

***Cylchlythyr Cymdeithas Cyn-Ddisgyblion Ysgol Ramadeg y
Bechgyn, Aberhonddu
Mawrth 2013***

Brecon Grammar School Old Boys' Association Newsletter March 2013

Introduction

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In last year's newsletter the launch of the Old Boys' web site (www.brecongrammar.org) was announced and feedback was invited. One suggestion received was that a gallery of photos be added. This was done and it includes an invitation to Old Boys to submit photos. A news page has also been added and readers can submit items for inclusion.

Since the last newsletter I have received photographs of the Penlan school from Bram Humphries; two were stitched together to form the image used on the Welcome page of the web site and the rest are in the gallery.

As usual Old Boys are invited to submit contributions for the next newsletter (see last page for editor's address). They can range from a short letter or paragraph to an article of one or more pages. Previous newsletters can be accessed on the web site.

Cyhoeddwyd lawnsiad gwefan y Cyn-Ddisgyblion (www.brecongrammar.org) yn rhifyn llynedd y Cylchlythyr a gofynnwyd am adborth. Ymhlith yr awgrymiadau a gafwyd oedd ychwanegu oriel o luniau'r aelodau. Gwireddwyd hynny, gan gynnwys gwahoddiad i'r Cyn-Ddisgyblion gynnig lluniau. Atodwyd tudalen newyddion hefyd a chaiff darllenwyr gyflwyno eitemau i'w cynnwys.

Oddiar y Cylchlythyr diwethaf, rwyf wedi derbyn lluniau o Ysgol Pen-lan gan Bram Humphries; asiwyd dau at ei gilydd i ffurfio'r llun a ddefnyddir ar hafan y wefan, ac mae'r gweddill ar yr oriel.

Fel arfer, gwahoddir Cyn-Ddisgyblion i gyflwyno cyfraniadau ar gyfer y Cylchlythyr nesaf (cyfeiriad y Golygydd ar y tudalen olaf). Gallant amrywio o lythyr neu baragraff byr i erthygl o dudalen neu fwy. Mae cylchlythyron blaenorol ar gael ar y wefan.

Events of 2012

On the 14th April 2012 the 63rd **Annual Reunion Dinner** at the George Hotel was attended by 55 members and guests, an unusually low number. Several apologies for absence due to illness were received by Secretary Tom Protheroe. After extending a warm welcome to members and guests,

chairman Glyn Powell announced that he wished to retire from the post of chairman in 2013. He then invited President Shaun Gallagher to give his address. In his address the President said he wanted to talk about the theme “learning is a lifelong process”, and to take a tongue in cheek look at some moments in his life when he learned some important principles. He used amusing anecdotes to illustrate several principles he had learned in the world of education, as a pupil, teacher, senior school manager and beyond. The first was “always tell the truth; whilst it may not get you off the hook (and have painful consequences, e.g. a caning as in his case!), it would earn the trust and



respect of your peers”. His second principle was “as you sow, so you shall reap”, and the third was “ignore the voice of youth at your peril”. He concluded with the wise advice: “keep learning, keep interested, and consequently, keep young”, pointing out that, like a stunted hawthorn on a wind and rain lashed mountainside, we are shaped by the environment into which we are born, and by the people who share that environment. Vice President Wyndham Jones (on left in photo) proposed a vote of thanks to the President for his address, and then received the chain of office from the President.

Annual Awards Evening

Representatives of the Old Boys attended this event at the High School on 17th July 2012 when prizes were awarded to pupils for their performance during the school year. As usual the prize-giving was interspersed with performances of drama, dance, literature and music, including orchestra, string ensemble, brass ensemble, big band, and clarinet solo. There was an Olympic theme and the evening got off to an impressive start with the Chariots of Fire theme music by the orchestra, accompanied by a dramatic depiction of racing in slow motion. This culminated in the appearance of an Olympic torch (unlit) provided by torch bearer Mr John; hence some Brecon citizens got to see a real torch (Brecon was not on the torch route). Then poems written by nine year 7 pupils about the Olympics were read out and were later displayed throughout Brecon during the Olympics.

President Wyndham Jones presented the Old Boys prizes (see list of winners below) and the photo shows some of the recipients with the President (from left: Kim Ijham, Pratibha Rai, Francis Bolt,



Keron Gurung, Sam Eggins, Joe Sissons, Lois Flower, and Frances Smith.)

The remaining prizes were presented by the special guest, Mr Stephen Perks, former head of Brecon High School. In his address he referred to his time as coach of the Great Britain 4x100 m men’s relay team in the 2004 Olympics. He highlighted some of the qualities to which the Olympics aspires - friendship, equality, determination, and said that success depended on hard work and dedication. He described in some detail

the final of the 4x100m race in which the Americans were favourites to win. He had calculated that team GB needed a 1.5 metre lead after three legs to have a chance of beating the Americans for whom Maurice Green, who had run the 100m in 9.87 seconds to win the bronze medal, would run the last leg. Thanks to a poor baton transfer by the Americans, team GB had a lead after three legs, and Mark Lewis-Francis managed to hold on to win by 0.01 second! In his team talk before the final Mr Perks had told his runners they should seize the opportunity. This was what pupils at Brecon High School should do - seize the opportunity to do well.

Winners of Old Boys' Prizes

Cliff Carr Prize	Tom Lowe
Geoffrey Meredith Powell Prize (senior)	Pratibha Rai
Geoffrey Meredith Powell Prize (junior)	Frances Smith
Evans KS3 Maths Prize	Keron Gurung
Evans KS4 Maths Prize	Tom James
Evans KS5 Maths Prize	Khim Ijam
Evans Art Prize	Frances Bolt
Evans Science/Business Prize	Joe Sissons
Evans KS3 Language Prize	Lois Flower/Shawn Gilbert
Evans Intercultural Understanding Prize	Pratibha Rai
Evans KS4 Geography Prize	Grant Bragg
Evans Most Improved History Prize	Dafydd Pearce

The **2012 Memorial Service** was held at Brecon High School on Friday, 9th November. Chairman of the OBA, Glyn Powell, headed a group of a dozen old boys who joined the whole school in a Service of Remembrance to mark the anniversary of the armistice of 11th November 1918. The solemn and moving service was led by the new Headmaster, Michael Morris, and included a number of readings by senior pupils. Later the names of those who had been killed in World War I and II were read out by Sergeant Money, representing the military and David Gittins (standing in for Vice-President, Tom Protheroe) representing the Old Boys' Association.

After the sounding of the Last Post, a minute's silence and the Reveille, wreaths were laid on the memorial plaque by President, Wyndham Jones, on behalf of the OBA, and by the Deputy Headboy and the youngest pupil on behalf of the school. This was followed by another inspirational address by the Rev. Michael Hodgson who contrasted the various conflicts of the last century with those in modern day Iraq and Afghanistan in a way which all those present were able to relate to.

