



THE LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

Newsletter 98 June 2000

Editorial

Judging by the notes of events and the announcements in this Newsletter, Llanccarfafan is still the busy place it always was. The Society's annual May Walk was popular as ever and seems, each year, to bring better weather. It was good to hear from Phil Watts and Ann Radcliffe that the reunion of wartime pupils of Llanccarfafan School was well attended. Another Society event, the Petanque Tournament brought in yet more good weather and our winning team is now getting ready for the Lord Mayors tournament.

The World War I account of Lieutenant Gwilym Lougher in two previous Newsletters continues as something very different this time. A contribution from Lawrie Williams, *Llanvithyn House*, describes a chance meeting during the Gallipoli campaign, between Gwilym Lougher and a young Midshipman from Bonvilston, who later became Captain W. W. Williams, R.N. and was Lawrie's uncle. WW1 is history for most of us but this story suddenly brings it alive in a remarkable way.

Events and announcements

The Hog Roast will be held on Sunday July 16, at 12.30 p.m. in Culvery Field by kind invitation of Frank and Joyce Jameson. Tickets from Committee Members: There is a slight price reduction if you book before July 8: Adults £5.00 & children £2.50. After that date: £6.50 & £3.00. In the event of wet weather the Roast will be held in the Village Hall.

Reynard Planning permission is still awaited for the *Fox and Hounds* development, despite a recent article in the *South Wales Echo*, to the contrary.

Dedication of Commemorative Pew Runners Mrs Jean Veysey tells us that her pew runners, which commemorate the dead of two World Wars, are now completed. They will be dedicated during the Remembrance Sunday Service in November and any relatives of those who are remembered on our War Memorial are invited to attend. Another reminder will be printed in the Newsletter immediately preceding the dedication ceremony.

Archive Newsletters Should anyone wish to consult past Newsletters, there is now a complete set, together with indexes, in the Barry Public Library. Members may also recollect that there are also sets in the County Archive and in Cardiff Central Library. For reasons of security, the attempt to keep a set in the Community Hall has been abandoned.

More apologies David Evans has rightly chastised me for failing to send him proofs of his contributions to the last Newsletter. I omitted his title, **Hot-cross buns for hot cross sows**, which was a far preferable to my terse **Garnllwyd pigs**. Abject apologies for this as I know how irritating such things can be. Contributors are usually sent a proof of long or complicated articles, but the system fails when we are rushed. The last Newsletter had to appear in time to advertise the May Walk. An explanation – not an excuse.

Llantrithyd Park David Evans also told me that *Country Life* has advertised the forthcoming sale of *Llantrithyd Park* with an optional 81 additional acres. During the May Walk I enquired of local members if the deer remained in the park and was assured that some are still there. On two occasions In 1991 and 2 we visited the Park during the May Walk. This was shortly after the Park had been re-enclosed and stocked with Red and Fallow Deer as a commercial enterprise. Does anyone know more, concerning the sale and the future of the deer?

Foundation Meeting of the Society 1987: The appeal for information in the last Newsletter resulted in letters, phone calls and e-mail from Phil Watts, Barbara Milhuisen (our first Secretary), Ann Ferris (present Secretary) and Alan Taylor (current affairs link-man). Thank you all. I now have a record of that inaugural meeting in the *Fox and Hounds*, which is probably accurate.

Those who are believed to have attended were, convemor, Phil Watts, with John Etherington, Russel Grant, Andrew and Carol Griffiths, Derek Higgs, Barbara Milhuisen, the late Paul Schmit, Alan and Sue Taylor, the late Gwyn Thomas, Peter Tickner and Ruth Watts. If you think this is in error, or incomplete, please contact the editor.

Another village first? The National Portrait Gallery has recently acquired a group portrait, by Stephen Farthing, of seven eminent historians associated with the journal *Past and Present* (See *History Today*, May 2000). One of the seven is our President, Sir Keith Thomas. Llanrcarfan has probably never been represented in the Gallery before this portrait was hung?

Petanque on the Bank Holiday was well attended on a beautiful afternoon. Eight teams competed and eventually Phil Watts, Gwyn Liscombe and Sue Taylor were the victors who will represent Llanrcarfan in the Lord Mayor of Cardiff's competition. Good luck to them.

