

LLANISHEN

From Village to Suburb



by

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In association with Llanishen Local History Society

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PREFACE

As a comparative newcomer to Llanishen, of only thirty years, I found listening to stories recollected at family reunions and snippets from local inhabitants was a fascinating insight to local life over the years. I wanted to record these stories to supplement the history of the area written by the late Canon Leonard Dowse of St Isan's church. I was more interested in the lives of the people than historical changes and started by recording some of the reminiscences of the older members of the community before they were lost and gone for ever.

The first chapter gives a brief historical outline of the village from the earliest times up until 1922 when it was absorbed into the City of Cardiff. The remaining chapters deal with the social life and activities of the people of Llanishen since then and are derived principally from personal reminiscences.

Since its inception in 1990 the Llanishen Local History Society has done much to promote interest in the history of the area by a varied programme of meetings, by giving talks to local schools, societies and by gathering documents and photographs illustrating the history of the village. I am grateful to many members of the Society who have been of help in the preparation of this history and in particular Mrs Sylvia Evans who acts as the photographic librarian.

Outstanding help has been given to me in the conversion of my illegible handwriting to readable text by my friend Andrew Johnson. Stan Jenkins, the Society's treasurer, has been of great assistance in searching out difficult sources and helping with the final presentation. Finally my wife, Janice (nee Workman), has been a mine of information of local knowledge and has tolerated scraps of paper all over the house for more years than I care to remember.

I am also especially grateful to Fred Davies and Jackie Roberts for contributing the chapters on the Railways and the Scout and Guide movements.

Others to whom I am grateful for contributions are: Margaret Aven, Peter Andrew, the Atomic Weapons Establishment, Walter Boothby, Miss Phyllis Buckle, Richard Babbage, the late Jean Burns, Gwen Bassett, Ted Chamberlain, Stan Davies, Dr. Don Dymond, Peter Elkington, Graham Falconer, George Gillespie, Bryn Hancock, K. Hignell, Tony Hart, David Hughes, The Rev. N. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Maskell, Dennis Morgan, Margaret Morris, The Rev. J. Morgan, The Rev. Kristin Ofstad, David Mallinson, Dr. J. Parry, Gwyn Prescott, Michael Quinn, the late Charles Reece, John Rees, the staff of Rhyd-y-penau library, Graham Tennant, Gerry Thomas, the Western Mail, Mrs. Beryl Westlake, Des Willis and Pastor Alex Wilson. I apologise to any others whose names may be missing from this list.

Any errors of fact or interpretation that have crept in can be put down to tricks of the memory and are entirely my responsibility.

Graham Horton

CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

In the early part of the 6th century, a band of missionary monks from Hereford led by Teilo were despatched to South Wales establishing a “llan” out of view of the Norse invaders on the bank of the River Taff. This religious settlement at Llandaff developed and some monks were sent to form further settlements.

In 535AD, two of these monks, namely Isan and Edeyrn, were told to travel in an easterly direction and would have looked for a site with the necessary requirements for a settlement, these being a well for drinking and baptism, an area for cultivation and a burial ground. The chosen site (Llanishen) was that now known as the Oval Park where they would have built a simple wattle and daub shelter with a fence for protection from wild animals. The spring and burial ground are to be seen to this day.

Edeyrn moved further eastwards forming another “llan” (Llanedeyrn) leaving Isan to develop his llan. He, as was the custom, adopted the Latin name of Dionysus which became corrupted to Dennis, hence the present area name of Ffynnon Llandennis or “well in the llan of Dennis”.

However, it was probably due to the Norman religious builders that chapels were established on the higher ground surrounding the bay marshland, including the llan of Isan - Llanishen.

The first recorded historical facts emerged following the Battle of the Heath in 1089 that took place around the Heol Llanishen Fach area between the Welsh armies and the Normans. On the Ordnance survey map of 1901 is marked “Twm Path” above the Deri public house where it is reputed the Welsh dead are buried. Similarly, Rhydwaedlyd or Bloody Brook corrupted to Wedal where it now joins Nant Fawr stream.

In the agreement of 1126, following a dispute between the Bishop of Llandaff and Robert the Consul, Lord of Cardiff, the parishes of Llanishen and Lisvane are mentioned over the rights of taking timber which resulted in the Bishop’s favour.

Very little was mentioned during the Dark Ages, possibly as a result of the devastation caused by the epidemic of Black Death in 1348, but Cardiff records state that in 1393 Roger Panter, the surveyor of Divers Churches belonging to the Abbey of Tewkesbury recorded, “the parishe of LLANNYSSEN tith was assessed as 66/8d per annum”. A later Latin translation in 1557 mentions a grant for “ a house or mansion place for the priest of LLANISSEN”.

John Leland, the King’s Antiquary, in 1536 wrote “an hille in the same comote caullid Keven six miles from the mouth of Remney. This Hille goeth as a Waulle over thwart betwixt the rivers of Thau and Remney. - In the south side of the Hille was borne Richard William alias Crumwelle yn the Paroch of Llanisen”.

Leland had recorded the prominent personalities and estates of the period and most historians accept this fact but the association with the “Lord Protector” Oliver Cromwell is questioned. The family home is thought to be the farm Llanishen Fach and there appears to be no doubt over his Welsh connection as the Williams name appeared in his marriage settlement.

In the mid 16th century during the dissolution of the monasteries Edward Lewis of the family property Van in Caerphilly purchased parcels of land in Llanishen from the Manor of Roath-Keynsham. This started an association with Llanishen up to recent times with enough history to fill several books. It is obviously essential to record some of this.

Edward Lewis married Margaret in 1602 and lived in an old house in Llanishen near the church (thought to be in the Wolf's Castle area) with two sons, one of whom was Gabriel whose heirs lived in Ty Glas (Blue House), now demolished. This was later the home of the Wride family, from 1800 one of the more successful farmers in the area.

The Lewis family had moved to newly built New House on Thornhill where Edward died and was buried in Llanishen in 1764. The family became great benefactors to Llanishen and played a large part in village education.

Another branch of the Lewis family lived at Greenmeadows in Tongwynlais. Now demolished, their estate was developed for houses. Wyndham Lewis married Mary Ann Evans and was a Member of Parliament, but later died. It is said that Disraeli used to stay at the Cow and Snuffers public house in Llandaff **North** from where a boatman would row him up the Taff to Greenmeadow to court the widow whom he eventually married.

Another arm of the Lewis dynasty lived at the Heath. In the 19th century the Heath, now containing the University Hospital of Wales was owned by Wyndham William Lewis. The Heath then covered an area which would have stretched from the now Allensbank Road to Caerphilly Road and Ty Glas Road to the north (approximately). He was a sporting squire keeping a pack of hounds on the Heath. He inaugurated the Llanishen Ploughing Society in 1854 and patronised the Llanishen and Lisvane Annual Ploughing Match which was usually followed by a dinner in the Church Inn, Llanishen. Horse racing was held on the Heath until 1854 but was then transferred to the new course at Ely.

In 1848 a fatal affray between gamekeepers and poachers ended in proceedings at the Magistrate and Assize Courts. Mr F Holley, the author of "Master of Hounds", has permitted the following extract to be taken from his book.

"The trial took place of Daniel Davies, William Hill and Moses Bryant charged with having feloniously killed and slain one David Davies with a certain gun, loaded with gunpowder and shot".

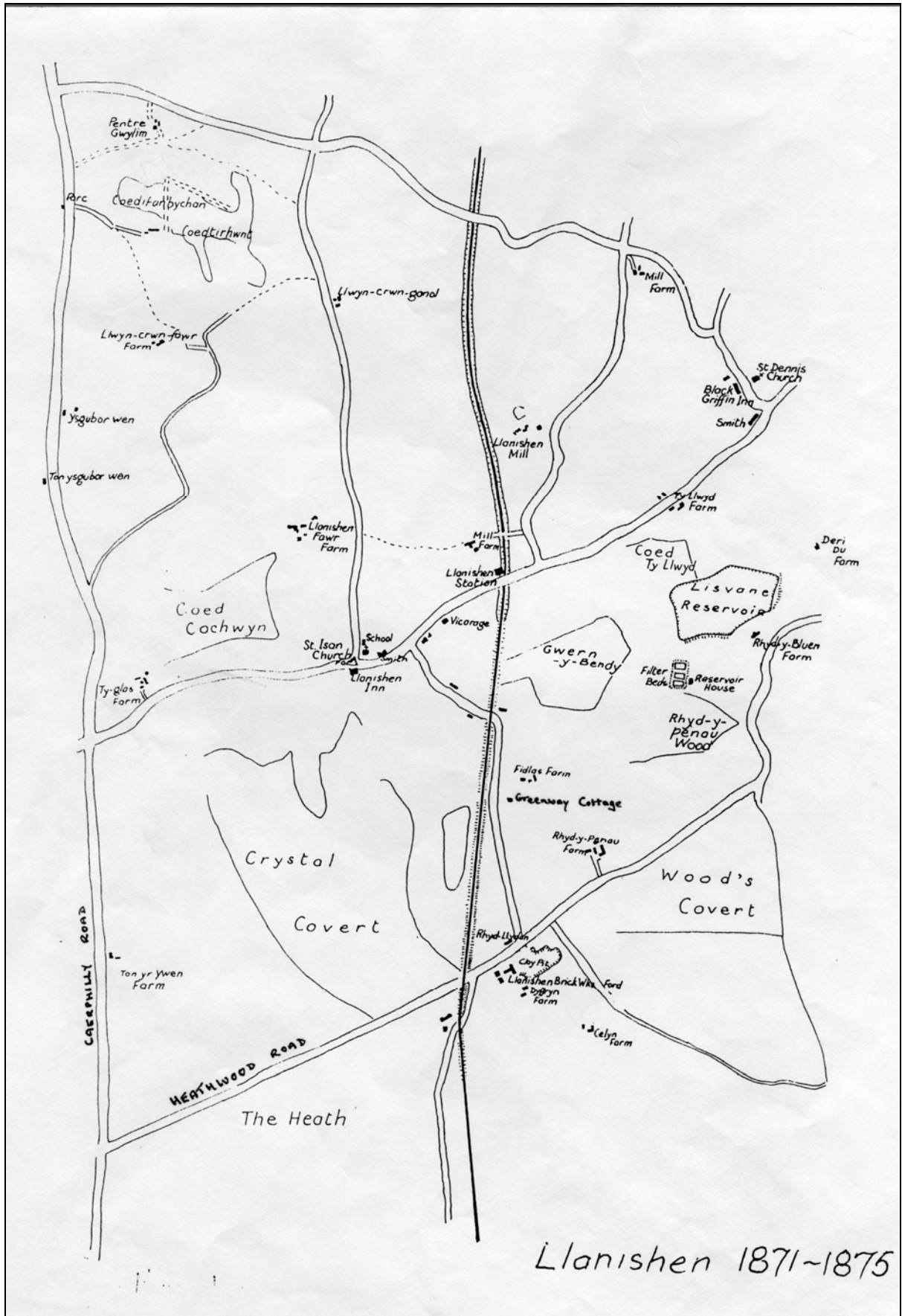
In evidence, John Lewis stated that he lived near New House, in the parish of Llanishen in this county and that he was a gamekeeper for Mr Wyndham Lewis. "I was called out of bed at about half past eleven by Thomas Thomas who looks after game at Mr Lewis's property in Lisvane, who said he heard firing and where were the other keepers. I sent him to collect them from New House while I dressed and we then went in the direction of the firing near Cherry Orchard and waited. We heard several shots fired in the covert close by and later four men appeared, three with guns. We followed them, after one had said "stand back or we'll shoot you", to a road leading to Llanishen church when they turned off into a covert. As the poachers crossed a gate, one of the keepers attempted to get the gun off Bryant. Another gun discharged and wounded David Davies whose job was to feed the dogs and he cried "I've been shot" which eventually caused his death. There was an element of doubt about the firing of the gun, whether it was a hand or a stick being the cause of the discharge, but the result was fatal".

John Emanuel, the landlord of the Church Inn in evidence stated that he saw three pheasants in the possession of Daniel Davies and two with William Hill. After the summing up, the jury returned a not guilty verdict as it appeared to be an accident. However, the following week they faced another trial, of - having with other evil disposed persons and armed with guns, bludgeons or certain offensive weapons, unlawfully entered certain enclosed lands. The men were found guilty, with Hill and Lewis being sentenced to six months hard labour and Moses Bryant sentenced to one month hard labour after Mr Wyndham Lewis pleaded merciful consideration on the grounds of previous good character.

In the same year, at Llandaff Petty Sessions, a Thomas Ford was committed for three months for trespassing in search of game on Wyndham Lewis' land after a previous warning. This makes an interesting comparison of crime punishment to modern times.

At the opening of the nineteenth century Cardiff was still a small market town with a population of under two thousand, surrounded by hamlets and small villages largely of agricultural communities. With the development of the docks by the Second Marquess of Bute in the middle of the century the population increased rapidly, rising from 18,355 in 1851 to almost 40,000 in 1871. In 1875 the town's boundaries were enlarged to include the parishes of Canton and Grangetown to the west and Splott and Roath to the east.

Llanishen remained intact as a rural parish taking in some of the present districts of Thornhill, Lisvane, and Cyncoed. It extended southwards from Graig Llanishen to reach the Cardiff boundary four miles away at Fair Oak. It retained its independence for almost fifty years until 1922 when further expansion took place and the surrounding districts of Llandaff, Whitchurch and Llanishen were incorporated into what was by now the City of Cardiff.



