

LLANGORSE LAKE

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"Llangorse Lake is the largest natural lake in South Wales, was formed by glacial action, is popular for water sports from fishing to windsurfing and is a wonderful habitat for wildlife. (OS Map No: 161 Grid Reference 133262)"

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Very true - that statement just about covers the facts regarding Llangorse Lake. However, it doesn't convey the magical quality of swirling mists on a cold grey autumn dawn, the soft gentle sunset casting a warm rosy glow as background to roosting wildfowl, the kaleidoscope of vivid colours painted by spinnakers on a hot, breezy summers day or even the stark black and white picture created by naked trees, swaying reeds, shining ice and crisp snow in the dead of winter.

Solitude - that's a word bandied about when people speak of Llangorse Lake these days. Are they blind? Can't they see the sunlight glinting on gleaming breastplates and plumes dancing on Roman helmets? Are they deaf? Don't they hear the creaking leather from a thousand Centurion sandals marching in formation down the rough track? And listen... isn't that splashing coming from oars dragging a boat of hewn oak across to St. Gastyn's from the Crannog?I can hear the groans of exhaustion, I can see the rivulets of sweat! Can't they hear the bells ringing in the submerged church tower? Solitude? No, you are never alone on Llangorse Lake. Don't you see a dozen pairs of eyes watching you - could they be plump moorhens hiding in terror, downy cygnets sneaking amongst the reeds... or maybe they are goblins?

Tranquillity - let's try that one! The snow white feathers of the majestic swan, ruffle up and spread - he hisses, defending his territory and his faithful family (he'll smash your bones without a qualm); the heron swoops, elegant, long and lean, without mercy to devour an unsuspecting trout languishing too near the surface of the water; pike with razor teeth have no pity... It's a battle ground, a dear, beloved, battle ground. It's a magic battle ground.

..... Come with me, let us walk through time and see what others say about Llangorse Lake.

(From "The Mythology and Rites of the British Druids. By Richard Davies, Author of Celtic Researches. London, 8vo. Booth - 1809.")

THE ISLAND OF THE FAIR FAMILY

In the mountains near Brecknock there is a small lake, to which tradition assigns some of the properties of the fabulous Avernus. I recollect a mabinogi, or mythological tale, respecting this piece of water, which seems to imply that it had once a floating raft; for here is no island.

In ancient times, it is said, a door in a rock near this lake was found open upon a certain day every year; I think it was May-day. Those who had the curiosity and resolution to enter were conducted by a secret passage, which terminated in a small island in the centre of the lake. Here the visitors were surprised with the prospect of a most enchanting garden, stored with the choicest fruits and flowers, and inhabited by the Tylwyth Teg, or fair family, a kind of fairies, whose beauty could be equalled only by the courtesy and affability which they exhibited to those who pleased them. They gathered fruit and flowers for each of their guests, entertained them with the most exquisite music, disclosed to them many events of futurity, and invited them to stay as long as they should find their situation agreeable. But the island was sacred, and nothing of its produce must be carried away.

The whole of this scene was invisible to those who stood without the margin of the lake. Only an indistinct mass was seen in the middle: and it was observed that no bird would fly over the water, and that a soft strain of music at times breathed with rapturous sweetness in the breeze of the mountain.

It happened, upon one of those annual visits, that a sacrilegious wretch, when he was about to leave the garden, put a flower with which he had been presented into his pocket; but the theft boded him no good. As soon as he had touched unhallowed ground the flower vanished, and he lost his senses.

"Of this injury the fair family took no notice at the time. They dismissed their guests with their accustomed courtesy, and the door was closed as usual: but their resentment ran high. For though, as the tale goes, the Tylwyth Teg and their garden undoubtedly occupy the spot to this day, though the birds still keep at a respectful distance from the lake, and some broken strains of music are still heard at times, yet the door which led to the island has never re-appeared; and from the date of this sacrilegious act the Cymry have never been fortunate."

It is added, that "sometime after this, an adventurous person attempted to draw off the water in order to discover its contents, when a terrific form arose from the midst of the lake, commanding him to desist, or otherwise he would drown the country."

"I have endeavoured," says Mr. Davies, "to render this tale tolerable, by compressing its language, without altering or adding to its circumstances. Its connexion with British mythology may be inferred from a passage of Taliesin, where

he says that the deluge was presaged by the Druid, who earnestly attended in the ethereal temple of Geirionydd to the songs that were chanted by the Gwyllion*, children of the evening, in the bosoms of lakes."

