

***Cylchlythyr Cymdeithas Cyn-Ddisgyblion Ysgol Ramadeg y  
Bechgyn, Aberhonddu  
Mawrth 2016***

***Brecon Grammar School Old Boys' Association Newsletter March 2016***

**Introduction**

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The past year saw the first informal autumn reunion at the Castle Hotel, Brecon. A minority of members had voted for such an event and a dozen members enjoyed the lunch as described on page 4. This will be repeated in 2016 after which a decision will be made whether to continue with it. At the AGM in 2015 there were some key changes in the officers. Glyn Powell, having been persuaded the previous year to stay in

post as Chairman for another year, stepped down and was replaced by Vice Chairman David Gittins. Wyndham Jones finally succeeded in retiring from the post of Treasurer and in the absence of a volunteer to take over, Tom Protheroe generously offered to take the post whilst continuing as Secretary. The Association is indeed fortunate to have such a dedicated member as Tom in these posts. Shaun Gallagher was elected Vice Chairman.

Old Boys (or Old Girls) are invited to submit contributions for the next newsletter.

Contributions can be short (like last year's snippets), or a few paragraphs, or up to 3 pages.

There are fewer than usual obituaries in this year's edition. If you know of any Old Boys who have died recently please let us know (contact details are at the end of the newsletter).

Cynhaliwyd yr aduniad anffurfiol hydrefol cyntaf yng Ngwesty'r Castell, Aberhonddu eleni. Roedd lleiafrif o'r aelodau wedi pleidleisio dros digwyddiad o'r math, a mwynhawyd cinio canol dydd fel ag a ddisgrifir ar dudalen 4. Byddwn yn cynnal achlysur tebyg yn 2016, gan benderfynu ar ôl hynny ai parhau gyda hyn ai peidio.

Cafwyd nifer o newidiadau allweddol i'r swyddogion yn y Cyfarfod Cyffredinol yn 2015. Ar ôl iddo gael ei berswadio yn y flwyddyn flaenorol i aros ymlaen am flwyddyn arall fel Cadeirydd, ymddeolodd Glyn Powell a chymerwyd ei le gan yr Is-Gadeirydd David Gittins.

Llwyddodd Wyndham Jones i ymddiswyddo o'r diwedd o'i bost fel Trysorydd, a chan nad oedd gwirfoddolwr i gymryd ei le, cynigiodd Tom Protheroe o'i haelioni i gymryd drosodd tra'n parhau

fel Ysgrifennydd. Mae'r Gymdeithas yn ffodus drosben bod gennym aelod mor ymroddedig â Tom yn y swyddi hyn. Etholwyd Shaun Gallagher yn Is-Gadeirydd.

Gwahoddir cyfraniadau gan Aelodau – Hen Fechgyn a Merched - ar gyfer y cylchlythyr nesaf. Gall y rhain fod yn bytiau bach fel rhai'r llynedd, neu erthyglau hyd at dair tudalen.

Mae llai o ysgrifau coffa na'r arfer yn rhifyn eleni. Os yn gwybod am farwolaethau diweddar ymhlith yr Hen Ddisgyblion, byddwch cystal a rhoi gwybod i ni (manyllion cysylltu ar ddiwedd y Cylchlythyr).

## Events of 2015

The **66th Annual Reunion Dinner** of the Old Boys' Association was held as usual at the George Hotel, Brecon on 11th April with 56 Old Boys, Old Girls and guests present. Glyn Powell warmly welcomed everyone, and after a minutes silence in memory of Old Boys who had died in the past year, followed by grace, dinner was served. Then Glyn announced that he had stood down as Chairman at the earlier AGM, and he wished to thank the committee for their support and considerable effort in keeping the Association going. President Arwyn Davies was then invited to give his address. He referred to being transferred to Brecon from Llandovery where he took his 11+ exam. At Brecon school he met boys from strange sounding places like Talgarth, Crickhowell and Hay on Wye, the latter being the home of his mischief making friend Ralph.

As someone from a Welsh speaking home he found English a challenge, but it was an even bigger challenge later when, having qualified as a vet, he worked in Radnorshire and met farmers who spoke an indecipherable dialect! He reminisced about the school trip to Rome in 1960 when he was led astray by Ralph, in an escapade involving throwing bread rolls from his room across the street into an open window.

When he dropped French to do Physics he was harangued by Harvey Williams (Welsh teacher) and accused of being a disgrace to Wales and to the Welsh nation! As a Welsh speaker he was put in the Welsh 1 class (taught by Dewi Davies), which contained only three pupils, and some lessons were held in the prefects' room where there was on the wall a distracting picture of Bridget Bardot. RI was not a favourite subject and he commented on some of his ancestors who were devout Methodists; they regarded the launch of Sputnik by the Russians in 1958 as "meddling in the work of the Lord". Arwyn was fortunate in having a good Maths teacher, Carwyn Roderick, and a good Biology teacher, Lyn Williams. Biology was an important subject for an aspiring vet and after the



Biology Department was created in 1958 he took one year to complete the O-level course. In the VIth form the class were able to use a store room where tea and coffee could be brewed. Since there was no gas in it, a hose pipe had to be run from the lab to a bunsen burner in the store room. What would Health and Safety think!! Finally when his Geography teacher, Mr Lewis, retired he was replaced by Curtis Grove, who transformed the teaching of Geography but he was a strict disciplinarian!

The photo above shows President David Powell after receiving the chain of office from Arwyn.

On 14th July 2015 the **Brecon High School Awards Evening** was attended by Tom Protheroe (Secretary) and David Powell (President) who presented the Old Boys' Association prizes. They were treated to the usual programme of entertainment that included a harp solo, wind ensemble, brass ensemble, strings and a rock band. Other features were a fashion show and a short drama showing the cruelty of children's relationships from "Blue remembered hills". The OBA were thanked for their contribution and the addition of two new prizes, namely the Lewis/Price cup for academic achievement and the DJ Powell cup for entrepreneurial endeavour (for more information on these two cups see article on page xx).

There were a number of school led achievement prizes awarded and it was evident that the school is multicultural with many Nepalese children taking these prizes. Head teacher Mr Broadbent in his address chose four people who had achieved great things by overcoming barriers to reach their goals, Simon Weston being one. He urged the students to learn from their example and strive to achieve.

The OBA winners were:

Cliff Carr Prize Andrew Hosie

The Geoffrey Meredith Powell Prizes:

Senior prize Samantha Lisle

Junior prize Iestyn Webber (highest quality work of recent years)

Evans KS3 Maths prize Ziggy Annear

Evans KS4 Maths prize Aleksas Kliska

Evans Art prize Isha Gaha

Evans Science/Business prize Jac Powell

Evans Intercultural Understanding prize David Singleton (promoted Anglo-German understanding)

Evans KS4 Geography prize Jacob Shephard

Evans most improved History prize Los Flower

The Lewis/Price cup & prize Lois Flower

The DJ Powell cup & prize Rhiannon Barber (selected for the para-Olympics youth team)



The continued support of Mr Simon Powell and brothers, and Mr & Mrs Evans is gratefully acknowledged.

The pupils in the photo are:

David Singleton,

Jac Powell,

Samantha Lisle,

Iestyn Webber,

Aleksas Kliska,

Rhiannon Barber.

### (Report by Tom Protheroe)

On Saturday 3rd October 2015 the **first informal reunion** was held at the Castle Hotel, Brecon. A dozen Old Boys and partners gathered for a very pleasant lunch (see photo below). We sat at one table and enjoyed a good natter well into the afternoon. We agreed to recommend that this event be repeated next year.