CHAPTER 2

THE VILLAGE

Before Roath Park was opened in 1894 the route from Cardiff to Llanishen was up to Allensbank Road, with the Nant Lecky bog down on the right hand side and as one neared Heathwood Road, the kennels belonging to the Heath Estate on the left. Going under the railway viaduct, on the right hand side was the works of the Duffryn and Llanishen Brick, Tile, Sanitary Pipe and Terracotta Company with its clay pit extending up to Celyn Farm and nearly down to Duffryn Farm. There was another pit on the other side of the road parallel to Fidas Road.

The Cardiff Argus of the 5th June 1890 describes the works: "The clay used here (about 100 tons per day) is obtained from a large pit (drained by a powerful steam pump) already 36 feet deep and proved to 30 feet lower. From this pit it is hauled up a gantry about 200 feet long to a large clay mill and the tram is made to automatically tip its load. After going through this mill the clay is "tempered" or mixed with water and then passed through a Whitehead's horizontal brick machine capable of turning out 25,000 bricks daily. The bricks, cut off by wire, are then stored until loaded onto one of three downdraught kilns for burning. The output of the kiln is about 100,000 per week and it is of these bricks that the Rhondda Sewer is made, as well as other drainage and engineering works throughout the country. Besides common bricks, many other kinds are made here such as hand pressed and moulded bricks but what was the most interesting feature of these works was undoubtedly the terra-cotta department.

The terra-cotta goods, which for the most part are of a very artistic design from architects drawings, are moulded and placed in a muffled kiln which is entered by a door or wicket, loaded and then the entry bricked up. The peculiarity is that the fire cannot touch the clay as it is separated by a wall through which the heat penetrates and 'burns' the clay".

Just before the boundary of Rhyd-llydan clay pit and the brickworks cottage, the left hand turning leads into Fidas Road or one can carry straight on up Rhyd-y-penau Road or turn down the lane to Celyn Farm. Carrying on up Rhyd-y-penau Road the lane on the left leads to Rhyd-y-penau farm whilst further on it passes Rhyd-y-Bluen Farm and Deri Du Farm.

Retracing our steps down the road to the junction with Fidas Road and proceeding up the tree-lined road until the first cottage on the right, Greenway Cottage and Fidas Farm appear, whilst on the left is the railway archway to allow cattle access to the grazing fields on the western side of the rail bank. Just below the fields was Crystal Covert with a summer house for the owners of the Heath Estate.

Behind Fidas Farm are the reservoirs. The first (Lisvane) of nineteen acres was completed in 1869 by a private company with water held back from the Nant Fawr, Nant Ty Draw, Nant y Felin and Nant Glandulas. The private company was bought out by Cardiff Corporation who then constructed Llanishen reservoir of sixty acres, starting in 1882. This development resulted from the Public Health Act of 1848 which did not insist on improvements of sanitation but only made recommendations.

As the cost of implementing the improvements would increase rates the recommendations were opposed by the Bute Family who were the effectual ruling body on the council. However, the Butes were faced with opposition through the increased numbers of council representatives who wanted a public enquiry into the state of public health in Cardiff. In addition a visit by the Board of Health Inspector resulted in the issue of a damning report on a cholera epidemic, which was exacerbated by the arrival of large numbers of Irish “ballast immigrants”. These immigrants had free passage to act as ballast and were endeavouring to find work following the potato famine. These now desperate people lived in appalling conditions without reasonable sanitation and with, under these conditions, a very high infant mortality rate.

The background to these events involved a private company securing Parliamentary sanction to construct works to supply water to “the whole of the town and port of Cardiff and places within and adjoining to such town in the county of Glamorgan.” However, the water demand had increased and the necessary investment had also increased so Parliament was again approached by the company in 1853 resulting in Royal Assent given to repealing the Cardiff Waterworks Act of 1850 and granting further powers. This still did not keep up with the demand and it was necessary for the company to obtain Parliamentary Authority in 1860 for a gravitation scheme at Lisvane with a storage reservoir and filter beds fed by intakes from the four previously mentioned brooks.

In 1875 Cardiff Corporation obtained statutory authority to purchase the Water Undertaking of the company. After much political and financial negotiation the Corporation eventually took over constructing the Llanishen Reservoir which was fortuitous as, in 1887, there was a severe drought and only fourteen days supply was stored at one period.

Greenway Cottage was a two up-two down white, slate roofed, typical country tied cottage and very similar to the still existing Bridge Cottage adjacent to the garage at the top of Fidlas Road. In 1920 the cottage was demolished to allow the building of Fidlas Avenue as the garden extended down to Rhyd-y-Penau crossroads

The name of Fidlas Road has been difficult to interpret but the most sensible explanation has come from the Cardiff Archaeological Society which is as follows. In volume III of the Cardiff Records, Vidlas is mentioned as property in possession of William Lewis of the Fan, Caerphilly but it is a strange point that there is no “V” in the Welsh alphabet and that Vidlas was spelt with an “F” later on, but “the Fan”, Caerphilly is nowadays referred to as “the Van”. However in 1884 on the Ordnance Survey maps is marked “Fidlas Farm” taking its name from Heol-Fid-las which, as local tracks took their name from the farm, must have been a defined boundary or hedge. The Welsh “bid” means a “lopped” or “quickest hedge” which undergoing mutation after the definite article becomes “y fid” and the local “glas” (blue) is also mutated to “las”, thus “Heol Fidlas”.

At the top of Fidlas Road, facing south and alongside the railway was the next dwelling called Bridge Cottage, still there today and occupied by Miss Bassett, but tucked away between Yapps Garage and the railway embankment, it remains with little external change over the years. This lovely white cottage is largely unnoticed being shielded by trees, and remains a relic of old Llanishen.

Through the single railway arch and upwards on Fidlas Road with the market garden and grazing land on the left leading down to Crystal Covert with fields and a couple of cottages on the right hand side up to Station Road junction. Up the road were a couple of houses and the Vicarage,

now built on and aptly named Vicarage Close. Then on to Mill Farm, Llanishen Mill and Ty Llwyd Farm. Going back to Fidlus Road junction and down into the village was the blacksmith's forge, then the church with the National School alongside with the Church Inn opposite. Between the Inn and Caerphilly crossroads was Ty Glas Farm and Coed Cochwyn woods on the right hand side. Heol Hir was a rough track leading to Llanishen Fawr Farm. On the parallel route from Caerphilly crossroads up Thornhill was Ton Ysgubor on the left and then Ysguborwen farm up to the Parc and Pentre Gwilym with tracks leading to Coed Tir Hwnt, Llwyn-crwn Fawr and Coediforbychan Farms.

With the advent of the train, a change occurred in the village starting in the main street. The first house next to the police station, Station Road, called Boscobel, has had many interesting owners over the past years. A feature of the house worth noting is the architectural design on the chimneys. At the turn of the century it was occupied by Lt. Colonel Frank Hill Gaskell, the second son of Joseph Gaskell, the chairman of Hancock's Brewery, and his name is to be seen on many memorials including those at St. Isan, St. John, Llandaff Cathedral School, Malvern College and University College, Cardiff and after serving in the South African War he resumed his studies of law becoming a solicitor in Cardiff in 1902 and was called to the bar practising as a barrister on the South Wales circuit.

At the outbreak of the First World War, he joined the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion of the Welsh Regiment as a Lieutenant and went overseas with a draft from Cardiff. After a few days in the Front Line he was shot in the jaw and invalided home. During this time the "16th Cardiff City Battalion" was raised and Frank Gaskell successfully recruited the necessary personnel to bring it to strength.

Shortly after proceeding for the second time on active service, the now Lt. Col Gaskell broke his leg in a riding accident and was invalided home for the second time, rejoining his battalion about three months later. On the night of 16th May, 1916, he went out to visit some sentries, when he was hit by a bullet which struck his ammunition pouch causing an explosion. This wounded him so badly that he died soon afterwards and was buried in Merville Communal Cemetery, France. He left a widow, Violet, and three children who continued to live in Boscobel until the middle of the 1930's, when it became occupied by a Mrs Knight, whose daughter June achieved fame as a swimmer. At seventeen years of age she completed the swim across the Firth of Clyde from Dunoon to Gourrock in 1950 but later failed when attempting to swim the Bristol Channel when rough sea forced her to retire after completing about five miles. She was successful however when attempting the 102 mile length of Lake Windermere the following year.

Several houses in Station Road lost family in the First World War among them Redcote losing a son, Capt. L.A.P. Harris and Edcombe losing another in 2nd. Lt. J.H. England. They are remembered on the memorial in St. Isan's, whilst other houses had occupants remembered for different reasons. Such a house was The Hollies. The occupier, T.H. Ensor was a solicitor who wrote to the Western Mail and the result was a legal definition for libel being established. The letter was directed at the late John Batchelor (a former mayor of Cardiff whose statue stands on the Hayes in Cardiff city centre) calling him "traitor leaving a list of creditors etc." The editor and part proprietor Mr. Lascelles Carr published it defiling Batchelor. Both he and Ensor were prosecuted for libel. Quoting the paper for 11th February 1887 – "The great libel case in which Ensor and Carr were charged with publishing a malicious libel on the late John Batchelor was

heard yesterday before Mr. Justice Stephens in the Nisi Prius court at Cardiff. In the case against Mr. Ensor and at the conclusion of the evidence, Mr. Bowen Rowlands Q.C. M.P. defending, objected firstly, that an indictment for libel on a dead man could not lie and secondly, that some of the counts of the indictment were bad as they did not allege an intent but only a tendency to create a breach of the peace”.

The learned judge delivered an elaborate judgement in which he broadly stated that to libel the dead was not an offence known to our law and following his direction the jury returned a verdict of acquitted. Mr. Carr was similarly acquitted. It became a famous case, as the judge proclaimed, “the dead have no rights and suffer no wrongs”, and that libel only applied to the living.

Adjoining the railway line and opposite the former booking office is the Court School which in 1882 was the home of the Roman Catholic bishop. The Marquis of Bute had converted to the Catholic faith and in 1880 placed a parcel of land at the disposal of the Bishop of Newport and Menevia following the transfer of his see from Newport to Cardiff. Bishop John Edward Hedley was born in Morpeth, Northumberland, entered the famous Ampleforth College and then the Benedictine Order taking the monastic name of Cuthbert and eventually taking up residence at the newly built Court in 1882.

Bishop Hedley was a great supporter of education in his see having encouraged the building of Catholic schools but his main influence was in establishing Papal permission for Catholic students to attend universities and the 1890's Catholic halls of residence were opened at Oxford and Cambridge through his efforts. His private chapel can be seen in the right hand corner of the Court today and, when he died in 1915, his vault in Cathays cemetery was paid for by the Vicar General and Rectors of St. David, St. Peter and St. Mary churches.

Norfolk House was a private school on Station Road and in the 1920's had a headmistress by the name of Miss Hagan. It started as Llanishen Preparatory School and was held in the hall at the rear of the Baptist Church on Fidas Road afterwards moving to Station Road. One pupil in particular became well known in the film world as a director of a film entitled “Jagged Edge” and another called “Return of the Jedi”. His name was Richard Marquand and his father was M.P for Cardiff East, eventually becoming Minister of Health in the post war Labour Government. Sadly, when at the peak of his career, Richard Marquand suffered a fatal stroke in 1987 at the age of 49.

The local medical practitioner was a Scotsman by the name of Dr Shiach who visited his patients on horseback and lived in Elgin House, whilst a few doors away in Newcroft lived another medical man named Dr. J.C. Gilchrist, who was a tuberculosis authority and also a keen music lover. A friend of his who often visited was Eugene Goossens a distinguished orchestral conductor and the founder of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. One morning whilst on his round Stan Davies the postman was doing his imitation of a cuckoo only to be suddenly encountered by the doctor who said, “That was an excellent imitation, Postman, but you were an octave lower”.

Further up Station Road at 103 was College Hall, a hostel for domestic science students and it is worth noting that the station at the top was the first of the company's stations to warrant the installation of acetylene lighting as it had a resident station master, ticket collector and clerk and its own toilets.

Retracing our steps down to the village, next to the Church Inn was a plant nursery and the nursery house, whilst there were no other buildings to Caerphilly Road except for Blue House on the right hand side which was occupied by Mr. Barry Wride who also farmed the land now known as the Glider Field. The Wrides were well known farmers in Llanishen for over a century.

Coming back to the village, at the bottom of Heol Hir was the Church School, St. Isan's and the blacksmith's forge and house. The slowly increasing population brought about changes in shops and transport starting with meat being slaughtered and sold behind the Church Inn. In 1900 a general provision shop opened in the front room of Workman's in Fidlas Road, a wet fish shop a few doors down from the Baptist Chapel with, just above, a National Provincial Bank on one side and William's Store across the road just above the chapel.

At one period, Llanishen was blessed with the presence of representatives of two police forces and both were resident in Fidlas Road. This occurred during the integration of Llanishen into Cardiff Council when one policeman from the County and one from the City Constabulary shared responsibility for law and order in the village. However, the first police and gaolhouse is on the other side of Fidlas Road in the White Cottage.

Schooling started in the village when Mary Lewis of New House gave by covenant £23 per annum for the purpose of "Teaching and apprenticing poor children in the Parishes of Llanishen and Lisvane". A portion of this was applied in 1850 for teaching about thirty pupils but education really started when the Church School was built in 1867 and continued until it closed in 1965 when it was turned into the Church Hall.

CHAPTER 3

RAILWAYS IN THE PARISH OF LLANISHEN **(by F W Davies)**

The Taff Vale Railway Bill received parliamentary consent in 1836 and building work began on the pioneer railway of South Wales. The Glamorgan Parish of Llanishen, three miles north east of Cardiff comprising some three thousand and fifty acres of farm and woodland stretching south from Caerphilly mountain to the coastal plain, was quite unaffected by this great engineering project. Its small population, three hundred or so souls, was described in a contemporary census as “engaged in agriculture”. The inhabitants of the twenty odd farms of the parish and the tiny cottages that clustered around the ancient church at a mid-parish crossroad went about their daily tasks much as their forbears had since Norman times.

