

# LLANCARFAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 162

JUNE 2015



Llancarfan  
goes  
walkabout



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## EDITORIAL

One of the upsides of holding a formal AGM – when deprived of an entertaining night of the long knives, or of playground petulance – is that you can liven things up with a guest speaker. Last May we froze empathetically as Maria Leijerstam retold her South Pole cycling saga. This year offered lots of ways of feeling warmer. Nicola Sumner-Smith enticed us with an informative and eye-opening account of the things that *Creative Rural Communities* has stimulated and funded to keep us and our visitors active in the Vale. So many of those who (thankfully) came to the AGM said how jolly interested & impressed they were. Nicola was able to talk, and show short films, about a range of initiatives – including fun things for youngsters, quirky re-visioning of lost historical sites (by pointing your iPhone at today's ruins), and of course 'Walking in the Vale'. Some AGM members were delighted to carry away goody bags which included copies of the splendid walking maps shown on our cover picture. These maps even measure the route in kilocalories burnt for those wanting to burn them!

Mind you, our society members have rarely needed prompting to go walkabout. John Etherington (who with Mike Crosta & Kay Brain makes a welcome contribution to *this* newsletter) also evoked our annual Llancarfan and/or Llantrithyd walks, which started with the Society's very beginnings (See *Newsletter 56* online). This year our members reinforced the health-bringing brain-stimulating tradition – enquire within re those who followed Maddy Gray to meet her (alleged) ancestors, the Silures, on Castle Ditches. Now I think of it though, Nicola's kilocalorie-burning walks didn't note the cream bun hazards of June & Andrew Studley's warm hospitality!

## IN DEFENCE OF IMAGES

Ian Fell

Given that members recklessly re-elected me chairman again at the aforementioned AGM (5 May), and also that I still cling on here as newsletter editor, I face the duty of summing things up in assorted reports. Honestly, I do hate standing up there trying to be 'self-important', having wisely been told by fellow volunteers that I am 'no worse, though no better' at fulfilling the role than previous committee chairmen. So - praised with faint damns!

However, part of the *Newsletter* report reflected at the AGM is the cost of printing it (very supportively carried out by *Infographics*). As a percentage of our society's modest income, the *Newsletter* ranks among the more costly aspects of what we do. The cost of printing these 16 pages, half colour, half black & white, worked out this last year at £1.42 per copy. Then there's postage. There is no economy of scale, for we currently print only 150 quarterly copies. You'll have to tell us if you think it's worth it.

In submitting his AGM statement of the Society's declining balance, our respected and honorary accountant, Edward (Knott), floated ways in which this decline could be addressed. Re this *Newsletter*, Edward echoed the thought that there could be 'a membership category where [you] would receive an electronic copy of the newsletter which could be emailed'. Then our President, Barbara, very supportively expressed her allegiance to print. However it was appropriate to point out that (notably with the 'What's On' elements) that your vice-chairman Jim Barratt has made generous strides in sharing community information by the web. Anyone wishing to join an email mailing list can contact Jim at [llancarfancine@gmail.com](mailto:llancarfancine@gmail.com).

The fact is, for whatever reason, the electronic publication of newsletters in the past was not a satisfying experience for those of us who agreed to try receiving it in that form. And I freely confess that a (Luddite?) ill-ease encourages me to cling to print, and inhibits my embracing 'social media'. Interestingly, our AGM affirmed that members of Llancarfan's diaspora *do* like physical copies to remind them of the village community they miss.

Ours is of course a trivial example of the dilemma which faces all the print newspapers & magazines. But I sheepishly confess that turning this into a uniquely web-based publication is not something for which I have the skills, nor would I much relish following this through. (Archiving is another matter though, and again we must do more to build on our *Newsletter* archive, a splendid web resource un-managed since Alan Taylor's untimely death.)