*Frequent allusions are made in early Welsh poems to the Gwyllion, which term has been generally understood to mean shades or ghosts of departed men, who were allowed to inhabit this world, and sometimes appeared in a visible state.

"Seith gwaw gowanon
Seith loneid afon
O gwaed Cinreinion
Y dylanwon.

Seith ugain hoelion
A aethant yb Gwyllion
Yn hoedd Celiddon
Y darfuant."

Merddin, 580.

" Seven battles of the spear
Seven rivers full of blood of leading warriors
Shall fill up.
Seven score heroes have become
Wandering phantoms: in the woods of Caledonia
They came to their end."

Again:-

"Cul Gwyllion Davydd da gyrchiad."

L.I.P.Moch, 1240.

"The battle shades of David of good onset."

Gwendyd thus addresses her brother Merddin in his fit of frenzy:-

"Can ethyw dy Pwyll can Gwyllion mynyd
A thy huw yn agro
Pwy gwledych gwedi lango?"

"Since thy reason is gone with the gloomy shades of the mountain, and thou thyself despairing, who sways the realm after lango?"

The compiler avails himself of this opportunity to correct what he has said respecting the word Gwyll in the first part of this work (2nd ed. p. 247, and quoted at page 11 of this volume); although the explanations he has given of the word are correct, he was wrong in comparing it with the Irish Phooka. The Welsh name for this spirit is Mwca or Pwca, which means 'formed of smoke' from Mwg - smoke.

LLANGORSE

Llangorse has one of the few churches which preserve the memory of Paulinus, the first Archbishop of York who died in 664 AD. Llangorse was an ancient ecclesiastical centre; it is expressly termed a monastery, i.e. a clas, and was held by the Bishops of Llandaff, who paid occasional visits to the reedy shores of Llyn Safaddon*. The village is pleasantly situated, and has good accommodation for visitors, who are attracted chiefly by the lake and mountain scenery.

The legends of Llangorse were first given to the world by Giraldus Cambrensis. He wrote:- "It has been a current speech of long continuance among the neighbours thereabout that where this Meere is, there was in times past a City, which being swallowed up in an earthquake, resigned up the place unto the waters. And besides other reasons, they allege this for one, that all the highways of this country come directly hither on every side. Which, if it be true, what other City should a man think stood by the river Leveney than Loventium, which Ptolomee places in this tract; and in no place hitherto could I find it, albeit I searched diligently for it, either by name, or situation, or ruins remaining." But Giraldus was wrong, for Loventium is now generally believed to have been located near Llanddewi-brefi, Tregaron. He also tells us that -

it came to pass before that great war, in which nearly all this province was destroyed by the sons of Jestin, the large lake and the river Leveni, which flows from it into the Wye, opposite Glasbyry, were tinged with a deep green colour.

Ranulph Higden (1299-1363), the monk of Chester, summed up in Latin the fame of the lake, and John Trevisa (1387) translated the passage into English:-

Ad Brecknoc est vivarium	There is a pole in Breighnok
Satis abundans piscium	There ynne of fische is many a flok
Saepe coloris varii	Oft he changeth his hewe on cop
Coman gerens pommarii	And beareth aboue a gardyn crop
Structuras aedificii	Ofte tyme how it be
Saepe videbis inibi	Schap of hous there thou schalt see
Sub lacu cum sit gelidus	When the pole is frore hit is wonder
Mirus auditur sonitus	Of the noise that there is under
Si terrae princeps venerit	Gif the prince of the londe hote
Aves cantare jusserit	Briddes singeth with merry note
Statim compromunt nodulos	As mery as they kan
Nil concinunt nil caeterus.	And singeth for noon other man.

Leland (1563-9) wrote of it:- The lake caullid in Walche Llin Sevathan. Here one thing is to be noted, that after a great reyne Lleveney cummeth out of the montaynes with such rage that he bringeth the color of the dark red sand with him, and ys sene by the color where he violently passeth through the mere. Thens Lleveney runneth into Wy about Glasbyry, a iiii miles from Hay, the which is in the right way betwixt Hereford and Breknoc. In the lake be numbers of fish caulled in Walche cangans (?grayling, W. glasgangen) and great store of pykes, whereof many cum into Wy river. The Lake of Breknoc ons frozen over than in a thauw breking, making mervelus noise per totam viciniam. Llin Sevathan is a iiii myles by the South est from Brekenoc. It is in a bredth a