Reunion of pupils: Llanrcarfan School 1939-45 Nineteen former pupils of the school during the War years recently gathered in the Village Hall for a reunion. A full report will appear in the next Newsletter.

INSERT CONTACT ADDRESSES AND NUMBERS FROM PREVIOUS NEWSLETTER

Y Bwthyn Bach

In a recent letter, Phil Watts recalled that the young Princesses Elizabeth (now Queen) and Margaret Rose were presented with a tiny thatched cottage, the *Little House (Y Bwthyn Bach)*. The thatching was undertaken by “Tom the Thatcher” (Tom David of Llantrithyd) and his brother, who had to go to London to re-thatch the house after the chimneys had been taken-down when it was moved to its final site. Prior to this it had been on public exhibition in London. Phil believes that it was a present from the people of Wales to the princesses. Does anyone know more?

Editor has managed to find a photo of *Y Bwthyn Bach* in book commemorating George VI – Queen Elizabeth’s Silver Wedding (1948), but no details were given. Phil received this information from Glyn Elward (now of Poole, Dorset). Glyn says that Tom David’s son, George, has a photo of his father and uncle, with Princess Elizabeth standing between them, in front of *Y Bwthyn Bach*. Either the Duke or the Duchess of York (later George VI and Queen Elizabeth, now the Queen Mother) took the photo. We shall try to obtain a copy for a future Newsletter.

May Day Walk 2000 by Phil Watts

Llancarfan Society May Day walk was yet again was blessed with fine weather. If May Day had been a week earlier we would all have been drenched. We again met at the Village Hall for tea, coffee and biscuits. Everyone was asked to sign in and was welcomed by the Chairman Philip Gammon and an outline of the walk by Maddy Gray who said she was available to fill in historical gaps *en route*.

The walk centred on Llanbethery. We left the Hall at 10.30, passed the *Fox and Hounds* to *Ty To Maen* from where we crossed the fields to *Aberogwrn*. At this point we had hoped to follow the footpath to *Highcroft*, Llanbethery, but unfortunately April rain had produced a lot of growth in the field. We decided to take the drier route by road to *Lime Kiln* cottage opposite the *Wild Goose* where we were supplied with cold drinks by Sue and Ruth.

We then proceeded into the Thaw valley to visit the site of the medieval chapel of ease, the former Llanbethery railway halt, and to see a magnificent Victorian bridge which looks as though it will stand for many more years to come (although decorated with a burnt out car!). The railway from Aberthaw to Cowbridge was built in 1898, but it did not succeed as a passenger line and closed for passengers in 1928, continuing to be used for freight until 1932, carrying lime one way and coal the other.

INSERT PHOTO

Victorian bridge over the Cowbridge-Aberthaw Railway in the Thaw Valley below Llanbethery. Photo by Graham Brain, 1 May 2000.

We then returned to our watering place for further refreshments and crossed the fields to *Middle Cross* and returning to Llancarfan via *Pancross* making a stop at Culvery Field near to *The Grange*, home of Frank and Joyce Jameson, who gave some background information on the historical monastic site. We were finally able to visit the church to see and hear the bells in the refurbished tower and to view the wall where we are told there are paintings that have been covered since the time of the Reformation.

So it is thanks to a lot of people that many more were able to have another wonderful day out in the country and to familiarise themselves with other parts of the Parish. Everyone is to be commended on good behaviour and respect of the land and animals, particularly the numerous dogs and children.

At a risk of leaving someone out the following should be mentioned for making the day a success: Tea, coffee and biscuits in hall, Sheila Mace, Ann Ferris, Val Watts, Kathleen Watts. Steward *en route* - Simon and Emma Heselton, Jamie and Georgina Powell, Phil Watts, Tony Lewis and Alan Taylor. Drinks *en route* - Ruth Watts and Sue Taylor, Judy Taylor, assisted by Becky and Rachel (washers up). Peter and Barbara Manchester lent their lay-by for drinks. Ken Walls for helping Alan and Phil to investigate and plan a manageable route for all. The church, which is normally locked, was open for the day. For this we thank Malcolm Davies our vicar, who accompanied us again on our walk with his wife Jean and Poppy the dog.

