



***Cymdeithas Hanes Lleol  
Llandysul a'r Fro  
Local History Society***

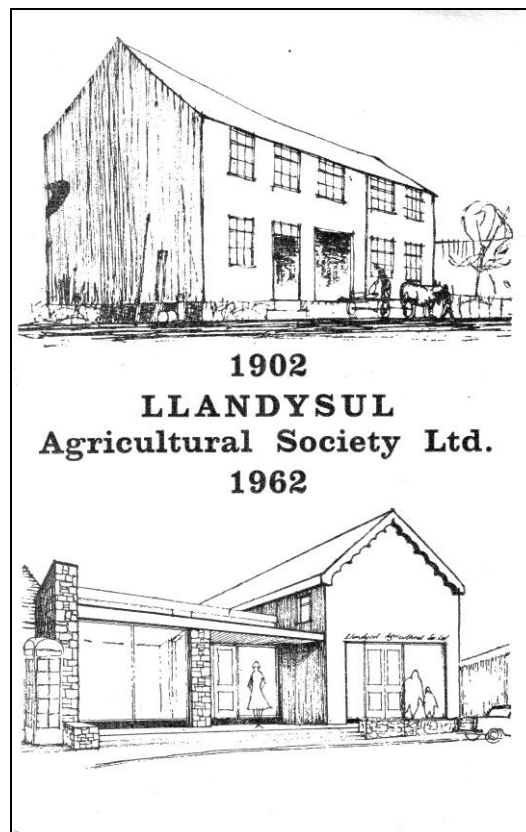
One of the Society's collection is a pamphlet written to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Llandysul Agricultural Society Ltd, produced in 1962 (author unknown).

It starts with a full history of the Society and then continues with memories of some of its staff and customers.

If you remember the Society after 1962, please let us have your memories so we can add to the history of this important Society.

I have transcribed a shortened version here ; you will have a opportunity to see the whole pamphlet when we are next able to hold an Open Day!

Jane  
Chairman



***Front cover***

**It starts with a Preface:**

The purpose of this booklet is to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of the Llandyssul Agricultural Society Ltd., and also to place on record our appreciation of the foresight, courage, and determination of those people who formed our Society sixty years ago. ....

**In bold print on one of the early Balance Sheets can be seen the following:**

"What you can get by trading with our Society" and the following benefits are listed underneath:

"A Shop of your own, Interest on your capital, Dividend on Purchases, a Committee to complain to, a Manager and Staff who are also your Brethren, a Balance Sheet annually, a meeting of Shareholders in which each member is equal, and the right to grumble and growl but no to cease buying".

Let our motto be "Ymlain Gymdeithas Gydweithredol Llandyssul a'r Cylch".

**The pamphlet continues:****Sixty Years of Service****A Sketch of the Society's History**

by J.C. Jones, J.P. General Manager and Secretary

The Society was registered on 4 March 1902, being one of three societies formed in the lower Teifi Valley at very nearly the same time. Much of the credit for starting these societies must go to the late Augustus Brigstocke, the Liberal squire of Blaenpant, Llandygydd. Organisation ... seems to have started at the Emlyn Arms, Newcastle Emlyn ..... but it is known that Brigstocke paid several visits to Llandyssul to attend meetings. The late Mr. David Thomas of Cwmhyar, Tregroes was one of the prime movers informing the Llandyssul Society. .... The idea of Agricultural Co-operation was new to Wales at the time, and it needed men of courage and great determination to carry out the task of forming the Society. They believed that through co-operation the Landlord, the Tenant and the Cottager could work together harmoniously to the mutual benefit of all concerned. ....

The Society faced very great opposition during these early days, but the grit and courage of a small group of men carried it through to ultimate success. ....

The following were elected to form the first Committee to run and look after the interests of the Society:

David Thomas, Cwmhyar (Chairman)  
James Davies, Cwmeudwy, Llandysul  
Thomas Jones, Troedrhiwrhwch, Bangor Teifi  
William Davies, Nantremenyn, Pontshaen  
Jenkin Jones, Pantmoch, Pontshaen  
Evan Davies, Faerdrefawr, Llandysul  
Edward Thomas, Blaenmene, Llandysul  
T. Jones, Gellyfaharen, Llandysul  
Thomas Davies Rhydybannau, Prentrecwrt  
Thomas Thomas, Penwern, Llangelor  
D. Davies, Maengwyn, Llandysul  
Thomas Davies, Cwmathan, Pencader

These people who formed the first working committee were not highly trained business men, but honest to goodness sons of the soil who strongly believed in putting into practice the idea of co-operation among the farming community in this part of the Vale of Teifi. ....