(Castle Reunion: photo by Arwyn Davies)

A dozen Old Boys attended the **Memorial Service** at Brecon High School on 11th November 2015 to remember the former pupils who died in the two world wars, and the new head, Rob Broadbridge, took the service for the first time. After readings by senior pupils, the names of those Old Boys who died in the two World Wars were read out

by Warrant Officer Nick Nesbit (RIFLES) and Vice President Mr Glan Pritchard. Then, after the Last Post and a minute's silence, wreaths were laid by Past President Arwyn Davies and oldest boy, Gwyn Stephens, and the youngest pupil, Jenna Welch. Then school governor Joan Brown spoke about her grandfather's experience in the first World War. He was shot in the chest in France in no-man's land between the German and British lines. He lay on the ground bleeding, fearing that he would never see his family again when a Gurkha soldier crawled on his stomach from the trench and dragged the wounded man back into the trench. He was taken to hospital and patched up but the bullet could not be removed. He survived to the age of 79 with the bullet still in his chest. With the close connection between Brecon and the Gurkha regiment and with many Gurkha children being pupils at the High School, the story had a special resonance.

The Reverend David Thomas began his address by pointing out that since the end of World War II there has scarcely been a period without a war somewhere in the world. Over 16,000 British

members of the Armed Services have been killed since 1945 and many more injured. He said the Armistice Day provided an important opportunity to remind our children and grandchildren of the consequences of war. The photo shows the Old Boys with senior pupils, school governors and the cadets after the service.



(Photo by Miss Gibbs)

### Biographical Notes

#### **Ieuan Glanville Thomas Prichard (1952-1957) - Vice President**

On joining the Cradoc Road school in 1952 Glan spent his initial years in the Plough. On leaving school after O-levels he worked for Brecon auctioneers and then, after a brief period in the finance department of Brecon Rural District Council, he joined Bedfordshire Police where he spent 12 years in uniform and then 18 years in CID. On leaving the Police, Glan worked as a security investigator for Vauxhall Motors and then as a regional property manager. On retiring in 2007 he returned with his wife Sharon to the family home in Senni where a small flock of sheep keep him occupied.



## How the Years have Wings: Part 2

You last met this correspondent as he was about to leave his post at Weston-Super-Mare Boys' Grammar School. At that school I had enjoyed five very rewarding years of growth and experience as a teacher of English and P.E.

The succeeding years took in teaching posts in Oxford and then Stevenage. I left the former as a father of a second young son. I left the latter as a father of a third son. In Oxford I was Head of the English Department in a co-educational grammar school. In Stevenage I was Deputy Head of a Boys' comprehensive school.

And that was it - fifteen years teaching tucked under my belt. In those days it took fifteen years to get from the bottom to the top of the Burnham scale, the teachers' pay scale, and it was always my intention to do the time, and then use it as a basis for something else. I had no intention of becoming a Mr. Chips.

So, I looked around. The Swansea University Department of Education showed an interest, but failed to act on it when they found I had not done any research. Try to imagine it - a full-time teacher in the Seventies "doing research". That showed me the world they were living in I suppose! On a different tack, a book publisher showed an interest. The first words he said, as I sat to be interviewed, were: "I could sack you." That certainly showed me the world he was living in.

Where to go then? Slough. I went back to Slough as an Education Officer, where, fifteen years earlier, I had begun my missionary work - sorry - teaching career! This move had one big advantage. The teachers and headteachers still in Slough knew full well where I had served my apprenticeship - William Penn Secondary Modern School For Boys - and this gave me an enormous amount of what one might call street cred. Even although I was now "From the Office", I was accepted.

My new job was that of Assistant Education Officer for Slough and Eton, with specific responsibility for the Eton district. No more timetables to do. No more Assemblies to take. No more discipline to instil. No more lessons to prepare. No more homework to mark. Instead, welcome, Peter, to the world of committees and governing bodies, to the world of Articles of Government and Instruments of Management. It was all very new to me, and my first lesson was a big shock.

I was sitting on the high dais alongside the chairman, looking out at the assembled members of the Eton Divisional Education Committee, when the penultimate item on the agenda was reached: discussion of the plans for a new school to be built in one of our outlying villages. I suppose I was pretty relaxed. I had been welcomed by the chairman. I had been welcomed by the committee. I had smiled a lot. At everyone. The meeting was ambling towards its tea-time conclusion. I imagined telling my wife all about it when I got home. Then I heard words I shall never forget. Recalling them still sends a chill down my spine. *"Mr. Holt will now take you through the plans for the new school."*

That's my boss talking, the legend-in-his-own-lifetime Mr Charles Smythe.

*"Mr. Holt will now ... "*

So the Members sat back, smiled encouragingly at me, and with eager anticipation awaited the first performance from their brand new AEO.

BUT THEIR BRAND NEW AEO HAD NOT SEEN THE PLANS. Mr. Holt had no idea what was on the plans. This Mr. Holt had not a clue what to say.

OMG. I was about to be TOTALLY embarrassed in front of my very first committee. Shame was about to wrap its hideous black cloak around me. In a cliché of panic I wanted the earth to open up and swallow me. How could I ever recover from such public humiliation!

(To be continued if required).

**Peter Holt**

## **The D.J.Powell Cup**

The Cup was donated in 1957 by my grandfather, David James “Jim” Powell, to commemorate his four sons, Ernest Baden (my father), Wilfred, Bryn and Brenig Powell, who attended Brecon Boys Grammar School over various periods from 1917 until the commencement of the Second World War.

My grandfather, born in 1881, commenced a life-long career in agriculture as a farm servant or labourer around Bwlch and Talgarth. He married Rachel Morgan in 1901 and purchased in succession two farms in the Cwmdy Valley situated below the Black Mountains. There they raised nine children, seven boys and two girls who went to the local elementary school in Cwmdy. Four brothers and one sister subsequently attended Brecon Boys’ and Girls’ Grammar Schools. Early each Monday morning they would cycle from home to catch a bus to Brecon where they stayed “in digs” during the week returning on a Friday evening.

Before attending school in Brecon my father was “on service” at local farms having left Cwmdy school at thirteen but in January 1917 whilst operating a chaff cutter he lost the fingers of his right hand. He subsequently recommenced his education at the Grammar School until 1921 when he enrolled at Trinity College, Carmarthen. Qualifying as a teacher he taught initially at Talgarth before becoming headmaster of Llanfaes Primary School, in Brecon from 1938 until he retired in 1967. He married Nancy Davies, also a teacher and I was born in 1942. My father was involved in many local community activities for which he was awarded an MBE in the 1953 Coronation Honours List, and the following year he became President of the Old Boys' Association. On his retirement he was elected county councillor for the St Mary's Ward in Brecon which he represented until 1974.

His brother, Wilfred continued the family tradition and with my grandfather farmed near Abergavenny. The younger brothers Bryn and Brenig served in the RAF during the latter stages of the Second World War and subsequently joined the Civil Service working in various parts of the country until they retired. Brenig the youngest of the brothers was the last survivor passing away in 2015.

The Cup in their honour was awarded to the school house which excelled at middle school athletic events during the annual sports day. Following reorganization of secondary education in 1971 and the school becoming Brecon High School for girls and boys on the present Penlan site, the Cup ceased to be awarded and gathered dust in a storeroom. In 2015 the Cup was “unearthed” by the Association's archivist Shaun Gallagher. The Association's committee decided the Cup should be rededicated and presented annually to the student who had demonstrated “significant adventurous or entrepreneurial endeavour”.