Thanks to Maddy Gray for setting the tone of the walk with her personality and expertise. We now look forward to seeing you all again next year on a similar venture.

Learning by footpath by John Etherington

At the commencement of the May Day Walk, Maddy Gray pointed out that we have a wonderful network of footpaths in the parish, now much improved by the Valeways Enterprise. I have walked those paths for the past 37 years, but learn something new every time we have a May walk. Not to mention the sheer joy of all those new green leaves that put the trees and hedgerows in their best fettle.

We returned from the Thaw valley to Llanbethery, under the temporary, unofficial leadership of Sam Smith who we thank for a delightful diversion across Pant-y-Coed, a secret valley, with its chattering stream running into the Thaw. On the hillside above this valley, a Roman hoard was discovered in 1957, comprising 814 coins, mostly Constantinian (mainly between A.D.313-46) except for six worn 3rd century coins. The coins were unearthed in a grey ware vessel of which the top had been ploughed away. I believe a few more coins found their way into the unofficial ownership of parishioners! Also on the Downs, to the north of Pant-y-Coed, were the decoy lights that diverted enemy attention from St Athan airfield during WW2 (see Newsletter 94). Thanks to Ken Walls and Ann Radcliffe for pointing-out the location of these sites.

I have never been into Pant-y-Coed before and did not know the exact location of the coin-find or the decoy airfield. Neither had I ever been across the fields from Llanbethery to Middlecross, with its fabulous view of the Channel, Somerset and Exmoor. It must have been breathtaking before the cement works and power station adorned our coast. Nowadays I walk the Llancarfan footpaths only once or twice a year. Those of you who live in or near the parish – take the opportunity now. The bones start to creak only too soon!

INSERT THREE DIAGRAMS

The track of the former Cowbridge -Aberthaw Railway, following the Thaw Valley along the western margin of the old parish. The insets show the location of Llanbethery Halt and the position of the medieval chapel-of-ease which is just to the north of the bridge, shown on page 3. Insets modified from 1919 O.S. map (25 inch to the mile)

Walkers who followed our route on the 1:25,000 O.S. map may have noticed how odd are the shapes of the smaller fields around Llanbethery. Some are long thin strips, some are more or less rectangular but with strange jagged boundaries and yet others are made up of joined, but offset rectangles. These are the remnants of the medieval open fields of the village and those jagged boundaries are evidence for the merging of a number of strips of slightly different length. Maddy Gray commented on this before we set-out on the walk and it reminded me that we have previously noted a group of these strips:-

INSERT TWO MAPS

The plan (left) shows an isolated strip of land, close to the present day *Aberogwrn*, which was sold several times as part of the lands belonging to *Great House*. The plan was copied from a deed which transferred the properties from the Griffiths' family (blacksmith's) to John Jones. in 1919. The title of the plan has been moved to save space.

This tracing from the 1:25,000 O.S. map, surveyed in 1970-3, no longer shows the strip as a separate enclosure but there is a saw-tooth kink in the boundary showing where it was

The foregoing paragraph referred to the deeds of *Great House*, and fields belonging with it. Ownership can be traced back through the Griffiths' family of blacksmiths, ultimately to Robert Jones of *Fonmon Castle*, who sold the land in 1812.

[A] tiny, separately owned field of an S-shape, further-out near *Aberogwn*, looks like three fossilised selions (a selion was the the half-acre, 220 yard strip of common field cultivation). It still appears on the O.S. map though, whether it still exists as a hedged field I do not know. The whole area is dotted with limestone pits suggesting that much more land was cultivated than at the present time.

Newsletter 38 (1991 p. 8)

This "island" strip, amongst other fields, was a real fossil of shareland, part of the common field system of Llanbethery, a living museum piece. Sadly, as the mote recent O.S. map shows, it has succumbed to modern agriculture.

Near the rop right hand corner of the modern map are three right angled kinks in a field boundary - the ghosts of three more strips. The limekiln near the entrance from the road led me to discover that the plateau here is pockmarked with limestone pits suggesting that it was mainly arable land in medieval times. No one bothered to lime grassland in those days.