The first building acquired by the Society was the Crimea Stores (now Mr. D.R. Jones's Shop on the New Road, Llandysul), removing shortly afterwards to Kings Head Fach in the main street, where the present Lloyds Bank premises now stand. The paid-up capital amounted to £106, and the sales for 1903 amounted to £2750, with trading results showing a net loss of £3.

.... It is interesting to note that one of the first boars was presented to the Society by Mr. Brigstocke, and kept at Penlonwen, a farm not far from the village of Llandysul. According to the rules the boars were to be exhibited each year at the Cardigan and Newcastle Emlyn Summer Shows, and the fee charged for their service was 1s 6d. to members and 2s. 6d. to non-members

During 1903 it was decided to lease a plot of land on the Railway Yard at Llandysul in order to build a new store, as the Society had now extended its trading activities to seeds and seed potatoes and feeding stuffs, as well as fertilisers and coal. ....

Records show that the Committee were meeting every week at the Wilkes Head.....

On 21 September 1905 the new Store on the Station Yard was opened, completed at a total cost of £237 10s., and to celebrate this important event a dinner was provided at a shilling per head, the hostess being the late Mrs. Jones, Cilgwyn Hotel.

In ..... 1910..... a Complimentary Dinner given at the Wilkes Head Hotel by the Committee in recognition of the services of Mr. Charles Lloyd of Waunifor during his three years' term of office as Chairman..... Mr. Lloyd was leaving the district.

The years 1911 to 1913 showed slow but steady progress ..... Then came the first Great War, and during the very difficult years up to the end of that War the Society continued to expand and increase its turnover. ....

During 1915 the Committee took a very active part in arranging meetings to set up a cattle mart in Llandysul. The membership had now increased to 262 .....

The sales for 1919 amounted to £19,425 4s. 11d., with a net profit of £361 13s 8½d, and the dividend was maintained at 6d. A further 40 new members joined the Society during the year. ...

1925 found the committee deciding to extend the premises by building an extension to the Station Yard Stores so that the Society could deal in grocery, hardware, drapery and boots and shoes. ....

During 1930 the C.W.S. ceased buying butter, and at a General Meeting it was decided to take up shares in the newly form co-operative, Tivyside Creameries Ltd., with its factory at Capel Dewi.

.... the Society bought its first lorry in 1934.

From 1935 up to the outbreak of the second World War in 1939 the Society continued to flourish .... The staff had now been increased by five, assisted by casual labour during certain times of the year.

....

The years from 1940 to 1950 were very difficult ones, years of War, restrictions, and rationing, with the demand so much greater than the supply. ....

The question of providing a milling and grinding service for members was having the attention of the Committee, and in December 1943 the mill known as Court Mill, Pentrecourt, was bought by the Society.

.... in 1944 ... the Society took over the old established business of Albion House, Pencader and was now in a position to supply the members in that area with grocery, drapery and other domestic needs. A plot of land was also bought at Pencader with the object of building a new shop and stores at some future date. ....

The year 1946 found the Society thinking in terms of offering a further service to its members, and a machinery pool was formed for this purpose. The Society could now help members with their cultivating, harvesting, threshing, and baling, and this service proved a boon during these years when farmers had to depend so much on the crops grown on their own farms. The service was in operation until the end of 1952 when the machines were sold. The end of rationing meant that the farmer had no longer to be self-supporting, and the call for the services of the machinery pool came to an end.

The sales for 1947 amounted to £66,137, and a record dividend of 25s in the £ was paid. Owing to the increase in trade the lack of storage space was becoming serious, and it was decided to build a new fertiliser store on a site at Cilgwynbach, which would give the Society the extra room required for that purpose. In 1950 a large disused woollen mill, Arddol Mills, Pencader, was bought, which meant that the Society had now one of the largest and best conditioned stores in West Wales. ....

During 1951 the question of forming a new egg-packing station was under discussion at several Committee meetings, and the Society decided to give this venture every support.....

With the year 1952 the Society completed fifty years of faithful service to agriculture co-operation in this part of the Vale of Teifi and the upland country on both the Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire side. The Golden Jubilee celebrations took the form of a Social Evening at the Graig Hall, Llandysul, in April 1952. ....