Consequently at the annual distribution of prizes held at Brecon High School on the evening of July 14, 2015 the Cup was presented to Rhiannon Barber for her contribution to athletics both within and outside the school. It was indeed a pleasure for me, as the current President of the Old Boys' Association, to present my grandfather's Cup to a worthy recipient in addition to presenting the many other prizes donated annually by the Old Boys' Association.

**David Powell (1954-61)** [Editor’s note: a second cup was unearthed by Shaun - the Lewis/Price Cup, which honoured former teachers Dr Price and Mr Lewis].

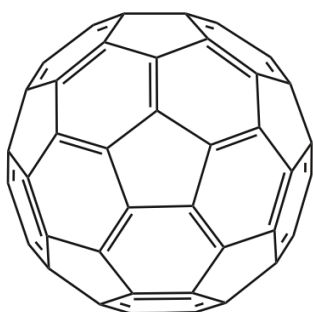
## **Chemistry Revisited!**

In the 2013 newsletter I wrote an article entitled “The joys of practical chemistry”. I now return to the subject with the question “how has Chemistry changed since I was in school?” I got the idea of posing this question when I heard about a comment made in an interview panel for the appointment

of a scientist in a university which had closed its Chemistry Department. Someone said “we don’t need chemists anymore” - an incredible statement from a supposedly intelligent person!! In recent years several University Chemistry Departments have closed, one of the first to do so being that at Aberystwyth. In my view a university lacking a Chemistry Department is incomplete. Perhaps the same comment was made in the 19th century after the Periodic Table of chemical elements was completed. When first assembled by Mendeleev there were several gaps representing as yet undiscovered elements in the table. Then, when the missing elements were finally discovered and identified, perhaps someone thought “that’s chemistry sorted then!”. But there was of course much more to discover, not least atomic and molecular structure.

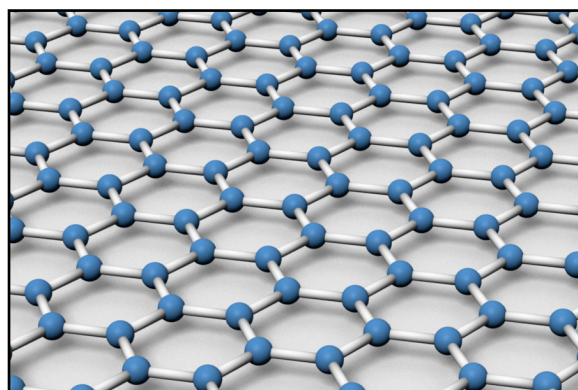
But let’s return to my school chemistry. Do you remember learning about allotropes, different forms of an element, a common example being the carbon allotropes, diamond and graphite? These materials have very different physical properties which is a consequence of their structures (which we were not taught). In diamond the carbon atoms are linked together through covalent bonds oriented tetrahedrally; this is a very rigid and strong structure. In contrast the carbon atoms in graphite are linked in planar sheets (imagine benzene rings - planar carbon hexagons - denuded of their hydrogen atoms and linked to other such benzene rings, the bonds to each carbon atom being oriented at an angle of 120 degrees). These sheets are able to slide over one another, hence the soft property of the material (think “lead” pencils).

So what has changed in the world of Chemistry since the 1950s? There have of course been huge advances but I will answer the question by referring to carbon allotropes. Another allotrope of carbon was discovered in 1985, and Harold Kroto of Sussex University and Robert Curl and Richard Smalley of Rice University, Texas received the Nobel Prize for their work in 1996. It was



named **buckminsterfullerene** after the inventor Buckminster Fuller who designed a geodesic dome that resembles the molecular shape, which is a spherical truncated icosahedron with the formula  $C_{60}$  (see image on left). Many soccer balls have a similar shape. The compound, sometimes called “buckyballs”, is a constituent of soot and can be made by laser ablation of graphite. It has a fascinating chemistry, e.g. atoms and small molecules can be trapped inside the cage. As an unsaturated compound it undergoes many reactions, but as yet no commercial application has been reported. It was detected in space in 2010.

In 2004 yet another carbon allotrope was discovered, namely graphene, which is a monolayer of a lattice of carbon hexagons (image below) as found in graphite. Its discoverers, Andre Geim and Konstantin Novoselov of Manchester University, received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2010 for their work. It was first isolated in the simplest of experiments where sticky tape was applied to the surface of graphite! It has created enormous excitement in the world of science and technology because of its properties, which include being a superb conductor of heat and electricity and having great strength. It’s 200 times stronger than steel. Applications already announced include a graphene light bulb which has a better performance and lifetime than LED bulbs, and graphene reinforced tennis rackets which are



already being used by Andy Murray and other professionals. Recent research has also shown that steel coated with graphene is very resistant to corrosion. Manchester University has created a National Graphene Institute to exploit the many potential applications of this exciting material. A photo of a lightening strike on an airport appeared in a national newspaper last September with the caption “Graphene could soon be protecting airliners from lightning after British Company Haydale won a £100,000 research contract to investigate the commercial potential of graphene’s electricity conducting property”. Could this also be used to design clothing to protect walkers from lightning strikes?

Note that I’ve not mentioned another type of carbon which has had a lot of publicity recently, namely carbon nanotubes, which are graphene sheets folded into a tubular shape. Their discovery is contentious since one of the first reports was in a Russian journal in 1952 which was not read by most scientists during the cold war period.

Although no commercial applications have been found for reaction products derived from fullerenes, endohedral fullerenes, which contain atoms, ions or molecules trapped inside the sphere, do have potential applications as illustrated by the announcement last December by the company “Designer Carbon Materials” of N@fullerene. This material contains a nitrogen atom inside the sphere. Nitrogen atoms are very reactive and the fullerene acts as a Faraday shield in protecting the atom from external electric fields. A quantity of 0.0002 gram was sold for £22,000 last year, making it the world’s most expensive material. It is being used to create a small portable atomic clock with potential application in the GPS navigation system on driverless cars. Current satellite based GPS systems are accurate only to a few metres. The main challenge in this field is that only milligram quantities of endofullerenes are available and current research is aimed at improving the yields.

I’m sure that Chemistry will continue to surprise us in the years to come.

**J Michael Williams**

### **Memoirs of Tom Evans**

Let us begin at the beginning. I was born the only boy in a family of five girls on a typical Welsh farm of some 100 acres in the valley of the river Usk. I did not have much company of other children of my own age to play with, and my favourite companions were the farm dogs and the farm shepherding pony. I was very fond of horse riding and my father bought a cob mare in Llandovery for me to ride on the farm. Later he found out that she had a reputation for being unruly and she would throw people off, although I used to ride her without problems. Just before I started the Grammar I was on horseback getting the sheep in for dipping, when we heard that one week earlier a heifer had escaped from Sennybridge show ground and no one knew where she was. From my vantage point on the mare, I saw this heifer in the fern on our land. I told the people of Ysclydach that their heifer was on our ground. The striking thing was that this heifer was making for home as she was only a few hundred yards from the home farm and her mother. Mrs Powell, the owner of the heifer, gave 5 shillings to my sister; unfortunately I never saw the money!

