many men tried to get into his platoon, owing to his fine qualities and the trust they placed in his leadership." In less than one week of bitter intense fighting General Percival surrendered, despite between 60 to 70 thousand Allied troops being originally present. They greatly outnumbered the Japanese but many were in a sorry state after the Malayan fighting to the north.

This was far removed from the relative tranquillity of Llancafarn where the mood was fear for the future, and all around us, war-time conditions existed, with Lancaster bombers stealing out from St. Athan where many had come, in 1943, for crucial wing-spar replacements. Landscapes changed permanently as farms were acquired under wartime regulations. Small side-lanes were manned, and reasons for access demanded, for instance around Boverton and Llanmaes.

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Dorothy Margaret Evans in the 1950s

Mother held jars of some poisonous substance, which she had planned to administer in the event of occupation, stored on the highest shelf of her bedroom wardrobe! They were viewed as a salutary reminder to behave at all times, at least so I had thought! Wooden stair-rods were her first and favoured weapon as we fled ahead. In later years her control would be exercised with a long, thin hazel stick. One glance at this deterrent was enough. I believe it is called discipline. The best brought up children are those who have seen their parents as they are.

To be continued in Newsletter 95

#### **Obituary: Peter John Etherington** by John Etherington

My brother, Peter, died on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. He was not a member of the Society, but always took an interest in our activities. Peter was an experienced Family History researcher and during the early years of the Society, undertook several investigations for me, and gave advice in the researching of local history. He was meticulous in everything he did and often took me to task for my cavalier ways – in historical research and much else. It is a pleasure to know that Peter made a bequest to his local Family History Society Group, which had been a great solace to him. His last few years were not very happy, which deeply saddens me. He will be missed.

**Ragwells again**

The editor noticed a reference to Ragwells in the first of *Fishlock's Wild Tracks* new series (HTV). Trevor Fishlock visited North Pembrokeshire and included the reconstructed Iron Age camp of *Castell Henllys* in his itinerary.

A ragwell, complete with strips of cloth adorning the surrounding bushes has been incorporated as a bit of "celtic" tradition, reminding me that there is an interesting poem concerning the Llanccarfan ragwell in *Holy Wells of Wales* (Francis Jones 1954):-

### **To Ffynnon y Fflamwyddan, Llanccarfan**

*Mi euthum yn lled egwan  
At ffynnon y Fflamwyddan,  
Gan synnu pam os dyna'r gwir  
Ceir lles o dir Llanccarfan.*

*Pam na wnai Ffynnon Beti  
Neu bistyll mawr Corneli,  
Neu Lygad Lai a dwr Wernfraith  
Llawn crystal gwaith a hynny*

*Ond at y dwr mi etho  
Gan yfed cawg ohono  
A chasglu liaid at blastar cro'n-  
Mae'r po'n yn ddistaw heno'*

*Mi ddeuaf felli drwyddi,  
Caf hongian ar y perthi  
Ryw ddarn o racsyn, fel bo'r Llan  
Yn gwybod am y miri.*

I went, feebly, to the well of the erysipelas,  
wondering, if true, how benefit was obtained from  
Llanccarfan land.

Why was it that Ffynnon Beti, the great pistyll  
Corneli, or the source of Llai, or the water of  
Wernfraith, could not do equally well ?

But I went to the water and drank a bowlful, and then  
gathered mud to make a plaster My pain is silent to-  
night.

And so I shall recover, and I shall hang a piece of rag  
on the bushes, so that the village will know about the  
merriment

If you want to know more about the Llanccarfan Wells, of holy and healing repute, look back at Newsletters 7, 9, 41 & 43. Further information can be found in an article by Madeleine Gray on the Llanccarfan Web-site. By the way, we are not the only village in the Vale to have such wells as the following light-hearted verse shows.

### **Marcross Well**

For the itch and the stitch,  
Rheumatic and the gout,

If the devil isn't in you  
The well will take them out.

Francis Jones 1954