Now – as we’re examining mixed thoughts about the mixed new media, we’re in danger of getting philosophical and historical. Bear with me. ‘Sue me, sue me, shoot bullets through me’ – to quote *Guys & Dolls* – but in the 35 Newsletter issues with which I’ve been editorially involved, I’ve been allowed to print in (comparatively expensive but rather special) colour.

Yes, I know this page could make better use of it, but whether one is re-telling past for present, or present for future, the fact is that life happens in colour, and should ideally be recorded as such. But yes, nowadays your Websites, Facebooks, iPhone images, *can* all share coloured images with ease. (As to which computer ‘cloud’ archives these images for posterity, for how long, and when the power fails, this surely needs risk assessment!)

All of which brings us to ‘the defence of images’. For never before could we share images so powerfully, or with such a disturbing potency & ease<sup>1</sup>.

For example. Penny [Fell] subscribes to *Facebook*, along with one and a half billion other active users<sup>2</sup>. The other day our eldest (Ben and his lady, Jen) shared on *Facebook* an ‘announcement’ image of the child they have conceived. It is an ultrasound glimpse of a five-month developed baby in the womb, profiled features, cwtched body, splayed fingers. I was both moved and frightened. It had 200+ ‘likes’. It is the imaging of the invisible.

The Latin word for ‘image’ is ‘imago’. ‘Imago’ is primarily used nowadays to denote ‘the last stage an insect attains during its metamorphosis’ – that is the *Wikipedia* definition. Its wonder apart, the photograph (sonograph?) of Ben & Jen’s baby somehow joins these old and new meanings.

You may agree that our ability nowadays to image the invisible, and (of course) to instantly share the visible, is revolutionary, and a startling phenomenon of the last 15 years.<sup>3</sup> And, to reach into Llancarfan’s present history, the re-appearance of those banned mediaeval images on our St. Cadoc’s walls only serves to reinforce the eternal potency of the picture.

These wall paintings are the digital messages from the past, archived beneath lime-wash for centuries, now transmitted to us from the pixilated paintbrush of a master draftsman. **You Got Mail.**

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<sup>1</sup> When I was first employed scripting and editing newsfilm in 1966 I was part of a highly-specialised industry joining strings of black & white negative pictures with smelly glue, then sending photographic prints of these films round the world by aeroplane – without ever me or the editor seeing a positive image of the camera-work. Now you do it from your phone.

<sup>2</sup> <http://investor.fb.com/releasedetail.cfm?ReleaseID=908022>. *Facebook 1st Quarter 2015*.

<sup>3</sup> Apparently the first camera phone was sold in 2000.

Anyway. You might wish to know that way back, **Reginald Pecock**, Bishop of St. Asaph from 1444 to 1450, approved of images.<sup>4</sup> He wrote, in English, just before *our* paintings were created, an obsessively detailed book<sup>5</sup>, including a defence of images. These were under attack by Luddites long before the boy king Edward VI purged iconography from our churches.

I've modernised the spelling here, but Pecock was absolutely certain, surely long before the commonplace was coined, that a picture paints a thousand words. Pecock underlined the 'right singular advantages' of 'beholding by sight of eye upon many diverse stories or images' :

' . . The eyesight showeth and bringeth into the imagination and into the mind within the head of a man much matter, and long matter, sooner and with less labour and travail and pain, than the hearing of the ear doth.'

Pecock defended from the iconoclasts the visual social media that featured on his church walls. And in referring to his visually-oriented, non-reading contemporaries (nothing changes?) he observed that 'they shall not find men so ready to read a dozen leaves of a book to them'.

Which still leaves me needing to shake sand out of my ostrich eyes, and wondering how to grasp & explore the potential of web-shared publishing.



Ah, colour postcards like they used to be! Hall's Croft, Stratford - taken when? - the 1960s? And why? See Mike Crosta's intriguing discovery overleaf.

<sup>4</sup> He's thought to have been born in Laugharne, of Dylan Thomas fame.

<sup>5</sup> This was the quaintly named *The Repressor of over much blaming of the clergy*.

