

*Cylchlythyr Cymdeithas Cyn-Ddisgyblion Ysgol Ramadeg y
Bechgyn Aberhonddu
Mawrth 2007*

*Brecon Grammar School Old Boys' Association Newsletter March
2007*

Once again this Newsletter opens with an appeal to recipients to encourage younger Old Boys to take an interest in the Association by attending the dinner and/or the Remembrance Day Service. Every Old Boy is a member of the Association so if you know of anybody who might be interested in coming to the dinner and/or the Remembrance Day Service please contact Tom Prothero, our Secretary by post, 14, Rookery Drive, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 7DD, or e-mail (t.protheroe@talk21.com). I have calculated that there are probably around 1,000 Old Boys still alive - scattered around the World! Even if the 'lost' Old Boys have never been involved with the Association we could send those, in the UK, who are known to current recipients of the Newsletter, an invitation to the 2008 annual dinner and a Newsletter. Such action might delay the inevitable demise of the Association!

Unwaith eto, mae'r Cylchlythyr yn dechrau gydag apêl at yr aelodau i annog Cyn-Ddisgyblion iau i gymryd diddordeb yn y Gymdeithas trwy ddod i'r Cinio neu'r Wasanaeth Coffadwriaeth. Mae pob Cyn-Ddisgybl yn aelod o'r Gymdeithas, felly, os ydych yn gwybod am rywun a hoffai ddod i'r Cinio neu'r Wasanaeth Coffadwriaeth, cysylltwch â'r Ysgrifennydd, Tom Prothero, mewn llythyr i 14, Rookery Drive, Yr Heledd Wen/Nantwich, Swydd Caer/Cheshire, CW5 7DD, neu trwy e-bost iddo yn (t.protheroe@talk21.com). Rwyf wedi amcangyfrif bod o bosibl tua mil o Gyn-Ddugyblion yn byw ledled y Byd! Hyd yn oed os na fu gan y 'Bechgyn Colledig' gysylltiad erioed â'r Gymdeithas, gallem anfon copi o'r Cylchlythyr a gwahoddiad i Ginio Blynnyddol 2008 at y rhai sydd yn byw ym Mhrydain y mae darllenwyr y Cylchlythyr yn gwybod amdanynt. Gall gweithredu felly ohirio tranc anochel y Gymdeithas!

Events of 2006

Ninety-one guests, of whom sixty were Old Boys, from all corners of Wales and England, attended and greatly enjoyed our 57th Annual Reunion Dinner at Bishop's Meadow. After the dinner, our President, Brynach Parri (1955-62), gave a short, thought provoking and entertaining address. Then Mike Balding, the Vice President, after moving the vote of thanks to the Committee and staff of Bishop's Meadow, was installed as President for 2006/7. There was then plenty of time for the convivial reunion of former pupils, many of who had not seen each other for a long time, which is the prime reason for these dinners.

The Cliff Carr Memorial Prize was presented at the annual Celebration Evening held at Brecon High School on 12th July. Since there were two recipients, Claire Phillips and Sam Hobbs, they were each given a book token of £75. Claire is a talented all round sports woman but has excelled at Netball. She is now a student at Loughborough University. Sam is now a student at the University of Wales Institute Cardiff. He was captain of the rugby XV and played for the U 18 Cardiff Blues and Crawshay R.F.C.

Twenty-six Old Boys and Old Girls attended the dignified Remembrance Day Service in the High School on Friday 10th November. The Very Rev. Geraint Hughes (1947-53) conducted the service and the names of the 69 former pupils on the Roll of Honour of the Boys' School were read out. The Rev. Hughes also brought to the attention of the pupils that Nurse Eira

Durham, an Old Girl, had died in St. Thomas's hospital, London as, in the words of Miss Jarvis, the Headmistress, she "steadfastly and courageously did her duty, during an air raid."

Jacob Morgan - Headmaster 1929-54

Born in Llangadog, Carmarthenshire in 1889 he received, when he was thirteen, a scholarship to Llandovery College where he excelled both academically and on the sporting field. After seven years he was awarded an Open Mathematics Scholarship to Jesus College, Oxford, where he had a glittering university career. During World War I he was commissioned in the 10th London Regiment and served in Allenby's Middle East campaign. After demobilisation he first taught at Taunton School and was appointed Headmaster of Brecon County School for Boys in 1929.