(Report on Memorial Service by David Gittins)

Biographical Notes

Tom Protheroe (1953-61) - Vice President

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 (although dad, a bus driver with the Western Welsh, was in Vaughan!). After studying at University College, Swansea for a degree in Metallurgy he worked in the development labs of Tube Investments but later switched to pharmaceuticals. Starting as a salesman Tom spent 30 years with the Wellcome Foundation, mostly in marketing and completed his career as a European executive.

Brecon High School's New Head

The new headmaster at Brecon High School is the Rev. Michael Morris, a classics scholar, linguist, Welsh learner and cleric - a veritable 'man for all seasons'. A former pupil of Llanelli Boys' Grammar School, he studied Latin, Greek and French at 'A' Level before proceeding to read Theology and Classics at Oxford and subsequently at Cambridge. An initial period working at a



community home in education was followed by a post as part-time chaplain at a Borstal, during which time he supplemented his income as a securicor driver. He then became a stipendiary parish priest in Brixton where he witnessed the street riots of 1985, teaching at a Brixton inner city comprehensive during the same period. Stirred by 'hiraeth' and with a young family, he and his teacher wife Denise returned to Wales where he took up a part-time lectureship in philosophy, theology, Latin, Greek and Hebrew at the University of Wales, Lampeter. It was a position which he combined with being vicar with oversight of a number of local parishes. He then moved from the university to Lampeter Comprehensive School as Head of Sixth Form with responsibility for RE throughout the school. It was during this period that he was to attain fluency in Welsh. At the time

of his appointment to Brecon Mr Morris was Deputy headmaster at Aberaeron Comprehensive as well as being an unpaid minister of the Church in Wales with responsibility for a small rural parish in Carmarthenshire. We extend a sincere welcome to him in his new post.

Prifathro newydd Ysgol Uwchradd Aberhonddu yw'r Parch Michael Morris, cyn-ddirprwy yn Aberaeron. Cyn-ddisgybl Ysgol Ramadeg y Bechgyn Llanelli, fe astudiodd Diwinyddiaeth a'r Clasuron ym Mhrifysgolion Rhydychen a Chaergrawnt. Wedi cyfnod fel caplan yn Brixton fe ddychwelodd i Gymru fel darlithydd yn Llanbedr Pont Steffan a gwasanaethu fel offeiriaid dros nifer o eglwysi'r cylch ar y cyd. Yna fe fu'n athro yn Ysgol Uwchradd Llanbed fel pennaeth y chweched dosbarth yn ogystal â bod yn gyfrifol am addysg grefyddol dros yr ystod. Mae Mr Morris yn addysgwr amryddawn o brofiad eang - ysgolar, ieithydd, dysgwr rhugl a chlerigwr. Estynnwn groeso didwyll iddo i'r swydd.

Glyn Powell

Come back Gordon Eckley - all is forgiven

In the summer of 1958 the Empire (now Commonwealth) games were held in Cardiff.

In that summer of '58, my brother Gerry and I were selected, with an army of other young athletes, to carry the baton containing the Queen's message for the opening of The Games.

In that summer of '58 Gordon Eckley pounded me into the ground in the mile event at the Inter House Athletics Championship at Dering Lines.

I will never forget that proud, fine summer, but, more importantly, I will never forget Gordon Eckley. He was small, smiling, eminently likeable, a very talented all round sportsman, a year behind me and in Theo'...but I suppose not everyone could be in Siddons!!! He, myself and Gerry were three of eight runners representing their four houses in the mile event. Gerry, the County Champion and County record holder, was clearly unbeatable, and the race realistically was for second place. I was a sprinter and field event athlete, but, strong and fit, I felt quietly confident of second place...and relative victory.

The day was fine and sunny with just a light breeze. Conditions were perfect. The whole school watching hushed, as we came to our marks. The starting pistol cracked into the quiet air and Gerry surged out. Flowing over the ground, he was the consummate miler, the next Herb Elliot, and to my amazement Gordon went with him. Within two and a half laps I was back in confident striking distance of second place, enjoying the crunch of the Dering Lines cinders under my feet, but also painfully aware that those crunching strides were not closing the final gap of about three yards. When I surged, Gordon surged with appalling constancy and when, off that final bend, I surged again, I did so knowing the irresistible, irrepressible iron force that was little (younger) Gordon Eckley was not to be beaten out of second place.

Defeat is one thing, but defeat which lasts a lifetime is quite another. Those of you, who had the pleasure of knowing Gerry and knowing him well, may remember his enigmatic smile, whimsical (Irish) sense of humour, and succinct way with words. So it was that, until his death in '96, whenever I fancied my chances with him in some sporting or remotely competitive challenge, he would always, with that smile, look me in the eye, place his hand gently on his little brother's shoulder and say fondly, quietly but earnestly... "Just remember little Gordon Eckley".

I always have, and always will... so, wherever you are Gordon Eckley, come back, all is forgiven. (OBA dinner is at the George Hotel Brecon, Saturday 6th April 2013)

Shaun Gallagher (1952 – 59)

Growing

I read somewhere that Aristotle made out that there was only a certain number of ways in which a story or play can be written. I am sure that one of those ways is to set up a situation whereby a character views a series of actions or hears a conversation between a number of people and as a result of that follows a certain course of action...only to witness or hear the same event through the eyes of a different person which gives a whole different meaning to what has happened. I start with this rather tortuous introduction by way of explaining what happened to me at Brecon Boys Grammar school in the autumn term of 1946.

The C.W.B. results of that year told me that somehow I had scraped my foreign language examination, French, and so was awarded a very minor certificate. This was the second year I had sat the Board having ploughed the 1945 set of exams quite miserably. I offer no excuses save that I was ill prepared by myself favouring the delights offered by the local picture houses and a love of sport participation.

Towards the end of the 1946 summer holiday my future looked quite bleak. Thinking, at that time, that the small town of Brecon held no attraction for me I was determined to leave and follow my star elsewhere. However my immediate future was to get a job, any job, and sit tight until I came across an attractive post. How lucky I was, then, to be offered the post of headmaster's secretary by Mr Jacob Morgan at my old school, especially so when I was able to take time off to play for Siddons on a Wednesday afternoon and for the school on Saturday morning.

Please read little into the title of headmaster's secretary for on reflection I was nothing more than a messenger boy at first with a few odd tasks added to it. One such task was the making of the staff coffee each morning, this saw me in the staff room, some twenty minutes before break, heating a large saucepan of milk and then stirring coffee granules into it to make a satisfactory brew. This was in the days before instant granulated coffee and had to be stirred in continually for a good number of minutes. Twice, through my carelessness, the saucepan boiled over and below the little gas trivet was the shelf that the staff put the pupils' exercise books for marking...can you imagine the mess I tried to clean up. Fortunately a staff member helped me and explained to the others what had happened excusing my behaviour.

Generally speaking the staff accepted me as a necessary adjunct to school life.

I managed to steer a safe course through the daily school activity. Mr Morgan was kindness itself. All new tasks assigned to me were explained and monitored by him and so I gradually started to appreciate how a school was run. One such task was to inspect the classroom register daily and take from it the necessary figures to build up a statistical analysis of attendance, record the same, and take the resultant percentage figures to Mr Leonard, the Secretary of Breconshire Education whatever in his office on the Watton Mount.

