

Cylchlythyr Cymdeithas Cyn-Ddisgyblion Ysgol Ramadeg y Bechgyn, Aberhonddu Mawrth 2015

Brecon Grammar School Old Boys' Association Newsletter March 2015

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Mr Michael Morris, the head teacher of Brecon High School has resigned and Ms Tracy Gibbs, deputy head teacher, continued to hold the post of acting head teacher until a new head, Rob Broadbridge, was appointed in November (see page 4 for details of his background) The school is at the centre of £70 million plans for a new learning campus which will involve a new school and sixth form centre and redeveloped leisure centre, expected to open in 2018.

When the World War I Memorial Edition of the newsletter was

distributed last September members also received a questionnaire about future reunions. No deadline was set for replies, and there is still time to send us your views which must be received by 31st March 2015. The results will then be presented at the AGM on 11th April. If you no longer have the questionnaire a copy can be found at the end of this newsletter.

The "Letters to the Editor" feature introduced in 2010 has attracted few contributions to the newsletter, so a new feature - Snippets - is introduced this year to tempt readers to put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard!). Snippets are a single paragraph about any item you think might be of interest to readers, and examples from Mike Peters and Michael Williams are included. Regular articles are also welcome (see end of newsletter for contact details).

Mae Mr Michael Morris, prifathro Ysgol Uwchradd Aberhonddu, wedi ymddiswyddo, ac roedd Ms Tracy Gibbs, y ddirprwy brifathrawes, yn brifathrawes weithredol tan benodiad y prifathro newydd, Rob Broadbridge, ym mis Tachwedd (gweler mwy amdano ar dudalen 4). Mae'r ysgol yng nghraidd cynlluniau gwerth £70 miliwn am ganolfan ddysgu newydd a fydd yn cynnwys ysgol newydd,

canolfan chweched ddosbarth a chanolfan hamdden ar newydd wedd y disgwylir iddynt agor yn 2018.

Wrth ddosbarthu Rhifyn Coffa'r Rhyfel Mawr ym mis Medi llynedd, anfonwyd holiadur ar aduniadau'r dyfodol. Ni osodwyd pendraw am atebion, a mae gennych chi amser i anfon eich barn chi i mewn atom, ond rhaid eu derbyn erbyn 31ain Mawrth 2015. Cyflwynir y canlyniadau i'r Cyfarfod Blynyddol ar 14eg Ebrill. Os nad yw'r holiadur gennych chi bellach, ceir copi ar ddiwedd y cylchlythyr hwn.

Cafwyd ond ychydig o gyfraniadau i golofn "Llythyron i'r Golygydd" a sefydlwyd yn 2010, felly rydym yn lawnsio colofn newydd – Lloffion – i ddenu perlau yn eich llythyron neu yn syth o'ch bysellfwrdd! Y gobaith yw derbyn paragraffau unigol ar unrhyw destun a all fod, yn eich tyb chi, o ddiddordeb i'n darllenwyr, a chynhwysir enghreifftiau gan Mike Peters a Michael Williams. Croesawir hefyd erthyglau rheolaidd (gweler diwedd y cylchlythyr am fanylion cysylltu).

Events of 2014

The **65th Annual Reunion Dinner** of the Old Boys' Association was held at the George Hotel, Brecon on 26th April with 66 Old Boys, Old Girls and guests present, and a very pleasant evening was enjoyed by all. Chairman Glyn Powell gave a warm welcome to everyone including Tony and Estelle Hepton, who had travelled from California to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Tony's departure from the Grammar School. Glyn named several Old Boys who had died since the newsletter had been published and after a minutes silence in their memory, and Grace said by Reverend Michael Hodgson of the Plough Chapel, dinner was served. Then Tom Protheroe gave his Presidential address in which he talked of the influence of different subjects on his life. In English he recalled learning a poem - "Anthem for doomed Youth" by Wilfred Owen - which led to a life-long love of poetry. He had a plaque, given to him by his mother, which contained the inscription: "To be born Welsh is to be born not with a silver spoon in your mouth, but with music in your blood and poetry in your soul".

In Music he was highly influenced by singing Faure's Requiem, still the favourite among his collection of over a dozen requiems. Hymns sung at morning assembly helped develop a love of choral singing and language especially "Efengel tang nefedd, O rhed dros y byd". Despite Mr Giles' discouragement he continued studying Chemistry in form VI and talked of having been inspired by the impressive sodium/water reaction. He shares his enthusiasm for science today with hundreds of primary and secondary school children in South Cheshire with the assistance of the local Rotary Club by organising talks, demonstrations and competitions. His main benefit from Physics was his knowledge of angles in collisions of snooker balls which helps him escape from snookers. His Latin teacher, Kaiser, gave him a good knowledge of the structure of language, something that was not provided elsewhere. In History Tom learned that there are two sides to every story a good example being - Welsh and English, and the effects of King Edward 1. Was he the king that brought law and order to Wales or an oppressor of the people? Finally, Harvey Williams - the most feared teacher - kept him on his toes and reinforced his love of the language of the King James bible. Two of the more memorable quotes being "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as one of these". This followed his placing of a flower in a small vase at the front of the class. The main message from



his school days was aspire - aim for the stars! (The above photo shows new President Arwyn Davies after receiving the chain of office from Tom Protheroe).

On a warm Tuesday July 15th 2014 Old Boys, Arwyn Davies (President), Michael Williams and Tom Protheroe attended the annual **Brecon High School Awards evening**. Acting Headteacher Tracy Gibbs, (the head Mr Morris was off on sick leave) introduced the evening and then handed over to Mr Lewis. We were entertained with a fashion show, a most beautiful harp solo, an energetic modern dance routine and the winning eisteddfod sketch. The presentation of awards to year 7 preceded the interval.

After a glass of wine and the inevitable raffle a string ensemble played several pieces, one of which had been played for Prince Charles during his visit to the town in early July. President Arwyn stepped on to the stage and presented book tokens to the following pupils in various categories.

Cliff Carr Memorial Prize

Natalie O'Donoghue

Geoffrey Meredith Powell Senior Prize

Connie Hogg

Geoffrey Meredith Powell Junior Prize

Giuliana Sierchio

Mr & Mrs K. Evans Prizes

KS3 Mathematician Prize

Emma-Lea Harris

KS4 Mathematician Prize

Harry Davies

KS5 Mathematician Prize

Nikhil Limbu

Art Prize

Erin Blackburn

Science/Business

James Byrne

KS3 Language Prize

Hannah Morgan and Thomas Cutts shared the prize

Intercultural Understanding

Amy Leigh

KS4 Geography

James Jeffereys

Most improved history

Frances Smith



At the end Ms Gibbs publicly thanked the Old Boys Association and others for their help in making the evening a success.