The above information is well known to many of the Old Boys and it was purloined from Glyn Powell's valuable book, 'Brecon Secondary Schools 1896-1996' - it is an excellent read and copies will be on sale at the dinner at the reduced price of £2. A former pupil of the school, Viv Parry, has recently come across an account of the marriage in April 1930 of 'Jake', who was then 40, to Miss Greta Armstrong, a scholarship pupil of Girton College, Cambridge where she took her degree with a first class in English Tripos. Old Boys might be interested in the following quotation from the Brecon and Radnor Express.

"A very pleasant ceremony took place at the County School on Thursday morning. At the close of prayers there was an unusual stir and some of the senior boys left the room. They returned carrying a tea-wagon - this was the school's wedding present to the headmaster. G. H. Phillips presented it on behalf of the boys. Mr. L. Lewis then presented a clock as a wedding present from the staff. The presentation speeches were short and informal and Mr. Morgan replied in a similar strain. He felt, he said, very young and happy at the moment. He thanked boys and masters most sincerely, and drew a very pleasant domestic picture of his future wife pushing the wagon loaded with tea things, whilst he filled his pipe and began to mark some exercises."

When five weeks of heavy snow did not close the school!

**Report by Jacob Morgan to the Governors of Brecon Boys' County School
March 1947**

"The school has been kept continuously open throughout the blizzard which began on Friday 24th January 1947, with the exception of the afternoon of Friday, 3rd February, when we had to close on account of a leak in the boiler valve. We managed to survive with a couple of bad bursts. The average attendance for the five weeks has been, 75, 60, 75, 120, 120; the full attendance is 150."
[Rescued from the archives by Steve Roderick]

Two former pupils who 'Jake' helped 'to find their way'.

David 'Scitch' Morgan

As a young lad and teenager Scitch's abiding interest was sport and, in his own words, he took, 'scant regard of the educational opportunities being offered me.' He left school in 1946 with an undistinguished school certificate with no idea as to what to do with his life. 'Jake' clearly saw his potential and seeing the danger that Scitch would just drift into a job with limited opportunities, asked him if he would like to be his secretary until he knew what he wanted to do. The clinching attraction for Scitch was that he would still be entitled to play for the school's soccer and cricket teams. After two terms Scitch joined the Meteorological Office and was posted to the Arabian Gulf. He subsequently entered Caerleon Training College followed by a degree in education at University College, Swansea. There followed a notable

career in teaching and he became Headmaster of Dunvant School, wrote historical plays for schools for the BBC and has written two very well received histories of Dunvant and Killay. In 1990 he was invited to be a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

Bill Gallagher

Like Scitch, Bill would have left school if it hadn't been for the personal intervention of 'Jake'. Although Bill was an excellent student, at the end of his first year in Form VI he informed 'Jake' that he wished to leave school as he felt that he should, 'be making a needed contribution to family finances'. 'Jake' knew that he was capable of going to university. So he offered Bill the job of part-time school secretary and he could attend his sixth form classes and play soccer and cricket for the school. Bill accepted, passed his Higher and went to university.

Bill had a life threatening illness ten years ago but survived until last year. During this period he wrote a fascinating book consisting of short prose pieces and poems which in many ways are an account of his life and thoughts. The book, 'All the Geese are Swans' has been published privately by his family and all the money raised by the book is given to a medical charity in Wimborne where Bill lived. Copies of the book will be on sale at the annual dinner for a minimum price of £5. The following is an extract from a short piece, 'In Another Time'.

'But it was the upstairs corridor that was most steadfastly set in the past, always dark in gloom as if to lure the unwary. Teachers walked the blackness on their way to and from their Common Room almost invisible in sombre gowns. Classes disappeared into its shadows on their way to the Chemistry laboratory. Here it was a quite different world. In the laboratory Mr. Sutherland held sway. Everything about him and his surroundings spoke of efficiency and the future. He ran a physics laboratory as well, full of strange angular equipment. Nothing was out of place, and our exercise books had to reflect this. A man of interminable patience, he took us, meticulously, step by step, through every experiment until we could recite the stages by rote and carry them out blindfold. It seemed amazing to us to pass every time through an ancient benighted passage-way and emerge to find ourselves in such a bright and clinical atmosphere. No fairy-tale characters, no travellers through time could have been more struck with the miracle than we.'