But 1952 was not merely a year of celebration; it was a year of development also. On 1 January the old-established business of Pontwelly Mills, Llandysul, was taken over by the Society and all the grocery and drapery business was transferred to those premises. Three mobile shops were added, and the Society was now able to provide members with a good service of grocery delivery and egg collection. This year also saw the revival of the Llandysul Cattle Mart, and at a meeting arranged by the Society it was decided to give the auctioneers every support. The sales for 1952 showed a substantial increase to a total of £152,478 16s. 9d., with a net profit of £6,933 3s. 11d. In 1954 the Society opened a furniture store at Wilkes Head Square, Llandysul; it was now in a position to supply its members with furniture and all domestic appliances.

In 1960 the premises of Pontwelly Mills, already leased to the Society, were offered for sale by the owner, and it was decided to buy this property, together with an adjoining plot of land for £4,000. The question of centralising all the departments of the Society in a new building to be erected on this site was under consideration by the Committee, and it was decided to engage an architect to draw up plans. The grocery business was further increased during this year to include the sale of bread and confectionery, and shares were taken up in the West Wales Co-operative Bakeries Ltd., from which supplies are drawn. This year also saw the introduction of a staff pension scheme in the Society.

Court Mill, bought by the Society in 1941, had by now served its purpose and was no longer a paying proposition. The premises were sold to a firm of local builders, and were replaced by an electrically-driven mill at the central premises at Llandysul. During 1960 an approach was made by West Wales Egg and Poultry Producers Ltd., asking if the Society would be prepared to rent a part of Arddol Mills, Pencader to them, so that an egg production unit could be installed there. It was agreed to do everything to encourage this new venture, and they entered into possession on 1 January 1961.

An appeal was made during 1961 to members to invest in a loan fund in order to build the new premises at Llandysul, and although the response has not been very encouraging, it was decided at a meeting of the Committee on 13 November 1961 to proceed. On 19 November, the Chairman, Mr. R. Jonathan, signed the contract on behalf of the Society, and the contractors took possession of the site. This new venture will be a great financial burden over the next few years, but every successful business must have suitable premises, and there is no doubt that the step taken by the Society will prove to be a wise economy in the years to come. ....

We are now at the end of our story, a word picture of the trials of honest simple country folk who aspired to better the lot of themselves and their fellow-men, and the ancient craft of agriculture in this corner of Wales. It is a story that should be told and re-told around the firesides of every homestead in the district, so that the young farmer of today should know the true meaning of co-operation. ....

Though the efforts of societies such as this, the hardship endured by our forebears has been turned into prosperity for the modern successful farmer. In the distant past, by nature, man was a lone hunter, every man for himself was the slogan of early man. For the betterment of all, a new idea has been conceived, and man has embraced Society. Out of this came Brotherhood and the creation of institutions like the Society whose Diamond Jubilee we are celebrating this year.

What of the future? Today we stand at a very important crossroads in our history, and we have taken a brief glimpse back along the difficult road traversed since those distant days of 1902.

..... The Society needs the loyalty of all members if it is to succeed and survive, the Committee must do all in their power to maintain the true spirit of co-operation, and the staff must also play their part by giving of their best in the interest of the Society.

The Society will be proud of its record: may the principles of co-operation continue to guide our policy, and may we go on building on those foundations laid by our forefathers sixty years ago.

**The pamphlet continues with a record of memories of staff and members, but starts with words from the then Chairman, Mr. W.H. Owens, D.C., Bronygadair, Llangeler:**

*I feel very proud indeed to be Chairman of the Society during this very important year in its history. Unlike the others who will be contributing, I am not able to say that my roots are in the Society, because I only came to live in Wales about twelve years ago, and have served on the Executive Committee for nine years. Although born and bred over the border, I am of Welsh descent, and proud of it. It was only natural that I should come to farm in Wales, but when I arrived I was a stranger among strangers but not for long, as my family and myself were soon made to feel that we were among friends.*

*One of my first contacts was our Manager, whom I had been advised to see, and the assistance he was able to give me, though the Society, was of very great value during those first few months in my new home. Although a strong believer in co-operation I had not had the opportunity of being a member of a Society such as this before, as there was no farmers' co-op in that part of England where I lived.*

*I soon discovered that by joining the Society, it would mean that I not only stood to gain financially, but that it played a very important part in the every day life of the community in which I now lived. Through the Society I was able to build up a new circle of friends, and found myself taking a very active interest, not only in agricultural affairs but in public life as well.*

*I have always believed in healthy criticism, and I feel that Agricultural Co-operation needs a fresh injection of new life and new ideas, we want more co-operation among co-operators, and we must draw much closer together if we want to movement to survive and succeed. ....*

*We as a Committee have faith in the future, the fact that we are now building a new store proves that we believe that Agricultural Co-operation has a very active part of play in the future as in the past. ....*