I entered the **Boys’ Grammar School** on 5th September 1931. It seems a long time ago now and a great deal of water has flowed under the bridge since then. We assembled in the school hall for the first time to hear the headmaster conducting a short religious service. One of the prayers he spoke went like this: “and when the shadows lengthen and the fever of life is hushed we may obtain peace with thee”. I have often thought about the phrase when the shadows lengthen until I could see it



referred to the end of the day when the sun is going down and the shadows appear longer than they would be at midday, and this suggests the end of life.

There was a good crowd of pupils from Sennybridge and District. Our mode of transport to school was on the Western Welsh omnibus - a 32 seater. it picked up pupils along the route from Trecastle to Brecon. we used to get off the bus by the Wellington monument and walk through the town to Cradoc Road - about one mile. The only boy I envied in the school was from the Cantref area, Llewelyn Williams from Crofftau. Llewelyn came to school on his dappled grey mountain pony. I was keen on riding and envied Llewelyn. During the day his pony was stabled at one of the pubs at the bottom of Ship Street. Sometimes we would see him making his way home trotting over Llanfaes bridge. He had to travel about 5 miles. There was no bus available and the authorities thought it was too far for him to walk and his parents didn't want him to lodge in Brecon. The Education Authority paid for the feed for the pony!

There were several amusing incidents that occurred in school and remain in my memory. One day we were having RE with Dr Griff Price and we were dealing with the reign of King Solomon. When discussing the alleged wisdom of this King Dr Price asked the class "Why do you think King Solomon was wise?" One of the Hay on Wye boys replied that it was because he had three hundred wives to advise him! Dr Price gave a little smile which was very rare for him. Another time we were having a history period with Mr Inglis and it was at the time we would hear Hitler on the radio getting worked up. The teacher asked Fred Watkins (from Trecastle) whether he preferred peace or war. The answer was peace and when asked why, Fred said because war made history!

One of my particular memories was of Prosser Roberts, our old Welsh teacher, standing at the back of the class room, watching people travelling up and down the road. This particular day, some girls from Pwll-y-Calch were walking by along with the daughters of Morgan Lewis, the drapers of Brecon. We noticed that Prosser Roberts smiled and waved at the girls. At break time we were all discussing that this was the first time we had ever seen him smile! It transpired that sometime after this, the said Prosser Roberts married Anne, one of the draper's daughters!

Another memory I have is of a fellow classmate, Gwyn Powell, who in addition his drawing skills was also my main rival in exams. One particular day, when we came back from lunch he had drawn on the blackboard a figure which filled the board from top to bottom. There was no mistaking who this was. It was me. My mother had bought me a suit for school comprising a black jacket and trousers with a grey stripe. This was the standard dress for preachers! The image was perfect. I got hold of Gwyn and thumped him because he had depicted me as a cartoon character. While I was giving Gwyn a good hiding one of the big boys who came from Gwyn's locality entered the room. Nobody argued with Brian Price and I thought "I'm in for it now". Brian took one look at what was going on and said "Don't kill him" and walked out of the room. I made Gwyn wipe the board clean.

A member of staff I will always remember is Mr Doug Inglis, the History master who was a marvellous teacher. I got on well with him. He would ask me to write history essays that were not set homework pieces. This was not punishment for any misbehaviour on my part, and I did not object as history was one of my favourite subjects, although I was surprised to be singled out as he did not ask any other pupil to do these extra essays. On one occasion he asked me to write an essay on the Life and Times of Sir Francis Drake and he would then ask me to read the essay out in front of the class. This extra work was never marked and I sometimes wonder if I was assisting the lesson by providing and delivering this material.

Some disappointments remain in my memory. One was the St David's Day Eisteddfod when pupils competed for top marks for their particular house. I was competing in the singing competition. My song was "the Rising of the Lark". I was always nervous and it affected my voice. I was beaten by two boys who were having singing lessons with a famous singer in Brecon. Next year I tried the recitation. There were three other competitors in the prelims and only three were allowed to go through to the stage. I was judged fourth! I didn't compete again!

At the age of 17 I had to leave school and return to work on the farm because Dad wasn't very well. Mr Inglis told me it was a shame I had to leave school as I would have done well and I believe he was saddened that I could not join the sixth form. I joined my father in partnership on the farm. I joined the Home Guard in autumn 1942 and I was chosen as one of two snipers. we used to train Thursday evening and Sunday afternoons in a hut behind the Usk and Railway Public House, and for rifle training we would march to the rifle range in Cefn Maescar. Usually we numbered about thirty five, drawn from the surrounding areas and our ages varied from 18 to over 60.

#### My early involvement with Sennybridge Young Farmers' Club

I was one of the founder members of Sennybridge YFC. We were fortunate to have support from many of the local VIPs. Our first President was Mr Williams, Bryncelyn, Sennybridge, who also held numerous influential positions including secretary for NFU Executive Committee, Secretary for Sennybridge Stock Market, as well as being Secretary for Sennybridge Agricultural Show. Mr Williams was also acquainted with many of the officials in the Ministry Of Agriculture and Food and staff at the Plant Breeding Station at Aberystwyth. Familiarity with the latter resulted in Mr Williams being instrumental in organising several lectures to the Club by staff from Aberystwyth. The lectures covered a variety of pertinent subjects, e.g. grass seeds, cereals, fertilisers, and in particular advice on the best seeds for optimum output for our locality. Our next President was Mr David Lewis, Cwmpadest, Crai, who was at the time also Chairman of Breconshire County Council Education committee. It was Mr Lewis who arranged for the club to meet at Sennybridge School free of charge.

The first Secretary for Sennybridge YFC was Mr Ken Jones of Blaencamlais Fach. He was a First Class Honours graduate from Oxford University. There was no other club with an Oxford BA in the position of Club Secretary! This was all taking place in 1942 when the war was not going too well for Britain. Time was at a premium with farmers being compelled to produce as much food as possible (three acres of wheat, four acres of barley and one acre of potatoes) when most of the Club members were also training in the Home Guard.

Other activities I organised were ploughing competitions, stock judging and public speaking. I entered any quiz with varying results. We also had ballroom dancing lessons with semi-professional instructors and these were enjoyed by all club members. The YFC was also known as one of the best marriage bureaux where many happy unions were formed. In 1956 I married Monmouthshire young farmer, Myra Jones from Abergavenny YFC, who was in 1954 the first lady chairman of Monmouthshire County Federation (now Gwent Federation).

During my long association with Sennybridge YFC I held a variety of posts, including Club Secretary, Club Chairman, Club Leader and Club President. With other Club Leaders at the time we were instrumental in setting up the Annual Calf Buyers Dinner which was deemed a great success but unfortunately has since been discontinued.

In my younger days I was an active member of the National Farmers Union and was twice elected Chairman of the Sennybridge Branch. I was also a Councillor for my parish and Chairman of Bwlch y Groes Graziers.

I was pleased to have been President of the Old Boys Association and subsequently elected as Life Vice President. My best wishes for the Association to continue to prosper for as long as possible.

**(Editor's note: Tom Evans died in January)**

### **You never know whom you will meet at a reunion!**

At the 2015 annual reunion Old Girl Ann van den Broek (née Morrison) was delighted to meet JJ Price, who wrote an article for the 2015 newsletter about his experience as a British Naval Attaché in Brazilia in the early 90s, because she had, like JJ, visited the port of Joao Pessoa in 2014 when her son got married to a local girl. Her husband Peter had also visited South America several times whilst working for ICI so they and JJ had much to talk about.