## HELP FOR GARN LLWYD FROM SHAKESPEARE'S SON-IN-LAW

I don't know if anyone would find the following strange or interesting - **writes Mike Crosta** - but I did. On a motoring break Jan and I tasted the pleasures of Stratford-upon-Avon. Of course it was Shakespeare we concentrated on; some well-preserved buildings are connected to the bard.

We were particularly impressed by a fine timber house (*see above*) that Shakespeare apparently shared with his eldest daughter, Susanna, and her husband, Dr. John Hall. Hall was an eminently successful physician of the early seventeenth century, and the only one in Stratford. I couldn't resist buying a book<sup>6</sup> which quoted from his surviving medical case notes for the years 1611 to 1635, describing how he treated 155 patients of all classes<sup>7</sup>. It was difficult but satisfying to read his hand-written notes, detailing many very strange ways of treating sick patients. But on Page 292 of *John Hall & his Patients*, what should I see but something very close to home? . . .

### OBSEXO. LVIII.

*Mrs. Lewes, Sister to Mr. Fortescue, three days after Child-birth, getting cold, fell into an Ague, with torment of the Belly, was cured as followeth: She drank the Decoction of Harts-horn, cur Julep against the fever, two spoonfuls every fourth hour. She also had a Clyster of Milk and Sugar. There was Origanum and Marjoram lapped up between a Linnen Cloth, and applied hot to the Belly. And so she was suddenly helped.*

These were notes which referred to the treatment of Martha Lewis, whose husband owned 'Carnlloyd, Llancarfan'. Nicholas Lewis had a £400 per annum income. The family were well-known radical non-conformists.

I like the fact that our village, albeit tenuously, has a connection with the great William Shakespeare, whose son-in-law treated a village wife. It's good to know that Martha Lewis benefitted from Dr. Hall's potions – which elsewhere included mistletoe, capon grease, windpipe of cock, powder of earth worms, goose dung, horse dung, spiders' webs, mummy, human fat, womens' milk, burnt lead, and maiden hair! Such prescriptions, one feels, are only slightly better than his father-in-law's concoctions (in *Macbeth*) of

Eye of newt, and toe of frog, wool of bat, and tongue of dog.

<sup>6</sup> *John Hall and his Patients* : Joan Lane : 1996

<sup>7</sup> Full transcripts of 'Select observations on English bodies of eminent persons in desperate diseases' are on : <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=eebo;idno=A45063>

## WHAT'S OCCURIN'? OR MAYBE EVEN OCCUR'D!

### LLANCARFAN SOCIETY EVENTS

14 <sup>th</sup> June	Ruth Watts Petanque Cup at 2.00 p.m.
22 <sup>nd</sup> August	MYSTERY TRIP : PLEASE NOTE REVISED DATE : CHANGED TO ENSURE THE PROMISED MENU!
18 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Llancarfan Society Annual Dinner
Oct/Nov	Fundraising event : STILL TBA
4 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas Social Evening

### VILLAGE SHOW

Sadly cancelled owing to lack-lustre returns from our questionnaire. The organisers are recharging their batteries, and have some hopes for 2016.

### CREAM TEAS IN THE VILLAGE HALL

20<sup>th</sup> June 1430

A new group of Llancarfan Fundraisers (a changed name, but the willing faces remain the same!) invite us to join them getting jam up to our elbows in aid of 3 charities – Latch, The Air Ambulance, and MIND. Tickets are £5 from 781282, 781453 or 781350.

### CHURCH REOPENS FROM 20<sup>th</sup> JUNE TO SEE LATEST DISCOVERIES!

### GET WELL SOON

Our best wishes go to Audrey Porter, who is still in hospital at Landough, to Ron Price, still recovering from his fall, to Phil Watts, who is making progress after his knee operation, and Phil Gammon who awaits further treatment following heart surgery. Our thoughts are also with Malcolm & Jean Davies during their present anxieties concerning their son Jonathan.