The photo shows some of the prize winners.

Names (from left): Connie Hogg, Erin Blackburn, (President Arwyn Davies), Thomas Cutts, James Byrne, James Jefferies, Frances Smith and Nikhil Limbu.

(Report by Tom Protheroe)

Many more Old Boys than usual attended the **Memorial Service** at Brecon High School on 11th November 2014 to remember the former pupils who died in the two world wars, and the service was masterminded by the acting head, Miss Gibbs, with her customary aplomb. After readings by

senior pupils, the names of those Old Boys who died in the two World Wars were read out by Sergeant Hack and Vice President Mr D G Powell. Then, after the Last Post and a minute's silence, wreaths were laid by President Arwyn Davies and Deputy Head boy, James Byrne, and the youngest pupil, Jason Henrie.

In his address the Rev. Hodgson began by referring to his recent visit to see the poppies outside the Tower of London - a very moving experience with each poppy representing one of the 888,236 men killed in World War I. He named some of the Old Boys who died in that war, perhaps the most famous being Tom Rees who, at the age of 21, was the first victim of the German pilot, the Red Barron. A major influence of this war was the role of women, who had to take over many tasks formerly done by men, for example in munitions factories. The Rev Hodgson's own grandfather survived being gassed in the war but died young as a consequence. Finally reference was made to the importance of the Army Chaplaincy and the fact that a former Army Chaplain, Evan Mathias, had a Brecon connection in that he trained for the Ministry at the old Memorial College in Camden Road.

Biographical Notes

David Gwynne Powell (1952-59) - Vice President

David joined the Boys' Grammar School at Cradoc Road but completed his final year at the new school at Penlan. He played rugby for the school. After graduating in veterinary science at Bristol he worked at a poultry company in East Anglia, and then the Animal Health Trust, Newmarket as an epidemiologist before moving in 1985 to the Kentucky University, USA where, as a member of the Department of Veterinary Science, he investigated equine disease outbreaks at local, national and international levels. He retired to Abergavenny in 2010.

Mr Rob Broadbridge - new Head of Brecon High School

In early November, Brecon High School welcomed its new Headteacher, Rob Broadbridge. Mr Broadbridge comes to the school having already had over 8 years of experience of Headship, leading two schools in England, both of which had strong reputations for the quality of the provision and a history of academic success for its students.

Rob started his teaching career in Essex in 1991, having completed a teaching degree, specialising in Design and Technology. After 3 years he became a head of department in his first school, before moving on to lead a larger Design and Technology Department in a school in Ipswich, Suffolk. After further promotion, he moved to Gloucestershire in 2001 to become a Deputy Headteacher. In January 2006 he was appointed to his first Headship in the Forest of Dean, and then moved to a large 11 to 18 school outside Cheltenham in January 2010. Mr Broadbridge left this post in August 2014 and was very pleased to accept the position of Headteacher at Brecon.

Mr Broadbridge has returned to working in a smaller school, where he has the opportunity to work much more closely with the students, because he wanted to bring his experiences to work with the staff at Brecon to bring the school out of its 'Special Measures' category.

The school and the local community have been very welcoming to Mr Broadbridge, who is looking forward to continuing the process of finding out more about the Brecon community and their support in working with the school.

School Roll of Honour

The original bronze tablet designed by Mr George Kay, Engraver of Free Street, at a cost of £20 was initially erected in 1920 by the Governor of the School to commemorate the former pupils who fell in the First World War, 1914-18. It was unveiled in the presence of the whole school and a number of distinguished guests with the Headmaster. Mr Percy Morton, presiding. The actual act of unveiling the plaque was performed by Miss Adelaide Williams, Penpont, and it was placed in the Central Hall of the Cradoc Road building. The names of thirty four former pupils and one member of staff were appended. The memorial plaque was intended to provide a shared focus for the feelings of loss and to pay tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice. This bronze plaque was subsequently placed for safe keeping in Brecon Museum.

The current memorial, a composite of both World Wars, with two subsequent additions to the WWI list, was unveiled and dedicated on Saturday, 30th September 1953, at a ceremony held in the School Gymnasium. The ceremony was presided over by Mr Ifor Jones JP (1898-1902, Association President 1953) and the Headmaster, Mr Jacob Morgan, unveiled the plaque. In 1958 the tablet was moved from Cradoc Road to the foyer of the new school building at Penlan. On secondary reorganisation in 1971 it was transferred to what was the Secondary Modern School building where it was placed (and still remains) in the foyer above the main doors to the Hall. With the removal of the stage, the possibility of having it placed in a prominent position on the wall within the Hall is being considered so as to provide ease of viewing.

Saif y gofeb fel tyst i aberth y saith deg un o gyn-ddisgyblion ein Hysgol a gollodd eu bywydau yn ystod y ddau Ryfel Byd. Codwyd i fod yn ganolbwynt i alar y gymuned ac i dalu teyrnged i'r dewrion hynny a syrthodd. Mae'r gofeb yn symbol parhaus o'r gwaed a gollwyd ac yn un hatgoffa am y perthnasau a ffrindiau ysgol oedd heb angladd na bedd i'w helpu i ddygymod â'u galar. Ein cyfraniad prin ni i'r coffa yw'r Gwasanaeth Cadoediad blynyddol ar y cyd â'r Ysgol pryd y gosodir torch y pabi coch ar ran y Gymdeithas.

Glyn Powell

A further extract from "Recollections of Adolescence" by the late Iwan Jones (1934-41)

[Iwan entered Brecon Boys County School in October 1934 at the age of 11 on transfer from Ystalyfera Secondary School. He was the third of four sons of the Rev Arthur Jones - Owen, Wyn (1934-39), Iwan and Alun. His father became Minister of the Plough Chapel on transfer from Panteg. In the first extract (see 2011 newsletter) Iwan made reference to Jacob Morgan and Lewis Lewis and gave his personal opinion of the rest of the staff in his days. This extract has been translated from the original Welsh version, written by Iwan during his semi-retirement as librarian at Glantâf, the Welsh medium secondary school in Cardiff.]