Throughout south-east Wales and especially on the coastal plain the effects of a dynamic changing economy based on mineral products was soon to affect the most rural of districts. Through iron smelting on the uplands of north Glamorgan, the later widespread exploitation of the newly discovered coal of the south Wales valleys and their rapidly expanding populations revealed a need for more efficient transport links between the Glamorgan hinterland and the burgeoning ports of the Bristol Channel. Railways became of paramount importance in the furtherance of the nineteenth century South Wales mineral economy.

Between 1871 and 1889, three such railways, in response to the demands of the new economy, emerged into the lands of the Llanishen parish. Two of them, the Rhymney and the Cardiff Railway survive to this day, one radically shortened. The third, the Roath branch of the Taff Vale Railway is disused, its track bed, where it has not been redeveloped, overgrown with thorn and briar. All three railways were considered to be important links in each of their company’s network and business fortune, their primary function to convey coal to Cardiff docks.

Llanishen’s foremost railway was undoubtedly that of the Rhymney Railway Company, founded in 1854 and promoted, in part by the trustees of the Second Marquis of Bute, to develop the mineral resources of the valley. The railway began at the town of Rhymney and made its way south with the intention of becoming a tributary branch of the Taff Vale Railway with a junction at Nelson/Llancaich in Mid-Glamorgan. This plan was rejected by Parliament and the company proceeded to construct a further nine miles of track down its valley to Caerphilly and Nantgarw where, unable to reach Cardiff on its own rails, it was given parliamentary permission to exercise ‘running rights’ over the Taff Vale Railway’s main line to Cardiff. ‘Running rights’ over a section of another company’s railway meant paying for the privilege. The Rhymney Railway had to pay for every train hauled in either direction over the section from Taff’s Well to Crockherbtown, Cardiff. Here the Rhymney had constructed a small branch line from Crockherbtown to Adams Street where a passenger station was built, while the line proceeded on to the new East Bute Dock where the company was to enjoy preferential treatment in its dealings with the Bute Trustees.

One of the Trustees, John Boyle, was also Chairman of the Rhymney Railway, and his attempts in the 1850’s to exclude the Taff Vale Railway from the East Bute Dock erupted in severe friction between the two companies. The Taff Vale, the region’s premier railway, expected to be granted

access to this new, larger, deeper dock which would attract bigger vessels necessary for

international trade, and it was not prepared to allow the Rhymney 'upstart' to monopolise this valuable business.

Thus was born the Taff Vale Railway's Penarth Dock plan and also the imposed delays and increased coal tonnage charges which that company inflicted on the Rhymney's coal trains waiting at Taff's Well. In a counter move, the Rhymney projected a direct line through Caerphilly mountain and hence to the East Dock. This plan was immediately matched by the Taff Vale's 'Cardiff-Caerphilly Railway', but neither plan won parliamentary support.

With the advent of Penarth Dock and Harbour Railway in 1856, a thinly veiled Taff Vale scheme, greater access to the East Bute Dock was granted by the Trustees to the pioneer railway, who now promptly dropped their opposition to Rhymney's 'direct line'. Parliamentary permission was granted and work began immediately on the new line. Great changes were now to affect the Parish of Llanishen.

The Bill granted the company powers to raise £210,000 of fresh capital to build the 'direct line' to the docks. The new railway left the original main line at Caerphilly North Junction, passing west to east through the present Caerphilly station, then south through a one and a half mile tunnel on a falling gradient of 1:122 and descended on a huge embankment of 1:80 gradient along the length of Llanishen Parish into the district of Cathays to join the company's East Dock branch line of 1857 at Crockherbtown Junction, a distance of seven and three quarter miles. Opened to traffic on the 1st April 1871, the Adams Street station was relegated to a 'goods only' function, while a new passenger terminal, 'The Parade Station', opened on the north side of Queen Street.

The 'direct line' took seven years to construct and encountered some severe engineering problems, the greatest being the fresh water spring found inside Caerphilly mountain during tunnel construction. The spring, presently drawing sixty million gallons of water from the tunnel each year, completely flooded the tunnel workings and brought all work to a halt for some years. This source of fresh water was later utilised by the railway at its 'Cherry Orchard' sidings in Llanishen which became an important wagon repair depot. Further supplies of water could be taken on here by hard pressed mineral trains negotiating the long 1:80 Llanishen bank, especially those trains carrying imported Spanish iron ore to the Dowlais Works' furnace top sidings which frequently required two and even three locomotives to negotiate the fearsome inclines found in the Taff-Bargoed Valley. The incline to the south of Cwmbargoed was half a mile of 1:35, in a series of gradients that took the railway from 450 to over 1250 feet above sea level in the space of five miles.

The 'direct line' was built with the help of hundreds of 'navvies' who laboured to build embankments, tunnel and bridges, which was hard, dangerous work and a number of them were killed in its construction, and buried in the church yard of St Isan's. Their encampments of rough tents and huts were dotted along the length of the line. One such encampment is noted in the 1871 Census of Population and is shown in the enumerator's handbook as 'tunnel huts'.

The railway embankment, a major feature in the southern half of the parish sheared through existing farmland reducing acreages. The embankment archway in Fidlas Road indicates how access to isolated fields was maintained. Inevitably, some farmland was blighted by railway construction and taken up for house building purposes at a later date.

Surprisingly, though passenger rail services to and from Llanishen began immediately the 'direct

line' opened in 1871, the parish singularly failed to attract any new residents for another twenty years. This must reflect the improved social and sanitary conditions that existed within Cardiff during this period. The census of 1891 records the first new dwellings close to the railway in Station Road, their owners being the principals or senior managers of Cardiff's wealth of coal and shipping firms. Thereafter, each census shows a steady increase in Llanishen's population as former city dwellers realised their dream of the 'country estate', but depended on the railway in order to 'commute' each day to their work in the city.

Llanishen's railway is still an important mineral line supplying one and a half million tons of coal per year carried by its mineral 'merry-go-round' trains that ply each week between Cwmbargoed and Aberthaw. Some coal is also taken to Avonmouth via the Severn Tunnel. One of the most prosperous of the South Wales railways, the Rhymney is now a mere shadow of its former self. It lost its name in 1921 when it became, with the Taff Vale and the Barry Railway, a constituent member of the Great Western Railway. At much the same time, coal production fell as the battle with fuel oil was lost. Since 1945, substantial reductions have occurred in passenger travel as mass personal transport has become the main method of commuting between home and work. However, growing road traffic congestion upon city and suburban roads may yet convince the traveller that the railway offers a more efficient and logical alternative.

The second railway appeared at the extreme southern edge of the parish in 1883 and was known as the Roath Branch of the Taff Vale Railway. This was born out of the chaotic congestion of coal trains trying to enter Cardiff Docks (a twelve mile journey from Pontypridd to the East Dock could take up to eight hours to complete) and the need for another approach to the new and bigger Roath Dock, then under construction on the moors to the east of the existing dock land. The new branch line costing £130,000 left the main line at Llandaff, skirted the east side of Cardiff just inside the parish boundary which was the tiny Nant Wedal stream and curved back in a south westerly direction to connect with the Bute Docks railway serving the new Roath and the later Alexandra Dock. The line was completed and opened on 23rd April 1888 as a freight railway for coal traffic largely but incorporating more general goods as the coal trade diminished after the Great War.

Despite the rundown of Cardiff Docks as a coal exporting port, the Roath Branch became much used by mineral trains leaving the Principality, it being a preferred 'short-cut' to the main line rather than the 'Penarth Curves'. Former British Rail driver, Mr Alan Morgan, who now lives in Fishguard Close, fired or drove many of the mineral trains rostered to run from the Radyr marshalling yards along the Roath Branch. "We took coke to Llanwern Steelworks", said Alan, "or coal to the Severn Tunnel Junction or 'down the hole' (the Severn Tunnel) to Didcot Power Station." Some days the job would be to take a '46 class' (a small tank engine) to make goods deliveries to the large business concerns near the Goods Depot siding off the main branch near Newport Road. 'Saxa Salt' was a frequent user of the line and quite large amounts of timber were also delivered to a nearby works.

By the mid sixties, the Roath Branch had reached the end of its life and was closed, to be swept away by the major road reconstruction that occurred at the North Road/Western Avenue junction. The new Eastern Avenue roadways covered all the original track bed that lay in Parish lands, but nearby certain features of the railway remain. The track bed east of Roath Park at the rear of Ty Draw Road is discernible among the advancing scrub land, but the footbridge opposite the Park's bowling greens remains, as do most of the inimitable concrete fence posts that line its edge, to remind us of what was once a thriving railway.

Llanishen's third railway emerged from what was considered by its proposers to be an excellent solution to the nagging problem of poor interest return from inherently high levels of capitalisation by the Bute Dock Company. Acquiring a railway had long been a frustrated dream of the earlier Bute Trustees. The company owned valuable coal interests in the Rhondda but had to pay the Taff Vale Railway to carry its coal to the docks. A railway owning dock would cut freight costs, improve the vital cash returns and probably attract additional revenue from other sources.

By a Parliamentary Act of 1897, the Bute Dock Company changed its name to the Cardiff Railway Company and was granted 'running rights' over neighbouring railways, mainly the Rhymney, and permission to construct some twelve miles of new line between their docks and other railway networks.

The most important of these new railways, and the only one ever to be built, began on parish land at Heath Junction and travelled west through Birchgrove, Rhiwbina and Whitchurch, turning north to run parallel with the River Taff through Tongwynlais, Taff's Well and Nantgarw to seek a junction with the Taff Vale Railway's main line at Rhydyfelin just south of Treforest.

Naturally, this proposed junction was hotly contested by the Taff Vale who saw the newcomer as a deadly rival anxious to 'cream off' valuable revenue earning traffic upon which Taff Vale profits depended. Much litigation by both parties resulted in a stalemate over the junction, except temporarily on the birthday of the Marquis of Bute, 15 May 1909, when a ceremonial coal train of twelve loaded wagons from the Bute Colliery, Treherbert and with his lordship on the footplate made the inaugural journey down the new line to his docks.

The local newspapers made much of the event, but the jubilation in Cardiff was short lived. Opposition from powerful interest in both Newport and Barry proved too great and led to a Parliamentary bill's rejection on the 27th August 1909. In October the temporary junction was removed and never reinstated. Thus Cardiff Railway's mineral line from Heath Junction to Rhydyfelin, said to have 'started nowhere and ended in a field', lost its 'raison d'être' and became overnight a huge financial disaster for the Cardiff Railway Company.

To obtain some revenue from the new railway, it was used for passenger and goods traffic from Rhydyfelin to the Parade Station in Queen Street. In 1932, now in Great Western ownership together with the docks, it was decided to close all passenger services north of Coryton because of the economic depression in South Wales. Commuter traffic from Coryton and the intervening halts to Heath Halt Junction remained viable during the 1930s and Heath Halt's platforms were even extended to take five coach trains.

Mr Charles Reece formerly of Fidlus Road, had an enduring memory of travelling on one of Cardiff Railway's steam propelled carriages which were used exclusively for all passenger services until 1919. These trains although powered by steam resembled the modern diesel units. "In summer time", said Mr Reece "the Sunday school treat would be a ride on the train from Whitchurch to the Heath, where they would get off and walk to the Glider field, play games and have a picnic. It was a wonderful day out."

All that presently remains of the railway upon which the Marquis and his friends pinned such high hopes is one single line section of about three miles from Heath Halt Low Level to Coryton. Heath junction was radically altered in 1985 and the small exchange sidings below it were

removed and the land sold for residential building, some of which may be viewed from Heath Halt Road. Today, the line is part of the Cardiff Valleys Operating Unit and as the 'City Line' runs from Coryton to Radyr, via the major city stations of Queen Street and Central. Stations en route such as Ninian Park were modernised, while new stations appeared at Fairwater and Danescourt to serve new western suburbs, while on parish land at Ty Glas between Heath Halt and Birchgrove a new station was built to serve Llanishen's growing business estate. It was hoped to revitalise rail travel in these areas with a half hourly service throughout the day.

So much for the past history of Llanishen's railways. What about the present and, more importantly, the immediate future. Much of what follows has been gleaned from "Capital Future for Valleys Operation" by Deryck Lewis in an article for 'Rail', November 1994.

Presently the two remaining rail networks in the Parish of Llanishen form part of the successful and efficient Cardiff Valleys Operating Unit (CVOU) which includes Treherbert, Aberdare, Merthyr, Penarth and Barry routes into the city, some eighty five miles of track carrying eighteen to twenty thousand persons daily. The CVOU is financially successful and track additions such as the Hirwaun extensions are being considered. Our railway, the Rhymney Valley section, has been line singled between Bargoed and Rhymney to reduce track costs, but passenger commitment to this route is considered satisfactory particularly at peak periods. On the other hand, the Coryton to Radyr 'City Line' is the only part of the CVOU which is giving cause for concern with scheduled train services not covering their fuel costs. This uneconomic state has resulted in the half-hourly service being cut to one train per hour, while a publicity campaign to stimulate passenger custom on this heavily populated district line is underway.

Privatisation has taken place and despite frequent political assurances, the future of rail services is unclear. The CVOU which concerns the rail commuters of Llanishen and South Wales is optimistic, though its Director of Operations knows that the more efficient his network appears, the more it increases the likelihood of a successful 'takeover' bid from one of the bigger rail operators. This would stifle a local management/employee takeover from British Rail, currently considered to be the better option for the immediate future of local rail services.

The growing and serious road congestion within the city and along its arterial road network at peak periods and together with Cardiff City Council's policy of high parking fees within the inner city limits, should do much to confirm an active future for the railways in the parish of Llanishen.