When the phone rang and Mr. Morgan was teaching maths to the fifth form... he delighted in those sessions...I either took a message or monitored the class while Mr Morgan dealt with it. Looking after a class was a very big responsibility and I think it was my position as secretary that got me through for the boys were mindful of the little 'power' I had.

Shall we now step backward in time some two and half years to a history lesson taken by Mr Inglis. It was during the morning and Doug was making his opening gambit...no not the one about 'chipping or flaking two pieces of stone together' that was for the first years and again not the one about Alfred the Great who burned the cakes in the grate and so was a great man, that was for the following year. No the third year was Tudor and Stuarts and I found that very interesting, HOWEVER on the morning in question I gave out an ill timed yawn, it was a very loud yawn quite involuntary, but nevertheless could be construed as boredom. Doug took immediate exception to this and ordered me to leave the room and go to the headmaster's office. Shamefaced I did and went to see Mr Morgan who was not there. Musing over the classroom event I decided that Doug acted rashly and didn't really mean for me to report to the head, and so I took myself off to the toilets and there waited for the bell to go at the change of the lesson when I would return to IVF and take my seat. This was not to be. Doug came into the toilet and found me. I had disobeyed him and he was furious. He took me to the headmaster explained what had happened seeing my yawn as a direct criticism of his work and so I was caned. Relationships between Doug and I became restrained, as it did with one or two other staff members who delighted in letting me know that they knew what had happened. No names and no pack drill.

It was in the summer term of the following year that I sensed a return of entente cordiale with the history department. It so happened that my ability to bowl a straight slow bowl in cricket picked up a number of wickets for the school team as we visited Abergavenny, Merthyr, Builth Wells and Ystradgynlais. We were a formidable unit and the teacher in charge, one Mr Douglas Inglis, was very pleased with the way the team played. Not overly so, but you could sense satisfaction. However I was still wary of him and did not relax in his company, unlike Mr. Elwyn Thomas whom I warmed to very much indeed.

So you see when I returned to school as an employee I was carrying quite an amount of emotion regarding members of the staff and I was a boy entering a man's world. I listened to the staff's conversations - about boys I knew (never to divulge anything overheard). I observed deep friendships. I noted concern for the well being of others and as I relaxed and grew happy in their company I realised the difference between the classroom authority figure and the staff room camaraderie.

I had spare time during the day and filled it with literature. The teacher in charge of the school libraries at all ages introduced me to the likes of Hornblower, Young Renny of the Mazo de la Roche Canadian family series and Graham Greene and talked to me about my readings and pointed out general themes, thus opening up new vistas for me. Other staff members sought me out so that I could help them and I was pleased to do so.

I left school in the spring of 1947, when the whole country was in the grip of very severe winter weather, and went to London for six weeks' initial training as a meteorological assistant along with

a fellow past pupil John Winston. The experience was one I longed for, the London life.....but occasionally I thought back to the school and the staff room with affection.

Little wonder, then, that I spent thirty eight years of my working life in and around the schoolroom.

David Morgan (1941-46)

Oh, the teacher in charge of the school libraries and the teacher who cleared up my coffee mess.....Mr Douglas Inglis.

The Joys of Practical Chemistry

It was the enjoyment of practical chemistry that led me to choose to specialise in chemistry and eventually to choose a career in that subject. Practical chemistry always seemed to be popular at school. What are your recollections of chemistry in the lab? My earliest recollections include the beautiful colours produced by certain metals in the Bunsen burner flame – later the basis for identifying the metal ion in the spot tests, and generating hydrogen gas by the reaction of zinc metal with dilute hydrochloric acid, and collecting the gas in a gas jar. This was followed by a test with a lighted splint which usually gave a satisfying “pop” of varying intensity depending on how much of the lighter-than-air hydrogen had escaped.

Some experiments were demonstrated by the teacher, e.g. the rekindling of a glowing splint in oxygen, the reaction of elements such as molten sulphur in oxygen, and the violent reaction of sodium metal with water. Acid-base neutralisation was studied by titrations, simple experiments though detecting the end point could be tricky when the indicator involved a change from one colour to another. The easiest indicator to use was phenolphthalein which changed colour from colourless to pink when titrating an acid with a strong base like sodium hydroxide. The calculations could be tricky, involving as they did in the 50s the concept of normality.

One usually had to write a balanced equation for any reaction involved in an experiment. So for the reaction of sodium with water the reactants would be Na and H₂O The products, deduced in the experiment to be a gas which ignited and an alkaline solution as shown by litmus paper (red turned blue), should be hydrogen and an alkaline product containing sodium and oxygen, namely sodium hydroxide (not sodium oxide). So the equation is: $\text{Na} + \text{H}_2\text{O} = \text{H}_2 + \text{NaOH}$ (but it needs balancing! Can you do it?)

Chemistry labs are often associated with smells, sometimes unpleasant ones. My A-level chemistry classes were at the girls’ school where the teacher was Mr Rees, a lovely elderly chain-smoking man with nicotine-stained fingers. Before he arrived in the lab for a practical class, sometimes someone (who shall be nameless) couldn’t resist the temptation to make carbylamine from chloroform. The stink permeated the corridors nearby and was not popular!

Practical chemistry classes of course require a suitably equipped laboratory. In Glyn Powell’s book “Brecon Secondary Schools, 1896-1996” reference is made to experiments in a sink at the top of the stairs by Chemistry teacher John James Morgan, who was appointed in 1897. Teaching practical chemistry has been greatly affected by Health and Safety Legislation, one simple example being the avoidance of benzene and chloroform as solvents.

A demonstration can be an effective way of emphasising a point and in my university lectures to first year students one impressive demo concerned the inflammability of hydrocarbons. The behaviour of hydrocarbons when exposed to a flame depends on the presence of oxygen (or air).

When a tin can containing a 1cm diameter hole in the bottom and a small hole in the lid was filled with gas (methane) and the gas emerging from the top was lit, it first burned quietly with a small flame. Air entered the tin through the bottom hole and when the air/gas ratio reached a certain critical value a very loud explosion blew the lid several feet into the air!

Nowadays many experiments can be conducted virtually on a computer. Examples include titration, and assembling apparatus for a distillation and controlling the heat input during distillation. However in my opinion there is no substitute for a live experiment and having the satisfaction, for example of persuading a reaction product to crystallise and then recrystallising it to produce beautiful needles or prisms with a sharp melting point – a measure of a pure (organic) product.

J Michael Williams

The School Cap and Other Tales from School

I attended the Brecon Grammar School in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Despite the years of austerity and the somewhat decrepit state of the building, my memories are of a happy time there. I attribute this to the small size of the school, which encouraged a close friendly atmosphere, and the agreeable bunch of boys who were my contemporaries. Also the teaching staff, under a veneer of severity and under the influence of the gentlemanly Jacob Morgan, were relatively liberal and kindly by the standards of that time, in contrast to the horrifying experiences of some of my ex-public school golfing friends. Incidentally Jake's proud boast was that he knew his boys both past and present and had little need of written records. On one unique occasion I remember him rushing with great consternation to a teacher in class when he couldn't recall a former pupil (surname: Jones) who had approached him for a reference.