Prosser Roberts, a native of Borth, Ceredigion, taught Welsh and English to the lower forms with occasional PE lessons as well, although I never saw him actually strip or participate in the games. I recall having to stomp around the gymnasium in pairs singing songs such as "Pack up your troubles" and "Tipperary". On Wednesday afternoons we changed for House matches played either on the School field or on one of the pitches on Pwlllycalch farm. Prosser would referee the game from the touchline whilst engaging in conversation with one of the young ladies of Pwlllycalch. He was the headmaster's "troubleshooter" being delegated the mission of resolving issues of misbehaviour and bringing transgressors to task. In the cross examination of a suspected miscreant

his hue would turn scarlet red and his bellow would resonate through the building. It is not surprising therefore that he came to be known as 'Dragon' by successive generations of pupils. However I was to meet up with him several times after leaving school and found him to be a most engaging personality who always expressed his desire to prioritise the well being of the School.

It was John Sutherland, the Chemistry master, who really impressed me as a superb teacher who set the highest standards in the preparation of lessons and the supervising of experiments. He explained everything thoroughly and intelligently and insisted that experimental notes and diagrams were reproduced meticulously in one's exercise book. Failure to do so would mean repeating the homework until he was satisfied with the standard.

Latin was a compulsory subject in my day, the subject choice being between Welsh and French. Dr Griff Price, known as 'Caesar', enunciated in its native form, taught Latin. I question whether this was an appropriate pseudonym as one could hardly have imagined anyone less authoritarian than the Roman Caesars. As he was a rather humourless character pupils tended to play a range of tricks on him in his lessons. His teaching method was based on constant repetition and I can actually still remember lines from Virgil's 'Aeneid' and whole paragraphs from 'De Bello Gallico'. He was a great scholar who gained his doctorate in law by examination and is credited with a standard reference work on maritime law.

For my first few years it was 'Tiger' James who taught us Mathematics before he moved to Aberdâr and subsequently became headmaster of Brynmawr County School. He was followed by Benny Boulton, a very different personality. Mr James was an inspired teacher, a stern disciplinarian and Welsh speaker whilst Mr Boulton, an Englishman, was rather at sea in front of a class and his occasional pronunciation gave rise to a measure of hilarity. Having opted for Welsh I did not experience lessons with Mr John Williams, known as 'Colonel', who did not tolerate any nonsense in class. However I came to know him quite well outside school as a kindly and generous personality with an engaging sense of humour. His wife, Olwen, was the eldest daughter of Evan Evans, 'Y Gôf' (a blacksmith), and deacon in the Plough Chapel where my father was the minister.

Not everyone could comprehend Douglas Inglis, the History master, whom some found rather forbidding. Perhaps he reflected an air of superiority and consequently could be demeaning to the pupils, raising his voice sarcastically when he encountered words such as 'work' and 'industry' during the course of a lesson, e.g. "And now we come to a word which is strange and unknown to Breconians" and "This is a concept beyond the imagination of Breconians". When someone appeared 'twp' he would pound the blackboard and exclaim "Angels and Ministers of Grace defend us!" He took umbrage when his lesson was disturbed even by the headmaster on a rather insignificant matter relating to a pupil. It was evident that he was not enamoured of either Wales or the Welsh generally. I proceeded to study history for higher and then found him to be particularly encouraging and helpful, and he continued to be so when I went to Cardiff University. Books were his enduring passion and although initially failing to acquire a room for a library he set one up on shelving in the corridor on the second floor. I recall his encouraging school leavers to donate a book or books to the library in recognition of the educational benefits derived from attendance at the School. In my fourth year when he was our form he arranged for us to contribute a few pence for a number of magazines such as 'Boys' Own Paper', 'Meccano Magazine', 'Armchair Science', etc and he paid for the hard-back binding. It was he who inspired my life-long love of and involvement with books and libraries.

Purposely I have left reference to Elwyn Thomas until last. Apart from History my other sixth form subjects were Welsh and English, both of which were taught by Elwyn Thomas who was to become one of the main influences on my life. A native of Dowlais he was a cousin to Mr M Glyn Jones, the eminent Anglo Welsh poet and litterateur. Elwyn was a high flyer who had a very successful career at Cardiff academically and on the sports field, being captain of the soccer team. This sporting prowess was evident when he played for the staff team where he earned the pseudonym 'Ceff', an abbreviation of the Welsh word 'ceffyl' meaning 'horse'. During the war years he joined the schools' department of the BBC as an occasional contributor before moving eventually to Bangor to head the BBC School Service. He was an inspiring and stimulating teacher of both language and literature. Those who were fortunate enough to have benefited from his cultural influence acquired an enhanced literary education. His class discipline was rigid and he did not suffer fools lightly. Sharp tongued, he could give razor edged reprimands when dealing with pupils who had not completed their homework or were guilty of day dreaming. However he had the evident weakness of being rather idle. There were occasions when he would come to the class without having made any preparation. The image I have is of him lounging in the teacher's high chair with his legs stretched across the desk and discussing a topic masterly with the magic of words.

Translated by Glyn Powell

Where have all Aneurin's "flowers" gone?"

In an earlier issue of the newsletter the editor invited correspondents to contribute to a letter column so as to generate discussion and debate about the Association and related school topics. The response was so thin as to be virtually a dead letter from its inception. A topic that could possibly generate debate again is whether our Association can continue to stand alone without progressing either to outright amalgamation or to a general closer co-operative collaboration with other former pupil groups in the wider local secondary school sector. Our 2010 survey soliciting the opinion of members on the way forward received only a muted response to the questionnaire. Of the 26% of members circulated who bothered to reply, 75% expressed a wish to retain the status quo whilst at the same time keeping an open door for association with former pupils of the Girls' Grammar School. A wider association absorbing former pupils of all other past and present secondary schools was not favoured at this stage.

The ranks of the Cradoc Road "purists" is thinning progressively whilst the Penlan contingent has regrettably singularly failed to step into the breach in significant numbers. Subsequently with secondary reorganisation in 1971 and the emergence of the composite comprehensive Brecon High School, we were introduced to a very different ball game. At the AGM that year members did not feel inclined to revamp the Association and shelved the issue with a resolution that bore the imprint of passing the buck. It was resolved "that the Association continues as at present and that the situation be reviewed annually". Some members felt that they were not really in a position to suggest the formation of a new association by merger and that any such request should come from the new school. It is evident that the "purists" were loathe to bite the bullet thereby leaving those ex-pupils who had attended both the Grammar and High Schools in a discriminatory position relative to contemporaries of theirs (of both sexes) who became former pupils of the High School only.