CHAPTER 4

THE SCOUT AND GUIDE MOVEMENT IN LLANISHEN

At the end of the twentieth century when we have so many ways of spending our leisure time – going to centres of entertainment, to pubs, to sporting venues, or just for a drive in the country – it is important to remember that this is a fairly recent state of affairs. Llanishen in the past was largely a rural community and what limited spare time our forefathers had, together with poor transport facilities, was inevitably spent in the village where it was centred on activities in the churches and chapels. Scouting and guiding, in particular, provided an important social background for youngsters growing up in the village.

1st Llanishen Guides

Scouting started in Llanishen in 1914 with the formation of the 1st Llanishen Guide Company. This was closely followed by the Boy Scout Troop and Wolf Cub Pack at Llanishen Baptist Church which continued until 1960 when the Scout Hall in Tegfan Close was opened.

The Guides were ridiculed at first by being called “Girl Sprouts” and “England’s last hope”. However the novelty soon wore off and they were accepted as part of village life.

They met twice a week - on Wednesday evenings in the clubroom, a large functional loft generously provided by Miss Dorothy Lewis’s father over his garage, and also on Saturday afternoons which were generally spent out of doors. Doing “good turns” was taken very seriously. With no bus service in the village, heavily laden farmer’s wives returning by train often had a long walk to their cottages, so they were met and helped with their loads.

Waste paper was collected and sold for helping toward providing a YMCA hut for the troops in France, resulting in the presentation of a framed certificate signed by the Chief Scout in recognition of their efforts.

The first camp was held in 1918 using a bell tent and a small “bivvy” acting as a store tent. The company was registered in November 1919 with Dorothy Lewis as Captain. The Brownies or “Rosebuds” as they were then called were also registered at this time.

1st Llanishen Scouts

The 1st Llanishen Boy Scout Troop was led by Percy Hunt as Scoutmaster whilst Gertrude Humphries was the Wolf Cub Leader.

There are many people who were involved in the early days, too numerous to mention all of them, but Florence Turner is well remembered as a Leader by one now very grown up Cub!

Huxley Turner took over the Scout Troop after Percy Hunt and L. Bailey served from 1926 to 1928. When he left Llanishen Mervyn Clarke took over as Scoutmaster with Archie Clarke and Arthur Brewer as ASMs. Records show that the first warrant was issued to Mervyn in June 1930. Desperately short of funds, it was decided to hold a fete and to the pleasant surprise of everyone, over £100 was raised, which was unheard of in those days!

There were separate units until the introduction in 1931 of the Scout Group system which has continued to the present time. The Group grew in strength and numbers with many leaders. During World War II most of the leaders joined the various fighting services but the boys continued to meet despite blackout and other restrictions. The senior boys acted as leaders.

At that time there was a store of army blankets kept at the Baptist Church for emergencies. Thankfully they were not needed but to put them to good use, they were pinned together to make curtains and backcloths for the Parents Evening entertainments by the boys!

These entertainments were the forerunners of the excellent gang shows at the Melbourne Hall which in those days had a stage. The 2nd Llanishen Guides combined eventually with the Scouts and from these shows much talent was discovered. One young Patrol Leader, Alan Stillwell, known to all as "Sticky", went on to make acting his career. He played many a panto dame and did many tours as entertainment officer on cruise liners, including the QE2.

Costumes, scenery and props were made from odds and ends including blackout material, for everything in those days was rationed. There was much fun but also the money raised from these concerts was given to help purchase ambulances, badly needed to replace the bomb damaged ones.

After the war years Mervyn Clarke resumed as GSM, having been approached to do so, and was more than pleased by the appointment of an old Patrol Leader, Norman Maskell as Scoutmaster. Many other Patrol Leaders moved up through the ranks to be ASM on reaching the required age, including Sticky, Gaff (Tony Gaffney), Trevor Whatley and Wilf Henwood.

At this stage the opening up of the Fishguard Road estate contributed to a massive increase in numbers. 1st Llanishen Group and especially the Parents Association worked hard to raise money to eventually build their own headquarters and in 1960 their dream came true with their hall in Tegfan Close. With the growth of population in different areas of Llanishen, the spirit that prompted the early activities in both Scouting and Guiding still remains very much alive.

There are now Brownies at St Brigids Roman Catholic Church in south Llanishen, at the United Reform Church in north Llanishen and also at Thornhill. There are also Beavers, who then progress through to Cubs, Scouts and Venture Scouts.

2nd Llanishen Guides

The 2nd Llanishen Guide Company was formed in 1931 and met at the Baptist Church. The first Captain was Miss Muriel Fooks, later to become Mrs Cadenne.

The 2nd Llanishen Brownies were formed in 1930. Their first Brown Owl was Miss Dorothy Robinson who became Mrs D. Spencer. During the 2nd World War guiding also continued, despite the blackout and other restrictions such as no heating in the hall and lack of equipment. Guides collected jam jars, aluminium pots and pans and other commodities for the war effort. The Trefoil Guild met monthly at the Baptist Church. They were an association of ex-girl guides from all groups.

Llanishen & Lisvane Parish Church Group

Alongside the 1st Llanishen, the only other scouting group which exists in the area today is Llanishen and Lisvane Parish Church Group which was formed in 1931. Both of these two big

groups continue to help support and train boys to the present day.

“Llan and Lis” as they are known used to meet in a hall beside the old vicarage under the leadership of Bryn Hancock. They later had their own headquarters in the Court Field, Melbourne Road. We can recall some early scouting memories from Bryn Hancock, recorded in 1990. *“The vicarage room was the place where the Girls Friendly Society and the Boys Club were originally held. The main purpose of this room was for the vicar’s use for his vestry meetings and parochial church councils, etc. but ultimately it became part of village life where it was used for the benefit of all. We had a curate by the name of Stan Fricker who used to be an electrician’s tester before he entered the ministry. As a curate he lived in the bungalow next to the Church Cottages on Heol Hir, and he and I became very friendly. There was not a lot for the average boy to do and so I discussed this with Mr Fricker. I discovered that he was anxious to get a group going within the Church so we set ourselves a task. He asked me to present him with a list and we then had a meeting with the vicar. After quite a lot of debate and registering through the Scout headquarters we then had a meeting to discuss the uniform, i.e. the colour and type and most importantly the title of the troop.*

Being too young to hold a warrant I was made a Patrol Leader and with my contacts with the 1st and 14th Lord Mayor’s Own I was able to borrow a chap who acted as Assistant Scoutmaster named Trevor C Phillips. He took the part until I was old enough to get the Assistant Scoutmasters warrant after which I got the first Scoutmasters warrant in the group. The first group that I took was to Saundersfoot with 28 to 30 boys. I enlisted Harold Morgan to help me as he was qualified in ambulance work at the time. He later went on to become our Group Scoutmaster.

One more thing I would like to mention is that in 1933 we held a Scout and Guide Service in Llanishen Church, organised by our troop for the whole of East Glamorgan District, including the Girl Guides. 350 people including the Lord Bishop of Llandaff mustering on Station Bridge paraded down through the village. A while later I left to join the army and when I got married in 1939 I was presented with a bronze statuette of a boy scout in the Baden Powell uniform which will never be bought or worn again.”

CHAPTER 5

RELIGIOUS GROWTH IN LLANISHEN

St Isan's

The parish church is a landmark indicating the Christian presence in this area, and going back many centuries as testified by the list of incumbents found on a board inside the church near the west door which starts with ST. ISAN 537 A.D. The present site has been raised on earlier foundations and records show that a church probably existed since the middle of the 12th century with two recorded enlargements in 1872 and 1908 which also reflect the growth in population. As part of the Norman parochial system, it was mentioned in the Agreement of 1126 following a dispute between the Bishop of Llandaff and Robert the Consul, Lord of Cardiff regarding the rights to local woodlands. The parish is also mentioned in a survey of lands of the Manor of Keynsham and Llystalybont in 1262 along with Lisvane. In the returns of Roger Panter, Surveyor of Tewkesbury Abbey in 1393, the tithe value of the parish is recorded. The growth of a typical agricultural village was small until the arrival of the railway service in the mid 1800's which resulted in an expansion of the church to 182 seats to meet the anticipated increase of parishioners. A further expansion took place some thirty years later to 428 seats.

However, in 1758 the parish church required refurbishment and a petition was sent by a churchwarden, Mr T Lewis, with the marks of six parishioners added, to the Bishop of Llandaff with similarities to the present day renovations. The unique wording is worth recording:-

To the Worshipful George Harris, Doctor of Laws, Vicar General and Principal Official of the Right Reverend Father in God, Richard, by Divine permission, Lord Bishop of Llandaff.

“We, the persons subscribing, the Minister, church warden and parishioners of the Parish of Llanishen in the County of Glamorgan and Diocese of Llandaff, do hereby testify that the seats, pews and the kneeling places in the south isle of the Parish Church of Llanishen aforesaid are old, much decayed and not fit and convenient for the parishioners to sit, stand and kneel in, to hear divine worship and sermons nor so decent as becomes the church or place where divine worship is celebrated. That the floor of the said isle being on earthen floor is becoming uneven by reason of frequent burials therein for many years past. That the font now standing in the said isle being an inconvenient place for same and that the pulpit is too much out of repair and that there is an absolute necessity of making a new pulpit and that the steeple and belfry are very much out of repair. We do therefore pray your Licence or Faculty to take down and remove the said old and decayed seats or pews and in the room thereof to make and erect new seats or pews in the said isle such as that be decent for the said church and parishioners and to settle and dispose of same by and with the consent of the Minister, Churchwarden and parishioners of the said Parish or the major part of them, at the proper expense of the parishioners of the said parish and to level and pave the floor of the said isle, to the remove the said font to a more convenient place - it being in the place where it now stands a hindrance to the laying down of the said new intended seats, and also to make a new pulpit and to fix the same in a more convenient place than where it now stands and to repair the steeple and belfry at the like expense.”

In witness whereof we have here unto set our hands the sixth day of September 1758.

Curator. Thos. Charles

Churchwarden T. Lewis

The lychgate is a replacement for the original which was removed and rebuilt following the damage caused by a traffic accident. It has been a custom for many years for local children to prevent the newly wedded couple from leaving the churchyard by tying the gates and not allowing them out until a forfeit was paid. Approaching the west door from the gate there is a plinth with an impressive modern cross erected as a memorial to the late vicar of the parish, Canon Leonard Dowse. Near this memorial is the base of an old preaching cross which is thought to be the one that John and Charles Wesley preached from on their parish visits. The side view of the church from Station Road has not much changed over the centuries and it is ironic that the railway, which was the basis for the biggest change in the parish, was also the cause of the death of two Scotsmen who were accidentally killed whilst building it and were buried in the second grave from the lychgate adjacent to the boundary wall. In 1868 three workers were buried and another three in 1869 during the construction of the railway tunnel to Caerphilly.

A vicarage was built in 1864 off Station Road for the parish priest, Rev. Thomas Rees known as the “bricks and mortar parson” because of the building works he initiated, including the present boundary wall. He was a complete contrast to his predecessor Benjamin Jones known as “the farmer parson” who had rented Velindre Farm from Wyndham Lewis of New House and appeared to prefer agriculture to religion by neglecting the buildings in the parish. Various financial benefits were also accrued by Thomas Rees unlike a predecessor of his in 1804 who was given £10 by the “Taylor and Middleton Benefaction for Poor Curates” to assist him with his eleven children whilst having an income of £21 per annum. Several hundred years before this, when Henry VIII embarked on the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the parish which then belonged to Tewkesbury Abbey, was sold to Sir Roger Keymes. The incumbent was a Morgan Gwyn who appeared to farm most of the parish land and was certainly no shrinking violet as, in 1558, he made a claim against Queen Mary in the Court of the Chamber for “the restitution of ornaments stolen from the church during the previous reign”.

The 1908 enlargement was on the north side of the church and today it is much the same excepting renovation due to the 1908 work. When the Church Council agreed to the proposal, it involved moving the grave of Wyndham Lewis as it would have been inside the church extension. However his widow Maud, later known as Lady Orr-Ewing, refused permission as she claimed to have paid £300 towards the previous enlargement with certain conditions. It was taken to the Consistory Court at Llandaff. There was a question over the £300 the widow had paid but the judgement was that “the right to the vault was not the right to the land”. Lady Orr-Ewing covered the expense of the body being moved to its present position and the large white cross erected over it near the north boundary. The extension went ahead at a cost of £2500 but had repercussions which, in 1998, required raising the sum of £100,000. The disturbance had caused the subsidence in the chancel and warping of the choir stalls requiring the floor to be dug up and re-surfaced.

The post 1939-1945 war boom in the parish population through the north estate development resulted in the building of St Faith’s to serve the dual purpose of social and religious need. This was later followed by Christ Church at Lake Road North in 1963 serving the southern end of the parish following the Roath Park development and south estate growth.

St Brigid and Christ the King

As a result of the demobilisation of members of the armed forces after the Second World War and the lack of house building during that period, many populated areas of Cardiff were

overcrowded. This necessitated the construction of new housing estates. A building policy was implemented and the North Llanishen estate was started in 1950 with an influx of occupants as building progressed including those of the Catholic faith. Problems were created as the Catholic population had come from a different environment lacking accustomed amenities. They were used to Catholic schools, Catholic churches etc., but now experienced no roads, no pavements and no street lighting with buses from Cardiff only reaching Llanishen village or Caerphilly crossroads. This remained the situation for a couple of years with the nearest place of worship being a large Nissen hut situated alongside the brook in the Crystals area. This was used for storage purposes on weekdays and cleared for Sunday services. The services were attended by the “wellie brigade” as the Catholic families would walk to St Brigid’s on a Sunday in their wellington boots through the building site, but it was the start of the establishment of a Catholic community.