A view from the laboratory by Tom Prothero

Chemistry as taught by Mr. C. Giles was a subject of fascination, excitement and frustration. His quiet manner when dropping pieces of sodium into water, burning strips of magnesium etc contrasted with my fascination and excitement. His sang-froid was shaken when during an experiment in the Cradoc Road laboratory he invited one of the Hay boys to sniff nitrous oxide from a gas jar. The student however took a deep breath, laughed hysterically for a few seconds and collapsed on the floor. The window was flung open, face slapping began and the lad fortunately, quickly recovered. I never saw Mr. Giles move as fast again.

Extract from the diaries of Lennox - Form VIB

The Nark wants another boy and me to go to the railway station to meet, coming off the train, a boy from Bultth. He arrives on time and we return via the Bulwark. Ahead of us coming out of the Guildhall is a stream of people, forming up in two's along the pavement facing Lloyds Bank direction. They are, we gather Cordwainers, on their way to the Cathedral, for a Service of Commemoration. We decide to join the procession, and as we do, more Cordwainers join up behind us. The procession moves off, it starts to rain, and the cortege now consists of a line of umbrellas covering one half, then an uncovered three, then more umbrellas. We process along the Struet and up Priory Hill. As we approach the Cathedral, the first half turns into the

Lych Gate entrance, we carry on, and those behind us follow us until they realise they should also have gone towards the Lych Gate. Pandemonium but we are half way along Maendu Street by this time, out of reach.

Presentation to Mervyn Jenkins C.B.E -Hon. Life President

Mervyn, who was a member of the committee of the Association from its inception and served both as Chairman and President, resigned from the committee in February 2006. At the next meeting of the committee it was decided that in recognition of Mervyn's outstanding service to the Association to present him on his ninetieth birthday with a framed set of four small prints of the Cathedral by Jennifer Conway.

New Officers

Mike Williams (1951-4) - Vice President

Michael was born in Llanelli and his family moved to Brecon in 1951 when he entered form V of the school. He was in Theo and was head boy in his final year 1953-4. He then went to Birmingham University where he graduated with B. Sc. and Ph.D. degrees in Chemistry. After two years as a research chemist in the USA and three years as Research Fellow at Bristol University, he joined the staff of the Chemistry Department at Swansea University in 1965. He became the Wales representative on the Council of the Royal Society of Chemistry.

Tom Prothero (1953-1961) - Secretary

Born in Brecon and a pupil at Mount Street school where Len Davies was one of his teachers, he followed in his father's footsteps (1929-1933) to the Grammar School where he was a member of Theo. After studying at University College, Swansea for a degree in Metallurgy he obtained a position in the development laboratories of Tube Investments but later switched to pharmaceuticals. Starting as a salesman Tom spent thirty years with the Wellcome Foundation, mostly in marketing and he completed his career as a European executive.

Whyndam Jones (1949-1955) - Treasurer

The fourth member of his family to become a pupil at Brecon Grammar School Whyndam left school after O-Levels to join British Nylon Spinners as a laboratory assistant where during the next fourteen years he progressed to Senior Analyst whilst at the same time studying for various professional qualifications. He then switched into line management and finally into personnel management and retired in 1994 as the Personnel Manager for a BP Chemicals Division. He returned to Wales in 2005 to live near his youngest son and family.

Obituaries

Gerald James (Marco) 1929-1934

Marco was an outstanding sportsman and on leaving school he worked in the County Treasurer's office until 1939. After the war he became the County Youth Employment Officer. His great interest was the theatre and at the age of 39 he was accepted at RADA which resulted in a distinguished career with the National Theatre and on the West End stage.

Bryan Price (1930-1935)

The son of Charlie Price who taught woodwork at the school from 1922-46. When he left

school after obtaining his School Certificate he worked fulltime on his father's farm Cynhordy, Penarth. Like his father he became a very well respected District Councillor for Penarth. He was instrumental in founding the Llanfrynach soccer team of which he was captain.