mile and a ii miles in length, and where as it is deepest a xiii fathom. On the one side wel nere the ripe is a kind of weedes that goith along the Llin, wherein the spaune doth sucour, and also the great fische. At great windes the water doth surge there mervelusly. Lleveney cummeth through this lake, no great river. and after a great raine is parfightly seene of a rede color in the middest of the lake...It berith as the principale fische a great number of bremes, and they appeyre in May in mightie sculles, so that sumtime they breke the large nettes; and ons frayed appereth not in the bryme of the water that yer agayn. It berith also a good pikes, and perches in great numbers. Trowts

also, and chevins (chubb) by cumming in of Lleveny. Menne fisch ther uniligneis and they be very narrow... Part as sum say is in the Walsche Talegarth, and part in Breknok lordship, the whiche be divided by Lleveny.

Camden, writing in 1722, says:-

Two miles to the east of Brecknock, is a large lake, which the Britains call Llyn Savedhan, and Llyn Savadhan, i.e. a Standing Lake: Giraldus calls it Clamosum, from the terrible noise it makes, like a clap of thunder, upon the breaking of ice. It is...well stored with otters, and also with perch, tench and eel, which the fishermen take in their coracls...Marianus seems to call this place Bricenanmere; who tells us that Edelfleda, the Mercian Lady, entered the Land of the Britains anno 913, in order to reduce a castle at Bricenanmere; and that she took the Queen of the Britains prisoner.

With regard to the drowned city, Camden writes at length, and concludes - All of which I suspect as fabulous, and not to be otherwise regarded.

THE SUBMERGED CITY

A legend of Llyn Safaddan, by Ysgafell, based on Cynfig of the Iolo Mss:-

Where mountain heights surround the vale
And humbler hills their summits rear
To ornament the spreading dale,
Amid a marish dark and drear,
Calm as the glow of summer skies,
The Lake of old Brecheiniog lies.

Tradition tells, in days of yore,
(Dates suit not this mysterious tale),
Where the lake spreads its watery store,
A village smiled among the vale.
And there its lovely Lady dwelt,
To whom an humble suitor knelt.

A wealthy dower the Maiden owned,
Yet coveting augmented store,
The Suitor's poverty she scorned,
And bade him see her face no more;
His melancholy way he went,
On thoughts of love and wealth intent.

When in a solitary place
A travelling merchant crossed his way,
A man of wealth - with rapid pace
The Suitor fell upon his prey;
Beneath his sword the Merchant dies,
The murderer seizes on the prize,

Prepares a grave with fearful haste,
And hides his hapless victim there;
Then at his Lady's feet he cast
His treasure, and preferred his prayer.
Surprised she questions; thrilled with fear
The horrid secret greets her ear.

"Hence, guilty youth," she trembling cries,
"Why should I join my lot with thine?
Vengeance to smite the murderer flies;
Oh, may far other fate be mine!
Receive thy sentence at his tomb,
Nor bid thy loved one share thy doom."

He went, the moon her radiance veiled
Beneath a cloud of sombre hue;
The screech-owl's note his ear assailed,
As near the lonely copse he drew.
Sepulchral tones amid the wood,
Asked, "Is there vengeance for this blood?"

"There is," a hollow voice replied,
"A sure, though distant curse shall come;
Nine generations multiplied
The Murderer's race shall share his doom."
Well pleased, the Murderer hastes away,
Nor fears the long protracted day.

Nor does the Lady now refuse
To join with his her future lot;
Sin's punishment escaped her views;
The guilt of sin she dreaded not;
Theirs, ere that tardy vengeance fall,

Must be the common lot of all.
They lived their offspring's race to see

With rapid increase spread around,
Survived that hour of destiny
When time the threatened period found;
Yet on the Murderer's hoary head
No storm of wrath its lightning shed.

The festive board, its song of mirth,
Their safety and their joy declare;
Terrific tremblings rend the earth,
Lo! vengeance, ruin and despair!
And where the Murderer's turrets rose
The Lake is spread and Llynfi flows.

