

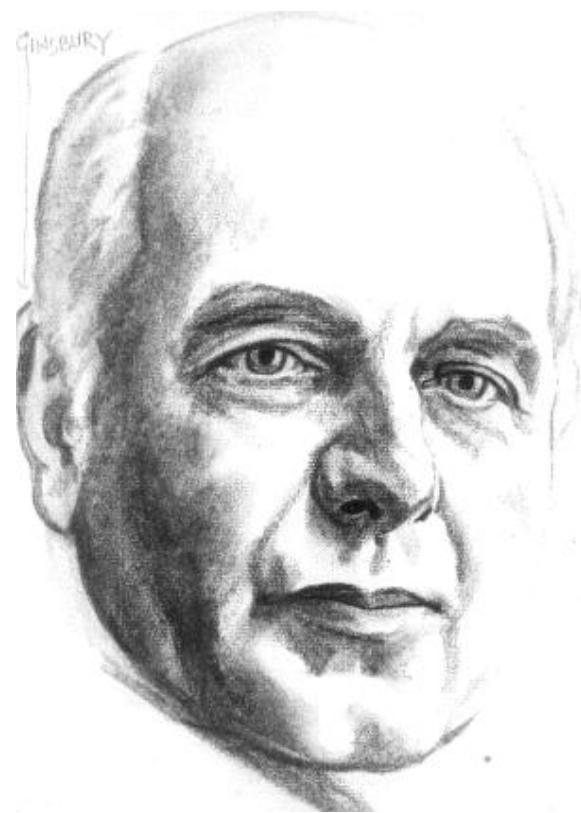
History

The picturesque village of Llanmadoc - 15 miles from Swansea - is situated on the north side of the Gower peninsular, which is a place of beauty and legend. At the beginning of the 20th. century the forebears of Sir Lancelot Aubrey Fletcher owned most of Llanmadoc and also held the title deeds of "Lordship of the Manor".

In 1914 he built a bungalow which he named "St. Madoc", overlooking the sand dunes and sea, a present to his second wife as a honeymoon gift. This they used as a holiday home until 1924.

At this time he decided to sell the bungalow, together with several other lots by auction. The auction was held at the Metropole hotel in Swansea. The bungalow and the deeds were sold to Mr. James William Burr. He admitted that he had merely seen the place and had entered the Metropole out of curiosity. At the same auction Dr. Ernest Jones purchased the property known as Hills Farm, which was to become, by divers means, the St. Madoc Christian Youth Camp.

Mr. James William Burr and Miss Alice Maud Forgan were married at St. Paul's Church, Hook, near Surbiton in April 1899. Mr. Burr, following an apprenticeship, started his career as an Electrical Engineer. Via many appointments in England and the Continent, was finally appointed as Borough Electrical Engineer of Swansea in 1924. A man of strong personality and liberal idealism, he and his family took up residence in "St. Madoc" bungalow in September 1924. Here many people were entertained, enjoyed the amenities of the beautiful grounds, tennis courts, croquet lawn etc. The Burr family were enchanted with the communal spirit of the village and took part in all its activities.



In 1936 Mr. Burr purchased from Dr. Ernest Jones the property known as "Hills Farm" - 76 acres - on which stood a bungalow and several out buildings. This he rented to Mr. Dan Evans and his sister. In 1939 Mr. Evans vacated the premises after the death of his sister.

In 1940 Mr. and Mrs. Burr visited the Mayor of Swansea, Councillor Thomas James, where they met the Rev. Maurice Charles, the Minister of the Congregational Church, Walter Rd, Swansea. The Rev. Charles mentioned that he seeking a place outside the bombing area as a rest centre for Ministers and others. Mr. Bur offered Hills farm, rent free, for that purpose.



The Rev. Maurice Charles gratefully accepted the offer. So began his organisation of a band of voluntary workers who converted the rough out buildings into an habitable state. Pig sties became dormitories, cowsheds became dining rooms, and a hall - a gift from Mr. Burr - was transferred from the grounds of "St. Madoc" to the site.

A lounge was constructed for a quiet room for older folk. The Glamorgan County Council supplied a number of books as a basis for a library. An arched fireplace was built in the hall, candles and paraffin lamps gave light and a paraffin stove was installed.

Water had to be carried from a well approx. one mile away. A large area on the hill was cleared for a playing field. Such development had taken place that it was now possible not only to be used as a rest centre but also for churches to hold conferences and to train youth leaders for the service of youth.

In 1943 Dr. Malcolm Spencer founded the Llanmadoc Religion and Life Fellowship. The original members were clergy of the Church in Wales and Non-conformist ministers, who met at Llanmadoc Camp, the movement growing out of the "Religion and life" Campaign. They published many pamphlets including "The Welsh pattern" in 1946 and "The christian future for Wales" in 1948. One Swansea school came and stayed for a weekend and it was such a success, some came later for longer stays.