Then the day after the reunion Ann and Peter went to the Cathedral for a christening and were welcomed by a gentleman, David Hughes, who asked whether they were locals or on holiday. On learning that Ann had attended the reunion, he said that at the earlier service at the cathedral he had sat next to a man who had also attended the reunion. This was Tom Protheroe. Although originally from Bradford, David had Welsh grandparents and had worked most of his life for the Forestry Commission in Wales. By a coincidence he was a member of the same Welsh learners' class as Tom's sister. The coincidences did not end there; Ann's cousin Christopher Brown, was at the christening, and when Tom was leaving the Clarence Inn, where he had been staying, he met Pam Brown and husband Mike. Pam is Christopher's twin sister who has also been a friend of Tom's sister for 55 years!

So why don't you come to the next reunion (Saturday after Easter, 2nd April 2016); you never know whom you'll meet!

**J Michael Williams**

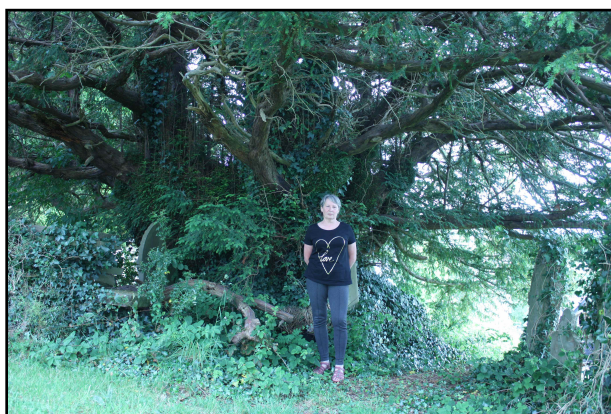
### **Britain's oldest tree is in Defynnog!**

Did you know that a yew tree in a churchyard in Defynnog is over 5,000 years old and is the oldest tree in Britain according to tree-dating experts. Scientists have used DNA and ring dating tests on the tree in St Cynog's churchyard. Many yew trees in Britain are at least 600 years old but the tree at Defynnog is believed to be the oldest. Janis Fry, who has studied yew trees for over 40 years said "This tree was planted on the north side of what was an ancient burial mound which is now the churchyard, probably in honour of a neolithic chieftain". Janis Fry's intriguing book "The God Tree" cites innumerable references to ancient texts to show that the yew tree is the legendary Tree of Life, which is referred to by various names such as Yggdrasil, Kiskanu and Mes. She suggests that the yews were brought to Britain from Ancient Egypt and the Holy Land as staffs by pilgrims thousands of years ago and planted in remote places, especially in Wales where many still survive. Janis has written that Wales' importance in ancient times is in having the largest collection of ancient yews on earth. That is some claim! Some well known yews in Wales include the yew tunnel at Aberglasney Gardens and the "bleeding yew" at Neven in North Pembrokeshire, which is remarkable for the spectacle of the blood like fluid that oozes from a wound in the tree. I have recently noticed what I believe to be an old yew in the grounds of Sketty Hall on the edge of

Singleton Park in Swansea. Coed Cadw, the Welsh arm of the Woodland trust, has produced the Great Yews of Wales Tree Trail to help people find them. It can be downloaded free from [www.ancienttreehunt.org.uk](http://www.ancienttreehunt.org.uk) or obtained from the National Museum of Wales or the National Botanic Garden at Llanarthne.

Closer examination of the yew (image below left) on the north side of the church at Defynog shows that there are two trees, but according to Allen Meredith (cited by Janice Fry), these were originally part of the same tree as shown by DNA analysis. The famous yew at Fortingall in Scotland, once thought to be the oldest in Britain, similarly consists of two trees. The Defynog yew is unusual in that it is monoecious, that is it contains male and female parts, which is rare.

The lady in the photo below right was visiting her parents' grave when I was photographing the



yew. She said she remembered hiding with her brother in the yew when they were small children.

The yew tree is also interesting from a chemical point of view. It contains several chemical substances including taxol, which is used as an anti-cancer drug.

**J Michael William**

### **The Silurian and The Daisy**

Winston Churchill once likened the Welsh national conscience to “a gorse fire which flares with intensity before dying back”. Such has been our experience in seeking to establish sets of “The Silurian”, a task which was tackled initially with such enthusiasm before blowing cold. However there would now appear to be two sets in addition to my own one, which I started collecting as a member of the editorial board of the first issue in 1950. There is the Association set lodged in the archives in the Guild Hall and which is extracted every year for display at the Annual Dinner. There was also at one stage a complete set housed in the Grammar School Office which is, I suspect, the one that has been deposited in Brecon Museum following secondary school reorganisation. The final edition was Volume XXII of 1971 with the editor expressing the fervent hope that its publication would continue into the future with secondary organisation.

Recently the question of the former Girls' School magazine, “The Daisy” was raised at a committee meeting in response to an enquiry from Gwyneth Jenkins. Over the years I have begged, borrowed and occasionally “failed to return” individual copies from descendants of former pupils. It was slow progress until I was able to solicit the help of Marjery Davies, Llangynidr, who uncovered packets of more recent issues. The magazine was first published in 1912 through the driving force of Miss Margaret Davies, the inspirational first headmistress. It is interesting to note that when she set up

the house system in 1914, she labelled them Green, Yellow and White, supposedly the colours of the daisy which was the emblem of the school and was used as the title for the magazine. With the increased school role the houses were subsequently reorganised into the five “Santesau” in 1945 by Miss Jarvis on the eve of the School’s Jubilee Year. Our school house system owed its formation years later to Dr Llewelyn Woosnam, headmaster from September 1923 to April 1929. He was also credited with establishing a school eisteddfod.

“The Daisy” was a remarkably informative publication which, apart from the literary content of prose and poetry contributions, also outlined an annual calendar of events, the comings and goings of staff, examination results and sporting events. It was above all a veritable Who’s Who of Old Girls’ with news of engagements, marriages, births and deaths (“catches”, “matches”, “hatches”), as well as details of their further study, eventual careers and families. Because of the shortage of paper during World War II the magazine was replaced by circular letters from Miss Jarvis to Old Girls for the years 1943, 1944 and 1945, copies of which I have been fortunate enough to acquire. For record purposes, therefore, and to assist other collectors who might be interested in assisting in compiling a complete set for the archives, these are the issues which I have in my possession: 1925, 1925-1932 (inclusive), 1938-1942 (inclusive), 1943-1945 (newsletters), 1946-1952 (inclusive), 1953/54, 1955/56, 1957-1959 (inclusive), 1961 and 1962. It would be appreciated if someone among the ranks of the Old Girls could confirm whether or not the magazine continued to be published up until the end-game in 1971. For clarification it should be noted that the name “The Daisy” was replaced in 1946 by the title “Magazine” for reasons that Gwyneth Jenkins might be able to explain from her researches.

**Glyn Powell**

### **Recollections of “Old Girl” Gwyneth Bevan**

My husband and I attended the ‘Old Boys’ lunch in October 2015 at the Castle Hotel. It was a glorious weekend weather-wise so it was a great disappointment that it was a gathering of only 12 people. It was mentioned that there were only eight ‘old boys’ present. I then ventured to mention that, although I was not an ‘Old Boy’, I could be counted as I was one the first ‘Old Girls’ as I had attended ‘A’ level classes at the school. Mr Jacob Morgan was our tutor and he wrote the books we used. He was a formidable teacher and if you did not understand the formula the first time, there was no second explanation! The first term was therefore quite strenuous!