There have been numerous favourable soundings about an accommodation with "Old Girls" as an interim arrangement which is reflected in the open invitation for them to attend the reunion dinner and the Armistice Service. I have often suspected that this tie-up has been pressed enthusiastically by certain Don Juans in our midst in the hope of rekindling schoolday liaisons! The girls have in

general preferred a more informal ad hoc arrangement for their reunions. One particular group meets up annually for a celebratory lunch followed by an outing usually on the canal.

Is it to be “*quieta non movere*” (“let sleeping dogs lie”) or do we reopen the debate about safeguarding the long term of an “association”, initiated by the committee in 2004 and publicised by the Rev. Geraint Hughes and Dr Les Bevan in their respective presidential addresses. A number of year and peer groups have met informally over the years with the 1955 intake being particularly successful with Philip Malham and Brynach Parri as “chief sleuths” rounding up 50 members for the event. A number of unpublicised reunions of former Secondary Modern School pupils have also taken place but have not been followed up regularly. Is there not something to be learned from the reunion of the “seventy niners” of the High School at the Castle Hotel in 2013 when almost a hundred former pupils and partners attended a buffet dinner and dance? Is this an indication that there could possibly be some mileage in establishing an association of former High School pupils to run in parallel with the OBA? However at this stage our immediate aim should be to gather our own lost sheep back into the fold and - to paraphrase the words of a popular refrain - to ask “Where have all Aneurin’s flowers gone?”

Glyn Powell

Recollection of Keith Evans (1959-66)

I left Mount Street Primary School in 1959 to attend the Grammar School at Penlan, where I was placed in Form 1B, and along with Philip Morris and Dennis Morgan I gained a Form Prize. The encouragement this gave helped me to strive for improvement during my time at school. I recall many talented pupils who excelled academically and others whose prowess in rugby, athletics and cricket was exceptional.

Thanks to Mr Rowlands (POJ), I joined the Brecon Scout Troop and eventually became a Queen Scout. I was also fortunate to play chess with Jacob Morgan - my only connection to the ‘Old School’ as he had retired to close to where my family lived. He was also kind enough to demonstrate to me how to solve mathematical problems logically using Trigonometry and Geometry.

Leaving School in 1966 to attend Bristol University, I finally completed my Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award and attended the award ceremony at Buckingham Palace. Whilst in my final year at Bristol I obtained permission from the Clinical Dean to take the Royal College of Surgeons Examination, and fortunately I passed before completing my Degree.

My next significant step was to marry my wife (Marilyn Ann Richards), also an ex Brecon Girls’ Grammar School pupil, before starting several clinical House jobs in Bristol. Whilst studying there for my Fellowship, I was invited to join a large General Dental Practice in Basingstoke. I stayed there for three years before starting my own practice in Peterborough in 1975.

For the next 22 years I worked as a General Practitioner, became Secretary of Cambridge Local Dental Committee and a member of Cambridge Family Practitioner Committee. I had a part time attachment to Peterborough District Hospital with responsibility for dental care to the geriatric units in the area. During this period I was asked to help set up a Training Unit for Dental Surgery Assistants at Peterborough Technical College. This led to becoming a National Examiner for Dental Nursing Awards.

I was then encouraged to take the Forensic Science Course at Hatfield University and eventually I became a Forensic Odontologist. This led to interesting periods of working with a number of different police forces providing identification of the deceased, where other methods proved unreliable.

In 1997 I sold my share of the Practice and joined the Dental Reference Service based in Eastbourne. This led to travels to different areas of the UK, examining patients, referred by GP's or the Dental Practice Board checking both legitimate and fraudulent Claims, sometimes leading to Disciplinary Proceedings or even to Crown Court appearances against any miscreant.

I retired in 2008 and when I reflect back on having had a fortunate and rewarding Career, coming from a humble background, I believe Education was the pathway that enabled me to achieve these goals. My wife and I both agreed that we should, in a small way, provide an incentive for today's pupils to work hard to improve their skills and to be rewarded in a similar way as I was in Form 1B, I thank the Old Boys' Association for help in setting up the prizes.

(Editor's note: the Evans prizes are listed in the Awards Evening report on pages 2-3)

Those were the days

Editor Dr Michael Williams admitted in our 2014 newsletter that he had experienced an inexplicable glitch in his recall of a feature on his route to school. "Mirabile dictu" - "Wonderful to relate". Having got him on the ropes, I am now tempted to test him further on his powers of recall to see whether he has any recollection of the Association's Annual Dinner held at the Cafe Royal in 1954 at which he attended as Head Boy! The guest speaker was Ald. Percy Morris MP for a Swansea constituency with E. B. Powell, headmaster of Llanfaes CP School as the President for that year. A contemporary report noted "that the Annual Dinner is now firmly established as our most popular function is beyond dispute. Each year the demand for seats increases and the atmosphere of reunion becomes more evident". Trawling the archives it is established that the Association had a paid membership of 380 at that time which makes one long for such by-gone days.

The previous year the guest speaker had been W. S. Russell Thomas MA, MB. BChir, an Old Boy and former MP for Southampton, one of a phalanx of guest speakers at successive dinners. Actually those earlier dinners bristled with speeches with the evening often featuring a double-act as well as contributions from voluble officers of the Association. I suspect that Michael would have learnt a salutary lesson from these verbose marathons as he, as a leading member of the current committee, was party to the change to dispense with a guest speaker so as to afford greater opportunity for socialising and an evening filled with good stories and revealing anecdotes. The current format for our Annual Dinner would undoubtedly have met with the delighted approval of the late John Golesworth, who, many of the regular diners will recall, would express his irritation at lengthy speeches with barbed and snide asides interspersed with audible interjections, which cut to the bone, from a sedentary position. When John was bored to distraction he would lapse into a veritable state of hyperventilation and play out his angst to the embarrassment of the pseudo polite of more delicate sensibilities who in all honesty shared his growing discomfort.