The Archbishop of Cardiff, Dr McGrath decided to build Chapels of Ease on the main estates to serve a double purpose for use as a church and a community centre, with one on the corner of Templeton and Newborough Avenues. The new hall was to be started in 1954 and, not being a parish, the priests at St Brigid’s would attend to their spiritual needs.

In early March the Rev. Father John Crowe called a meeting in Heol Hir school of the Catholics in Llanishen, announcing that the hall would be ready early in 1955 and a committee was formed to organise the task of funding the furnishing of the church hall. A whist drive at 79 Templeton Avenue was arranged by Mrs Edie Thomas which proved so successful that a centre for storage and fund raising was established there. Materials were purchased with the money raised by raffles, whist drives, donations and gifts which the ladies transformed into vestments and all the necessities of a new church which was opened by Archbishop McGrath on April 4th 1955. The fund raising continued to repay the debt on the church as the hall was used as a local meeting place and community centre. In 1962 it became a parish with Father Dunne as the first parish priest, who was later followed by Father McCurdy. A boxing club had also been formed by Bernard Murphy under whose guidance it produced a Welsh Schoolboy Champion in Alan Davies. The development continued with a presbytery in Heol Hir and a school in Everest Avenue. The effort put into all this was acknowledged with Papal decorations, the Benemerenti Medal, being awarded to three of the congregation - Ted Andrews, and Mr & Mrs Thomas.

Meanwhile, the by now substantial congregation at the Crystals continued its fund raising resulting in the building of St Brigid’s Church. A curate, Father Dunne, from Christ the King, became parish priest and eventually became Canon with an offshoot church in Cyncoed, namely St Pauls.

In 1978 the ultimate goal was achieved with a new church being built with Father Walsh as the priest. A new Catholic school was erected in Everest Avenue which is already unable to meet the demand for places.

Baptist Church

Towards the latter part of the last century, the non-conformist movement had also gained momentum. Mr Allen Pearce opened a Sunday school for Baptists in the front room of his house, Rosebank, in Station Road in about 1889. This was followed a year or so later with a marquee for services on ground in Fidas Road. One windy night this was blown down and a more permanent wooden building with a corrugated metal roof was opened in 1892 which served for fifteen years. There were twenty-one members and three men, Messrs Ward, Waite and Parr,

gave their time and labour to its erection. At services the members gathered round an open stove for heating which had a pipe through the roof, oil lamps for lighting and they used a large zinc tank for baptism. The first recorded church meeting was on Friday 10th December 1897 with Mr Samuel Fisher JP, President of the Coal Trimmers Union in the chair, the secretary was Mr W Williams and treasurer, Mr Tom Williams of Fidlas Farm.

At the turn of the century a chapel building fund was established and on the 2nd November 1908, the new building was opened, designed by E Turner & Sons who had built the City Hall and Law Courts. It cost £600 more than the original estimate of £2000, but the extra was paid by the Turners. The church had been a branch of Tredegarville, called a "Mission Station", until independence came in September 1909 with its own Pastor, Rev CJ Norris at £2 per week. A gift of a pipe organ by Mr T Herbert Evans in 1918 meant structural alterations to the building which were carried out by J E Turner & Sons. In 1920 a church meeting approved the use of the school room as a kindergarten for Norfolk House school on Station Road. In 1928, gas lighting and manual organ blowing were superseded by the introduction of a complete electrical installation, thanks to the benefactor, Mr J Fooks.

Melbourne Road Methodist Church

Charles and John Wesley started the Methodist movement in London around 1729 and later travelled to Bristol where a base was established. John intended to visit Fonmon Castle, but missing the ferry he ended up in Newport. As he needed a guide for the rest of his journey, a youth going to Llanishen offered to take him along, where Wesley stayed and returned a year later. On his return he was met with objections from the local religious bodies who were against his use of their churches (this at a time when the breakaway groups from the established church were forming). He therefore preached at open air meetings near St Isan's, and reputedly at Blue House Farm. One Calvinist Methodist group did not agree with the teaching of Wesley. Wesley who was a Church of England clergyman had to give up his original idea of his movement being within the church. The group left the Church after petitioning the Bishop of Llandaff to allow them their own place of worship whilst remaining Anglican. Monies were raised to build the Century Chapel which cost £1700 in Melbourne Road. The foundation stone was laid in September 1900, hence the name of "Century", and it was completed in the following year with the hall being erected later in about 1926.

The hall has been used as a temporary school for Rhyd-y-penau school during the erection of permanent buildings and as an annexe for Norfolk House school and kindergarten.

Park End Presbyterian Church

This church began as a dream for a local person, Mrs Wall of Fidlas Avenue in which she saw a church standing on a piece of waste ground on the corner of Rhyd-y-penau Road. Convinced that she should take some action she approached the necessary people and it was as a result of this vision that Park End came to be built.

Negotiations began for the purchase of a site of about one third of an acre on the Bute estate at the corner of Rhyd-y-Penau crossroads. To this day a plaque commemorating the names of those who donated £25 each for the purchase of this freehold site is displayed. It was decided to erect a church hall which would serve as the church until such a time as finances would allow for the building of the church proper. Little was it envisaged that the hall would still be used in its original form forty years later. Fifteen tenders were received, the lowest of which amounting to £2,975 was accepted. Mr G F Jotham was appointed architect and so the building programme

went underway.

During this time records show that fifty church chairs were bought at five shillings and nine pence each and that great enthusiasm was aroused by the purchase of a two manual pedal organ with seat for the sum of £50. The Sunday school scholars were subsequently offered the coveted job of blowing it each Sunday for the princely sum of two shillings and six pence per month. In 1932 a pipe organ was installed and their efforts were no longer needed.

The pastorate was accepted by the Rev. A Wynne Thomas who was inducted into the charge of Park End in October 1926. His ministry was a short one, marred by ill health and at the end of 1927 he gave notice of his resignation.

Park End did not escape the vicissitudes of the Second World War. One night when German bombers were paying a customary visit to Cardiff, four incendiary bombs found their way to the church. Fortunately, members of the Emergency Medical Centre which had made its home in the school room rose to the occasion and averted what might have been a very serious incident. Thanks to their prompt action, damage was limited, although for many years one bent pipe on the organ remained to remind the congregation of those unwanted intruders.

In the years following the cessation of war, concern was expressed regarding the lack of space at Park End. The congregation had continued to increase and in 1955 Sunday school records showed the names of some sixty officers and teachers and six hundred scholars. Temporary building accommodation was provided in the form of a hall at a cost of some £2000 to ease the situation but in 1960 a new building fund was inaugurated. The opening of the long awaited rebuilt Park End Church by Mr Malcolm Jones, one of the original members of the church, took place on the 25 March 1966. It cost £49,585.

The church still suffers periodically from flooding, the roof requires vigilant attention and occasional thieving takes place. In the late 1990's there is talk once again of a need to refurbish the church building to meet the needs of modern society. The congregation has changed and will continue to change, but the work of Park End Presbyterian Church goes on. Mrs Wall would, it is presumed, be pleased with the result of her vision.

Emmaus Chapel

When the City Council developed the council estates in the 1950s it recognised the need to provide sites for places of worship and invited applications from religious denominations for the allocation of such sites. One such group was already holding meetings at the house of Mr & Mrs Arthur Thrower in Fidlus Road. As numbers increased, to accommodate the extra members, a gospel campaign tent was erected in 1953 on a field in the south estate. Following a gale in which the tent was blown down a prefabricated building, brought from Bedlinog, was built on the same site and the opening meeting was held on the 15th May 1954, conducted by Mr Stan Ford of Dorset, who had conducted the opening meeting in the tent. The chapel had no baptistry so, as membership increased, it was necessary for baptism to be held in the Bethesda Hall at Tyny-Parc, Whitchurch. The temporary building was replaced by a permanent building which was opened in March 1959 and an extension was added in early 1975.

Thornhill Church

The most modern church in the area is Thornhill Church, opened in 1997 on a site adjacent to Sainsbury's Supermarket on Excalibur Drive. It is an independent evangelical church with

members drawn from a wide variety of church backgrounds. It is the only church within the modern private housing development of Thornhill. This northern suburb of Cardiff has a population of 10,000 and the church serves to meet the social and spiritual needs of the residents of the area.

Bethel United Reformed Church

This chapel also opened in 1997 but has a longer history and is the recipient of a design award. It stands on the site of an earlier church built in 1960 at Llangranog Road. This thriving church has developed from a small congregation which met, under a lay preacher, in Cefn Onn School for many years. Funds to build the church were provided by the congregation itself with additional cash received from insurance on a church in Richmond Road which had been bombed in the War.

CHAPTER 6

SECOND WORLD WAR

If not in the armed services or a reserve occupation, it was obligatory for men to carry out “volunteer” service in the Observer Corps, Home Guard or as Air Raid Warden, etc. Although enemy air raids were mainly concentrated on the docks, Llanishen with its Royal Ordnance Factory was not immune and bombs were dropped on the area leaving craters on Three Arches Avenue and incendiary bombs on Fidas Road. One incendiary device fell in Charlie Reece’s garden and failed to ignite. It was later dug up by his father, defused and given to Coed Glas School. Another landed on the first floor of Workman’s garage. Bill Workman and his sister, Madeleine, went to tackle the resulting blaze with a stirrup pump and water containers, but in the confusion the wrong end of the hand pump was placed in the water bucket thus sucking air and not water. It was soon resolved by the two red faced fire fighters. Another incident later in the war occurred when a fire engine with a large ladder on top and firemen mounted alongside, sped towards the village but failed to cope with the Church Inn bend (no roundabout then) careering into the church wall and requiring a crane to remove it. To great embarrassment the crane became upended during attempts to remove the engine. Four days later and with much equipment, the embedded fire engine was extracted from the church wall.

Llanishen had its own fire fighting service with the appliance garaged in a shed between the blacksmiths (now the police station) and the churchyard. Des Willis recalled that during the war, he watched the volunteer fire fighting crew setting off for training with the fire tender which consisted of a grey trailer pump towed behind an old Austin car. There were about a dozen volunteers in the crew and water was obtained from storage tanks at strategic locations such as Ty Glas Road and Fidas Road.

A most serious wartime incident occurred at the Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) on Caerphilly Road when nine lives were lost during the night of Monday March 27th 1943. The government of the day, foreseeing what was appearing to be inevitable in 1936, put in hand the preparation of armament factories at various sites in South Wales, with one site of 47 acres at Llanishen. Work commenced in 1939 and the production of guns started in 1941 with peak production of 1784 tank guns in one month reached prior to the fall of Holland by a workforce of 3000, of whom 80% were women.

The incident in March 1943 was caused by “friendly fire” i.e. an unexploded shell from one of the surrounding defending anti-aircraft batteries. The shell landed on the ROF and exploded resulting in fatalities. Two memorial services were held on Monday 3rd April 1943 in the canteen of the ROF. One was for the day shift conducted by Rev. L Wellington and one for the night shift at 3 a.m. conducted by Rev. Bertram Noel. The ROF continued in Llanishen post-war by changing its role to the production of mining plant, oil engines, rolling stock for railways, in fact, a variety of products from silver lamp contacts to half ton excavator parts with the largest single project being the complete design and construction of plant capable of producing ceramic insulators from mineral crushing to the glazing and baking of the final product. Later the factory resorted to armament production once more until, in 1958, with the government reorganising ordnance factories the plant’s workforce was reduced by half, and became devoted to research work for special weapons with familiar names such as Bloodhound, Rapier and Sea Dart as well as civil connections such as Concorde component test work. In 1960 a new venture started

following the success of machining of uranium when the casting, sintering and machining of the unique metal, beryllium began. It is likely that when flying in a European civil aircraft, the gyroscope was machined in Llanishen. It would appear that having been privatised as the Atomic Weapons Establishment, it is now to close down.

The area, then referred to as the Glider field, was a large meadow land extending from Ty Glas Road to Crystal Woods in the south and from Caerphilly Road to the Hardy Plant nursery in the east. The land was farmed by Mr Harry Wride and entered at about 128 Ty Glas Road. The threatened invasion of this country meant that open spaces invited airborne militia and, as a deterrent to landings, poles were dug in. This happened in the Glider field until the Air Training Corps was established when all poles and debris were cleared to give basic glider pilot training. A small "blister" type hangar was erected on the western edge to house the Slingsby Cadet gliders where the pupil sat in the front on the open cockpit with the instructor behind. The necessary tow to get the glider airborne consisted of a canvas top car previously used for the Air Raid Precaution (ARP) pump and to be replaced by an RAF barrage balloon winch. There were quite a few flying mishaps with the trainees including landings in Crystal Woods, in the garden of a house on Ty Glas Road and amongst the bean sticks on the allotments at Fishguard Road. The unit was visited by the legendary Dambuster hero, Commander Guy Gibson who had married a Penarth lady and was later killed when leading another raid. The Glider field became the home of a small United States Air Force observation unit with Piper Cub aircraft just before the "D" Day landings. American servicemen were a familiar sight in Llanishen as they were billeted in local houses, under canvas at Heath Park and a hut camp with a field kitchen behind Rhyd-y-penau school field. Where Three Arches Avenue is now was parking area for the American transport awaiting the invasion of Europe. There were a lot of those temporary "locals" who never saw their home country again.

The civilian population endured their share of deprivation and hardship which was commonplace at the time. Some idea of food rationing is obtained by the weekly allowance per person of some items such as: 2 ozs butter, 2 ozs cheese, 4 ozs bacon, 4 ozs sugar and two eggs. A shortage of money, restricted travel, limited entertainment, clothes rationed, waste collected for recycling and children doing their bit by harvesting potatoes and vegetables at local farms. The Americans played their part as well and during the winter of 1943 when Llanishen was virtually cut off by snow for several days they brought along a snow clearing vehicle, the like of which had never been seen before, clearing the roads of the deep snow much to the delight of the local inhabitants.