We had quite a number of free periods during the day because he had no secretary and had to attend to any telephone calls etc. The boys were quite helpful in explaining anything we could not understand and so there was quite a hubbub of noise in the hall. Other classrooms were adjoining the hall and many times the teachers would appear and reprimand us for the noise. More than once ‘Dragon’ would lose his temper and blame the girls for being there. Colonel would also appear and agree with him. This is why I claim I could count as an ‘Old Girl’!

Further to this Geoff and I have another tale to tell of Mr Prosser-Roberts. The school had an annual visit from the ‘Dorian Trio’, three ladies all dressed in black playing 2 violins and a cello. This was all rather boring for an eleven-year old Geoffrey who was seen talking during the performance. After they had left Dragon called him up in front of the whole school. He went on to say, “You sing this well known hymn and see how good you are!” What he did not know was that Geoff was the Head Chorister in the Cathedral choir and proceeded to sing the hymn perfectly. The whole school clapped with gusto. I suppose we were both well known to him then, and years later, when we were



walking out together, we would meet him in Brecon. He would doff his hat to us with a large grin on his face and say “Good Evening both”. I would love to know what he was thinking!

### **A Constant State of Flux**

From its very inception the status of our Alma Mater has been in a perpetual state of flux. At its foundation in 1896 it was bedevilled by conflicting politico-religious and financial contentions. An influential lobby with considerable social clout persisted in canvassing in favour of transforming Christ College into a boys’ secondary school, thereby obviating the expense of building a new school. However as a practical option it was a non-starter. There were great reservations initially about the need for a secondary school for girls in Brecon where there was already a successful private school conducted by Miss Stewart-Bake at Boughrood House Academy. However the proponents of a girls’ “Intermediate” School were a determined group of county ladies who championed the cause of girls’ education and were resolved to bring their plan to fruition. What eventually emerged were two separate single sex schools which was an unique arrangement for secondary education in Breconshire. Once in existence however, the schools were regularly under pressure with financial considerations being a constant bone of contention amongst councillors worried about the implications of their cost on the rates.

The financial problems which troubled the 1920s almost eliminated the boys and girls secondary schools as two single sex separate institutions. The joint governors proposed the amalgamation of the two schools into one co-educational establishment under a headmaster rather than a headmistress in order to reduce running costs in the post war era of economic constraint. The year 1924 was seen as an opportune and propitious time in which to effect the reorganisation with Miss Margaret Davies (1896-1924) due to retire and with Dr Llewelyn Woosnam MA, D Phil (1923-1929) having recently been appointed to the headship of the Boys’ County School. Miss Davies in her letter to the Old Girls in the “Daisy” issue of 1925 intimated that the proposals had been a distraction in the performance of her duties during her last year in office. She wrote: “For a while my attention was diverted from the pending separation to the uncertain form of administration of the School in the future. The proposal to amalgamate the two schools became a **counter** anxiety”. Only the terminally naive would believe that the plan for integration was as simple as that, although the proposal per se had given rise to a particular sense of shocked yet satisfying curiosity. As it eventually transpired the proposal was not implemented and in the interim period both schools had short stay heads, namely Dr Woosnam until 1929 and Miss Gladys Ann Moore until 1927. They were succeeded by Miss Mary Eveline Jarvis (1927-1952) and Jacob Morgan (1929-1954) for the Girls’ and Boys’ Schools respectively. They were in post for an extended period when the grammar school tradition continued to be deeply entrenched.

It was an interlude of “*quieta non movere*” (“let sleeping dogs lie”) until the “status quo” was again questioned. It was Col Sir John Lloyd who was to put before the Education Committee his extraordinary motion regarding Christ College. Sir John had succeeded to the Chair of the committee on the death of the eminent and all powerful Principal Joseph Jones on 18th July 1950. Principal Jones had succeeded Archdeacon (later Bishop) Bevan and had occupied the chair continuously from 1929 to 1950 with great distinction locally and nationally.

In the inter-war years Sir John had fought hard to improve secondary education in the County as chairman of the Governors of both the Boys’ and Girls’ Grammar Schools. He had pressed with others for an extension of the schools with the plan for the Girls’ School coming to fruition on 3rd

June, 1935. In the period 1935-1939 the pressure for an extension of the Boys' School continued only to be scuppered by the outbreak of World War II. However, after the 1944 Education Act a new build on Penlan was considered to be the only feasible option. It was out of the blue that Sir John, shortly after his election to the chair of the Education Committee, made an unusual motion about an arrangement with Christ College. He suggested the possibility of combining this ancient institution with a brand new boys' secondary school, which, in his words, was "to make a considerable contribution to the educational system of the Principality". The motion in full when placed was: "That the LEA should examine the possibility of an arrangement with Christ College, Brecon on terms acceptable to the LEA and Governors for the accommodation of boys from Brecon, Defynnog, Hay, Talgarth and the Crickhowell Educational Districts who are adjudged to be capable of benefiting from secondary grammar or technical education. If such an arrangement could be achieved it would make a most valuable contribution to the educational system of the Principality and of Breconshire in particular".

According to the scheme the governing body of Christ College would have to dissolve itself and be replaced by a governing body consisting of one third of its members elected by the Breconshire Education Committee, one third being nominated by the present governing body of Christ College, and a third being nominees of the Ministry of Education. This new governing body would take over the estate, fabric and endowments of Christ College and would administer the school being assisted in this by Breconshire LEA. Sir John saw it as an unique opportunity for extending public education, but it was fraught with the greatest of danger for Christ College. In view of more recent proposals it may not seem to have been such a "crack pot" idea after all. It was a time of financial pressures in the post war years of austerity and inflation. Sir John had an overview from his standpoint as a Governor of Christ College, Chairman of Brecon Boys' Grammar School and Chairman of Breconshire Education Committee - a veritable "troika".

The inevitable amalgamation came eventually with secondary reorganisation and the establishment of Brecon High School in September 1971. As a comprehensive institution Brecon High School incorporated the two single sex Grammar Schools and the co-educational Secondary Modern/Technical Schools. Initially the school roll bordered on 1500 pupils and had to be accommodated in the three existing separate buildings. Even though the change over was not without its hiccups and pitfalls, the transforming of the selective system of secondary education into a comprehensive pattern was achieved by organising the School horizontally into three sectors each with its Head of School. Gradually Brecon High School developed its own identity and produced its own distinctive alumni and distinguished sportsmen and women. In recent years the school roll has declined considerably and its collaboration with Coleg Powys (now Neath and Port Talbot College) has deepened.

Once again there are significant changes in the air for a virtual "root and branch" reorganisation. In January 2015 Powys County Council commenced a Secondary Schools reorganisation which intended to transform the secondary and post 16 sectors across the county. The *raison d'être* for the reconfiguration of the sectors is said to provide for the creation of a sustainable infrastructure for schools and sixth forms across Powys, enabling a broader range of subjects to be pursued from each site. For Brecon a £75 million school plan is being proposed involving the establishment of a Brecon Learning Campus on the site of the existing High School, college, leisure centre and cricket pitch. It is intended to open a new 800 pupil 11-16 school with post 16 education based in an adjacent 6th Form centre as well as at the FE College. The original plan envisaged the closure of Gwernyfed High School whilst Welsh first language education would move in the first instance

from Brecon to Builth. The Leisure Centre redevelopment is included in any overall plan which had September 2017 as its completion date.

Brecon High School would retain significant influence over the 6th form centre with the school influencing the post 16 curriculum through the Campus Committee. Education for those over 16 would be provided by the NPTC Group formed by the merger of Coleg Powys with Neath Port Talbot College in partnership with the High School. The new public leisure centre would be at the centre of the campus with the 11-16 school and 6th form centre based in two storey high wings.