Released from the constraints of the three Rs of my elementary school, I particularly enjoyed the variety of subjects in my first year in the Dungeon, as was nicknamed the bottom classroom next to the woodwork room. Obviously we were the lowest orders in the school in more ways than one, glorying in the term 'guttersnipes', as Doug Inglis famously described us. There Dr Gruffydd Price (our very own Mr Chips) read some of the more exciting excerpts from English Literature which led me to a lifelong love of reading. In the second year 'Colonel' Williams (the French master, who had also been inveigled into teaching English) weekly encouraged us to make speeches, with the promise of all of 1 shilling for the best effort - excellent practice for reciting poetry in the school eisteddfod. Cliff Giles's bar breaker experiment, which demonstrated the expansion of metals, involved a lethal piece of iron flying across the chemistry laboratory, while we preserved life and limb in diving for cover under the benches. No Health & Safety glasses and helmets in those days! As I progressed through the school I found Doug Inglis's History lessons increasingly interesting and amusing. Apparently he was the only teacher in existence who prepared his jokes as well as his lessons. Ewart Davies's interpretation of the poem St Agnes Eve, with a voyeuristic young man spying on his girlfriend's bedroom (although I don't think John Keats quite described it in this way) has become embedded in school folklore. He certainly had the knack of conveying a feeling for words in English Literature. Ewart was later promoted to the headship off Builth Wells Comprehensive School, when he became a personal golfing friend, as I was teaching nearby. At the age of eighty he spoke brilliantly, without a note, as guest of honour at our Old Boys' Dinner.

We had a healthy mix of mature masters with those who had served in the recent war. The former included Lewis Lewis, who had been as officer in the Great War of 1914-18. I have it on good authority, from someone who was there, that when he arrived at the school he was supervising his

first football match. Some of the more audacious of the assembled players invited him to join in the game, believing that they could teach this young man a thing or two about the art of the noble game. Little did they know that Lewis was a talented outside forward who then proceeded to dazzle with amazing dribbling and feinting, making complete fools of the boys, who looked on with amazed respect. Thus was our hero's reputation at the school established for evermore.

One of the Second World War officers was John Phippen, a dashing young bachelor who impressed us with his open-topped MG. I can see him now driving with style down Cradoc Road from the school with college scarf fluttering behind him. I remember him as a patient and remarkably lucid teacher of Maths, who was very understanding of our shortcomings in that area. On one occasion he found some sixth formers in one of the local hostelrys. To their enormous relief, and as a man of the world, he tactfully advised them to retreat into the other bar, while he would pretend he hadn't seen them. Years afterwards I attended his birthdays at his home in Barry until his 91st year. He confided that his happiest and most satisfying contribution to the war was organizing a hospital for a battle that never happened. Another was Duncan Jones, affectionately known as ('Flying Officer') Kite owing to his impressive moustache. He once held us spellbound with a talk about his experiences serving in the Far East, with much mention of venomous snakes and crocodiles, which seemed to us more terrifying than the enemy.

One peculiarity of the old grammar schools was its obsession with the school cap. In the first year 'Colonel' explained to us (quite rightly) that it was good manners to raise our caps to ladies and members of staff, and that we should proudly wear our caps to and from school. In the sixth form we briefly rebelled against this rule by deciding to enter the school wearing all sorts of eccentric headgear. Geraint Hughes (who was later to hold a distinguished position in the Church of Wales) led us with a rabbit fur hat, David Jones (who became the headmaster of a successful comprehensive school in Northamptonshire) wore his trademark trilby, while rumour has it that I donned a silly French-style beret (quite untrue of course!). Unfortunately, as we climbed the steps leading to the prefects' entrance, we were met by an amazed-looking Doug Inglis walking the other way. I suspect he was privately amused, as there were no repercussions. In contrast, it was considered *de rigueur* not to wear the cap indoors, and I remember those who forgetfully entered the Dungeon in this way being reminded with the chant 'lid! lid!' Years later, when I was teaching in a grammar school in Somerset, I was being given a lift by two senior masters when the car we were travelling screeched to an abrupt halt, as they furiously gesticulated to a sixth former. I wondered what dreadful crime he had committed. Had he set the school on fire? Or, worse, had he failed to hand in his History essay? No! He was merely peacefully walking home capless.

I recall the upstairs storeroom, which was the repository for all sorts of evil-smelling sports gear. We were mystified by one of our fellow sixth formers seemed to be spending an inordinate amount of time there lacing up our leather footballs and applying them with layers of dubbin. It was only some time afterwards that we discovered that this was a refuge used by girls from the neighbouring school for carrying out Physics experiments.

In recent years one indirect advantage of being an old boy of the school has been the pleasure of having golfing house matches with my school contemporaries Peter Holt and David ('Ginger') Jones, as we lived within easy driving distance of each other in the eastern part of England. This included annually playing a round at each of our respective courses and golfing holidays. On one happy day David and I captained the senior sections in a match between our respective golf clubs, when David rendered the pre-prandial grace in Welsh, much to the bafflement and amusement of

the assembled English. Sadly David died some two years ago, but Peter and I remember him with warmth, playing for a trophy in his memory, inscribed with the names of our three school houses. (Unfortunately we were never able to find a golfer from Theo.)

Finally, on a personal note, I feel most grateful for the education I received at Brecon Boys' Grammar School. It set me up for further studies at the University of Wales, at Cardiff and Aberystwyth. Perhaps, most importantly of all, unlike Shakespeare's schoolboy, I can honestly say I never went 'unwillingly to school'. And, yes, I still raise my hat to ladies.

John Llewellyn (1946-53)

Brecon Grammar School and Beyond: John James (JJ) Price (1951 – 55)

After the 2012 reunion dinner Mike Peters 'kindly' suggested to the editor that I might be prepared to write a piece about my time at Brecon Grammar School and what happened to me afterwards in the Royal Navy. One could just about write a book about 'afterwards', so I've tried to be brief in just describing my five odd years as an Artificer before going to Dartmouth.

I entered 2A in September 1951 passing in about 12th place and pretty much remained at about that for most of my time there. During my schooldays, overall, I simply took things as they came and tending to blame any shortcomings on myself rather than the system. Certainly I played the fool to my disadvantage, but it must have been some time towards the end of the 4th form that one side of the brain said to the other, 'look enough fooling about, get stuck in and work'. That summer the message was reinforced when someone I knew quite well and a year ahead ended up with a solitary 'O' level, and that in Welsh. I used to have cold sweats that that could be my fate too. In the event I obtained 4 'O's and by that time had decided to join the Royal Navy as an Artificer (Technician) Apprentice. Family circumstances in any case precluded any thought of University. As I could not have the three day selection interview at Portsmouth for the January Apprentice entry until the Autumn, I returned to Cradoc Road to retake English Language and Chemistry, under the scheme introduced that year allowing retakes in the Autumn term. I attended all 5th form lessons in Chemistry and in the shortest time found it all terribly simple. Unknowingly I had discovered a shortcoming, which inconveniently surfaced from time to time later, that I was a relatively slow learner academically due to a poor memory for facts and figures – and names too as it happens! I passed my re-sits.