The aircraft on the Glider field held a great fascination for the locals and Ted Chamberlain recalled going there to help refuel them via hand pumps from a fifty gallon drum. As a reward, he was offered a short trip around Llanishen sitting behind the pilot but was unable to boast about it as it was unofficial and the pilot could have faced reprisals. His last recollection of the time was the village sports day on the Glider field on "VJ" Day when he won a prize in the sack race.

CHAPTER 7

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

Charles Reece (1904-1993) who lived all his life in Llanishen, had this to say about the village. *“My father came from the Chepstow area, my mother from the Gloucester area, and were both in domestic occupations. He was a coachman and she was a housemaid of some sort. I went to the Church school in Llanishen, where there were twelve pupils, and three teachers - the headmaster and two lady teachers. When I was nine or ten, I went to Roath Park Elementary School to get a better education. I stayed there for five years until I was fifteen. The school leaving age was fourteen but I stopped on and worked myself right through school to Standard 7, and finished during the First World War. After that I did some night school work, engineering drawing and mathematics at the Technical College in Cathays Park, later to become the Welsh College of Advanced Technology.*

I had started work as an apprentice (at Spiller’s Mill) when I was sixteen, around 1920, and I did five years apprenticeship. When I started, my wage was about fourteen shillings a week for the first year and then gradually went up as the years went on. I continued on for a few years until there was a recession and I was laid off. I forget how long I was laid off for, it might have been twelve months, but then I went back. They built a new mill on the Roath Dock and I went down there while it was being built and worked there until I finished my working life.

When I started working in Collingdon Road in 1920, potato boats used to come from the continent or the Channel Islands, up the West Dock and discharge their cargoes at England’s, the potato importers. The potato importing business then was quite a good size, women used to be unloading the potatoes and taking them into England’s storage buildings. Then little French boats used to come loaded with onions, the men used to take over an old warehouse, unload the onions, live and sleep there with the onions and go round on their bicycles selling onions around the town and up into the valleys.

Llanishen was a very different place in the 1920’s. There were no houses between the Church Inn and Caerphilly crossroads, Ty Glas Road was all grazing fields for sheep and cattle, so the village ended at the Church Inn. Blue House Farm was well back off the road; there was a lane going down to it but you wouldn’t go down there unless you had business. In later years some historical interest was taken in some of the buildings and I think one building that had stone slabs on the roof was dismantled and taken to St Fagan’s.

The houses went up Station Road and over the hill down the other side; there were some big houses; there was Boxford, I believe he was a solicitor, and on the other side of the road there was a man by the name of Ensoll, he was in insurance. Then up over at the Rise was a man called Nicholls who was the head of Spiller’s Milling; that’s the man my father worked for, William Edgar Nicholls, and he got me in as an apprentice. He retired before I started work and went to live in Stoke Poges. Further on down there were the Downings, I believe they were solicitors. And then there was Morgan Lewis; I believe he was something to do with coal exporting. There was another man on the other side by the name of March, I’m not quite certain what he was in, but he lived in a big house and had a Daimler motorcar.

Of course, there were no street lights, very poor pavements made of earth and no traffic whatsoever at night. Even in the daytime there were only horses and carriages and the number of cars in the village - I should think you could count them all on one hand, and they were all chauffeur driven.

Labour then was plentiful and cheap, both inside the house and out. So the wealthy people had a real life of luxury. I couldn't tell you what time the domestics had to start but they worked more or less all day and used to get half a day on a Wednesday and about every other Sunday. Men who worked as gardeners or looked after horses used to work on Sundays just the same, because the horses had to be seen to and the greenhouses opened to get vegetables for the big house. Wages then were much lower; I think railwaymen on the length or platelayers as they call them, were paid only about one pound a week. They used to cut the grass on the bank. But people used to live on it because everything was comparatively cheaper.

Well, of course, then there wasn't all this food in tins and packets and quick meals; it would be plain meat, cabbage and potatoes, rice pudding or apple tart or something that we'd made at home. There would be bacon and eggs, and fried bread and potato. Nothing fancy, all plain food, but good. My favourite meal was pork and apple sauce; if we had pork I always used to have a supper of cold pork and apple sauce. People would have a joint of meat and it would last a few days after they had cooked it in the oven. Williams was the butcher; you could go there and buy a piece of meat or go into town to do the shopping. I can remember my mother often used to go up the station and go into town shopping. The milkman used to come round and you took a jug to the door; he had his pail and measuring thing and he would pour you out a pint or two; whatever you wanted. The baker used to come round in the same way and a man with paraffin because of course it was nearly all paraffin lamps until gas came to the village.

There was a registered doctor on Station Road; a man by the name of Shiach and he was here for many years. I can remember having scarlet fever, I think I was eight years old, that was the time when the Titanic went down - 1912; it was an illness that pulled you down, you lost a lot of weight and when you were getting better your skin used to peel off in little bits until it was all gone. Doctors then were expensive; you only had a doctor if you were in bed. So lots of people who had ailments used to go in to town to a chemist; some of the chemists were very good; they had a little place like a surgery and they'd mix up an ointment or a medicine, a drop of this or that.

Llanishen in the 1920's was a very quiet place; it was a typical parish in Glamorgan, and everything was dead at night. There was nothing here except for the Church Inn and very few people went there. People didn't go out at night then. In the summer lots of people had allotments and gardens to attend to. But there was no sort of social activity, so we used to go into town.

You could either go on the bus or go by train; there were plenty of trains, up and down on the Rhymney Railway. At the back of Ty Glas Road there was a railway that used to be called the Cardiff Railway; it was a motor train with a steam engine built onto the carriage, and it used to go up and down between Rhiwbina and Cardiff General Station. Llanishen Station was then quite busy with porters and the Station Master, resident then, and booking clerks. The lower grades of travellers used to go at half-past eight in the mornings, those a little bit higher about nine o'clock, and then the top people used to go about ten o'clock. There was a coal yard there, and goods used to be brought up and shunted into the place just above the station. Of course in

those days everyone used coal and there were coal delivery men about the village with horses and carts; Tanner's was one and I think there was another one by the name of Parry and then Dick Babbage's father had a coal round.

The train was the only way of going into town until a private bus service, Worrells, started which used to run erratically, but they would stop anywhere to pick you up and put you down. They were only charabancs with a canvas top. During the First World War, when this service started, petrol was hard to come by and these two charabancs had huge bags filled with coal gas on their roofs; they were supposed to run on this but one day a bag caught on a tree at Ty Glas Road but the bus went on - it made no difference! When we went into town we would spend an hour round the pubs and go to the cinema; then have fish and chips in Bridge Street. If you missed the last train you had to walk home.

There was a well in the garden when we came here to live. It wasn't in use, although there was still an old pump which had gone rusty; and eventually we filled it up. There used to be market gardens at the back until they made a road right through from Fiddlas Road. There was one entrance to the market garden by the side of Williams shop down that short street; I forget now where the other entrance was. There was another market garden behind Station Road where Heol Hir School (Llanishen High School) is. There used to be a flower and vegetable show on the vicarage field. The Glider field is supposed to have got its name because somebody started using gliders there, but I remember it as just a grass field for sheep.

In summer time some of the big churches had their Sunday School outings on those big fields. They used to come up from Cardiff on a special train and put up swings and chutes and tents. We used to go to Sully on a motor train that took us from Llanishen Station to Sully Halt and bring us back from our outing.

During the Second World War I was in a reserved occupation and I continued working but I had to do shift work then. When there was an air raid alert the place used to stop working, and I used to go on the gate with the watchman; he would be on the phone in case there was an extra alarm and I would be watching out. One night, everything had gone very quiet, the air raid had passed over, when we heard a flapping in the sky or in the air, and we thought it was one of those landmines on a parachute; we were frightened and we both lay down on the floor until after a minute or so it all went quiet again and the flapping stopped. Then we heard some Air Force people retrieving a shot down balloon.

I had to go on duty in the Home Guard, to a rocket battery up on Penylan. We used to go home one night in eight, from about seven o'clock in the evening until perhaps seven o'clock the next morning. There were sixty four rocket launchers with two rockets in each. We used to practise loading and unloading; twice we went down to Penarth and actually fired over the Channel".

Phyllis Marjorie Buckle was born on 27 July 1914 at Roath Park in Cardiff, and recalls her early life in Llanishen. "My father was north country English; the Buckle family originated in Westmorland. My mother was French; her grandparents were married in France but settled in Jersey. My great-grandmother was about sixteen when she married and had her first child, who was my grandma, when she was eighteen; she died of cancer when she was thirty two and grandma was left the eldest, aged fourteen.

Grandma was a great friend of Lily Langtry in Jersey but when she was eighteen her father sent her to Bristol to a seminary for young ladies run by Mrs Tackett and she stayed there for five years until she married Grandpa when she was twenty three. Grandpa was also French, his name was Noel, but I don't know how his family came to England or how Grandpa and Grandma met. They had ten children, mother was the fourth. She was born in Cardiff but I don't know why they came here.

Daddy was born in Llandaff; he was the manager of the Tredegar Associated Collieries & Shipping Company in Cardiff Docks. They both lived in Radyr which then was just a hamlet. As children my mother and father played together. One evening when they were young, my mother and her elder sister went to Roath Park and they met my father and a friend of his. I think the girls were looking for boys and the boys looking for girls. Anyway they paired off, my father and mother together and Uncle Billy and Auntie Marie, my mother's eldest sister. They were supposed to be home by 10 o'clock but didn't get back until quarter past. Grandma was not very pleased but when Auntie Marie, who was a bit cheeky, told her that they'd been out with Fred Buckle it was different. She told Mother that she must ask Fred to tea on Sunday and that's how it started.

I was privately tutored by a governess who came to the house. I studied music and later on took my gold medal for piano. For dancing I went some time to Mavis June, then to Oglivie Cox and Mickey Preece and Barbara Henry; I was going to take my letters for ballroom dancing but the war put an end to that.

The house where we lived was brand new when we came here; it had only been up for six months. Ty Glas Road was nearly as wide as it is now, with blackberry hedges on both sides; on one side was a little mud path that used to be slippery in the wet. There was very little traffic; Worrell's buses came once an hour but you were lucky if they got as far as Cardiff because they used to break down. Over the brook in the village was a little humpty bridge, the type that if you accelerated over it in a car you thought your shoe buttons were in your hair. In the middle there was a triangle with two cottages that were 300 years old and a tiny little path, very narrow, that went behind the cottages into Heol Hir. Where the shops are now, from the corner of Kimberley Terrace to Jeff Phillips' at the end, was the village green. They started to build the shops in 1928 and they opened about 1929. On the other side, just past the church yard, was the old forge.

As you went up the hill and turned to go into Fidlas Road, there was a 400 year old house on the corner where there is now a bungalow; it was beautiful, built of cobbles. The people living there were Bowen Jones but they were told to get out because it was a blind corner and dangerous even though everyone was careful. A week later after they pulled the house down there was a terrible accident there. Fidlas Road was very pretty, winding and overhung with trees, part of it was like going down a tunnel of trees. I think it was in the 1960s that the road was straightened for the traffic and in one of the houses on the right hand side they found a well forty feet deep. Where Ty Glas Avenue comes in on the right there were two 300 year old cottages and our gardener, Bill Boulton, lived in the second one; he had been born and brought up in one and when he married he lived in the other. He was our gardener from 1935 to 1940 but he had arthritis very badly and had to give up gardening; he and his wife moved to Pontypridd where she had relatives.

After I left school, I continued studying music and dancing and when the war started our maid was called up and I had to help Mother. My chief occupation was going out and trying to get

food. I would go to the local shops that we dealt with but that wasn't enough so I used to go into town. On a Wednesday I spent a lot of time doing my hair and on Thursday I'd be dressed up like a film star; then I'd go into town and chat up the man in the shop and instead of six eggs I'd come home with two dozen. I got pots of Bovril, tins of blackcurrant puree, bottles of Ribena; I got a lot of nice nourishing things for Daddy.

My father had strained his heart but he joined the Royal Observer Corps and after working at the office all day he would be out with the Observer Corps all night. Younger men used to give up, one after the other, but Daddy said it was lack of determination and he went on. Determination was a trait that goes right through the family; he said you haven't done your bit until you're dead. But he made himself very, very ill and he had to give it up.

The doctor said he had to have honey to strengthen the heart muscle, so I phoned all the farms around but couldn't get any. I was getting quite desperate so I went into Howells in town and the male assistant there said some honey was coming in next week; if I would go into the stock room with him I could have some. I said thank you very much and walked out. When I told them at home what had happened, my father hit the ceiling; his language was choice. Then I wrote to Daddy's sister, Dot, who lived in Somerset, and she managed to get one lot; I tasted it and it was beautiful. And she gave Dad the address of someone in the Isle of Wight who kept bees and he was able to get a regular supply.

Immediately behind our house was a field with a diagonal hedge and on the other side another big field. Behind the houses in Kimberley Terrace was a thick belt of trees where Ty Glas Avenue is now. All that land belonged to Mr Hubert Prosser; he had 250 sheep there, and cows and horses, and there was a shack where the shepherd lived. When the war started Mr Prosser gave up the land and they put up a hangar there, where the cadets were trained; that is why it was called the Glider Field.