*In conclusion may I appeal to all members to stand behind the Society again, so that we can go forward provide the service to our members, which can only be given through Unity, Loyalty and Co-operation.*

**Memories of Mr. D. Thomas, Cwmhyar, Tregroes**

*It gives me special pleasure to write these few words, as my memory of the Llandysul Agricultural Society goes back to the very beginning of its history. I am very proud to be able to say that I am the son of one of those pioneers who in 1901 did so much to influence a small group of local farmers to form the Society. My father devoted a great deal of his time to spreading the gospel of agricultural co-operation among his farmer friends, and he was able to persuade about fifty of those farmers to invest the first share capital required.*

*He was the first Chairman, and acted in that capacity for many years. Things were pretty difficult at times, and I well remember one instance which I think goes to prove this. I was a pupil at the Llandysul County School at the time, and coming down from school during lunch hour on a Tuesday, I noticed a group of men on the Square, and standing in the middle was my father. There was a rather heated discussion going on, with my father threatening to resign the chairmanship. I was rather worried, being only twelve years of age at the time, but when I noticed that behind my father*

stood our local Police Sergeant, with a wide grin on his face. I knew that things were not so serious after all. He was eventually persuaded to return to the meeting room at the King's Head, to settle their differences there rather than do so on the village square. ....

There was very strong opposition from the local private merchants but the Society soon became the means of stabilising the prices of commodities supplied to the farmers in the district. .... I am proud to say that I have also followed in the footsteps of my late father, and have always remained loyal to the Society. Since his death in 1928, I have been a member of the Executive Committee., and the fact that my eldest son is now also a member of the same committee means that this chain of service of loyalty has remained unbroken for the last sixty years.

My father strongly believed in keeping the Society on a sound financial footing, and if alive today, would be very worried indeed to see the very heavy list of trade debtors appearing in our Balance Sheet each year. I would like to take this opportunity of appealing to all members to pay their accounts more promptly.

The young farmer must now realise that the Society belongs to him and that it is a part of our rural life. It is something he has inherited from the efforts of those pioneers who risked so much that we today can enjoy a better way of life and a higher standard of living. Let us then renew our efforts, so that the great tradition of the past sixty years be carried on. ....

#### **From Mr. Edward Davies, D.C., Penlonwen, Llandysul**

My associations with the Llandysul Society have been very close along the years ..... I well remember the first truck loads coming into Llandysul station, also the first stores at the Crimea and later at the Kings Head Fach loft, Llandysul, where the present Lloyds Bank now stands. I also remember the building of the stores on the Station Yard, the idea being to save haulage of goods from the trucks to the stores in the village. My mother, who lived at the Coopers, was one of the first members of the Society, and during those very hard times the benefits of buying at the Co-op were a great help to people like her, who had to struggle to make both ends meet.

I have been connected with the Society in more ways than one. .... I also did the haulage for the Co-op, in the early days with a horse and cart, and later with a lorry. I started as a young lad in 1908 doing haulage from trucks into store, and can never forget the kindness of the storeman then employed by the Society, Mr. W. Griffiths, Parcllyn. The sacks of flour weighed 280 lb. each, and to me then they appeared like huge mountains which had to be moved, but thanks to the storeman, who always shouldered the heavier end of the burden, I am alive to tell the tale.

I carried on doing this work for well over forty years, and have served under all five managers. During this long period of time I have seen good and bad times in the affairs of the Society ..... It is our plain duty to remain loyal to our Society, and to keep it as it was meant to be, a Society formed by the people for the people; and its success or failure is entirely our own responsibility. May we then go forward, bearing that bright torch of co-operation and goodwill so bravely lit by our forefathers over sixty years ago.

#### **Memories from Mr. D.J. Davies, Panteryrod, Llwynceilyn, Aberaeron**

On the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Llandysul Agricultural Society one cannot fail to be impressed by the enterprise and faith of those pioneers who formed the Society many years ago ...

I had the pleasure some time ago to read the first minute book of the Society, and to my surprise I was also shown a set of the rules of the Pig Improvement Society dated January 1903. .... They also believed that it was quite as important to co-operate in order to improve members' stock and by doing so, their production. ....

Is it not possible to revive the animal husbandry side of the Society? .... Could not the Society assist in encouraging the production of more eggs in the area? There are scores of farmers who badly need

the income which egg production could bring to them. .... I believe that by co-operating together in this field enough eggs could be produced to prevent the importation from over the border which is now needed to supply the South Wales market

.... It is the duty of the Society to explore new ways of providing better sources of income for its members, we must learn anew how to live and work together as true co-operators, for without such unity we die alone.