ON LLANGORSE AND ITS FOLK-LORE

Mr. GR Thomas, B.Sc., writes:-

A young man of humble birth one day sees the lovely lady of Llyn Safaddan. He immediately falls a slave to her charms; but his poverty proves an effectual bar to her hand. To win her, however, he is determined; so he plans the murder of a rich man; he goes to his lady-love with his ill-gained wealth, and while she condones his crime she again rejects his suit on the score that the ghost of his victim is not appeased. The ghost kept saying, "Vengeance will come," and the murderer plucking up courage, asked "When will it come?" "In the life-time of thy grandsons, great grandsons, ascensors and their children," was the answer. Any qualms of conscience that the lady had were now stifled, and she replied, "There is no need for us to fear, we shall be under the mould long before the curse comes." Rid of its accidentals, we find two central facts in the legend: (1) that early man would brook no barrier to a woman's hand; (2) the far-off possibility of revenge.

In the legend we have an instance of unadulterated savagery - the brutal murder of a harmless victim. We must not place undue stress on the marriage in the legend as connoting a degree of civilisation. Among savages there is no marriage as we understand it, and, although in the legend the suitor obtained his lady-love, the union was more territorial than personal. There is, however, a distinct trace in the legend of patriarchal society. Such a society would require the existence of a group presided over and controlled by the well-nigh despotic authority of a male ancestor. To substantiate this let us further proceed with the legend. After the murder the suitor and his lady felt safe. They had sons and daughters, who in their turn had children. Thus did the family increase until the sixth generation. By this time the original pair were very old, and they had flourished like the green bay-tree. So they convened their descendants and prepared a great feast to all the family, and made merry with them before they departed. Here we have the tribal society with male ancestors exercising unlimited control. Now in the crannog of Llangorse Lake bone fragments and teeth and other relics have been found. Professor Rolleston found the bones to be those of the wild boar, red deer, pig, horse, etc. This supports the evidence of the patriarchal society, and the communal character of the society is hinted at in the legend. It was the domestication of animals that converted the savage pack into the patriarchal tribe.

The definite assertion of revenge, though long deferred, strengthens the patriarchal suggestion. The first law-maker of Wales was Dyfnwal Moelmud. He established the relative measurements of Cymru and Cantref, and his work was concerned with codifying existing customs rather than making laws. The part of the legend dealing with vengeance might be accretionary, but it is significant to note that in all tribal organisations there was an Avenger. Thus among the Scottish he was called a Troisech, among the Teutons a Heretock, and among the Welsh a Dialwr (or Avenger). The avenger is an early instance of "the specialisation of functions." In these deathless traditions we find preserved remote facts of racial and national life, and by a systematic examination of folktale and personal and local legend the historian will greatly be enriched. Let us turn to another Llangorse legend, and see what it has in store for us. As far back as 1200 Giraldus, in his "Itinerary" says: "It has been an ancient tradition among the natives that where the lake is now was formerly a city which, being swallowed by a great earthquake, made a receptacle for the water."

Giraldus mentions as a proof of the legend that all the high roads in the country lead to the lake. The legend did not die with Giraldus, but has been handed down to the present day. Every child in Breconshire has heard of the "Old Woman of Llangors" who emerged from the lake, and sat on the weather-cock above the protruding steeple. When a disobedient child sauntered to the water's edge contrary to its mother's commands, with a doleful cry the old woman would exclaim, "Come along, my little child," and in the twinkling of an eye old woman and child, steeple and weather-cock, would disappear beneath the water. There are, of course, variants of the legend, but the central fact has persisted through the ages, that where the water now is there was once human habitation.

This fact has been emphasised in successive legends generation after generation. Now at Llangors we have the most interesting memorial of former times in the county. Boating near the island of Llangorse in 1867, the Revd. E.N. Dumbleton noticed a heap of stones which seemed to have been thrown into the water four or five feet deep. Subsequently a row of piles standing a few inches above the water was discovered. The island has now been shown to have been the site of the pile dwellings of an early race. The island itself was an artificial construction, upon which a platform was formed, and on this platform the huts or piles for the human occupants were made. A causeway connected the island to the shore. Remains of rude domestic pottery, and implements of the newer stone age have been unearthed from the island, as well as bones of domestic animals, all testifying to human occupation. The pile dwellings of Llangors are of great antiquity, and belong to the pre-metallic period. It is not our purpose to locate these pile dwellings in point of time, but to emphasise the fact that they belong to the prehistoric age. With the advance of more civilised men, used to superior weapons and implements, the pile dwellers would recede. Their memory would persist with the new settlers, and it is thus that, despite accretionary matter of the legends, the central fact of human occupation on the water has survived to this day. Thus we see that the science of folk-lore when properly studied is full of import to the historian, the archaeologist and the anthropologist. It is the beacon light in the mist of early obscurity, and heralds the dawn of history. It has already co-operated with prehistoric archaeology in showing that our glorious civilisation has ever been one continual, long-drawn, upward process from a low form of savagery. It shows how the undertone of love swelled through the great primeval world, and culminated when man's evolution was

complete in the sacrifice of Calvary. And it has been shown that underlying the line of caste and social chains and differences of race and nationality we were all possessed of a common humanity striving sometimes blindly, often unconsciously, to achieve higher things.