Coming from Caerphilly Crossroads there were a few houses on the right but on the left it was all fields. At Caerphilly Crossroads there were just two shops near Thornhill Road and on the left hand side of Beulah Road there was a pub, which apparently was very dirty and it was demolished in the late 1930's, I think. There were no houses on Caerphilly Road until you went over the bridge by Birchgrove Halt. Caerphilly Road probably had more traffic than Fidlas Road but that wasn't very much. Llanishen in those days was just quiet country. We would go out into the garden on a summer's evening as it was getting dusk and perhaps there would be an owl sitting on the clothes-line and you would hear wood pigeons in the wood. Daddy had built a pergola with roses over it and mother had planted night scented stock; Daddy would light his pipe and it would be perfect peace.

I didn't approve of the fox hunting in the area but my father said it was better than letting the farmers shoot them; at least the foxes had a chance of getting away. Once a huntsman came to the door to ask for a shovel to dig out a fox that had gone to earth; Mother was furious and I sent him packing. I think the fox had gone to earth roughly where the Income Tax Offices are now."

Bryn Hancock who also lived all his life in Llanishen, had more to say about village life and especially his schooldays. "I was born at the School House in January 1914. My mother was then

a caretaker of the school; she moved into the School House about 1905, having lived in either Wyndham Terrace or in Fidlas Road. When my parents moved into School House the family consisted of my two eldest sisters; the rest of my family, four boys and two girls, were born in the School House. My mother was there roughly forty four years as caretaker and at the end of the war my youngest brother took it over for several years.

The school itself consisted, as far as I remember, of a sort of L-shaped building, with the Infants School on the north side and the main room, which was partitioned off with a screen, going roughly from east to west. The school in those days was under the Glamorgan County Council. To the best of my knowledge the only cleaning materials that we used were what mother had to supply herself; the usual way was to sweep and dust the school, and about once a month on a Friday you flooded it with water and swept it out.

The main room, the big room as we called it in the family, was heated with a Robin Hood boiler which was situated in the girls' lobby, which was nearest to the School House itself; it was fired by coke which was supplied and delivered by the Cardiff Gas Light and Coke Company in a Foden steam wagon driven with massive chains. The infants' room was fired by a big rectangular dog fire; you could put on it somewhere in the region of a hundredweight, if not more, of fuel at any one time. Mother of course was helped by father with the heavier side of the work. Mother, to supplement family income, occasionally did a bit of domestic work in the village.

I went to that school for the whole of my school life; I think I went there when I was about four and half and left when I was fourteen. The schoolmaster then was a Mr Jones who lived down at the Oval Park, in the second house on the left beyond what is now called Roath Park Lane, leading to Heol Esgyn. Mr Jones, to the best of my knowledge, had a daughter and a son. The son was a well known character in the village; Crutchy Jones he was called because he had one leg and crutches but he would go anywhere, even on rugby pitches. The teachers in those days were Miss Watkins, Lizzie Watkins we called her - she lived in the second house - and Nellie Marchant who lived in Station Road, practically opposite what is now the Police Station, and Miss Gladys Robinson, who lived in what was then called Church Terrace, in the house later to be Bolloms the Cleaners.

Now roughly about 1923 Harold Morgan became the Headmaster. He originated from Llanharan, where his father was a local builder-cum-undertaker. I think his first teaching job was in Tongwynlais, he then moved to the Gwindy school on the Twyn in Caerphilly, before getting the job in Llanishen Church School. I remember his reception committee being several of the pupils, the old schoolmaster, Arthur J Harris, who was a sidesman and on the Board of Governors, and of course the teachers. Obviously it was much better for all concerned to have a younger man who was more active and quicker in mind; with all respect to Mr Jones, I think he was getting on in age. Harold Morgan transformed the education in the school, he was moving with the times. But he still allowed us a Friday morning to go to see the local hounds meet outside the Church Inn at 11 o'clock; that he never stopped and I might tell you sometimes many of us never came back; but we suffered for it on Monday morning.

In the early days the pupils at the school came from far and wide; from Thornhill, from Shepherds Hall Farm which runs along the mountain from the top of Heol Hir, from a cottage above that which we called Mog Williams' cottage; it was thought Oliver Cromwell either lived there or stayed there for one night during his escapades in this area. But that is just hearsay.

Harold Morgan was keen on sport of all kinds. He formed a school football team and obviously our first venture was with his old school in Caerphilly who walloped us 11-0. He introduced equipment for us to play rounders and various other sports. He took a keen interest in the pupils' welfare and he had very good results during his headmastership at the school. Some boys and girls who went there have done very well for themselves. I think he left about three or four years before what is now Llanishen High School was built.

In between there were extra teachers. There was a Miss Williams, who came from either Treherbert or Tonypany, Miss Steadman, and Miss Rene Fielding who later became Mrs Harold Williams. The headmastership was taken over by a Mr Williams who came from St Monica's, another school in Cardiff. Some of these teachers came after I left school, so I only know them by being in contact with my mother at School House.

I left school in 1928. It was Easter period; work was not easy to get and I did a few odd jobs, helping mother in her job as caretaker, and helping father in his garden. Incidentally, he kept about forty five perches of allotment up on the railway bank and another lot down on the local allotments off Fidlas Road, and of course, the big garden at School House.

Then Mrs Stone of Glendale Farm was taken ill which meant that her daughter who was doing well at milk rounds, was needed at home; so they could do with some temporary help and I did that for seven months. On milk rounds in those days you had the milk churns, bucket and half-pint, pint and quart measures. The Stones had three rounds, apart from producing their own milk, they bought milk from several farms in Lisvane; one being Williams of Spring Meadow and the other being the Maerdy Farm. My own particular round consisted of so many in Llanishen, then we worked our way down Fidlas Road, down to Cathays - Monthermer Road, Woodville Road, Woodville Road East. I might tell you, some of the vessels we had to put milk in you wouldn't put dishwater into today. And you never knew when the Food Inspector was coming along to take a sample of your milk. Then in a matter of a couple of years the bottle was introduced; it was bottled and sealed at the farm and it was delivered to the doorsteps of the houses; there were no more jugs or things like that. The Inspector would still come along and take a bottle away for testing to see if it was watered down or up to the necessary standard. Well that finished after several months, though I did continue on a Sunday morning for several more months.

One October day I was standing under the pine end of the Church Inn looking towards Station Road and we had one of the most severe gales I remember in my life. At that time Ben Thomas had erected a corrugated tin shed ready to start foundation work on what are now the shops which in those days were Doddington's, Miss Finch, Mr Livsey the Chemist, and Mr Phillips' shop which I think was divided at the start. Ben Thomas' shed was erected there on an open green with a bit of an open fence going round Station Road and turning into Kimberley Terrace; the next minute the shed was flying into the air. After that gale you couldn't buy a slate, a length of shooting, a roof crest, or anything for the exterior of house building; it was all scooped up from the builder's merchants in Cardiff by 10 o'clock in the morning.

Ernie Beer, for whom I had cleaned some bricks on a wall in Melbourne Road between delivering milk for Stone's, came round to ask me if I wanted a couple of weeks' work putting all the damage right. I jumped at it. I had always wanted a dirty little job and a heavy one and by God I had one. It was pushing a truck as there were no vans or lorries then; although Mr Beer

did possess two ponies and a trap to carry the ladders or go into Cardiff to buy timber from Robinson David or Edwards and Snoop.

I worked for a Mr Churchill, a decorator, for several years. Mr & Mrs Churchill had connections with the 14th Cardiff Lord Mayor's Own Scout Troop of which I became a member. I think the Lord Mayor then was Alderman W.E Gray, who was a big man with Arthur Short and the Arcades in Cardiff. My patrol leader was Bill Boucher who had the Army & Navy Stores at the top end of Bute Road and Bridge Street on the Hayes side.

The Scouts used to hold whist drives in the Cory Hall and when I left the Lord Mayor's Own Scouts for a bit I used to act as M.C at whist drives for all sorts of societies. In Llanishen the whist drives were held in the Vicarage Room which had been built by Lewis Elsinaw for the vicar to hold his vestry meetings and parochial church councils in but it worked its way down into village life.

I was called up for the Army on December 12 1940 to Tymmer Park in Rhyl. I had a pretty rough time up there with snow and winds. I trained in the Glider Regiment but all I got to ride was a bike. I was sent then to Towyn with the heavy ack-ack on instruments and then to Hyde Park in London and I was there for the first blitz on the West End. I was given the job of "bodger" on the site because I could do a bit of carpentry and plumbing. My next door neighbour, Cyril Gunstone was a Captain in the 20th Light Ack-Ack and he got me transferred to the 77th Welsh in Cardiff. I later ended up in Scotland for embarkation and we sailed from the Clyde on the day Pearl Harbour was bombed. We were originally intended for North Africa but zigzagged the ocean until ending up in Java. I was later captured and held as a prisoner of war for three and a half years."

Stan Davies recounts his early memories of the postal service. "Pre-war, the postmen's day commenced at five in the morning when they went up to Llanishen station to meet the 5.15 mail train that stopped at all stations up the Rhymney Valley. The first postman to arrive would get the truck out, which meant clearing off any snow and ice in wintertime, pulling it down the platform into position for loading from the mail van. Eight bags were considered a large load and three bags to be a small load. The loaded truck was manhandled down to the village sorting office, a green hut in the garden of the post office, on the corner of the road leading to Llanishen Court, so called because of the tennis courts and club originally there. The four postmen sorted the mail into their individual rounds tying the larger parcels onto their bicycles, having ensured the oil lamps were fuelled and in the case of Butch Reynolds, who also repaired footwear, mainly hobnail boots which would also be tied on to the handlebars for delivery.

The Post Office itself had a double purpose and was staffed by Mr Upham, the postmaster and his clerk Miss Dorothy Lawrence, later to become Mrs Leslie Workman. The left hand counter had a grill for GPO business whilst the right hand counter sold general groceries, wool and even paraffin for lamps, whilst it was customary to deliver goods along with the mail to outlying houses. Telegrams came in via the telephone wire, written on forms by the staff and delivered to the address by the telegram boy on his bicycle. The cost of this service was 1 shilling for twelve words (1 shilling, 8 pence for reply paid), and was usually bad news of a family bereavement or similar occurrence.

The first call was to Llanishen Fawr (now Wolf's Castle public house) and then across the fields to Blue House Farm, tenanted by the Wride Family since the early 1800's and encompassing the land from Thornhill Road to the Crystals and north of Ty Glas Road. The Bute Estate had

purchased this land from Wyndham Lewis in 1826 but the Wride family had rented it before that date. In 1830 the rent was £210 per annum but Barry Wride, although reputed to be one of the best estate farmers, nearly became insolvent probably due to the result of the foot rot epidemic of 1829. The land leading up to the farm was unique being the only place in Llanishen where white violets grew.

The next call was across the field and Thornhill Road to Llanishen Fach farm (on the boundary of the Llanishen Fach School) and to the various farms up to New House owned by Murray Threipland, then across to Hill Farm, Heol Hir Farm and descending down to Mill Road and Station Road. One day on my way to Pentre Gwilym owned by Mr England, the potato and vegetable merchant, I was met by the housekeeper who hustled me inside and up to the owners' bedroom as Mr England had fallen out of bed. Mr England was eighteen stone and had had a leg amputated but they overcame the problem by rolling him back into bed. I resumed my round only to be caught by the housekeeper asking for my return to help get Mrs England back into bed as she had also fallen out and had only one leg. Both had been victims of gangrene resulting in amputation, the standard treatment at the time."

Walter Boothby has some fascinating stories to tell of his childhood and youth in the village: "I was born in the house I'm still living in, 167 Fiddlas Road. It's the old police station. The houses didn't have numbers in those days, they all had names, and the postman knew them all off by heart. Of course there were only two or three hundred houses in Llanishen then because Llanishen was very, very rural. The house I was born in was called Garth Villa.

My dad was the village police sergeant. The boundary of Llanishen went from the top of Thornhill, out to Rudry and down as far as Roath tram terminus and across to Whitchurch tram terminus. He had two constables and their only transport was pushbikes. If they had to charge someone who was out, say, by the Unicorn in Llanedeyrn they would have to walk over to fetch him and then walk him to Whitchurch Road police station. Sometimes my dad would bring them back to our house and lock them under the stairs until he had time to take them to Whitchurch Road.

We used to take cattle from John Rees's farm at Lisvane to Ely market but, of course, there was no transport so we had to drive them there and us boys used to have to go in front to make sure every gate was closed so the cattle and sheep wouldn't go into people's gardens. Sometimes we'd have a bit of fun and take all the gates off the houses and change them over.

I remember when I went to school – this was Llanishen Church School – the old master, Mr Jones, would say to me "Walter, slip over to old Phelps' nursery and get me some nice bamboo canes" and nine times out of ten I was the first to have the cane when I brought them back. And things happened in the school. Right in the middle of the classroom there was a hole in the floor and if we made a mess of our work we'd throw the paper down the hole and start again. One day Bryn Hancock, Bill Workman, and a few more of them decided to strike a match and drop it down the hole and they set the bloody school on fire. The master was out of the room so we tipped water on it out of vases of flowers and the room was full of smoke. Of course, we had six on each hand for that lot.

Another time Bryn Hancock threw some inky paper at Bill Workman and it landed on his exam paper so Bill Workman upped his pen and threw it but it missed Bryn Hancock and landed in my neck and it was dangling there when the teacher came in. They both got a good caning for that and he told them how close it was to the jugular vein and how I could have been dead.

We had coke ovens and some of the big boys would have to go and stoke up the fires and sometimes they might want to have a jimmy-riddle and so they'd pee on the coke and then they'd put that coke on the fire and the smell was absolutely terrible, you'd never smelt anything like it. And another place was the toilets – the boys on the one side and the girls on the other – and us boys would have a competition to see who could go over the walls.

They were great times.