### **Memories of Mr. Gareth Jones, Tynnewydd, Bangor Teifi (Vice-Chairman)**

It gives me very great pleasure to write these few notes ..... I am doing so as a young farmer who has been a member of the Committee since 1956, having been appointed to fill the vacancy caused by the death of my father who had served on the Committee for over twenty-five years.

The Co-op seems to have to bear the brunt of attacks from all directions, and why, after sixty years of service, is there such a lack of loyalty and support among our own members? Is it due to the lack of publicity on our part, which means that the younger generation of farmers do not fully appreciate the value of a Society such as ours? During those very hard times at the beginning of the present century, the farmer was entirely at the mercy of the private trade; surely we do not wish to return to a period like that again!

This year the Society is building a new store and shops at Llandysul, which are very badly needed if it is to carry on giving the good service at present enjoyed by the members. This building will be not only a monument to the past, but also a great asset to the younger generation, and to those yet to be born. ....

We have attained a notable milestone in our history, may we then do forth with vision and pride, facing the future bravely bearing the torch of co-operation, throughout the length and breadth of this fair land of Wales and especially "Dyffryn Teifi".

### **Memories from Mr. Tom Davies, Pentrecourt**

During the year 1921, after returning from the Services, I was working as a collier in one of the coal pits in South Wales. Having been brought up on one of the lovely hills of Carmarthenshire, overlooking the beautiful Vale of Teifi, life in the industrial areas did not appeal to me, and I had set my mind on returning to live in the rural community of my boyhood days. When told there was a vacancy for a storeman at the Society, I applied, and was appointed, at a meeting held on 18 January 1922, at a wage of 30s. per week.

The fact that this year the Society is celebrating its Diamond Jubilee makes me feel very proud that I have now completed forty years as a member of the staff. When I started there were only two other members on the staff, together with Mr. Edward Davies, Penlonwen, doing the haulage work with his horse and cart. The feeding stuffs sold were bran, maize, barley meal and wheat, with a little groundnut and linseed cake. The Society also sold flour, coal, fertilisers and seeds. Handling these goods meant a hard day's work, as most of these commodities were packed in 2¼ cwt bags, and the flour in bags of 280 lb. Most of these had to be handled in and out of store, and very often either lifted or lowered on the old-fashioned hand-operated pulleys in the stores at the time.

After the appointment of Mr. David Jones as Manager in 1924, the trade increased and during the early thirties the committee decided to buy a push bike to enable me to go out canvassing in the district. I was out on my rounds in a kind of weather, very often up to very late at night. It was a case of being often tired, but hardly ever hungry or in need of a hot cup of tea. More than once did I sit by a roaring fire, proudly wearing some kind farmer's trousers, while my own were drying out.

During the forty years with the Society I have seen many changes .... The pattern of farming has completely changed, and the call for more grass, and the revolution in his method of production, has been one of my special interests in the last twenty five years. I can safely say that during those years

*I have weighed and mixed a few thousand grass and clover mixtures The quality of the seeds supplied by the Society has always been the best, and ample proof of this can be seen in the pastures on those farms who have always sown Co-op seeds for many years. ....*

*I can well remember the Society buying its first lorry, and may were the committee meetings held before deciding to take the plunge Gone are the days when there would be a string of carts, waiting to be loaded, extending from the stores out through the Station gate as far as the Cilgwyn Hotel. I could go on much longer, but I end by wishing the Society, on behalf of myself and all other members of the staff, greater prosperity in the years to come, and long may it continue to serve its members in the years that lie ahead.*

**The pamphlet ends with a Greeting from the Welsh Agricultural Organisation Society Ltd. (W.A.O.S. )(the central organisation of the farmers' co-operatives in Wales):**

This is the first time the W.A.O.S. has had the opportunity of greeting one of its affiliated societies on the completion of sixty years' service to the local farmers. ....

When we look back on the early history of the farmers' co-operatives in Wales, we always find reference to the loyalty of the pioneers to the society and their readiness to make sacrifices for the society. And we are sometimes inclined to complain of the lack of loyalty of their successors of today, and to call on them to make sacrifices for the society too. ....

If the society knows that it can count on receiving the orders of all of its members for their farm requirements, it can place its own orders with much greater confidence and often get better prices. ... .... the farmer who stops buying from his society when someone else offers him feeding stuffs at threepence a hundredweight cheaper does so because he has not looked enough ahead to realise what those prices really mean. It is because that kind of disloyalty does the farmer himself no good that we urge the farmers of today to be loyal to their co-operatives.