

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

*Rhifyn Arbennig: Mis Hydref 2008*

*Brecon Grammar School Old Boys' Association Newsletter  
Special Edition: October 2008*

The purpose of this special edition of the newsletter is to announce plans for the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the formation of the Old Boys Association next year. It has been decided to hold a concert jointly with Brecon High School on Friday 27 March 2009 and to move the Annual Reunion, which will be in the George Hotel, from the usual slot after Easter to Saturday 28 March for the convenience of those who wish to attend both functions. Details will be announced in the usual circular to be sent out next February.

We need to have some idea of the numbers who are likely to attend these events for planning purposes and therefore members are requested to return the tear off strip at the end of this newsletter to indicate their likely intentions.

**Contributions to the 2009 newsletter**

Members are invited to submit contributions, for example reminiscences of their time at Brecon school, for the Jubilee edition of the newsletter. An example is the following brief account from John Pugh.

**Recollections of John Pugh**

When I joined the county school in 1931 at the age of 11, boys and girls from Hay boarded in Brecon. Later a daily bus service was started. The morning journey was tense with everyone concentrating on last minute homework. The evening journey was different with noisy claques of diverse opinion formed around the topics of the day, for example the King and Mrs Simpson and, curiously, Mae West. Posters proliferated and argument prospered. The Hay bus was also a hotbed of dizzy plots. One such required a phial of butyric acid from Mr Sutherland's lab. Its contents were released soon after Talgarth. The stench was so oppressive the bus was abandoned. Jacob Morgan's retribution was swift and also oppressive!

After leaving Brecon I tasted in turn the Civil Service, Royal Navy, Bristol University, Colonial Service (assisting at the Gold Coast independence in 1957) and the Foreign Office. I spent 25 years in the Diplomatic Service in Africa, Indo China during the Vietnam war, Central America, The U.N. and south Pacific. In 1976 I was appointed British High Commissioner in the Seychelles. Later I became consultant to a number of New York companies, published the magazine "Expedition World", and produced documentaries on Tibetan Monasteries, the Yang Tse river among others. At present I am chairman of the Numjai Thai Restaurants.

**The search for the 1952-54 Chemistry classmates of J Michael Williams**

The sixth form chemistry class of 1952-1954 was taught at the Girls' Grammar School by Mr Rees, and about two years ago I decided to try and trace the members of this class. I had lost touch with all of them. There were ten of us, three girls and seven boys. How difficult would it be to track them down?

Not being born and bred in Brecon and having spent only three years in Brecon School, I had the disadvantage of not having an extended network of contacts. However in the 1960s an

American psychologist, Stanley Milgram, carried out an experiment that implied that everyone on the planet is linked to everyone else through just six connections (a concept known as the “six degrees of separation” or the “small world phenomenon”). In the event I succeeded with only three initial contacts and the longest path was just four steps. The natural place to try first was the Friends Reunited web site ([www.friendsreunited.co.uk](http://www.friendsreunited.co.uk)), and I had done that a few years ago when I found that I recognised only one name listed for the class of 1954; that was Margaret Evans (now James). She was able to locate relatives of three classmates and also was in contact with classmate Gaynor Davies. Thus, through Margaret I made contact with Tony Hepton in California and he knew Dai George in Australia. Margaret also lead me to Len Pritchard in New Zealand who knew that Tony (Charles) Went has died some years ago. I also found Roland Jenkins in Blackwood. My second contact, Jennifer Conway (nee Brookes), was able to give me the address of Jean Thomas (now Willis) in Nottingham. That left Peter Twist, and my third contact was Ron Tucker; I asked him whether the A S Twist mentioned in the 1954 Silurian was Peter’s younger brother. In his reply he said he thought David Chatfield was a friend of Peter’s, and David was able to tell me that Peter had died many years ago.

One pleasant result of this search is that, of the eight surviving members of this class, six of us (including Tony Hepton from California) met on 29th March in Brecon and five of us attended the reunion. A seventh member, Len Pritchard, couldn’t join us but he visited in June when he was in the country for a holiday.