The first headmaster was Mr Jones. When he retired we presented him with an armchair. Now Mr Jones lived in Llandennis Road and after the presentation the problem was how to get the armchair down to his house. Some of the boys had what we called bogeys – two wheels at the front, two at the back, and a board in the middle – and we thought we could take the chair down on a bogey. We tied the chair on and one of us sat on it and we thought we'd have a bit of fun so we took it up by the side of Heath Halt to get a good run down Lake Road North. Well, of course, it tipped over and there we were using our handkerchiefs to rub the scratch marks off.

My dad had to do lots of different jobs in those days. He'd have to check on the weight of a loaf of bread to make sure it was the right weight and he'd do the same with the coalman and the milkman. When it was raining the milkman always left the tops off the churns so it looked as if there was more milk in them. That was a regular dodge, that was.

Opposite the promenade on Lake Road West there used to be roundabouts in the summer and we had regattas on the lake. In the winter, if the lake froze over, there used to be skating. And there was always swimming in the summer. They had two good instructors, one of them was called Charlie Evans. He was very well known and coached people who swam the Channel and were in the Olympics. One of these was Phyllis Scott, she was a diver, the first person I ever saw dive off the lighthouse. Charlie taught me to swim and one day I said to him, "Now I can swim how about teaching me to dive?". Now the swimming area was near Lake Road East and there was lots of weeds there. But Charlie tied a rope around my waist and I climbed on to the top platform. I dived into the water and forgot to turn my hands to come back up and I finished up in the weeds. Charlie saw the bubbles coming up and he got someone to help pull me out of the water. I was almost a gonner and I gave up diving after that.

When I was a lad the Church Inn was run by a Mr Whittaker and his wife. They were very nice people. Of course, pubs were conducted in a proper manner in those days, you didn't have any disorder or things like that. There was the lounge and the bar; the bar was for the workmen and the lounge was for the gentry of Llanishen. Going back years and years ago, when they started doing alterations they found some big ovens. It was a sort of monastery attached to the church and that was where they used to do the cooking. That was a very long time ago. There was also an old story that Oliver Cromwell hid in one of the yew trees in the churchyard but I can't be sure of that, it was a bit before my time."

CHAPTER 8

THE SUBURB

According to the railway historian Hardacre, in the year 1801 the population of Llanishen and Lisvane was three hundred and four. The 1891 census gives a population of about seven hundred. This constitutes a growth rate doubling in one hundred years.

The major change in Llanishen's history following the arrival of the railway should have been the incorporation into Greater Cardiff in 1922 but this did not manifest itself until much later when the land that Cardiff City Council had been acquiring over the years was used to implement the Central Government's policy of slum clearance following the powers given under the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act. In the 1950s the growth became continuous to the present day and the City of Cardiff Local Plan (1971) forecast an electorate of approximately eleven thousand, nine hundred in the year 2001.

The rapid growth has continued towards the end of the century. The population in 1971 was 10,010; by the 1981 it had increased to only 10,070. However, in the following ten years it had grown almost half as much again and reached 14,170 in 1991. All this before the latest developments in the north of the area just below the M4 motorway.

Such a drastic change in population meant a change in every other facet of community life from house building to education, from shops to transport and from social to economic life. It is difficult to envisage the meet of a hunt in the car park of the Church Inn or Heol Hir with a few scattered farms and most of the locals relying on them for a living. This situation changed to commuting to work in the city and then onto industrial sites on the outskirts following the Second World War and then Llanishen became suburban.

The north estate was built first, so called as it was north of Ty Glas Road and on the area previously occupied by the demolished Blue House farm. Many of the older residents in the Ty Glas Road area were concerned about the arrival of so many newcomers to the extent that the City Council agreed to erect a wall at the end of Coed Glas Road to dissuade access. This was often circumnavigated by children devising various means of overcoming this obstacle. As the population continued to grow, private developers built houses above the north estate to envelop the former green field site as far as the recently constructed motorway.

The houses south of Ty Glas Avenue were next to be developed and this was followed much later by the Crystals after the demolition of the post war prefabs. This growth in house building occurred wherever vacant space allowed and eventually the building of an industrial estate for light industry completed the encirclement of Llanishen. The village has now been completely transformed from one which was predominantly agricultural to a suburb with only three farms – Ty Draw (now New House farm), Hill Farm and Heol Hir Farm – still operating, all located on the hillside above the motorway.

Typical of these was Heol Hir farm covering thirty-five acres around the house plus an additional forty acres rented from the Murray-Threipland estate. It was a mixed farm with two carhorses, eight to ten milking cows, chickens and geese. There was always a pig on the farm which was killed once a year and the meat was distributed to the men, mainly railwaymen, who helped out at harvest time. Their wives would always turn up to collect the blood from the slaughtered beast

and rush home with it, while it was still warm, to make black puddings. The Rees family farmed this area in the nineteenth century and it is still operated by their descendant, John Rees.

At the bottom end of the village what was once a brickyard is now the Three Arches garage and opposite is the Three Arches public house. This was built in the former clay pits and opened on Coronation Day in 1953 after having been delayed through the swamp land creating building difficulties. The landlord was well known as the Cardiff City goal-keeper Phil Joslin. The area to the crossroads and beyond was now built up as far as Rhyd-y-penau farm whilst in the dip caused by quarrying the clay is the Park End Church. Behind the Church was an indoor bowls' club which held international competitions until the heavy snowstorm of 1982 caused a collapse of its roof resulting in the demolition of the site and it being replaced by flats.

Rhyd-y-penau farm has been demolished and the adjacent farmland is a new residential area. It is difficult to imagine the Nant Fawr brook being dammed by the farmer and the flooded area freezing in winter so that he could charge a few pence to locals to skate on it. Across the road and through Nant Fawr woods the site of Ty Celyn Farm is now Cardiff High School with a residential area circling the woods that was started in the 1930s and continued until it reached Cyncoed Road in the 1950s with Rhyd-y-Blewyn farm still working in the 1970s. On Fidlas Road, which used to be called Cardiff Road for a few years, there is a gap between the shops by the telephone kiosk leading to some old stables. This was a riding school that operated into the second half of the century and was run by a gentleman called Eddie Thomas. At about the same period there were also riding schools in The Rise and at the rear of the now Court School.

Above the shopping area Fidlas Road has now been completely built up with Greenway Cottage demolished and replaced by Fidlas Avenue. Between the Avenue and Ewenny Road was the now demolished Gitsham's bakery where Christmas turkeys were cooked for the locals and later the building was used as a printing works. Rhyd-y-penau school was built in 1936 to accommodate the overloading of the Church School and traffic was also increasing to the extent that a second lane was needed under the railway arch at the top of the road. This had necessitated the removal of a large tree on the corner to accommodate the bend of the road which was carried out in 1934. Alongside the tree was a small shed used as a club room by Llanishen Athletic Club in 1905 and now replaced as a car showroom by Yapp's garage. Across the road is Miss Bassett's cottage which, being hidden from the road, is often unnoticed and is reputed to be earmarked for St. Fagans Museum in the future. Bridge Cottage with its Welsh slate roof and 2 ft. walls is a listed building, supposed to be haunted and was constructed in the reign of Charles II (1660-1685). The railway arches are, unusually, of two differing heights. The up lane is 16 ft. 3 ins. and the down lane 15ft. 9ins., so what went up would not necessarily come down.

Through the arch the road now forks left to Ty Glas Avenue with the south estate, Coed Glas school which opened in 1965, an industrial estate, the Inland Revenue offices, as well as the leisure centre. Originally the road only led around the Revenue site to what was Brocklehurst Yarns and later Viscosuisse Yarns until the late 1950s when it was continued to complete a by-pass of the village and allow the development of the area.

Returning to Fidlas Road and proceeding up towards the village the Baptist Chapel now has a glass porch added to the entrance but otherwise, apart from the widening, the road has not greatly altered up to the junction with Station Road. The last three pairs of houses in Fidlas Road, including the Phoenix Hotel, were built at the end of the last century by a shipping company

to provide accommodation for their sea captains and their families.

Once we turn down into the village the changes are difficult to keep abreast of as shops are changing hands or closing down continually. Although St. Isan and the Church Inn have remained unchanged for many years the same cannot be said for Kimberley Terrace which has now been closed to through traffic by means of bollards at the top end. It was once the hub of social activity having a dance hall at number seven, which is now converted into flats. Ty Glas Road has had the gap on the right hand side completed with houses and opposite is now a retail park. The traffic density along Ty Glas Road has necessitated control lights at the junction with Ty Glas Avenue.

What was once a country lane has now become so busy with traffic that Heol Hir needed speed control devices to improve the safety for pedestrians. What was the local education centre is the church hall and car park which reduces traffic congestion in the village. Further up Heol Hir is Llanishen High school built in 1953. After Mill Farm and Upper Mill Farm stopped working in 1948, the land was developed in the 1950s and a Roman Catholic primary school, Our Lady Queen of the Universe, in Everest Avenue, was established in 1969. The local children irreverently referred to the school as Miss World. It was later changed to the simplified present title of Christ the King as was the church from which it took its name. A further indication of the rate of population growth is the fact that when it opened it had a hundred and thirty pupils whereas today it has about two hundred and twenty. In the meantime, another school was built on Llangranog Road, namely Cefn Onn and later, the Welsh language Ysgol-y-Wern infant and junior schools.

Carrying on up Heol Hir and across the Excalibur Drive bisection we come across another school namely Thornhill Junior and Infants, built to meet the demand of the latest building development. Beyond are the last of the working farms, Llanishen golf course and Parc Cefn Onn. The Parc was owned by Mr Ernest Prosser, who was once the manager of the Cardiff, Taff Vale and Rhymney Railways. Several streams, including the Nant Fawr, run through the Parc and in the area known as the Dingle is a pond in which Mr Prosser and his guests used to swim. The nearby thatched hut was used as a changing room. Today the pond's only residents are golden carp. The little summer house above the pond was built for Mr Prosser's invalid son who suffered from tuberculosis and slept out of doors as part of his treatment. On Mr Prosser's death the Parc was sold to Cardiff Corporation in 1944. In the springtime it is a popular place for Cardiff residents who come to enjoy the wonderful display of azaleas and rhododendrons.

To the east of the Parc and going northwards through the tunnel under Cefn Onn ridge to Caerphilly is the Rhymney Valley railway which was opened in 1871. The station at Cefn Onn was not opened until 1910 when it was constructed specifically to give access to the golf course. This station was closed in 1986 having been replaced by the Lisvane and Thornhill station on the former Cherry Orchard sidings to provide a commuter service for the residents of this rapidly growing area.

The other means of transport, the car, had started to make an appearance pre-war for those of means but it was after the end of hostilities that the need for servicing the increasing number of vehicles arose. Edgar Falconer and Percy Watts had started a transport business in 1919 in Canton but then moved to Llanishen where it was well known for its coach tours. The business became a major operator in this field with the coaches garaged at the rear of the offices in Station Road, now the area in Llanishen Court surrounded by flats. They ran as many as sixteen

excursions per day to such places as Tenby, Blackpool, as well as tours to the Isle of Wight and to places such as Amsterdam and Hamburg, and as far as the Adriatic Coast on the continent. Their mystery trips on a Friday evening were very popular and for seven shillings the route through the country lanes ended with chicken and chips in the basket at a rural hostelry which was good value. Every year they used to take Lisvane and Llanishen Young Farmers to their annual dance at Bindles in Barry in two coach loads. The ladies would come in their beautiful long dresses but with their wellingtons poking out underneath and they would change into their dancing shoes on the coach. Graham Falconer recalled the night when two young ladies were fed up with the dancing and went with him and the other driver to a nearby pub for a drink, but on returning walked straight into a stream. Their dresses were soaked so he started up the engine in one of the coaches and they stood for ages in front of the heaters to dry.

The car hire side of the business also acted as the local taxi service and was very lucrative with the demand from locals and particularly Dr. Gilchrist who used the service almost daily. On one occasion he was driven to his consulting rooms in Cathedral Road but had left his brief case in the firm's office in Station Road near the electric fire where it caught alight. It was full of empty cigar cartons and he was a consultant specialising in chest diseases.

When Edgar and Percy left, Edgar's son Graham took over and thereafter the company concentrated solely on the coach business. The servicing was carried out by another company in Llanishen, R.H. Babbage and Son Ltd. located at the rear of Kimberley Terrace. Babbage started his business in 1932 but the lease on the premises went back to 1902 when it was used for garaging Worrells buses until 1927 when the local bus service was taken over by the Corporation and Worrells relinquished the routes. Babbage initially built up a flourishing business delivering coal. He went on to include general haulage and his lorries became well known in the district. His son Dick had in the meantime become a trained mechanic and the servicing side of the business developed while the coal and haulage were abandoned. Those of us who use computers today owe a great debt to a kinsman of the family, Charles Babbage, who in the mid 19th century devised his 'difference engine' from which the modern computer developed.

Other businesses which carried out vehicle maintenance in the village were Workman's and Yapp's. Mr George P. Workman had a garage built in 1926 alongside his shop in Fidas Road. He carried out repairs and sold petrol from three hand-operated pumps but did not sell cars except occasionally to order. The upper floor of the garage was fitted out as a dance hall and was also used for whist drives. Higher up Fidas Road, near the railway arches, was Yapp's garage which opened in 1929, having moved from Station Road where Ernest and Trevor Yapp had begun by repairing bicycles behind their parents' home. In later years they also opened another smaller garage in Cyncoed Road near the top of Rhyd-y-penau Road.

Llanishen has been part of the greater conurbation of Cardiff for almost eighty years. In that time its boundaries and population have grown and will undoubtedly grow in the future. Although it has changed from a largely agricultural community to one based on business and light industry, for its residents it remains a village at heart, centred around the shops, the church and the village pub. Long may it stay so.