G.R.THOMAS

A LEGEND OF LLYNSAFADDAN

By old Brycheiniog's famous Lake -
That Lake in many a tale renowned;
Three noble chiefs their journey take
Along Cathedin's awful ground.

Full oft these wondrous waters gleam,
A moving field of verdant hue;
And oft with intersections stream,
Of blood like crimson passing through.

And sometimes on the watery plain,
Courts, palaces, and gardens rise;
Groves decorate a gay champaign,
And charm the fisher's wondering eyes.

Then when the ice of winter broke,
'Twas with a wild, unearthly groan;
As if the horrid jar awoke
A hecatomb's discordant moan.

For shelter to the tangled reeds
Ten thousand fugitives repair;
The grebes are diving in the weeds,
Herns shriek, and wild swans whistle there.

Returning from King Henry's court,
Prince Gruffydd sought the wide domain,
Which homage, by subjection taught,
Preserved of his extensive reign.

Earl Milo, old Brecheiniog's lord,
And Ewyas' chief of Norman blood,
Friends of the royal hearth and board,
Beside the pensive Briton rode.

And tauntingly Earl Milo smiled,
And spoke, as near the brink they drew;

And all the surface vast and wild,
Serenely noble, lay in view.

"It is a legend of the Lake,
That when the Lord of Wales shall say,
Ye birds! your herald songs awake!
These birds his bidding will obey."

"Then be it yours," the Welshman said,
"Who hold dominion o'er the land,
Lords of the castle and the blade,
To issue forth the high command."

They paused. Earl Milo's thundering voice
Which oft had moved the ranks of war,
Now pealed a solitary noise,
Whose echoes rang from shore to shore.

Then Payn-Fitz-John with angry speech
Adjures the magic Lake in vain,
Whose smiling retinue impeach
In whispered words the Norman's reign.

Prince Gruffydd knew misfortune's place,
Yet scorned the petty sneer of pride;
Nor chose that his illustrious race
His prosperous foeman should deride.

Dismounting, towards the east he kneels,
As champions ere they meet the foe;
His gesture silently reveals
A heart in supplication low.

At length he rose, with solemn air,
Then crossed his forehead and his breast,
And looking upward thus in prayer,
Aloud his father's God addressed:-

"O let thy providence and power
The line of British sovereigns own,
And local birds proclaim this hour
The heir of Southern Cambria's throne."

He spoke, the smitten Lake grew bright,
With flash of many a humid wing;
In solemn notes that breathe delight,
Obedient birds their anthem sing.

YSGAFELL

After Giraldus Cambrensis born about 1147

LLANGORSE LAKE

Russell and Price (1769) write:-

On the east side of Brecknock is a lake called Brecknock Mere, which is about two miles over every way, wherein is such an amazing plenty of perch, tench and eels, that it is generally said to be two-thirds water and one-third fish. The method the inhabitants have of catching them is somewhat curious. For this purpose they make use of a small boat, called a coracle, which is nearly of an oval form, constructed of split sally-twigs, interwoven like baskets; the bottom is round, and the part next the water covered with a raw horse's hide. In length it is about five feet, and in breadth about three, and so light that the fisherman carries it to and from the lake on his back. One of these coracles holds one man, who when seated will row himself swiftly with one hand, whilst with the other he manages his net, angling rod, or other fishing tackle. This lake by the Welsh has been called Lynn Savedhan, but is now more commonly named Llan-gorsse-Pool.

The Imperial Gazetteer says:-

"Llangorse Lake is the largest natural lake in South Wales. It is 4 1/2 miles ESE of Brecon, and about the same distance from Talgarth. The nearest railway station is Tallylyn. The lake covers nearly 1,800 acres, and is about two miles long, by one mile broad, and about five miles in circuit. Its scenery is described as beautiful, though gloomy. It abounds in perch, pike and large eels." The large eels are now known to be fish that have migrated from the deep sea, as elvers, and will return to the Atlantic bed after any years of absence to spawn and die. The lake is much frequented for fishing and wild-fowl shooting.