### FOR THE RECORD

I implied in my ignorance in *Newsletter 161* that the re-discovered photographs of our church, now digitised by the National Museum, were all by Thomas Mansel Franklen of St. Hilary. In fact they were all, except for the intriguing photograph with the stone head of St. Cadoc, the work of Roland Exton Reynolds. He & his aunt, Isabella Metford of St. Fagans, apparently travelled around the Vale recording and photographing churches, castles and other ancient monuments, thus greatly contributing to a Photographic Survey of Glamorgan. Thanks for clarification to Melanie Williams, Research Officer - Historic Photography, at the National Museum.



Castle Ditches - the fortified mounds & ditches still circle the site.



Maddy Gray tests the route!



Andrew urns his keep.



Tony Thomas holds the fort.



Ken Wall shares a little history.

## CASTLE DITCHES LLANCARFAN : IN THE FOOTSTEPS



Striding round the ramparts.



Andrew points out the site of ancient walls, seen here in 1963 photo.



Blossom welcomes Tony's tribe.



Walkers & stragglers return for a second taste of Studley welcome.





Approaching Castle Lodge Farm.



June & Andrew Studley offer country hospitality Mark One.



The young folk find some relaxation before swinging into the past.



Maddy agrees - time to walk again.

## STEPS OF THE IRON AGE : MAY DAY WALK 2015



Maddy looks for distant camps.



Halfway round, the May walkers take in the extent of the ditches.



Mick Mace enjoys June's larder.



June & gatekeeper grandson Henry.

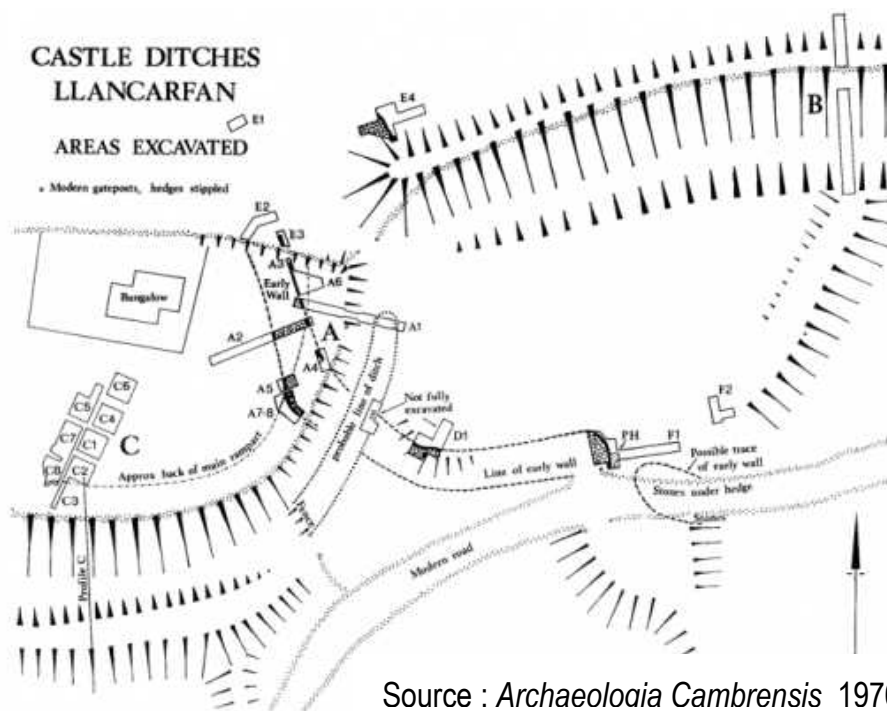


Where shall we go next year?

## THE MAY DAY WALK 2015 : CIRCUMLOCUTING CASTLE DITCHES

Before anyone corrects me, I know 'circumlocuting' really means 'talking round'. But that's exactly what some 40 of us did on May 4<sup>th</sup> when we circumnavigated our local Iron Age fort, (circa 800 BC to 43 AD). It seems there was life up there when Llanancarfan was still a forest-bound swamp.