However the best laid plans of mice and men can become unhinged as seems to have happened to the Learning Campus project. There have been vocal ripples from several quarters with the Gwernyfed lobby succeeding in derailing the progress of the plan through legal objection on the issue of the lack of consultation. It was also argued that it was educationally perverse to decommission a successful school like Gwernyfed High School and force its absorption with a school in special measures. The council's initial proposal had been to close Brecon High School Welsh unit from July 2016 with its pupils being transferred to Builth Wells High School. This threatened closure has now been reviewed following legal advice and the Welsh medium stream has been handed a temporary reprieve. This change of heart has come rather late in the day as some Welsh first language pupils have already filtered off to either Builth or Ystalyfera.

There has been opposition from nuanced and thoughtful critics as well as from sages of the moribund old order, dysfunctional and tormented by the past. Consequently councillors will have to sit through more hours of meetings, engaging in turgid and rambling debate to untangle the conundrum and fix the end game. Whatever the outcome there is every possibility that it will result in the coup de grace for the last vestiges of our Alma Mater. In the final analysis the Learning Campus can either be viewed as a grandiose scheme or as a rational response to the demands placed currently on the educational service and the attendant financial implications. In any case the one question that should be asked is whether what is administratively convenient can be educationally suspect.

### **What's next?**

Brecon Boys' Grammar School  
"Bid ben bid bont"

Brecon Girls' Grammar School  
"Nid dall ond diwybod"

Brecon Secondary School  
"Nid da lle gellir gwell"

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Brecon High School  
"Cais heddd cais wirionedd"

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Learning Campus

.....?

**Glyn Powell**

**When the Round Ball Ruled**  
**Brecon County Grammar School v Kington Grammar School**  
**(Excerpt from the Brecon & Radnor Express: 1st December, 1949)**

“Brecon County Grammar School entertained Kington Grammar School one Saturday afternoon. Two matches were played, one by the team under 14 and one by the School XI. The Juniors played very well but some of the younger and smaller players found the sodden ground very heavy going. Brecon Juniors recorded a well merited win by 3 goals to 1. The senior game was more evenly contested and resulted in a draw of 2 goals each. Both games were most pleasant and enjoyable and the football played reached a standard creditable to both schools”.

**(Submitted by Glyn Powell)**

**Glyn Powell , Chairman 2010 - 2014**  
**and some Random Thoughts on the Class of 1943**

2016 marks the twentieth anniversary of Glyn Powell's exceedingly well researched and readable book, “Brecon Secondary Schools 1896-1996”, and the 120th anniversary of the establishment of the Boys' and Girls' Intermediate (County) Schools in Brecon. Some 15,000 of the 35,00 words are devoted to the Boys' County School. If you don't have a copy there are still a small number left for sale, which can be obtained by writing to Shaun Gallagher (Tel: 01497 822973) , £2 plus postage, or can be purchased at the Anniversary Dinner on 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

Glyn's contribution to the Association has been immense. He was a member from its earliest days, a Committee member for 40 years and Chairman for five years. He is still an active member of the Committee the rest of whom are able to benefit from his experience and his ability to remember the names and characteristics of hundreds of Old Boys. Consequently, the Committee felt that it was time to acknowledge not only the importance of Glyn's contribution to the Association, but also to Breconshire and Wales, by briefly describing his life.

Glyn went to the small school in Crai until he passed the scholarship for Brecon Boys' Grammar (County) School where he was the youngest pupil in his class. This meant a major change in his life for there was no suitable transport from Crai to Brecon so during the week he stayed in “digs” with the kindly Mrs. Hatton, and three other boys, whose house was close to the school. This was wartime so the Grammar School boys and girls who had lodgings in Brecon brought not only their ration books with them but additional food from their farms, something strictly not allowed but to which a blind eye was turned by the food inspectors.

But an equally large culture shock was the change from attending a small school of some 32 pupils to becoming a member of a class of 35 pupils, 16 of whom were Brecon Boys and the rest from schools up to 15 miles from Brecon, most of them from very small village schools like Pengefnfford. Unusually that year there were no boys from Hay and only one from Crickhowell. Also there were two London evacuees one of whom, Richard Shead, regularly came top in every subject, including Welsh! In the class were two boys who were repeating their first year in the Grammar School and that plus the arrangement that a pupil was entitled to sit the scholarship twice, resulted in the age range of the pupils from just 11 to over 13. Welsh was Glyn's second language, and once Shead had returned to London in 1945 Glyn was always top of the class in Welsh. He was an ardent supporter of Theo and represented the school in football and cricket. Few of those present

in school at that time could forget the rich timbre of his voice in the morning assembly and the school's Eisteddfod.

Since there was no Form 1 it was possible for the youngest boys to sit the Central Welsh Board School Certificate in Form 5 at the age of 14 and Glyn was one of these. He proceeded to the small Sixth Form where his subjects were History, English and Welsh. In 1949 at the age of 16 he obtained his Higher School Certificate so he, and three other members of his year, wisely decided not to proceed to university but to spend a third year in the Sixth Form. At that time around half of the first year male university students were still ex National Service conscripts and probably the majority of 3rd and 4th year students, and some second year students, were men who had served in the armed forces during the war. Sixteen and seventeen year old boys sometimes found it difficult competing academically with these more mature, highly motivated men who also dominated student life. One boy from the school who went to university in 1949 found it impossible to cope with this new adult situation and had a mental breakdown, from which he never fully recovered. By 1950 most of the mature students had left and Glyn joined two other "Freshers" from Brecon Boys' Grammar School at the University College of North Wales, Bangor University where, in 1953, he obtained his B.A. Degree in History and Political Philosophy and then his Diploma in Education in 1954. It is rumoured that in Bangor he is still remembered as the conductor of the Saturday Night Chip Shop choir!

The next step for all medically fit university graduates was National Service and Glyn was posted to the King's Own Royal Regiment for his "square bashing". Graduates were regarded as "officer material", but to achieve commissioned rank required signing on for three or more years, as opposed to the two years of National Service. Glyn chose the former and after passing the rigorous selection process was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant and was posted to Korea, where although the fighting had ended in June 1953 it was not a sought after posting. From there he had an unusual assignment for one year as Army Liaison Officer with the Japanese Self Defence Force. Little is known how much of Japanese culture he assimilated but the next posting was very different, two and a half years in Malaya attached to the Gurkhas where he was promoted to substantive Captain and Acting Major. After six years in the army he decided that the time had come to return to civilian life but for the next four years he was an officer in the Army Emergency Z Reserve, a group which could be instructed to return to the army with a day's notice.

Civilian life must have seemed very strange after six years in the army, almost all of which was spent in the Far East. His first job was in Bridgend Technical College but after a year the opportunity arose for him to return to Breconshire and he was appointed to teach History and Welsh in the Brecon Secondary Modern Technical School. This proved to be a very fulfilling experience for Glyn and he came to have the highest respect for the quality of the teaching and the academic, cultural and sporting achievement of pupils who were mistakenly regarded by many people as "rejects" who had failed the often misleading selection examination. The records show that it was not unusual for pupils who had very high marks in the Intelligence paper to come close to the bottom of the English and Arithmetic examinations so were rejected for the grammar school. It is interesting to reflect that of the five boys in the Class of 1943 who went to university only one of them was in the top 15 of the 11+. In London there is no doubt that the other four would not have been admitted to a grammar school since fewer than 10% of those sitting the 11+ were admitted to a grammar school, unlike Breconshire where the figure was around 40%.