Well - that's what happens when you go off on a May walk! A lot of history to be investigated in a tiny area. In a future Newsletter I will write a little more about discoveries on this particular May Walk. It was a fruitful journey and I echo Phil Watt's thanks to all who made it so successful.

World War 1: a memento from Graham Jenkins

When Graham Jenkins attended the AGM this year, he brought with him a silver Vesta case (The O.E.D. defines Vesta as a wax match), The box was about one and a half by two inches and beautifully smoothed by wear. One end hinged and closes so tightly that it was probably quite watertight when new. The case is inscribed: -

Presented to Pte W. E. Evans 2190922 A.S.C, MT, RGA, by the Parishioners of Llancarfan, January 1918

INSERT PHOTO

Vesta cases presented to William Evans (left) and William Watts (right), by grateful parishioners during World War 1. Photo by Alan Taylor

William E. Evans of Llanbethery, appears on the Llancarfan Roll of Honour as one of the 66 men of the parish who served in WW1 and returned to tell the tale (Newsletter 93). Graham explains that William married Lily, a sister of his mother (Ivy Jenkins née Lewis), and lived at *Broadhayes* all his married life. His parents lived at *Higher End*, Llanbethery, the first cottage on the left, when entering the village. He was a grandson of the Evans' family of *Cuckoo Mill* and also related to the Evans of the *Green Dragon*, Llancadle (probably by marriage).

Graham has speculated about the significance of the presentation in January 1918: "I know he was awarded the Military Medal at some stage, but have no idea of the date. Phil Watts has a similar matchbox, which belonged to his father - also presented by the parishioners, but the date of presentation is different. I cannot think there will be many people still alive who can recall these presentations and, without any written records it will be difficult to resolve the matter."

The second case is now owned by Phil Watts, William Watts' son, and its inscription reads:-

t o d r W m W a t t s T R 1 0 9 2 7 5 . a . s . c . f r o m m e m b e r s o f
L l a n c a r f a n c h u r c h s e p t . 2 4 1 9 1 7

Yet another mystery. Did any of our other young soldiers and sailors receive such boxes, and do we have silverware or military experts in the Society who can comment further on these boxes?

Collector's note. The *Lyle Price Guide* shows various examples of Vesta cases, generally of the late 1800s to turn of the century. Most were more ornate than these WW1 presentation cases.

The sliding wood mystery

On the next page there is an article on Gwilym Lougher which refers to the "Sliding Wood". This was penned in 1915. The wood in question is at the top of the hill from *Little Mill* to *Llanvithyn*. It is correctly named Basset's Wood, after the family which owned it for many years.

In Newsletter 38 (1991), Phil Watts wrote of the "Moving wood" and quoted a letter from Ken Lougher which placed the time of the landslip as the early 1920s. Ken was then living in Hawaii with his parents and remembered that they had been sent newspaper cuttings about the landslide, so fixing the date accurately in his memory.

Were there, perchance, *two* landslides, one in the 1920s and an earlier one in the first decade of the century? Another question for members (and will it happen again?).

Llancarfan at war 1914-18

An encounter with Lieutenant Gwilym Lougher in Gallipoli

by Lawrie Williams, *Llanvithin House*

Our series of World War 1 articles has brought in more correspondence than any previous features in the Newsletter. Lieutenant Gwilym Lougher, R.A.M.C., died and was buried in Cairo during 1917 (Newsletter 95) but it proved rather difficult to discover anything of his previous life or military service. Mrs Margaret Jones (née Lougher, formerly of *Llanvithyn*) wrote to give a little more information about her uncle Gwilym, which appeared in Newsletter 97. We now have a remarkable account of a chance meeting between Gwilym Lougher and a midshipman serving on the battleship *Agamemnon*, part of the great naval fleet which had entered the Dardanelles in March 1915.

My uncle, Captain W. W. Williams, R.N. was a midshipman on the battleship *Agamemnon* and was present throughout the Gallipoli campaign. He spent most of this time on board ship but was on shore for about two weeks in August 1915, helping to evacuate the wounded after the landings at Suvla Bay.

Some while ago I edited a book of the letters, diaries and journals, which my uncle kept throughout the war. The following extract is taken from a letter to his mother, Mrs L. C. Williams of *Bonvilston Cottage*.