In January 1956 I joined HMS FISGARD at Plymouth, for Part 1 Training for all Artificer Apprentices. We were to spend four terms there before moving on to complete the four years of shore based Artificer Apprentice training at specialist Part 2 Establishments. FISGARD was run on boarding school lines with Chief Petty Officer Apprentices and Petty Officer Apprentices selected from the senior term acting as Prefects – but with the backing of Naval Discipline! So began four years of training ashore covering academic subjects, skill of hand and workshops, parade and leadership as well as physical and personal development. All was aimed at going into the Fleet as Junior Artificers (Corporal equivalent) for the fifth year of training and in my case, as an Engine Room Artificer (ERA), then as a Petty Officer with Boiler Watch-keeping and Main Machinery Operating Certificates to be advanced to Chief Petty Officer (Colour Sergeant) at the age of about 23. Chief Petty Officer Engine Room Artificers kept watches as the Chiefs of the Watch, the senior rating in charge of the Main Propulsion Machinery at sea. Artificers also maintained and repaired all machinery in the Engine Room Department.

Artificers had a promotion system quite separate from other Naval Ratings and were on higher pay scales. ERAs were also entitled to their own living space (mess) at sea. Apprentices wore the same type of uniform as Petty Officers and later as Junior Artificers lived in the Petty Officers Mess. Quite early in my time at FISGARD I realised that as I was usually in about the first three in the various examinations, I had probably joined at the wrong level. The next level though was Dartmouth and I judged that my chances of passing the Admiralty Interview Board (AIB) for a place there were very slim. I felt that I needed more time in the system before that and set my sights on the Upper Yardman scheme of promotion which happened not long after completion of Apprentice training. The term Upper Yardmen comes from the days of sail when the best sailors who manned the upper yards were so termed. So with that idea in mind I did not apply to take the Admiralty Interview Board in my fourth term. One or two usually tried and the occasional one passed. Little did I know then that many years later I, as a Captain, would spend two fill-in appointments as a President of the Board!

At FISGARD training continued and at the end of the third term, out of the Artificer Branches of Electrical, Radio, Ordnance, Air, Shipwright and Engine Room I chose the latter and opted to be a fitter and turner rather than a coppersmith or a boiler maker. The Engine Room Branch, later called the Marine Engineering Branch, attracted me because it both operated and maintained its machinery. In my fourth term I became a Petty Officer Apprentice and was given charge of our Division's New Entry (First Term) dormitory.

In April 1957 I joined HMS CALEDONIA, for Part 2 Training for Apprentices at Rosyth in sight of the Forth Bridge. There I progressed from 5 Class (or Term) through to 12 Class and was identified as an Upper Yardman (Potential Officer) Candidate. Seldom did an End of Term Prize Giving go by without one or two prizes coming my way. In my penultimate term I again became a Petty Officer Apprentice. At the end of that term a number of us were very unexpectedly called before The Captain (Commanding Officer) to be told that the Admiralty had decided to run a three week course at Portsmouth to prepare selected ratings from all parts of the Navy for the AIB, which those on the course would sit at the end of it. We had been selected to attend it.

Those on the course in Portsmouth were drawn from all branches of the Navy. From the very first I enjoyed the atmosphere, our treatment as Potential Officer Candidates and being out of the Apprentice system, to listen to lectures on the wider Navy subjects and Current Affairs. It was certainly a novelty on the parade ground to be taught sword drill rather than rifle drill. Three minute snap talks and group problem solving exercises were in the syllabus as was an initiative test. My test was to get to the Mermaid Theatre in London and then come back to give a talk about it. We eventually sat the AIB which was chaired by a Rear Admiral. The Board observed Group Discussions, heard three minute talks and marked an initiative test in the Gymnasium involving getting from one platform to another using spars, planks and ropes, sometimes over water, with each candidate in turn being the leader. My leadership task was to recover an enemy radar set from the other side of the water, and not being much good at these things I nevertheless had the greatest luck in that whilst we were trying this a friend in the group said if he could be swung bent over a spar suspended from two particular ropes he could reach down and pick up the radar set and be swung back with it. This we did and suddenly it was all over and done with. My inspired friend eventually became a nuclear trained submariner and retired as a Captain. There were then two interviews, one with a Psychologist and one with the Board with each Board Member having an allotted time and subject/aspect to cover. Late in the afternoon the Board called us in individually to hear the result. In my case I was told that they quite liked what they saw but that the decision was

that I should go back and finish my training and then go to sea for eight months and come back to take the Board again in a year.

I returned to CALEDONIA for my last term of training to find that a Petty Officer Apprentice in charge of a 12th Term Dormitory had been disgraced (demoted) because he had allowed junior term apprentices into the dormitory. A system of fagging had always existed in CALEDONIA but a couple of years earlier (during my first term in fact) it had got out of hand with a great deal of organised bullying. One of my term had been particularly targeted and had tried to slit his wrists. Some senior apprentices ended up in cells and the whole Divisional Organisation was changed so that Divisions comprised Apprentices from one term only and fagging was outlawed rather than mildly tolerated. As a returning Petty Officer Apprentice it was my rather poisoned chalice to take over charge of a 12th Term dorm. The term progressed and it came time for us to be rated Leading Apprentices, Pass Out and go to sea. I Passed Out second and therefore would have been second to have pick of all the ships that our term were being sent to. Unfortunately, Upper Yardman Candidates were always to be sent to larger ships in which there was an Instructor Officer and so instead of joining some smart frigate on an interesting foreign station, I was to join the Aircraft Carrier HMS VICTORIOUS (VIC), which was not at sea but in a dry dock refitting in Portsmouth.

In January 1960 I joined HMS SULTAN in Gosport, Portsmouth where about 15 of us were to be accommodated until VIC was ready for her ships company to move back on board. We were employed in the workshops refitting machinery from VIC and later on board frigates as mates for Chief Petty Officer Artificers. Obviously this was not going to give me the sort of sea experience that I needed to grow sufficiently for my next AIB and so I saw my Divisional Officer and pointed out that the Admiral at the AIB had said I should go to sea and that was what I wanted to do. Subsequently I was interviewed by a panel of officers chaired by an Instructor Commander and in no time I was on my way to join HMS SAINTES, a battle class destroyer – at sea? – no - in dry dock in Devonport. But, I lived ashore in the Petty Officers Mess and I was the only Junior ERA on board the SAINTES. I made a number of friends and began to enjoy life ashore in Plymouth. Eventually SAINTES finished her refit and went to sea and I enjoyed beginning to do what I had been trained for, such as running up machinery and refitting/repairing whatever came along. I enjoyed getting up early in the morning if we were sailing, to assist the Chief of the Watch prepare the main propulsion machinery for sea. We spent time at Portland working up and had a visit to Dartmouth. I was fascinated to see all these Cadets and Midshipmen around and on the river in every type of craft. In a while VIC was afloat and getting her systems ready for sea and I was ordered to return. Before I left SAINTES I was, following an interview with the Engineer Officer, awarded my Auxiliary Watch-keeping Certificate, a pre-requisite for advancement to Acting Petty Officer at the end of the year. The Captain, an ex Training Commander at Dartmouth, regretted that there had been insufficient opportunities to provide any officer training for me.