Upon an artificial island in Llangorse Lake traces of habitations raised on piles have been discovered, together with the bones of red deer, wild boar, and a species of cattle (*Bos Longifrons*). Some of the old piles on which the lake dwellings were erected were 50 years ago quite visible, but have apparently dissolved away since by exposure to air. They were about 3 inches in diameter. A small mound can sometimes be observed in the lake near the opposite shore. The island, which is wholly artificial, was connected with the shore by a pathway of earth, stones and piles, with probably a drawbridge. The water between the island and the shore appears to be called the Bwlc. Fishing in the lake is fortunately free to visitors. The Gazetteer asserts "though it has a depth of from 12 to 45 feet it is fabled to cover the site of an ancient town". This venerable fable is no doubt based on the lake dwellings. Such crannoges were used in some parts of the kingdom until comparatively recent times. It may be assumed that, as none of the early writers mention the existence of lake dwellings here, the buildings had ceased to exist before their visits, and that all memory of them had died out, except the legend of the buried city.

The Imperial Gazetteer says the lake abounds in trout. It certainly has a good stock of perch, pike and eels, but in 30 years' experience, the present writer has not heard of a single trout being caught in the lake. No small trout could long survive the attentions of *Esox ferox*, the greedy pike; nor would trout take kindly to the mud, which has become gray on an Old Red Sandstone base by long deposition of lime from the

shells of freshwater shell-fish. [The shells found therein are detailed under the heading Mollusca. Appendix ii.] The peculiar grayness of lake water, which Andrew Lang aptly described as the colour one gets on washing out a paint-box, is due to the presence in suspension of this carbonate or phosphate of lime derived from the decomposition of the shells. The deposit forms a good soil for the growth of reeds suitable for the making of reed pens.. Such pens were used by the ancient monks of Brecon, who fished the lake daily in Lent, and on three days a week during the rest of the year,, under a restriction that they should use only one boat. The lake is favoured by the presence of the White Water-lily, and the Yellow Water-lily; and has long grown the Elodea Canadensis, an importation from Canada in 1850 to Europe, where it was formerly unknown. The lake and its borders contain many plants of interest, most of which will be found in the list of Flora of Breconshire given herein. In hard winters the lake freezes over, and skaters come from all parts of the county; but such winters are now rare. The writer can recollect very specific accounts in his youth of wagon-loads of corn being hauled across the lake in one of the winters of 1850-60; but it was probably a rare occurrence. At such times both the Llynfi and Enig are frozen also, and he has seen salmon frozen in the flooded meadows near Bronllys Castle bridge.

Large pike are taken in the lake and in the Wye by trolling with herring and even mackerel. Information with regard to lake fishing can best be obtained from local boat-owners.

Llangorse is a great breeding-place for coot; and the pochard, great grebe, and an occasional bittern are to be found there. The boom of the bittern during the mating season, heard at night in boggy regions, has been described as a cross between the crowing of a cock and the bellow of a bull, and has helped to sustain the reputation of such places of being haunted. No doubt the water-weeds prevent the water-fowl clearing the lake of fish. In Ireland the writer found trout plentiful in lakes strewn with boulders, where trout could hide, but few in sandy-bottomed lakes, where the cormorant, or the grebe, could freely steal like submarines. It is interesting to watch such birds feed in clear water. They use their wings under water and rarely fail to catch a fish. The dabchick and the moorhen also, despite its demure appearance, are sad poachers of small fish. Herons and otters are said to prefer eels. The otter may occasionally be seen at work in the Usk about sunset. He glides about with only his nose-end out of the water, and if he did not go up-stream, might be mistaken for a log of wood. The fish leap down-stream over his head, when he has shepherded them into a shallow. It will no doubt have been noticed that some writers have been far too liberal in their estimates of the dimensions and area of Llangorse Lake. It will therefore be of interest to give the correct figures. The length along the centre of the lake from influx to efflux of the Llynfi is about 1 1/2 miles and 33 yards; the greatest width is about 1/2 mile and 20 yards. The width at Llangasty landing-stage is 1/2 a mile; and the distance Llangorse landing-stage to the Llangasty stage is 5/8 of a mile, or 1,100 yards. The area is, in Llangorse parish, 145.514 acres; in Llangasty-Talylyn parish, 185.882 acres; and in Cathedine parish, 31.865 acres; making a total of 353.261 acres. The surface of the lake on 15 November 1887 was 501.9 feet above (Ordnance datum) sea level.