"The camaraderie between the officers and men is extraordinary. The officers always talk of their men as "my boys", and if they get hold of any luxuries like tobacco or bread they always share it with the men. We had to do with RAMC people, belonging to the Welsh regiments

for the most part. Although one doesn't hear much of the RAMC and they don't do the fighting, I think that they deserve more praise than anybody. They worked day and night, carrying stretchers down from the front to the beach, through sand up to their ankles and under fire from shrapnel and snipers the whole time. If they had to wait five minutes before getting their stretchers into the boats they would fall asleep at once. Yet the first day off they had they would lend a hand anywhere or at anything. Most of these men were clerks, or men with bad eyes or too weak a constitution to be taken in a regiment of the line. It made me feel quite proud of my countrymen. They persisted in singing their dirges after lights out though, and we found tht a terrible ordeal to stand.

The world is a very small place. An RAMC major came down to our dug out one day to beg a loaf of bread. We had just got some from one of the ships. He stopped and talked for a few minutes, and asked what part of the world I came from. I told him, and he said, "Good Lord, you're L G Williams' son of course. I remember you well; I live within two miles of Bonvilston" He told me that he was the son of the farmer near the sliding wood* at the end of the Llancarfan lane. I ought to know the name of the farm, but it has clean gone out of my head. To get to it you go past the sliding wood and then turn up through a gate to the right, instead of going to the left and down that stony hill. I've been through the farm a good many times, riding from Coed Francis to the Green Down. The first time I rode the Rabbit I remember we found a fox at Porthkerry and ran him to ground just across the Cowbridge river, in Flimston or Castletown wood. Not having been home for so long I'm afraid that my local geography needs a bit of rub up. Anyhow that day the Rabbit and I parted company over a broken old gate at this particular farm. Happy days! I only hope that I'll have a chance of repeating the performance some time in the future. I had quite a long yam with this officer, and he was quite amusing and told me all about how we laid out the tennis lawn and the wonderful privet hedge that the cows walked over etc. In fact he was quite a cheery soul, and I managed to get four or five pounds of bacon out of him. We had the devil of a feed next morning; fresh fish, fried bacon, and bread and jam. I don't think that I've ever eaten so much at one sitting in my life. The fresh fish we found floating round on the surface stunned or killed by the concussion of Turkish shells bursting in the water. The fish were jolly good too; "it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good". It wasn't often we had a breakfast like that though; for the first week we lived on bully beef and biscuit, and water was very hard to get before the wells were found. It was part of our job to supply water to the wounded, and we had great difficulty in keeping the tank at the end of the pier full, as they used to try and water their mules and half the British army there as well. When Sir Tom Hamilton said that the navy was father and mother to the army he was about right, only he did not put it strong enough. The soldiers were jolly good at their own job, but as soon as they got in a boat or had anything to do with one they were absolutely lost, and didn't know their backsides from their elbows. However after a few days things used to work- very smoothly. I used to see quite a lot of Fox-Pitt. He brought in a boat full of drinking water, twice every day and as it took about an hour to pump his boat out we used to stroll inland with a good pair of glasses to see wha we could see. It was a beautiful country, shady and well watered and an absolute paradise after the usual stony, treeless waste. It was an ideal place for snipers of course and the Turks were not slow to take advantage of this. At first there were snipers everywhere, but they were clearing them out by degrees. They used to set alight to a patch of scrub and force the snipers out into the open. They used to break cover with a rush but never got very far. In the trees they had hammocks slung and everything, including themselves, painted green. Several women snipers were caught and shot, and one morning they brought down a boy of fourteen and his sister of seventeen both from the same tree. I brought back some shrapnel cases with me, which will make rather good vases when polished up. I could have picked up a Turkish rifle any day, but would not have been allowed to bring it off to the ship. Very annoying as I wanted one badly.

*The “farmer near the sliding wood” was D. Walter Lougher of *Llanvithyn*, Gwilym’s father. There was a landslide in Basset’s Wood, which blocked the road in about 1905 but see additional note at foot of page 5.