An interesting facet of the 1954 dinner, apart from Michael's presence, was the attendance by four brothers - Bertram Jones (1896-99), Perry (1899-1902), Evan Edgar (1902) and Harold (1902-07), residing in Swansea, Colwyn Bay, Caerleon and Cardiff respectively. Bertram himself was a member of the initial intake to the newly established boys' secondary school (Intermediate School) in 1896. Admission to the school was on a fee paying basis with an examination for a number of free places for boys from Elementary Schools in the whole county. Bertram was the top scholarship boy and entered Form IV remaining in that top class for the whole of his school life. Evan Edgar Jones' son, John S. M. Jones (1931-34) was a former assistant Director of Education for Powys. He provided an enlightening article entitled "Memories of Brecon County School) for the 2011 newsletter and his obituary appeared in the 2012 issue.

At that very same dinner there were three generations of yet another Jones family in attendance - F. Beverley Jones (1901-04), his son D. C. O. Jones (1925-28) and grandson B. C. B. Jones (1949-53). Beverley was one of the founders of the OBA becoming its chairman for 1952 and its President for 1957. An enthusiastic and active member he was often called upon to act as cricket umpire for the Old Boys v School match, and as the senior representative of the three generations he presented a Challenge Cup for the Senior House Soccer Championship. There must be something special about the Jones clan because in more recent times our immediate past president, Wyndham Jones was himself one of four brothers to have attended the school over a period.

Another family, though not a Jones in this case, which provided a sequence of distinguished pupils was that of Mr D. J. Powell of Abergavenny. Though not an Old Boy himself he donated a cup in 1957 for the Middle Athletics section, claiming proudly that he had the distinction of having had four sons and one grandson at the school. Mr E. Baden Powell MBE, President in 1954, was probably the best known, whilst the grandson mentioned was his son, D. G. Powell*, recipient of the Jacob Morgan Prize in 1960 and subsequently a graduate in Veterinary Science from Bristol University. The Jacob Morgan Prize was awarded annually to the boy who had done most for the school both socially and academically. One is tempted to enquire whether the Prize is still awarded and whether all those traditional cups and trophies are still in circulation!

*present Vice President

Glyn Powell

Dyddiau du a dyddiau da

A bod yn gwbl onest, doedd fy mlynnyddoedd cyntaf yn yr Ysgol Ramadeg yn Cradoc Road ddim yn rhai hapus. Dim ond ychydig dros ddeg oed oeddwn pan fu'n rhaid ymadael ag ardal wledig Gymraeg Cwm-Wysg a symud i dref Seisnig ddieithr Aberhonddu.

Yn waeth byth, am nad oedd modd teithio o fferm fy nheulu bob dydd, bu'n rhaid lletya yn Aberhonddu o ddydd Llun tan ddydd Gwener. I ddechrau, roedd hi'n ymddangos fel diwedd byd. Roeddwn yng nghanol dieithriaid ac yn gorfod ymaddasu â ffordd o fyw hollol newydd. Oni bai am gyfeillgarwch a charedigrwydd fy nghefnidryd hŷn, Meredydd Meity-isaf ac Eirwyn Beiliaugleision, a oedd lletya mewn rhan arall o'r dref, wn i ddim sut y byddwn wedi ymdopi.

Yn ystod y daith foreol o'r llety ym Mhorth-y-dŵr i fyny'r rhiw i'r ysgol, roedd f'esgidiau megis plwm. Wrth glywed llif Afon Wysg, fedrwn i ddim peidio â hiraethu am yr afon ifanc a ddawnsiai heibio i ysgol fach Aberpedwar yng Nghwm-Wysg.

Roedd cerdded trwy ddrysau adeilad brics yr Ysgol Ramadeg yn brofiad poenus. Hyd y dydd heddiw, mae meddwl am aroglau'r ystafell Gemeg yn codi cyfog arnaf. Hwyrach y dylwn fod wedi ymdrechu'n galetach i ddygymod â'r pwnc er mwyn osgoi dirmyg yr athro, Mr Cliff Giles. Doeddwn i fawr gwell wrth ymrafael â Lladin; cefais fy nghosbi droeon gan Dr Griff Price a bu'n rhaid ysgrifennu miloedd o linellau yn gosb. Pwnc arall a oedd yn creu anhawster mawr i mi oedd Mathemateg, ond roedd Mr Caerwyn Roderick yn hynod o oddefgar. Flynyddoedd yn ddiweddarach, croesodd ein llwybrau sawl tro; erbyn hynny fe oedd Aelod Seneddol Brycheiniog a Maesfed ac roeddwn i'n newyddiadurwr.

Roedd gen i edmygedd mawr o sawl athro arall, hefyd, gan gynnwys yr athro Saesneg, Mr Ewart Davies. Ef yn anad neb a roddodd yr hyder imi ysgrifennu a pheidio â chywilyddio am yr hyn a roddwn ar bapur. Nid oedd llyfrgell fel y cyfryw yn yr ysgol yn Cradoc Road, ond nifer o silffoedd

yn y coridor y tu allan i ystafell y staff. Bob tro y byddai drws honno'n agor, deuai cwmwl o fwg tybaco i orchuddio'r silffoedd llyfrau. Roedd arnynt rai llyfrau Cymraeg, a chefais gyfle i flasgu am y tro cyntaf weithiau awduron fel W. Llewelyn Williams, Moelona, Meuryn ac E. Morgan Humphreys.

Erbyn symud i'r ysgol newydd yn Mhenlan, roeddwn wedi cael pedair blynedd i ymgynefino â bywyd trefol, ac yn teimlo'n fwy bodlon fy myd. Y pleser mwyaf oedd gallu treulio amser hamdden yn y llyfrgell newydd, a oedd erbyn hynny yn ystafell gyfan yn cynnwys dewis eang o lyfrau a chylchgronau cyfoes.

O bryd i'w gilydd, byddai pobl amlwg yn derbyn gwahoddiad i ymweld â'r ysgol er mwyn rhannu eu profiadau. Un a wnaeth argraff fawr arnaf oedd James Blades (1901-1999), a ddaeth â nifer fawr o offerynnau taro i'w harddangos a'u defnyddio. Roedd yn cael ei gydnabod yn un o offerynwyr gorau'r ugeinfed ganrif. Cyfansoddwyd darnau yn arbennig ar ei gyfer gan Benjamin Britten a Malcolm Arnold, ac ef oedd yn creu'r sŵn ar ddechrau ffilmiau'r Rank Organisation; ffugio oedd Billy Wells wrth daro'r gong. Ymwelydd arall oedd Dr Richard Phillips, Llangwryfon, y gwladwr hynaws a enillodd Fedal Aur Cymdeithas Amaethyddol Frenhinol Cymru yn 1966 am ei waith yn hybu addysg amaethyddol. Cefais y fraint o weithio'n ddiweddarach â'i ferch, Teleri Bevan, a fu'n Bennaeth Rhaglenni'r BBC yng Nghaerdydd.