It is probable that even in historic times its area was greater than at present, the slow wearing down of the river bed at Trewalter, and the artificial help given to drainage of the Llynfi outflow having reduced its level and uncovered valuable land on

its shores. There are still Commissioners of Sewers, whose duty it is to keep the artificial portion of the Llynfi in good order. Such Commissioners were first appointed by the Crown in 1427, and jurisdiction is preserved by modern Public Health Acts.

It is well known that schemes have been considered from time to time to utilise the Llangorse plain, including the lake area, as a great catchment reservoir for the storage of water from the Llynfi valley, and even from valleys on the other side of the Usk, with a view to the increase of the London water supply. Increase of population, with demand for more pure water, may again revive such projects. Most people would certainly view the submergence of this area to the 600 feet level with mixed feelings. The Liverpool Corporation ordered pictures of the area to be submerged at Vyrnwy to be painted, and these pictures are not without a melancholy significance in respect of the lost homesteads and churches.

THE SWAN ON SYFADDON LAKE

Fair swan, the lake you ride
Like white-robed abbot in your pride;
Round-foot bird of the drifted snow,
Like heavenly visitant you show.
A stately ministry is yours,
And beauty haunts your young hours.
From God's hand this day you take
Lordship over Syfaddon Lake,
And two noble gifts you have
To keep you safe from the whelming wave;
Master craft in fishery-
On the wide lake could better be?-
And skill to fly on high and far
On strong wings over hill and scaur.
Your eyes discern, high overhead,
Earth's face beneath you spread,
And search all ways the watery deep,
Whose countless crop of fish you reap.
Riding the waves in stately sort
For fish to angle is your sport,
And your fishing rod, beyond compare,
'Tis your long neck, shapely and fair.
Warden you are of the round lake,
Fair-hued as the foam-flake.
Pure white through the wild waves shown;
In shirt as bright as crystal stone
And doublet all of lilies made
And flowered waistcoat you're arrayed

With jacket wove of the wild white rose
And your gown like honeysuckle shows.

Radiant you all fowls among,
White-cloaked bird of heaven's throng....

attributed to Dafydd AP Gwilym (c. 1325-c. 1385)
translated from the Welsh by
Sir H. Idris Bell

And lastly,
for those who live on the hills and frequently can't see the village....

THE MIST

O ho! thou villain mist, O ho!
What plea hast thou to plague me so?
I scarcely know a scurril name,
But dearly thou deserv'st the same;
Thou exhalation from the deep
Unknown, where ugly spirits keep!
Thou smoke from hellish stews uphurl'd
To mock and mortify the world!
Thou spider-web of giant race,
Spun out and spread through airy space!
Avaunt, thou filthy, clammy thing,
Of sorry rain the source and spring!
Moist blanket dripping misery down,
Loathed alike by land and town!
Thou watery monster, wan to see,
Intruding 'twixt the sun and me,
To rob me of my blessed right,
To turn my day to dismal night.
Parent of thieves and patron best,
They brave pursuit within thy breast!
Mostly from thee its merciless snow
Grim January doth glean, I trow.
Pass off with speed, thou prowler pale,
Holding along o'er hill and dale,
Spilling a noxious spittle round,
Spoiling the fairies' sporting ground!
Move off to hell, mysterious haze;
Wherein deceitful meteors blaze;
Thou wild of vapour, vast, o'ergrown,
Huge as the ocean of unknown.

attributed to Dafydd AP Gwilym (c.1325-c. 85)
translated from the Welsh by
George Borrow

LAME ANTS

In the old Welsh legends there is a story of a man who was given a series of what appeared to be impossible tasks to perform ere he could reach the desires of his heart. Amongst other things he had to do was to recover every grain of seed that had been sown in a large field, and bring it all in without one missing by sunset. He came to an ant-hill and won all hearts and enlisted the sympathies of the industrious little people. They spread over the field and before sundown the seed was all in except one grain, and as the sun was setting over the western skies a lame ant hobbled along with that grain also. Some of us have youth and vigour and suppleness of limb; some of us are crippled with years or infirmities, and we are at best but lame ants. But we can all limp along with some share of our country's burden, and thus help her in this terrible hour to win the desire of her heart.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE (1863-1945)

Recruiting Speech at Bangor, 1915