This achievement is of course feeble compared with what Brynach Pari, Philip Malham and friends achieved 3 years ago when they tracked down most of their year. So if you have ever wondered what happened to your classmates it shouldn’t be too difficult to track them down. If anyone would like to try but does not have internet access I would be willing to look up the Friends Reunited web site for names to follow up. All I would need to know is the year you left school. (See end of newsletter for contact details).

### **Induction of President David Morgan**



Because of David’s absence from the reunion on 29th March (due to his convalescence from an operation) his induction was postponed until the committee meeting on 29th May. The chain of office was handed to David, whose photograph is shown here, by Michael Williams at this meeting.

### **Obituaries**

There was an error in the last newsletter in the obituary for Douglas Malcolm whose name was wrongly given as Douglas Morgan. I apologise for this error and reproduce the corrected obituary here.

**Douglas Malcolm (1936-39)**

Douglas, a native of Talgarth, left school in 1939 to enlist as a boy-sailor in the Royal Navy. He experienced a very active wartime service especially in the Mediterranean. He was commissioned from the ranks and served for over twenty years, retiring as a Lieutenant Commander. He then settled in the Worcester area and worked in the Life Insurance Industry.

**Dennis Price Jones (1937-41)**

Dennis was a native of the Lower Chapel area. On leaving school he joined Lloyds Bank in Brecon until his call up for military service. After his discharge he returned to Lloyds Bank and served in Swansea finally completing his career as manager at Port Talbot. He was one of the earliest members of the Old Boys Association and was an active member of the committee.

**Kenneth (Hoppy) W. Hopkins (1941-44)**

Ken was a native of Brecon and a member of Vaughan. He was a keen cricketer and played for the School 1st Cricket XI. After National Service in the RAF he made his career in the County Treasurer's office. He was an enthusiastic member of the RAF Association and was for many years the secretary/treasurer of the Brecon Branch.

**C Gerald Curtis (1956-1960)**

Gerald, a native of Talgarth, was a member of Siddons. After his BSc and PhD degrees in Biochemistry at Cardiff he joined the academic staff there. In 1994 he joined industry, founding two companies and ending his career working for Lifeline Scientific Inc in Chicago. He was a talented sportsman playing rugby, cricket, football, squash and golf..

**William Gerald Phillips (1947-52?)**

After leaving school William worked in local government in the Health, Education and Social Service Departments. He became Deputy Director for Powys on local government reorganisation. He was Town Clerk for several years and also served with distinction as Treasurer of both the Choir Fund and Friends of the Cathedral. He was secretary of the OBA.

**Margaret Jinks (teacher)**

Margaret was appointed initially as an assistant Maths teacher at the Girls' Grammar School in 1948 and returned after a period raising a family. On secondary reorganisation in 1971 she joined the strong Maths department under Gwyn Angell at Brecon High School where she was a firm disciplinarian who was regarded as a superb teacher of her subject.

**Richard Gwynne Hill (1939-44)**

After leaving school Richard served in the Royal Navy as a signal man for his military service and pursued a career in banking. He worked for Lloyds Bank in South Wales, his final tour of duty being in Newport. He was a keen golfer and became captain of Cardiff golf club. He was at one time Troop Leader of the Brecon Scouts. He died peacefully at home on 28th May.

[Please send contributions for the next newsletter by 31 December 2008 to the editor:

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\*\*\*\*\* **Please respond to this request** \*\*\*\*\*

As 2009 will be our Diamond anniversary we invite you to register your interest in attending the dinner on Saturday 28th March and/or the joint OBA/Brecon High School concert on Friday 27th March in the evening. Details and menu will be announce in the formal invitation to be sent early in 2009. The secretary will include a list of probable attendees with the invitation. This it is hoped will enable members who have not attended to see who is likely to attend and this may encourage infrequent attenders to come.

Please email, write or telephone your response to the following:

**I WILL/WILL NOT PROBABLY ATTEND ON FRIDAY MARCH 27th.**

**I WILL/WILL NOT PROBABLY ATTEND ON SATURDAY MARCH 28th**

**NAME: .....**

to: t.protheroe@talk21.com, Tel: 01270 623525, T. Protheroe, 14 Rookery Drive, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 7DD