Cof da hefyd am T.C. Thomas, swyddog addysg gyda Chyngor Sir Frycheiniog, a ddaeth â phentwr o sgriptiau teledu *Davy Jones* i'w dangos. Wedi llwyddiant ysgubol ar lwyfan, roedd yr awdur a'i gwmni drama, y Llyn Safaddan [*sic*] Players, wedi derbyn gwahoddiad gan y BBC i berfformio cyfres o ddramâu fel *Davy Jones's Clock* a *Davy Jones's Locker* ar y teledu, gan ddechrau gyda *Davy Jones's Dinner* yn 1955. T.C. Thomas, hefyd, oedd yn rhannol gyfrifol am *Pasiant Brycheiniog*, rhan o Wyl Cymru, yn 1958. Anrhydedd i mi oedd cael chwarae rhan John Penri yn y perfformiadau yn y *Guild Hall*, Aberhonddu. Er na ddisgleiriais ym myd y drama, dro arall llwyddais i gael rhan fechan mewn perfformiad o *Murder in the Cathedral* gan T.S. Eliot yng Nghadeirlan Aberhonddu. Trefnydd drama'r sir bryd hynny oedd y rhadlon Brinley Jenkins, ac mae fy nyled iddo yn enfawr. Gwyddai fod gennyf uchelgais i fod yn ddarlledwr, a neilltuodd oriau lawer o'i amser prin yn rhoi hyfforddiant am ddim imi ar sut i ddatblygu fy llais er mwyn ei wneud yn fwy derbyniol i'r gwrandawr.

Os bu fy nyddiau cynnar yn yr ysgol yn anhapus, bu'r blynyddoedd olaf yn fuddiol dros ben, a chawsant ddylanwad pwysig ar fy mywyd.

Handel Jones (1954-62)

Handel Jones recounts how the move from the Welsh-language stronghold of Cwm-Wysg, near Trecastle, to the unfamiliar and Anglicised town of Brecon was a painful experience to a ten-year-old boy. Some of the teachers, such as Mr Cliff Giles and Dr Griff Price, would lose patience with his innocent ignorance; others, such as Mr Caerwyn Roderick and Mr Ewart Davies, were more tolerant and supportive. The move from Cradoc Road to Penlan heralded a change for the better. The well-stocked library was a welcome addition. Handel also recalls how he was influenced by occasional guest speakers such as James Blades, the percussionist; Dr Richard Phillips, promoter of agricultural education; T.C. Thomas, the playwright; and Brinley Jenkins, the county drama organiser. The dark days of the early years had become a mere memory.

Joint Annual Prize Day: 1929

The following extract refers to the Joint Boys' and Girls' County Schools Annual Prize Day, reported on in the Brecon & Radnor Express of 5th December 1929. It has been filleted from a very

detailed account that included Jacob Morgan's first Headmaster's report. Apart from being an evocation of the past it also illustrated the progressive evolution of the school's curriculum. The guest speaker was the Chief Inspector of Schools who, from the tone of his address, seems to have been more accommodating than current Estyn inspection teams. There are a number of references in the report which I have elucidated in additional notes.

"The headmaster of the Boys' School (Mr J Morgan) presented his report on the progress and activities of the school during the year. The most important event of the year, he said, was the general inspection, and the report was an excellent one and reflected great credit on the work of the school in general and that of Dr Woosnam (his predecessor) and the staff. The one adverse criticism referred to accommodation and this was a pressing question and would become more acute in the future. The school curriculum was at present limited by lack of space, and if the school developed science and art they would require special rooms. The number of boys admitted each year was strictly limited by the accommodation. The gymnasium, shortly to be erected, would supply the school with a long felt need and would add greatly to the general amenities of school life. Proceeding to the work of the classrooms, the headmaster said that there were 136 boys in school at the beginning of the year and 121 at the close, and last July 21 boys sat the CWB School Certificate and one the Supplementary Certificate Examination. Sixteen certificates were obtained with 70 credits and eight exemptions from Welsh Matriculation. Joseph Rendel Jones deserved special mention - he obtained a distinction in Greek after only one year's study of the language, and was awarded a bursary and a £20 exhibition at Taunton School. There were 14 boys in the upper forms and it was gratifying to find so many staying on in school after obtaining a school certificate continuing, Mr Morgan said the only change in the curriculum was the introduction of Scripture a year ago. Turning to the school activities he said of the tone of the school that the boys showed a great devotion in their work and their school, and the house system worked very well. The boys displayed a good home spirit and took a keen interest in the social activities generally. The Eisteddfod, Debating Society and War Savings were flourishing institutions, and last week saw two more innovations - a lecture on the League of Nations and a play reading. These were to become regular features of the school Referring to the staff, Mr Morgan said he had been with them for nearly two terms and the relations between them was most cordial. Before he had been at the school half a term they lost the services of the second master, the late Mr R W Jones. All knew the great love and devotion he bore for his school and boys, and he himself had lost a wonderful teacher and staunch friend. Mr Edgar Thomas had left to become headmaster of St David's County School; they wished him every success. New masters welcomed at the school were Mr Douglas Inglis BA, Liverpool, Mr E Glyn Lewis BA, Swansea and Mr G T Evans BA, Bangor, and it was hoped that their stay at Brecon would be long and happy"

Notes

1. The question of gymnasium provision was soon to be resolved as, on the 25th December, 1929 the Breconshire Higher Education Committee approved the acceptance by the Governors of the tender of Messrs A H Tyler & Son, Brecon of £1,520 for the provision and erection of a gymnasium at the school. There were eight tenders and true to form rates-conscious councillors opted for the lowest. So, what the class of 1931 termed "Crystal Palace" or "Bishop Bevan's Folly" sprouted up on the site of what had been the experimental horticultural plot.
2. The sudden and unexpected death of R Walter Jones has been mentioned in articles in previous issues of the newsletter. A son of "the Manse" he was described as a firm and rather severe Maths teacher (1919-29) who had served as a pilot in WWI.