Beyond doubt, our turn around Castle Ditches was thrice blessed. It was squeezed into the sunniest of gaps between some nasty cold wet weather. We were welcomed by the wonderful generosity of June & Andrew Studley, who seemed surprisingly happy to let us invade their home and landscape. And the third blessing was (Professor) Maddy Gray, who was able to lead us back to the Late Iron Age and introduce us to her Silurian ancestors.



Our centrefold reflects our enjoyment, with an age-range from 7 to a vigorous 95! But inspired by the things to which Maddy & Andrew drew our attention on the ground, we felt that we must also now take the rare chance to see & record some

of the artefacts brought to light by the archaeological work of 1963 & 64. Here we express many thanks to Adam Gwilt, the National Museum Archaeology's Principal Curator, Prehistory. We are grateful for the rare access to some of the Castle Ditches' finds of Adam's predecessor archaeologists. This collection has probably not been photographed for general public viewing since 'the digs' were written up around 1976.

Adam is no stranger to our Vale. Since 2003 in neighbouring Llanmaes, he has headed a museum community project which has uncovered a wealth of bronze & iron archaeology at their ancient 'feasting site' at Great House Farm. We would hope in a later newsletter to share further our (available) notes from Adam's guidance and interpretation. Meanwhile, the brief descriptions opposite refer to the items pictured on *Page 12*.

1. **Terret** – a bronze harness ring. Found on cobbles in the fort gateway, this lovely piece of tackle remains ‘an oddity’. A ‘war chariot’ would have 4 or 5 of these in paired arrays, guiding the ponies’ reins. But despite recent research, this ring has no direct twin among some 600 British terret examples examined.
2. **Sling Stones & Spindle Whorl.** Twenty-nine ‘ovoid pebbles’, found scattered, & of doubtful use as a weapon – the jury is out. Spindle whorls, however, were in use for over 9000 years, the hand-spinners of fibres into yarn weighting their spindles with them, even well past post-industrial times.
3. **Brooch Spring.** Again in bronze, perhaps Roman, but recorded as found in ‘pre-Roman levels’. Finds across the centuries remind us that this dominant defensive site was re-occupied by many successive generations and cultures.
4. **Iron Knife Blade.** It lay in a post-hole bottom, an example of many corroded iron fragments discovered, but no recognizable weapons were found.
5. **Crucible for casting Bronze.** Sherds of fine clay pottery, some ‘with slag adhering’, of which the rimmed piece gives evidence of bronze working,.
6. **Decorated ‘Glastonburyware’.** Named after Mendip pottery finds from as early as 300 BC, this scribed and dotted vessel rim might have crossed the Severn, but could be a local version of ‘south west decorative ware’. Its patterning & potentially burnished patina could have made it precious.
7. **Roman Nail Cleaner.** When the Romans moved in (permanently, or was this just a good spot for feasting and fair making?) they brought polite cosmetic devices. This find could well be from a ring which would hold the nail cleaner, perhaps an ear-scoop, and other personal grooming gear.
8. **Slag & Copper traces.** Slag, described as ‘from a furnace bottom’, suggests ‘considerable’ iron-working on the site. Future research could add to the evidence for metal smelting, and move our understanding to the ‘Treguff’ stage – our local farm name shows linguistic evidence for the blacksmith’s trade.
9. **Rim of Storage Jar.** Discussing pottery in his 2007 paper on the *Silent Silures*, Adam highlights that while there were about 35 ‘published’ tankards in Britain, the 9 recorded in south-east Wales form a significant percentage. And the absence of wine-bearing amphorae suggests we’re beer drinkers hereabouts!
10. **Skeletal Pelvic Bone.** The female skeleton, found in the embankment, stimulated many queries along the walk. Despite the crushed state, her burial in the boundary could prove to be symbolic. Scientific research might tell more, and is an argument for retaining the remains under tight ethical guidelines in the museum store. These bones banish any myths about their final resting place.