Back in VIC we eventually went to sea where I kept watch as the boiler room ERA in the centre boiler room, four hours on and eight hours off. Sounds pretty easy but everything to do with life had to be fitted into those eight hours off. That period with the debilitating noise and heat in the machinery spaces and seldom more than four hours sleep at a stretch did have the beneficial effect from then on of my rarely having difficulty in sleeping anywhere! My time to return to the AIB passed with a brief explanation from my Divisional Officer that there had not been enough time for relevant training. In the event in January 1961 I appeared before the Captain to be advanced to Acting Petty Officer Artificer and having done so he commented that I probably knew what my future was. I remember saying that I did not, that the Admiral at the AIB had said that I should

return in one year, which was the previous September and I did not know where I was.

The result was absolutely startling, as it can be when someone as powerful as the Captain of an aircraft carrier says that this will not do. Within hours the third most senior Engineer Officer in the department was my new Divisional Officer, I was being interviewed by the Senior Instructor Officer to be told that no Upper Yardman who had been looked after by him had ever failed the AIB and that he would fix some officer training for me. So, in no time I was watch-keeping on the Bridge as the Third Officer of the Watch, doing general things like filling in the logs and taking in what it felt like to be a junior officer. I continued my boiler room watches and it was rather bizarre to be at the beck and call of the Machinery Control Room whilst in the boiler room and a little later being called 'Sir' by them when I rang down from the bridge to ask for some information or readings for the log. I was soon told that I would attend the next AIB for possible entry to Dartmouth at Easter, so as VICTORIOUS sailed for South Africa on her way to the Far East I came ashore in Falmouth and returned to the Naval Barracks in Portsmouth to await the start of the next pre AIB course. I eventually attended the AIB, and passed. Some time later I was asked by a friend of mine for advice on how to pass the AIB. The problem was that everyone who fails has a feeling that they know why, but those that pass seldom feel they really know how they passed. Anyway, once over the hurdle who wishes to analyse why?

At Easter 1961 I arrived at Britannia Royal Naval College to join Temeraire Division. The Upper Yardmen were housed up the hill from the main college, in the old hospital which had been renovated to provide accommodation and a Wardroom Mess for them and their training officers. I was soon to realise that I had cruised through my training until now, as the pace at Dartmouth proved to be of a different order of intensity, standards and time management. But I was there and rather pleased to be styled Upper Yardman J J Price and wearing the associated white shoulder flashes and the distinctive gold cap badge of a Naval Officer. If all went well then at the end of the year I would be commissioned as an Acting Sub Lieutenant.

(To be concluded)

Genesis of the OBA

It was at the instigation of Jacob Morgan that a meeting of interested Old Boys was held at Cradoc Road School on Friday 6th January 1950 at which some 50 attended. It was decided to form an OBA having the objectives of "the renewal of friendships, the welfare of the school, and the formation of a bond of union between past and present pupils". The annual subscription was set at 3/6, five yearly at 15/- and life membership at £3. Members who paid up by 31st March were tempted with the perk of a copy of "The Silurian", the school magazine which was being launched that same year. The setting of this early date for enrollment had no supposedly ulterior motive except to ensure the printing of sufficient copies of "The Silurian" for distribution amongst Old Boys. As a member of the 6th Form responsible for the launching of the magazine, I still recall the events of that year.

A committee was formed with Ifor Jones JP as chairman and Councillor F M Thomas as vice-chairman with the additional membership consisting of F B Jones, E B Powell, H S Morgan, R G Davies, H J Leonard, D J Jones, A J Thorogood and J I Golesworthy. In constituting the committee an effort was made to ensure representation from successive decades of scholars and the different districts within the catchment area. For the initial year County Councillor Garnet Morris was elected President with the Headmaster and Stanley E Jenkins as Vice Presidents. H Prosser Roberts

fulfilled the joint offices of Honorary secretary and Treasurer, positions he was to hold until 1956 when he ceased to a member of staff on being appointed Youth and F E Officer for Breconshire. He was succeeded by H Cliff Jones in the joint capacity (1956-60), followed by Aneurin R Williams (1960-64) and subsequently by John Morgan before the offices were separated

The establishment of the OBA was due in no small measure to the herculean efforts of Prosser Roberts who churned out an endless stream of handwritten letters to keep the interest going and that without being harassed by self-inflicted technology. He encouraged, persuaded and cajoled a whole range of contacts which he had established since his appointment to the staff in 1931. In copies of his correspondence there is evidence of a charm, pleasantry and niceties of phrase which must have seemed strange to those former pupils who found him capable of temper tantrums of "Wagnerian" proportions. Prosser Roberts, more than any other single individual, ensured that the venture did not suffer the fate of earlier attempts at the formation of an OBA. In a one off edition of a school magazine in 1926 reference is made to Dr Woosnam's attempt to achieve this objective but without lasting success. However Prosser himself did on occasion express his dismay about the poor early response to his appeal for membership from certain quarters, especially Hay and Talgarth. This prompted him to solicit the good offices of the uncompromising John Golesworthy by inviting him to use his "acknowledged energy and enthusiasm" to rectify the situation. By the end of the first year over 600 Old Boys had been contacted but there persisted real concern that there remained a vast number who could not be traced without the participation and ready cooperation of known former pupils. There was a crusade to salvage the forgotten from the unknown.

From the outset a programme of activities was formulated to supplement the existing long standing soccer and cricket fixtures. An Inaugural Dinner attended by 70 members was held at the Cafe Royal on Friday 26th May at a cost of 6/- per head. L Col Sir John Lloyd MC MA was the guest of honour along with W Emrys Evans, former Director of Education, John F Morgan sub-editor of the Brecon & Radnor Express, Rt Rev the Lord Bishop and David F Candy, head boy. Jack Walters and Gerald James provided impromptu entertainment for no fee, a rare privilege for diners. Then on 27th October an Association dance was held at the Guild Hall, admission 2/6, followed by a joint Christmas reunion dance at the Girls' School for former pupils of both schools. Initial discussions also set in train plans for the provision of a Memorial for the fallen of both World Wars, a proposition that came to fruition in 1951. Through its social and sporting activities the OBA has borne testimony to a sense of belonging and reached the often mundane but unforgettable noises of school life.

Glyn Powell

My Two Years at The Plough "Academy" - 1951-52

At the outset my first problem was my dismal result in the County Scholarship examination as the 11+ was locally known. Owing to an extreme weakness in what were called "Mechanical Problems" in Arithmetic, I ended up with a very low position in the final listing. Indeed, had one candidate not decided to resit the following year, and another to enter Christ College as a day boy, I would not have made it to the Grammar School, at least not at my first attempt.