During the years from 1963-72 Glyn became nationally recognised in Wales when he organised the resistance to the building of a reservoir which would have drowned the Senni valley. This dramatically demonstrated that he was prepared to be a rebel in the footsteps of those Welshmen who protested, and failed, against several other new reservoirs in Wales. Using the skills acquired in the army Glyn created an organisation which was able to block all roads into the Senni valley with large farm equipment whenever the contractors attempted to enter the valley to start their work. It would have been difficult to keep up this protest for six months but Glyn and his supporters maintained their opposition for nine years. Eventually the scheme was abandoned.

In 1971 Breconshire embraced the comprehensive system and the Mixed Secondary Modern Technical school merged with the Girls' and Boys' Grammar Schools to become the Brecon High School. Glyn taught History and was also appointed Head of the Middle School. These were several reorganisations of secondary education in the county and so the number of pupils attending the High School oscillated between 1500 to 1000. After another reorganisation and reduction in the number of pupils in Brecon High School resulted in the positions of Junior, Middle and Senior School Heads being discontinued, Glyn decided that the time had come to retire.

But the word "retire" is not one which can be applied to Glyn. His life outside school was more demanding than that in school. As his experience, ability to organise, to communicate and to make sage decisions was recognised, he was appointed to more and more positions of significance not only in Breconshire but in Wales. When he left the army in addition to being a teacher he was a farmer, and he became active in the Farmers' Union of Wales. In time he became Deputy President of that organisation and for years he was the public face of the FUW. For ten years he was a member of the Welsh Rural Farm Board and Welsh Director of the Agricultural Training Board and on many occasions represented farmers before Parliamentary Committees and the Welsh Assembly. Glyn had become a well known national figure who had the ability to represent the views of the general population so it was no surprise when he was appointed to the BBC Council for Wales. At the same time he continued to be active in many organisations in the Senni valley and the Defynock/Sennybridge area, and in 1965 he became a deacon of the Defynock Calvinist Methodist chapel, an office he still holds.

Glyn has been married to Gwenllian (née Havard) for over fifty years and has one daughter Bethan, a language teacher at Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera and two grandchildren, Daniel (15) and Beca (11).

The Committee of the Association look forward to having the benefit of his experience, knowledge and wise counsel for many more years.

**(Ken Jones)**

### **Obituaries**

#### **Glen Davies (1949-52)**

Glen, a native of Talgarth, was an outstanding athlete especially at football which he played for his house Theo. He left school to become a fireman on the railway in Hereford and later joined the police. After his retirement he lived in Shrewsbury and he died in March 2013.

#### **Rev. David Geoffrey George Davies (1935-40)**

Canon Geoffrey Davies was ordained in 1951 and became a Minor Canon at Brecon Cathedral. He then moved to Oystermouth and Cwm in Flintshire. He later became Canon at St Asaph. He was for a time secretary of the Church in Wales Liturgical Commission. After a period teaching RE in Liverpool and Wigan he joined the Salisbury diocese as team vicar in the Bourne Valley.

**Harold Windsor Lewis (1945-51)**

Harold, a Brecon boy, left school with a state scholarship and went to Bristol University to study Physics and Maths. He then joined the RAF for his military service and became an Electrical Mechanic, unable to fly because of vertigo. He joined GEC and helped design the circuit boards used in the first transatlantic satellite TV broadcast. He was a keen sportsman and an active Lion.

**William John Sommers (1949-54)**

On leaving school William worked as a motor mechanic in Brecon and later in Hereford and with Duckhams Oil. He returned to Brecon and joined the Post Office, covering postal deliveries in the country areas. He was an active member of St Mary's Church, having been a choir boy, server, sidesman and church warden. He was a keen fisherman and a highly proficient gardener.

**Peter Vaughan (1949-54)**

Peter's family returned to the area after WWII and took up residence in Talgarth where Peter attended primary school. On leaving school Peter became an apprentice mechanic with Western Welsh before joining the army. On returning to civvy street he joined Pump Maintenance and then ended his career with the MOD at Brecon working closely with the 638 Regt RA(TA).

**Millar Treharne Smith (dates ?)**

The son of Mr Bill Smith, County PE Organiser, and Mrs Sheila Smith, the school secretary for many years Millar, after a period at the school, emulated his brother Russell and gained a scholarship at Millfield. Following a successful period in business he eventually returned to Brecon and decided on an alternative life style.

**David W Rice (1944-50)**

David was a very talented sportsman who played for the soccer and cricket first XIs. He graduated in French from University College, Aberystwyth where he played for the 1st XI. However tragedy struck when he was involved in a vehicle accident in which he suffered life changing injuries. This ruined any prospects of a teaching career so he worked in the library and local government services.

**Anthony (Tony) John Francis Wyatt (staff: 1962-85)**

Tony, a native of Abergavenny, trained as a P.E. Teacher and was appointed to Brecon Boys' Grammar School in 1962. In 1971 he was made Head of Lower School of Brecon High School, a position he held until his retirement. Throughout his teaching career he was involved in the organisation and coaching of rugby football. He also distinguished himself as a player for Pontypool RFC, Montgomeryshire and Breconshire. He left a strong sporting legacy at the school.

**J Eirwyn J Davies (1937-42)**

Eirwyn served in the Intelligence Corps prior to joining Carmarthen Training College. His first Teaching post was at Llanfaes CP School. He was then made headmaster of Hermon CP School Pembrokeshire and after a period teaching in West Bromwich he returned to Wales as head of Hafren CP School, Newtown, where he established a strong Welsh first language unit.

**John Kenneth Morgan (1965-69)**

Ken left school at the end of form V to return to farming and became known as Ken Gorslwyd. He was acknowledged for his excellence in grassland management and livestock breeding, for which he won national honours. He was a leading figure in the Brecknock Hill Cheviot Society, Brecon and Radnor Calf Breeders, Brecon Grassland Society, NFU and many other organisations.

**Cliff Jenkins (1957-63)**

On leaving school Cliff attended Cardiff College of Advanced Technology to study building in preparation for joining the family firm of Jenkins Builders, of which he eventually took control. A rather private person, he enjoyed skiing and sailing in particular and also squash. He built a boat to sail on the canal and later he had a sailing boat at Poole, the home of his maternal grandparents.

**David Kenneth Pugh (1956-61)**

David left school when his family emigrated to Australia in 1961 and joined the High School in Ballarat where he excelled in sport. On leaving school he first worked in a bank but his main career was in the Police Force. He eventually became a lecturer at Canberra Police Academy and began studying law at university. Sadly he died in 1982 in a motor cycle accident at the age of 38.

**David Robert Walker (Staff)**

A native of Penydarren, Merthyr Tydfil, David attended Cyfarthfa Comprehensive School, and graduated in Music from Cardiff University, specialising in the violin. In 1977 he was appointed to the music Department at Brecon, but was transferred to the new Crickhowell Comprehensive as Head of Department in 1983. After taking early retirement he became the Verger at Brecon Cathedral.

**Thomas Price Evans (1931-36)**

A long term member of the committee and a former President, Tom was at the time of his death the senior member and a Life Vice President of the Association. He contributed many articles to the newsletter and local publications in Welsh and English. Doug Inglis failed to persuade him to follow an academic career because he had to assist on the farm. He became a prominent leader in the farming community, especially with the NFU and YFC, and was a District and Parish Counsellor. [Editor's note: an article by Tom is included in this newsletter]

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