3. Edgar H Thoms MA (“Boiler”) was an English graduate and fine Welsh scholar who regularly contributed articles to learned publications and who was later to win the crown at the National Eisteddfod. Following a period as headmaster of St David’s he took up the headship at Llangefn County School, Sir Fôn.
4. Griffith Thomas Evans (1929-33), a Northwalian, succeeded R Walter Jones whilst Evan Glyn Lewis (1929-30) filled the English and Welsh post until replaced by Elwyn Thomas.
5. From my personal experience I cannot recall Scripture’s having a profound influence on my education!
6. Both Jacob Morgan and Doug Inglis had taught at Taunton School before coming to Brecon.

Glyn Powell

Snippets

Tracing ancestors is a growth hobby. Some love it; others are cautious – and rightly so. Old Boy **Mike Peters** and his son, Mark, are deep into the centuries past and have uncovered some surprising family facts. Hugh Peters, who faced the ultimate punishment of being hung, drawn and quartered at Charing Cross, following the Restoration of Charles II, was a Cornish ancestor. Hugh was a protestant preacher who harangued the Ironsides about the fallacy of the divine rights of kings and was a promoter of Cromwell’s Commonwealth. He was behind the scenes at the signing of the Charles I death warrant. Hugh was one of only four put to death among the 50 plus who were tried and found guilty. **Says Mike:** I can’t help but think, as a public relations specialist, that Hugh might be called Cromwell’s PR man. I shall have to watch my step.

Whilst at Brecon Grammar School one of the unfulfilled ambitions of **Michael Williams** was to win the Welsh recitation competition at the annual school eisteddfod. On retiring some years ago he decided to fortify his O-level Welsh, abandoned after school, by attending classes for learners. Last year he gave his first talk in Welsh (on the subject of autism) to members of the Swansea Welsh Dining Circle. The chairman thought it should be published, and an article eventually appeared in “Y Fanner Newydd” in the summer edition (Rhifyn 68, 4-10) of 2014. Then in September of that year Michael became the first Welsh learner to take up the post of Chairman of the Dining Circle.

“In the beginning”

When the Old Boys’ Association was established in 1950, amongst the initial ranks were some of the earliest of the former pupils of the school, many of them having achieved high academic status and prominence in public life. Senior amongst its members was Garnet Morris 1896-99, first President of the Association, who in his capacity as Chairman of the Governors, undertook the opening of the new Penlan School building on 24th September 1958. He performed the ceremony by unveiling a plaque and unlocking the main door of the school. The first turf on the new site of the Penlan campus had been cut on 15th March 1956 by another distinguished Old Boy, David Lewis MBE, JP, CC, 1899-190?, Chairman of the Education Committee for sixteen years between 1952 and 1968.

As a beguiling exercise in the remembrances of things past and with a sense of rapture lost, a list of those very first senior members of the OBA is added.

Garnet Morris	1896-99	A. G. Calwell	1902-07
Bertram Jones	1896-99	H. Jones	1903-07
T. J. Badgeth	1897-99	T. F. Jones	1902-05
W. Ifor Jones	1898-02	H. V. Jones	1903-06

David Lewis	1899-01	Dr J. G. T. Price	1903-13
C. H. Jenkins	1899-02	T. E. Williams	1904-07
P. Jones	1899-02	E. G. Jones	1904-06
Stanley E. Jenkins	1900-04	H. C. Jones	1906-10
A. A. Price	1900-03	Rev. O. T. Wallis	1906-10
W. V. Jones	1900-02	T. Cross	1908-13
F. Beverley Jones	1901-04	R. Hopkins	1909-13
H. V. Davies	1901-05	I. E. R. Morgan	1908-11
A. Cheyne	1901-06	E. C. Parry	1909-14
D. Thomas	1902-05	H. Elston	1909-12

Glyn Powell

“That is why the Comandante is a Diplomat”

Remembering the names of people can obviously be an advantage in life, but unfortunately in my case I do not seem to have that ability. However on one occasion I was amused to experience the result when I did impress with a name recalled.

From 1989 to 1992 I was the British Naval Attaché in Brasilia and a significant part of my job, apart from being a 'spy' as all Attaches are, was to arrange the many aspects of RN warship visits to ports along the 2,000 mile Brazilian coastline. At that time we happened to have two of our RN Hydrographic Service vessels surveying the south Atlantic and these ships were frequent visitors to ports, particularly in the northeast.

Each visit of a warship involved my visiting the port ahead of a visit to make arrangements with the local Brazilian Naval Authorities, our local Honorary Consul and our shipping agent. Incidentally for ports in the northeast this was akin to being based in London with the visits taking place in the Mediterranean, the northeast ports being some three hours flying time away for me and a three day journey on uncertain roads by my driver when my car was needed. I would again visit the port to meet the ship on its arrival and stay for a few days to, amongst other things, attend the ship's cocktail party which the Commanding Officer and Officers of all RN ships invariably give on the first night alongside. So, during these visits I met a considerable number of people.

One day I was staging through Rio airport when in the distance in the crowd coming against me I thought I recognised someone from a group of business people in one of the ports. I not only realised he was from the port of Joao Pessoa but, incredibly, his name also came to mind and so in passing I greeted him by name, exchanged a few pleasantries in Portuguese and went on my way.

Some time later at a cocktail party of another ship visiting Joao Pessoa he was recalling to his group of friends, with whom I was having a chat, of meeting me in Rio airport and being delighted and impressed that I not only recognised him but that I had greeted him by name. Drawing himself up to his full height he said with some feeling, 'that is why the Comandante is a diplomat'!!

J J Price

Cycling in the Brecon Beacons

If you are a cyclist the next time you visit Brecon or come to an OBA reunion bring your bike! An article in the Brecon & Radnor in 2013 was headlined “£5 million cash boost for bike project”. Brecon and Merthyr Tydfil have had a cycling link since 1998 when the Taff Trail opened. The long distance 25 mile mostly vehicle-free route from Brecon to Merthyr follows the Monmouth Canal to

Talybont before crossing the Beacons and descending to Pontsticill reservoir. It goes on to Merthyr where it passes below the lower slopes of Gethin Woodland Park, where Bike Park Wales was opened in 2013 thanks to funding from the EU and the Welsh Government. There is a wide range of trails here from Beginner to Expert. The trails are described on the Bike Park website (<http://www.bikeparkwales.com/trails>). There is a link between the Taff Trail and the Bike Park.