1  
Terret - a rein ring

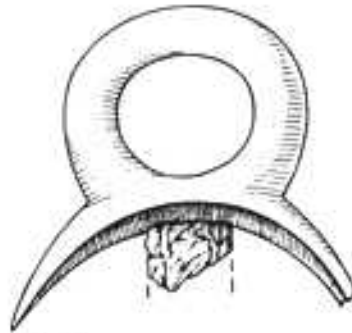


Fig. 8

Terret sketch 1964



2  
Sling Stones & Spindle Whorl



3  
Roman Brooch Spring



4  
Iron Knife Blade



5  
Crucible for casting bronze



6  
Decorated 'Glastonburyware'



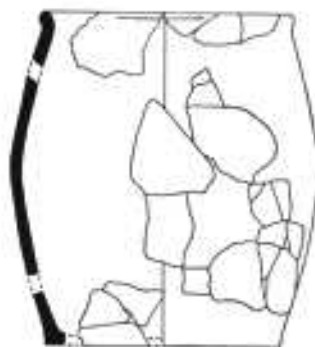
7  
Roman Nail Cleaner



8  
Slag & copper traces



9  
Rim of storage jar



Jar assembly 1964



10  
Skeletal Pelvic Bone

## A SLIP OF THE LAND

Kay Brain

I often search on *Ebay* for “Llancarfan”, and for the village “Glanworth”, where I was born and brought up, in County Cork, Ireland . . . always with a hope that something interesting will be found. I was not disappointed some time back when I found that someone from Aberystwyth was selling a newspaper article entitled *Moving Forest in Wales*. I bid for it and won it, and was delighted to receive and view it.

This cutting was from the *Daily Sketch*. As you can see, it pictured a land slip across a road with a young man straddling the then joined hedges. The article is transcribed below.

DAILY SKETCH, TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 1913.

### MOVING FOREST IN WALES.



*“The unusual spectacle may be seen at Llancarfan, Glamorganshire, where owing to the excessive rainfall of late, the ground on which this forest is situated has become a bog. The whole area is sliding from its foundation, and has already moved a distance of 17 feet, blocking up a road-way, thereby making it necessary to cut a new road. Our picture shows all that is left of the road, which was 17 feet wide before the slide started. It is now completely blocked by the debris. The youth seen in the photograph is standing with one foot on either hedge, which has now almost merged into one.”*

The photo isn't very clear, and so I set out to find out exactly where the landslip had occurred. I initially Googled 'Llancarfan Landslip', and discovered that such events *had* been covered in a previous *Llancarfan Society Newsletter No 38* dated June 1991. Here are parts of it:

*'Earlier this month Phil Watts wrote to comment on a letter which he had from Ken Lougher of Burry Port. Ken recollected that Basset Wood (north of the road between Llanvythin and Abernant) was reputed to have moved as the result of a landslip in the early part of the century :*

*“. . . it must have been about 1920 when we were in Hawaii, my parents received a letter from Llancarfan with newspaper cuttings of a moving forest in Glamorgan, S. Wales . . . The hillside, which is on a bed of clay, moved with the wood, blocking the road to Abernant . . . The year may not be 1920 but it was shortly before we moved to Cuba.*

*After we returned to Rhoose in 1925 we used to have permission to cut pea and bean sticks in Basset Wood. I remember my father telling me about the moving wood whilst we were cutting sticks."*

Then John Etherington noted that Phil Watt's family recollection put the date nearer to 1911. And now at last in 2015 we've tracked down the real date, January 1913, archived in one of those 'newspaper cuttings'. Back in 1991, Dr. Etherington was able to add more evidence to the local drama :