Gallipoli - historical background

The First World War had barely started when, in October 1914, vessels of the Ottoman Empire bombarded the Russian Black Sea ports. The Triple Entente (Britain, France and Russia) immediately declared war on the Empire – effectively the modern Turkey. The Dardanelles straits, already well fortified with gun emplacements on both shores, were quickly blockaded with minefields, sealing-off Constantinople and the Black Sea from the Aegean.

The first major action, in March 1915, was an attempt by the British fleet to force its way into the Dardanelles Straits. Insufficient heed was paid to minesweeping and the operation ended in tragedy. Many ships were lost and disabled, sitting ducks to the coastal forts, mobile howitzer batteries and shore torpedo tubes. The battleship, *Agamemnon*, on which Midshipman Williams served, was in the first line to enter the Straits and before the day was out, she was damaged by shellfire but not seriously.

The naval defeat led inexorably to the decision to mount an amphibious landing on the rocky and arid Gallipoli peninsula which separates the Dardanelles from the Aegean Sea. A slight inlet on the Aegean shore is immortalised as Anzac Cove, where many thousands of Australian and New Zealand soldiers were landed in April 1915, followed a day later by British troops landing at Cape Helles, the tip of the peninsula.

The landings incurred horrific losses and the subsequent fighting was worse, grinding to deadlock by the end of June when it was decided to land three further Divisions. Anzac was already overcrowded so the August invasion was at nearby Suvla Cove. Some have described this second operation as the forerunner of the Normandy landings 30 years later, pioneering custom-built landing barges and an attempt to bring in a floating harbour.

Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, had hoped to knock Turkey out of the conflict, but this goal was not achieved. A week after the Suvla landings, 20,000 allied sick and wounded had been shipped to Egypt and Malta. By late September the weather deteriorated, a destroyer was wrecked at Suvla and in October, piers on the beaches were destroyed. During early December it became apparent that the troops would be withdrawn, but by this time more than half a million Allied and Turkish men were dead or wounded.

*The Lord Nelson Class battleship, *H.M.S. Agamemnon*, of 15,925 tons displacement, was built in 1906 and survived the War, to be sold for breaking-up in 1927.

Key Reference. James, R. R. (1999) *Gallipoli*. Pimlico (1st edition Batsford, 1965).

St Cadoc's Church wall paintings by Malcolm Davies, Vicar

Many Llancarfan parishioners knew that there was a large stencilled figure of the Virgin Mary and Child on the south wall of St Cadoc's, and that it had been concealed by whitewashing in late Victorian times. The story is reproduced in Orrin's book *Churches of the Vale of Glamorgan* (1988), derived from Marianne Spencer's chapter on Llancarfan in her 1913 *Annals of the Vale of Glamorgan* (which can be read on the Llancarfan Web site).

The P.C.C. authorised its Restoration Committee to make arrangements for the finding of the paintings and, to this end, Mr Nick James of Caroe & Partners requested Mr Phil Parkes, Conservator in the Archaeology Department, Cardiff University, to visit the church in October 1998.

The outcome of this visit was several days of further investigation, during April 1999, to establish whether the painting still exists and if so, its dimensions and conditions. The wall was divided into a two-foot square grid, and at each intersection of the grid lines a two-inch square was investigated to establish whether a painted surface was present.

The overlying paint, whitewash and plaster, accumulated over years of redecoration, were removed using scalpels. The two-inch squares were each taken back a layer at a time so that exposed surfaces could be compared from square to square.

After the initial cleaning it was revealed that the wall had been redecorated many times during the lifetime of the church. After three days of work I received a telephone call at the Rectory and a very excited voice told me that a painting had at last been found. Beneath layers of paint and plaster, peeling away from the wall, was a painting on the surface of the stonework.

Laboratory work at the University revealed that there were 47 layers of paint and plaster which had accumulated since the 14th century, and that there were at least three separate paintings, which had been whitewashed out over the centuries.

The University team made another visit to St Cadoc's church in September 1999 to begin removing the plaster covering the painting but unfortunately the image started to come away with the detached plaster. At this stage the Cardiff University team decided that the work would exceed their facilities and consulted with Elizabeth Holroyd Associates Ltd of Bristol, specialists in this type of conservation.