Robert Newbury (1933-1941)

Born in Ross-on-Wye, Bob was brought up in Talgarth. After leaving school he went to St. David's College Lampeter until he joined the army where he served with the 6th Airborne Division in Europe. He then returned to Lampeter and in 1947 became curate of Killay and Dunvant. After a short spell in Builth Wells he returned to Swansea as vicar of Manselton.

David Morgan (1933-1939)

A pupil of Talgarth Junior School, David joined the army on the outbreak of war. When he was demobilised he returned to Talgarth to work briefly on his father's small dairy farm and then entered Liverpool University to become a veterinary surgeon in Yorkshire. Highly regarded in his profession he became President of the British Veterinary Association.

Rhys Maldwyn Thomas (1935-42)

After completing his Higher School Certificate in Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics Rhys saw service in the army until 1946. After demobilisation he became a Fuel Technology student at University College, Cardiff and graduated in 1950. He soon entered employment with the National Coal Board and retired as the Chief Scientist for the NCB in South Wales.

Roy Perry (1941-1946)

When Roy left school in 1946 he was employed in the office of the Town Clerk of Brecon. Roy remained in local government for the rest of his life and was promoted to the position of Treasurer of Brecon Borough. He was also Treasurer of Brecon Golf Club and Probus. His passion was choral singing and he was a founder member of Talgarth Male Voice Choir.

Bill Gallagher (1942-1949)

Bill was a Gam stalwart and very talented sportsman. When in the VI form he played soccer for the semi-professional side the Brecon Corinthians. After graduating with an Arts degree in 1952 from University College Cardiff and National Service in the army he taught in the West Country for several years before returning to the army where he became a Major in the RAEC.

John Denzil Price (1942-1948)

An excellent pupil John left school at the age of 17 to join the RAF as he had a burning ambition to be a pilot. However, he failed to meet the rigorous medical requirements and was persuaded to join the Royal Air Force police in which he remained for 22 years. He eventually returned to Wales and worked from his home in Erwood in the auto-electrics business

Lionel Jones (1944-1951)

A former pupil of Llanfaes School, Brecon, Lionel studied Latin, English and History at 'A' level and played soccer and cricket for the school. Like many other pupils he opted to train as a teacher at Trinity College, Carmarthen. He remained in the teaching profession, mainly in the primary sector, where his musical abilities were highly valued, for all of his working life.

Alan Thomas (1945-1952)

A Crai boy who was both a fine sportsman and an excellent student who gained a scholarship to University College, Aberystwyth. His degrees were in Welsh and he specialised in linguistics. An outstanding scholar he was awarded a personal chair at University College, Bangor. His death was marked by an international seminar on linguistics at Cardiff University.

Tony Tovell (1946-1953)

Tony was an equally meticulous pupil and scorer for the cricket team. After a few years as a Pilot Officer in the RAF he decided that his true vocation was in education. Following studies at Trinity College, Carmarthen and Goldsmiths College, London, he taught physics in London schools and in 1981 became the first Principal of Leek College of Further Education and Art.

Cliff Giles (1950-1983)

When Cliff Giles became the Chemistry master he was confronted by a laboratory which, in the words of Glyn Powell, had to be, “resurrected from the debris of the blitzkrieg” which it had suffered under the short regime of Colonel Davies, a distinguished industrial chemist and a, “highly decorated septuagenarian veteran of World War I.” He sorted out the chaos and for 33 years was the well-respected Head of Chemistry in the Grammar School and High School.

David Jenkins (1953-1957)

On leaving school David was articled to the Chief Inspector for Weights and Measures for Breconshire. Later he was awarded the degrees of M. Sc. and Ph.D. He became the Principal Trading Standards Officer for the West Midlands. This was followed by 20 years in RoSPA where he was recognised as one of the UK’s most distinguished Product Safety Advisers.

David Williams (1955-1958)

After his A level examination in science David trained as an electronics engineer at Stafford College of Technology while completing his apprenticeship with the English Electric Company. Most of his subsequent career was in broadcasting where he worked for Radio Corporation of America in Jersey before returning to Wales to work for Harlech Television in Cardiff.

*It would be most helpful if Old Boys who have news about former pupils would send it to:
Dennis Morgan, Bryn, 79 Ffordd Garth Uchaf, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2SS*

kj.oba news.07