In 1944 Mr. and Mrs. Burr were so delighted with the hard work and generosity of those who had helped to make such marked improvements, that they decided to make a **Deed of Gift**. The gift was the freehold property known as "Hills Farm"; this included a mile of coastline to the tidal mark, ensuring that there could not be any building between the camp and the sea. He also made a reservation that would prevent the working of limestone and sand. So in the presence of a large gathering, Mr. and Mrs. Burr handed over to the Rev. Maurice Charles, head of the Trustees, the **Title deeds of the Property**. It was called "The St. Madoc Christian Youth Camp". At the taking over ceremony, Dr. Olive Wheeler of Cardiff University described the Camp as one of the most important experiments in youth work, and in running it on non-denominational lines the denominational boundaries would be forgotten. *All would be welcome.*

After the ceremony many visitors walked over the property and were enchanted with the unbroken view from the headland of Carmarthen Bay from Llanelli to Caldy westward, Worms Head to the south, while below stretched the sea and the gleaming sands of Broughton Bay.

The original farm house became the Chapel. The inscription:-

"While life was being shattered this place

was given for the healing of the soul"

was placed inside the undenominational chapel. This original farm house was well over 300 years old.

It had been used as a barn for keeping cattle and poultry after the new farm house was built – now the Warden's cottage. The rough texture of the walls had been retained. In the place of the window above the altar table Mr. Don Gibbons designed and made a stained glass window. He later created three more stained glass windows, after much research into the history of Llanmadoc. These were unveiled at a service which was filled with representatives from churches across South Wales and Monmouthshire. The service was conducted by the Rev. Idris Evans, with the Mayor of Swansea present.

Mr. and Mrs. Burr celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in the chapel, which was filled to capacity with friends and relatives. A reception followed in the dining room.



In 1952 a pumped water supply was delivered to the Camp. A hydram was positioned in the source of supply -a spring in the side of Llanmadoc hill. The system was designed by Mr. Burr himself. The Mayor of Swansea opened the system by hoisting a flag to signal the switching on of the pump. In April 1960 the Camp was connected to the mains water supply and a road way was built to allow vehicle access. The road was opened by the Mayor of Swansea. The Camp was also connected to the electrical supply the same year.

During the 1980s, much work was carried out by the Swansea City Council Community Programme, under the direction of Mr. Colin Morgan. The extensive work included a new coffee bar; new paths and access road; a tennis court and volley ball court. The woodlands were restored with the planting of over 1000 trees. The centre piece of the work was a new Sports hall, partly funded by the Tudor trust.

The kitchen was completely refurbished, in 1992, with the help of grants from the Lang trust. In 1995/6 the cottage was modernised and became fit to attract a Camp Manager, who would be able to take a more active role in camp development compared to the previous role as Warden. Mr Kit Loring was the first appointed part time manager.

In 2005 the Trust became a Limited Company. The Games room and one dormitory had to be demolished because they were unsafe.

Under the chairmanship of Mr Clive Bennett, Planning Approval was given in 2006, to demolish and rebuild the camp, with the Coffee Bar and Manse to remain. The plans were for a kitchen, dining room, games room, kitchenette, 80 beds with ensuite facilities and a disabled bedroom, all in one building. The chapel was to be refurbished and remains the centre of the activities. This new building will enable the camp to remain open throughout the year and secure its future for many years to come.

In September 2007, the Trustees took a “step of faith” and appointed Mr. Nigel Clifford as the contractor to commence the building project. A grant of £350,000 had been given by the Welsh Assembly and a loan of £400,000 was made available by Lloyds Bank. (of which we used £350,000)

The camp was connected to the main sewer via the caravan park and a larger incoming main water pipe installed,

along with a three phase electricity supply. The under floor heating was powered by two, air-to-water heat exchangers that reduce the carbon footprint considerably. Mrs Alison Holland was appointed as Centre manager. The new, but not quite finished, building was opened by one of camp's patrons, Lord Carey, ex Archbishop of Canterbury, "to the glory of God," in October 2008.

The building was finally finished in January 2010. The sleeping accommodation under the Sunley room allowed a second group to use these facilities while another group could use the main dining room and kitchen. The remaining old dormitory and shower block was demolished, in keeping with Planning Permission. 2009 saw an increase of staff to 3 full time members. In 2010 this increased by an extra three temporary members of staff, one part time cleaner and a volunteer for a year, working on land management. To accommodate the larger numbers the coffee bar was converted into an office.

2010 saw a significant increase in the number of local Primary schools staying at the centre, with the staff working hard to provide educational and team building programmes during the day. Work was started to properly manage the woodland areas and the grounds in general. Chickens, ducks sheep and pigs have been introduced along with poly-tunnels and a vegetable garden.