They visited St Cadoc's in February 2000 and a detached portion of the wall painting was inspected in the laboratory of the Department of Archaeology, Cardiff University. It was decided that further uncovering would damage the upper painted layers, and those beneath them. However, if it becomes possible to uncover and separate all of the paint layers and suitable places for their display can be found, this possibility could be considered but its expense may make it impractical.

The exposed section of the painting is located on the south wall in the bay to the left of the south door. It consists of several different schemes on different plaster layers that have become detached from each other over the whole surface of this bay. At least three schemes have been found and a portion has been removed exposing what is thought to be the earliest scheme still attached to the wall.

A section of a figure has been found but it is difficult to identify it from so small a portion. It appears to be a bishop as the figure is wearing a cope and has one hand raised in benediction. The decorative edge of the cope has crosses on it and may be a pallium, a type of stole which is joined at the ends and typically decorated with crosses. Such a pallium is only granted by the Pope, in person, to the highest and most esteemed of the clergy. St Cadoc would have had to travel to Rome to receive this honour.

If the project is to be continued, it is proposed that two persons should work on the site for about a month and would need to be accommodated locally. The estimated cost of labour, laboratory investigation and supporting expenses will be about £12,000. Grants can be applied for from CADW and the Millennium Fund, but the Parish will need to provide matched funding

Everyone is excited about the project and all wish to see it completed as another part of the wonderful jigsaw of this illustrious parish and the life of its people.

Decca Navigator Station Closure by John Etherington

For many years, the aerials of the Decca Navigator Station have been a feature of the skyline as one approaches or leaves Llancarfan on the road past *Caemaen*, particularly at night. Many people will remember the loud “beep” which would suddenly interrupt the car radio and lost motorists were often told: “Go past the radar station. ---” A few years ago the station was automated and, on March 31 this year, finally closed down having become redundant in this age of satellites and global positioning systems.

The Decca Navigator radio navigation system was invented in the USA in 1937 and, after war-service, was developed by the British Decca Company. It mainly covered north-western Europe, serving some 50,000 ships, fixed wing aircraft and about 750 helicopters (1992 statistics).

It was a hyperbolic ranging system* based on chains of three or four transmitting stations at precise distances from each other - one master and two or three slave stations each broadcasting a continuous wave, unmodulated signal.

The time taken for master and slave signals to reach the target vessel or aircraft was sensed by phase difference giving a theoretical resolution of about 5 metres. In practice, the accuracy was a few tens of metres in daytime. The daytime range was about 300-400 nautical miles and at night about half this (due to reflection from the ionosphere at night). This short range limited its marine use to near-coastal areas.

INSERT MAP

Llancarfan was a slave station, serving a master on the south Devon coast, with two other slaves in the Scillies and Channel Islands. This grouping of four stations gave navigational coverage of the western-approaches and southern England, overlapping with cover from a group of transmitters in south-east England and another group in Ireland.

A radio-location system giving such accuracy needs very precise positioning and electronic control of its aerials. I remember, in the 1970s, Norman Kilday, who was an operator at the station, telling me that, when wet snow accumulated on the aerials it caused them to sag and this had to be compensated by adjusting the transmitter.

*"When synchronous radio signals are received from two stations, the difference in times of arrival of the signal is constant on a hyperbola having the two transmitters as foci."

I am grateful to Roger Harris, *Navigator Cottage*, for information concerning the Station. Further technical data from McGraw-Hill *Encyclopaedia of Science and Technology* (1992) vol. 5.

Gravestone dates for an old photograph

The last Newsletter featured a photograph loaned by Joan Thomas, *Pancross Farm*. It was probably taken at about the turn of the century but the May Walk gave me a few spare moments to search for the gravestones which appear in the photograph and more usefully, as it proved, those which do not.

The pink granite memorial which dominates the south-western quarter of the churchyard today is not in the photograph, which must have been taken before it was erected. Unfortunately it is a family tomb and, possibly, earlier interments were moved from some other burial place. The dominant inscription is that of Thomas Rees, who died in 1906, which is probably, but not certainly the date of the memorial.