*'In about 1965 or '66 there was a tiny but similar landslip in the bank on the roadside leading to Broomwell. It is now all grassed-over and covered in bushes, but for a number of years it was bare earth and had unusual plants like the lovely woolly thistle. Llancarfan is sited on Liassic limestone which contains almost horizontally bedded layers of clayey shale. Where these slope slightly downward on hill slopes the shale traps the rainwater, makes spring-lines, but also allows slippage by lubricating the limestone layers . . . The terrace made by the Basset Wood landslip is still visible but it is tiny compared with the results of the great Axmouth landslip in Dorset early in the last century. This was on similar geology to our own and left a hollow over half a mile long.'*

I spoke again briefly with Phil Watts & Viv Price, and they both recollected the tale. They said that as a result many trees were planted to prevent future occurrences. I've yet to discover who the "youth" was, straddling the conjoining hedges, but perhaps someone out there can still do the splits!

□ *Re the above, please see Lawrie Williams' piece in Newsletter 160 (December 2014) – re 'Fat' Willams's encounter in the Dardanelles with Gwilym Lougher, 'son of the farmer near the sliding wood'. ED.*

## THE REMARKABLY BRAVE COLONEL ARCHER

*This May 7<sup>th</sup> we marked again VE Day, seventy years on. And while a consciousness of WWI must colour our memories until 2018, it is good to be reminded also of the local heroes of WW2. Hence the following – from a welcome ‘voice from the past’, your former editor, Dr. John Etherington :*

Members might be interested to read the following note, which adds information to John Rowland’s account of WW2 bombing to be found in *Newsletters 21 & 22* (1989).

The Daily Telegraph of May 4, 2015 carried an obituary of Colonel Stuart Archer GC, who died recently at the age of 100.

In May 1940 Archer arrived in Cardiff as a subaltern in the REs, commanding the No. 104 Bomb Disposal Section. He added much to our knowledge of handling unexploded weapons. It goes without saying that his survival was something of a miracle, involving acts of remarkable bravery. These included recovering undamaged fuse units from several bombs, which were wanted by the War Office for experimental work.

The obituary caught my eye because Archer coped with several 250 kg bombs which fell on St Athan aerodrome in July 1940. Soon afterwards a bomb dropped at Moulton, from which (gentler methods having failed) he manually prised the fuse using a pick-head and a spanner! Later in the same year he dealt with four unexploded bombs at the Skewen oil refinery while surrounded by burning oil storage tanks. **John Etherington**

*Thank you, John. People can read more of the full astonishing story at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/11580289/Colonel-Stuart-Archer-GC-obituary.html>.*

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For many of the past issues & more details please see the (to be updated) website at <http://www.llancarfansociety.org.uk/>

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**NEXT COPY DEADLINE PLEASE : 21 AUGUST 2015**



## MELINDA GARDENS INTO GLORY

The village's very own flower fairy, Melinda Thomas, scooped a silver medal for her McMillan-commissioned garden design, created at the Royal Horticultural Society's Show in Bute Park. Melinda, who has recently trained in 'Horticulture & Landscape Design', brought to life her McMillan Cancer Support project reflecting the theme of 'Legacies'. Weeks of hard work, from drawing board to show garden, did credit to the cause with a charming study in green, white & rusty red.

## LAST DITCH FOR THE DITCH TALES!

Once upon a time, back in the 1930s, two little girls sat in the window of the wooden house which also sat upon the slopes of Castle Ditches. The building - which was then called Ford Bungalow - has vanished. One little girl is now Barbara Milheusen, our President, there with her cousin, Mary Jenkins. By the time of the picture below Barbara was a young lady - who rather fancied the archaeologist, 2nd left, next to her Mum.

This man was Douglas Hague, who was staying with them at the Old Post Office, and who turned out to be the very close friend of his lady companion, a Mrs. Rosemary Christie. And she was Julie Christie's mother (who sadly died in Llanafan in 1982).

The dog was Fiona. Her contribution to the tale of the discovered skeleton was reprehensible. She found the remains temporarily stored in the family fridge. So she felt it her duty to re-bury parts of the lost lady of Castle Ditches in the Post Office garden. But this metadata has somehow escaped the official record.