When I attended an interview with the Headmaster, Jacob Morgan, I was made aware that I would be entering a lower stream called 2W (I never found out what the W stood for). However, Mr. Morgan was at great haste to point out that there were ways of being promoted into the A stream for those who were prepared to work hard. I decided to press forward and join four or five other boys

from my primary school although these went into the A stream. So the sense of academic inferiority was heightened for many of us from the very beginning.

The second shock was to find that there was no accommodation for us at the main school at Cradoc Road so we had to make our way to the annex at the other end of town at the school rooms available at the Plough Chapel. With great irony this establishment was generally called by staff and pupils the Plough Academy. We were only to attend the main school for sport, gymnastics, chemistry and physics where we had access to the laboratories.

As we were apparently considered academically inferior we were not allowed to participate in French or Latin classes whereas Welsh was taught compulsorily to both A and B (that is W) streams. From a purely practical point of view we may have had to do without these two subjects simply because Dr. Price and "Colonel" Williams did not drive and could not rush around from one end of the town to the other. Nevertheless, one also suspected that boys like ourselves were not up to the task of studying either Latin or French.

From a purely personal point of view this limited access to a complete curriculum was to present another problem in later years. Most of the English universities at the time demanded "O" level Latin as a Matriculation requirement, especially for entrance to Arts faculties. The Welsh University Colleges were the exception to this; however, I think one could argue that this was, effectively, a limiting of choice in that application to non Welsh universities was not possible, especially for degrees in Modern Languages. I remember sending for the entrance requirements for Bristol University and not bothering to return the Application Form because I had not studied Latin to "O" level.

Another curious anomaly where the school curriculum was concerned was the compulsory study of Welsh throughout all the classes to "O" level. I think that the intention was to supplement our national heritage by learning the native language, but in my opinion most of the pupils found this language rather difficult in spite of having been born in Wales. Further, it had very little practical application because Welsh was not universally used by the local population. So, in effect, Welsh was not popular with many.

My personal view is that this explains, at least in part the behaviour of some of the Welsh teaching staff which has been recorded in a previous report. I think they at all times thought that the majority of their pupils were highly ungrateful for the opportunity they were being given to learn what was theoretically their native tongue. In reality, of course, it became yet another quite difficult academic subject in something which was going to have no practical use. Lastly, Welsh wasn't the native tongue of the majority, this was obviously English.

Just a few words about the "benefits" of the cane which was used by at least two members of staff who taught at the "Academy". I remember quite clearly after all these years when every boy was subjected to this punishment at the end of a breaktime. A window had been broken, the culprit would not own up so everyone received the cane to make sure he received his just desserts at the expense, of course, of everyone else. I also recall a boy being thumped around the room for not doing his homework. I believe this was followed by a subsequent visit from the boy's father.

In retrospect I cannot say that my two years at the "Academy" were a very happy experience. I suspect that finance was the root cause of the creation of what were, in effect, two separate schools

in one. The War had ended just a few years previously and money for state education was in short supply.

In conclusion, in spite of what is recorded above, was the Plough experience a complete disaster? The answer must be "no". In spite of everything we all got on with things the way they were. We all enjoyed being together and we had good fun from one day to another. In my own case I eventually made my way to the A stream, to University and a successful career in Secondary, Further and Higher Education, but all this is another story.....

A.R.(Roy) Parry

Old Girls' Section

Old Girls have long been welcomed at activities of the Old Boys' Association and contributions to the newsletter are also invited. Jean Willis (née Thomas) contributed to the 2009 edition and below we have a contribution from Anne Davies (née Richards).

Recollections of School Days

I can remember so well that day in February 1947 when I went with great trepidation to sit the scholarship exam for entrance to Brecon Girls' Grammar School. Little did I realise what an influence my education there was to have on my life thereafter.

My years 1947-54 at the Girls' School were extremely happy with Miss Jarvis, the remarkable headmistress, who provided me always with inspiration from her wise headship.

The interests that I was encouraged to develop are still very much part of my life today. My first experience of singing in a choir began in my early years at school. Our music mistress, Miss Ralph, who loved singing herself, was at that time friendly with a well known singer who had connections with the BBC in Cardiff. Soon our newly formed choir was asked to sing on the radio. Our reward for so doing was an outing to see the film *Lassie Come Home* at the Colosseum and afterwards tea at the Cafe Royal (in Brecon, I might add). Later, I joined the Breconshire Youth Choir under the baton of Mrs Ogwen Thomas, the County Music Organiser. I still belong to a choir of one hundred and thirty in Ludlow, Shropshire, and we are in the throes of practising for a performance of Mozart's Requiem.

My love of languages and travel also began during my school days. It was early days after the end of the war, but we were encouraged to form friendships abroad. So it was in the fifties that I spent a month in Germany with my new penfriend, Annemarie. Sixty years on we still visit each other most years. I'm still involved with languages, leading a group for Welsh learners and another for Latin, under the umbrella of U3A (University of the Third Age). Also, I keep up my German conversation with a group of native speakers in South Shropshire. All in all I lead quite a busy life in my retirement and I thank my life in Brecon Girls' Grammar School for that foundation.

Anne Davies (née Richards)

Dr R T Jenkins - eminent scholar

Probably the most eminent master to have served on the staff of Brecon County Boys' School was Dr R T Jenkins, who taught at the school from 1905 to 1919. Though born in Liverpool in 1881 he

was brought up by his maternal grandparents at Y Bala. Here he attended its notable grammar school, Ysgol Tŷ-tan-y-domen”, and, well primed in the Classics, he proceeded to University College, Aberystwyth, and then to Trinity College, Cambridge, taking the LLB and MA degrees. In his fascinating autobiography “Edrych yn ôl” he gives a rather amusing account of how he obtained a post at Brecon. A week after failing with his initial application he received a telegram with the request “can you come temporarily on a weekly basis, one week in the first instance”. He reported in mid January 1905 on a cold day of rain and snow, and had tea with the headmaster, Nathan John (1896-1909), whom he found to be “a perfect fool”. His initial impression of the school building and management was highly critical. His reception by the other members of staff was cool because, mistakenly, they suspected that he was supplanting the highly popular Thomas Butcher, the second master who was on sick leave. However, despite its uncertain beginning, RT’s stay was to extend to 12 years, during which time he taught all the History and Latin as well as Welsh and Greek and some English and French.

Amongst his distinguished pupils were Prof Dr William Rees, Bishop W T Havard, Rev T E Pugh (Trefecca), C A Price (Talgarth), Dr Griff Price, Thomas Rees (Defynnog), Cuthbert Gordon Thomas (Llanfihangel Tallyllyn), D Welstead Williams and John Elwyn Davies. He left Brecon in 1919 to take up a post at Cardiff High School, then moved on to become a lecturer in Welsh History at Bangor in 1930 and subsequently became Professor in 1945. It was with the publication of his “Hanes Cymru yn y Ddeunawfed Ganrif” in 1928 that RT was to make his scholastic mark. It is now regarded as one of our national classics, popular in style but penetrating in its insight into the period. His *magnum opus*, however, amongst his vast volume of publications was “Y Bywgraffiadur Cymreig hyd 1940”, published in 1953, and its English version (Welsh Biographical History up to 1940) in 1959.