INSERT PHOTO

Llancarfan churchyard pre-1906? The semi-circular area shown by two arrows (a.) is in the position recorded for the *Tithe Barn*. (b.) is a group of large gravestones or a mausoleum. (c.) is the site of the *Church House*, used as the School and Workhouse until the present school was built. The rectangular site is free of vegetation suggesting that it had not long been demolished.

About 30 feet south-west of the church porch is a group of large gravestones (or maybe a mausoleum). It is no longer there, but a rectangular brickwork foundation is visible in the grass, with four (later?) gravestones within its perimeter. The earliest of these is dated 1875. Does anyone know what stood on this brick foundation and whether the gravestones are those which originally stood there?

Most other gravestones, which can be seen in the photograph, date from the second half of the 19th century and the latest which is certainly identifiable, is dated 1867 (John and Elizabeth Thomas).

The *Church House* (site of the *Village Hall*) was demolished shortly before Marianne Spencer wrote about Llancarfan in *Annals of South Glamorgan* (1913) but it still existed in 1864 (G.T. Clark, *Archaeologia Cambrensis*). Clark also noted that the *Tithe Barn* in the churchyard had been destroyed by 1864. Joan's photograph shows a semicircular area extending into the churchyard, just opposite the *Vestry* and *Chapel Cottage* garden and it is tempting to interpret this as an area of rubble derived from the *Tithe Barn*. To coin a phrase, "the site is right".

One other great change is the present day growth of trees and shrubs in the churchyard. In c.1900 there were no trees, except for the juvenile yew opposite the pine-end of *Chapel Cottage*, which is now a large tree. Churchyard yews are never as old as folklore suggests! It would be strange to plant a tree so close to a wall - was it a self-seeded from the one, which Johnnie Jones cut down to save his bees (Newsletter 97)?

Obituary: Nora Bryan by Phil Watts

With regret we report the death of Nora Bryan at the age of 95. She was our oldest member.

Nora was one of a large family that lived at *Kenson Cottage* until they all went their different ways. Nora came to Llancarfan and worked for Frank Rowlands at *Ty To Maen Farm* until 1962 when Frank retired. The association of Nora with the Rowlands family was more than employer and employee and she continued to live with them in Penarth, and later at Rhoose.

I had to pass *Ty To Maen Farm* on my way to school from *Abernant*. I saw Nora helping with the milking, dairying and other jobs that might be necessary in the buildings – feeding and washing-down. She was always busy, but always found a cheerful greeting for us children as we walked to and from school. Nora kept her cheerfulness all her life and this, with the combination of hard work has produced a long and happy life.

Obituary: Muriel Bonney by Phil Watts

It is with regret that we hear of the death of Muriel Bonney who was formerly Muriel Dunn, a sister of Sylvia, Jenkin, Carol and Mary of Llanbethery. Muriel had been a member of the Society from the early days and gave us a lot of information on early happenings in the parish. During her life she was very active in community affairs, particularly in Rhoose where she lived. She will be missed by all who knew her.

INSERT PHOTO

A question Mrs Margaret Jones (née Lougher of *Llanvithyn*) has sent us this photograph which she believes to have been taken in the 1930s on a Royal occasion. The brass band carries at least two Union flags - this would certainly suggest a national celebration. What about the accession of Edward VIII (1936), his visit to Boverton in 1936 (see Newsletters 46-48) or the coronation of George VI (1937)? This photo could be taken again today - little has changed in this view - even the telegraph pole and laurel hedge are still there Over to you, readers - what was the event?

INSERT PHOTO

William Liscombe Phil Watts sent us this photograph of his and Gwynne Liscombe's grandfather, William Liscombe, of *Little Mill*. The background shows *Garnllwyd* wood reaching to the horizon. Phil commented that the wood had been cut-down. When the Wildlife Trust acquired the wood in 1984, John Zehetemeyer (formerly Forestry Commission, S. Wales) identified it as a survival of medieval coppice woodland. The photo tells us that the wood was last coppiced near the beginning of the century - William was the miller and a Llancarfan churchwarden from the late 1800s to the 1930s. More on William in the next Newsletter. It would be interesting to know what the coppiced timber was used for - there must have been a lot of it. Mostly hazel and ash, so not very good for fenceposts. See Frank Jameson's article in Newsletter 28 (1990) for some suggestions..