Former pupils have testified to their respect for RT although he was an inveterate shunner of bores even to the point of rudeness when sorely tried. He was said to have “had an amazing repertory of goads to the acquisition of learning”. Dr Welstead Williams (1913-1917) wrote that “it is indeed of Mr R T Jenkins (“Jinks” to us) that my memory serves me best, and his personality and character were both deeply impressed upon my mind in those important formative years of long ago. He left on me the impress of a great teacher and profound scholar lessons from R T Jenkins were anything but dull affairs”. I was personally privileged to have met the Emeritus Professor when I was a student at Bangor and to have sat with him on occasions in the history study room at the University Library.

Glyn Powell

Letters to the editor - none received.

Obituaries

Richard Brian Taylor (1953-58)

Although initially intent on becoming a forester, Brian was persuaded to take a post with the MOD at Sennybridge Camp where he was in charge of ammunition. He was a keen sportsman with interests in rugby, soccer, darts and bowls, but cricket was his passion. He was a proficient fisherman and a keen photographer and he generously supported the RSPB and RNLI.

David Ioan Samuel Pritchard (1945-49)

Ioan’s family had to surrender their home on the Epynt when the military took over in 1940. During his schooldays he was a lodger and distinguished himself as an athlete. He held the middle school

high jump record for decades and dominated village sports for years; the pole vault was one of his specialities. On leaving school he became a farm bailiff and a small-holder on Mynydd Illtyd.

Vivian Edward Davies (1944-48)

Vivian, a native of Llandefalle, after completing his school certificate, entered upon a craft apprenticeship as a carpenter before taking up employment in the building industry. He was active within the Trefeca community where he had latterly taken up residence, and had been at one time Mayor of Talgarth.

Owen Tom Price (1935-41)

Owen graduated in Economics and Agricultural Economics from Aberystwyth. After further studies at Oxford and Wisconsin, USA, he joined ICI and later became an Economic Advisor to the World Bank, working in Washington, Iran and Indonesia. He was an eminent academic with BSc (Wales), DPhil (Oxon), MS (Wisconsin), and MA (Oxon) degrees. He returned to Wales for his final years.

David Jeffrey (“Dai Jeff”) Jones (1936-42)

His university studies were interrupted by war service as a Sgt in the RAF in Italy. On his demob he returned to Cardiff and graduated in History and Economics and obtained his Dip. Ed. in 1951. President of the student hostel, he was a robust hard-tackling regular member of the 1st XI. He taught for a short period and then emigrated to Australia becoming lecturer at Bendigo, Victoria.

John Stephen Roderick (1941-45)

On leaving school John returned to work on the home farm, which he eventually took over on his own account. He was an innovative and highly respected farmer, being an eminent Hereford cattle breeder. A member of a number of agricultural co-operatives, he was a regular exhibitor and stock judge at local shows. He was a dedicated churchman and a local leader in his community.

John O. Pugh OBE (1931-36)

John, a native of Hay, on leaving school joined the Ministry of Health. He served in the Royal Navy during the war and then joined the Diplomatic Service, serving in Ghana, Nigeria, Thailand and the Seychelles, where he was appointed High Commissioner. On leaving the Diplomatic Service he was awarded the OBE and became a successful businessman involved with Thai restaurants.

Graham Roblin (1962-68) - staff

Graham, a native of Cwmaman, on leaving school joined the police force and then the RAF before qualifying as a graduate teacher. He taught Maths at Cyfarthfa Grammar School, Brecon Grammar School and King Henry VIII School, Abergavenny. He was an active member of the Cathedral Singers, Brecon Chess Club, RAFA Club, Bowls Club, Rugby Club and Cradoc Golf Club.

Brian (B.R.C.) Williams (1943-48)

A studious and mature pupil, Brian had the rare skill amongst his peers of being able to play the piano. During his final year he studied short hand and typing and then acted as Jacob Morgan's secretary for some years before joining the Education Department, then becoming a lecturer at Coleg Powys. He was Chairman of the Magistrate's Bench for many years and an eminent organist.

David Tecwyn (Tec) Lewis (1933-38)

Tec, a native of Talgarth, on leaving school enlisted in the RAF where he served until the end of the war, attaining the rank of Warrant Officer. On demobilisation he trained as a primary school teacher,

eventually becoming headmaster at Southall, London. He was active in promoting musical events for school children. He was an early member of the OBA and was made Vice President in 2010.

Alexander Gorwin Gibson (1930-36)

As a member of Siddons he was in the same class as Mervyn Jenkins and was known to his peers as "Alec Boy". Initially a miller he subsequently took up farming after service in India in the RAF with Air Dispatch supplying the Chindits behind Japanese Lines. He was a proud Old Boy who served on the committee for many years and was President of the Association in 1996.

Val Pugh (Staff)

A pupil of Maesydderwen school she graduated from University College, Swansea and was appointed as a teacher of Classics at the Girls' Grammar School in the mid 1960s, transferring to Brecon High school on secondary reorganisation in 1971. With a decline of Latin as a traditional subject, she became a primary school teacher at Crughywel for her final years in the profession.

Terence ("Terry") Moses (1955-59)

Terry, a Trallong boy, on leaving school returned home to the farm and later took up farming on his own before turning to contracting. He specialised in roofing and pipe laying and spent periods as a site engineer on projects in Africa. As a competitor in school eisteddfodau he won poetry and prose competitions. His poem "Some day I'll be a prefect" appears in the 1956 edition of the Silurian.

Brian White (1951-54)

Originally from Builth Brian entered Trinity College, Carmarthen after National Service in the RAF and spent the rest of his teaching career in Surrey where he was the youngest to attain a headship. An active Welshman in exile, "Cymro ar wasgar", he was a keen supporter of Wales in the field of sport and achieved a low handicap in golf. He was active in both the NUT and U3A.

Howard Edwards (1941-47)

Howard was known to his contemporaries as "Little Jumbo" to distinguish him from his brother "Big Jumbo", that once dominating figure in school life. On leaving school Howard returned to the home farm at Pencelli Castle and became an eminent and highly successful dairy farmer. Physically powerful, Howard was a regular member of the school soccer team and the cricket team.

David Michael Adami (1957-63)

David, the son of a master at Mount Street School, participated in a range of school activities often achieving premier awards in the Eisteddfod notably in the Maths competition. After graduating in Metallurgy from Swansea University College he entered the Steel Industry attaining a high powered position. He resided at the rear of the Royal Albert Hall though his job involved world-wide travel.

Contact details

For contributions to the next newsletter: editor, Mr J M Williams, 4, Chestnut Avenue, West Cross, Swansea SA3 5NL; Email: williamsjm@mail.com; Tel: 01792 404232.

For enquiries re Old Boys' Association activities, etc.: secretary, Mr Tom Protheroe, 14, Rookery Drive, Nantwich, CW5 7DD; Email: t.protheroe@talk21.com; Tel: 01270 623525.