The whole route between Brecon and Merthyr Tydfil can be viewed on an aerial map which shows images of interest. Select "Aerial Photo View Map" on this page: <http://www.gps-routes.co.uk/routes/home.nsf/RoutesLinksCycle/merthyr-tydfil-to-brecon-cycle-route#>.

For the less adventurous, who perhaps don't have a mountain bike to use in the Bike Park, a trip to Talybont Reservoir and back would be equally enjoyable.

Michael Williams

Old Boys who fell in World War II

Details of former pupils who lost their lives whilst serving in the RAF were published in the newsletter for 2014 (following the profile of Len Davies). To avoid any discrimination between the services, details of Army, Navy and Civilian fatalities are provided below for record purposes. Also included is the one ex-pupil of the the Girls' Grammar School; her name has in recent years been commemorated at our Annual Armistice Service.

Lance Sgt (4078920) Albert Stanley Burgess, 2nd Bn South Wales Borderers, aged 26, died of wounds sustained in the advance towards the Seine in the Battle of Normandy, and is buried in Bayeux War Cemetery, France, Plot 8, Row A, Grave 23. The Latin inscription on the frieze of the memorial reads "NOS A GULIELO VICTI PATRIAM LIBERAVIMUS" ("We, once conquered by William, have now set free the Conqueror's land")

Signalman (2342708) Jack Capper, Royal Corps of Signals, 11th Indian Division Signals, died on 12th February 1942 aged 26, and is commemorated on the Singapore Memorial, column 43, which stands in Kranji War Cemetery. It is presumed on co-incidental evidence that he was bayoneted by a Japanese soldier who ran amok through the military hospital where he lay wounded.

Cpl (5388603) Robert David Davies, 1st Bn Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire ("Ox & Bucks") Light Infantry, died on 13th August 1944, aged 24 and is buried in Banneville-La-Campagne War Cemetery, Plot 8, Row B, Grave 14. The 2nd Bn Ox & Bucks were glider borne and landed on D Day. He was killed in the Battle of Normandy.

Pte (396555) William George Evans, 1st Bn Welsh Regiment, died on 16th June 1941, aged 23 and is buried in Phaleron War Cemetery, Greece, Grave 15, E5. The 1st Bn Welsh Regiment was part of CAEFORCE and its troops were the only ones to escape from AKROTIRI Peninsula north of Canea on 27th May 1941 leaving a rearguard force to cover the withdrawal. Bodies of the fallen were brought from temporary battle field graves in mainland Greece to the Phaleron Cemetery.

L/Cpl (5390905) Stanley John Howard, 6th Bn Ox & Bucks Light Infantry, died on 13th September 1944, aged 24. He has no known graves but is commemorated on the Rangoon Memorial, MYANMAR, Face 15. Engraved on the rotunda are the words "They died for all men". The 6th Bn Ox & Bucks were part of General Slim's 14th Army which after breaking the ring around KOHIMA and IMPHAL began the counter offensive in Burma (MYANMAR). L/Cpl Howard was killed during the "Road to Mandalay" campaign.

Pte (4081083) Ezra Brinley Lewis, 3rd Bn Monmouthshire Regiment ("Mons"), died on 2nd July 1944, aged 28 and is buried in the Banneville-La-Campagne War Cemetery, Plot 13, Row B, Grave 12. Pte Lewis was killed during the Battle of Normandy in the prolonged campaign to capture Caen. Prior to enlistment Brinley worked in the WBFA (West Breconshire Farmers' Association).

Gunner (968727) John Thomas Reginald Morgan, 104 (The Essex Yeomanry) Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery, died on 12th June 1942, aged 24. He has no known grave but is commemorated on the ALAMEIN MEMORIAL, Egypt, Column 14, which forms the entrance to the EL ALAMEIN WAR CEMETERY. He was killed in the battle of Tobruk, one of the longest sieges in British military history. Tobruk was the key to the war in North Africa for Rommel's Afrika Corps, but it was defended by the British Division 70th Division.

Driver (T/225194) Elvyn (Elfyn) Jenkins, Royal Army Service Corps (RASC), 18th Divisional Troops Coy, died on 27th January 1944, aged 32 and is buried in the KANCHANABURI War Cemetery, Thailand, Grave 4, E15. His unit served the 18th Division, an element of the Singapore garrison force which was forced to surrender to the Japanese on 15th February 1942, when he became a POW.

2nd Lieutenant (157536) Morgan Jenkins, Welsh Regiment attached to No 2 Commando, was killed on the famous Combined Services raid on St Nazaire on 28th March 1942. He was 28 and has no known grave but is commemorated on BROOKWOOD Memorial, Panel 12, Column 2. Lieutenant Jenkins was on board Motor Launch 268 when it was struck by enemy fire. A fuller account of this raid has been given in an earlier newsletter.

Cpl (2597307) William David Powell, Royal Corps of Signals, died on 7th December 1944 of malaria, aged 36 and is buried in the Madras War Cemetery, Chennai, India, Plot 8, Row 3, Grave 12. Known as "Budsey" he was remembered as a motor cycle fanatic who would engage in racing his pals along the A470 from Brecon to Storey Arms on Sunday mornings.

S/Sgt (S/67033) Cyril Welstead Rothero, Royal Army Service Corps (RASC), died on 21st November 1944, aged 37 and is buried in Brussels Town Cemetery, Plot 10, Row 26, Grave 17, where the majority of burials were of men who died on Lines of Communication duties after the liberation of Brussels.

Pte (14623575) Albert)"Bertie") Thomas Wesley, 2nd Bn Monmouthshire Regiment ("Mons"), died on 14th August 1944, aged 19 and is buried in Banneville-La-Campagne War Cemetery, France, Plot 4, Row D, Grave 14. Bertie was killed in the action known as Le Logis and Leffard in the Battle of the Falaise Gap. On that fateful morning the 2nd Mons were ordered to seize Hill 201 about 3 miles beyond Falaise. This was successful but there were many casualties.

Ordinary Seaman (Lt/Jx 214956) Reginald Saunders Lewis, Royal Naval Patrol Service, HMS Elan 11, died on 22nd March 1941, aged 22. The circumstances of his death have not been established but he is "remembered with honour" at Pwll (Holy Trinity) Churchyard. The Royal Naval Patrol Service or "Harry Tate's Navy" as it was popularly known, was a very special service with its own rules and regulations. It had the unique distinction of having its own Silver Badge. Its fighting fleet consisted of requisitioned trawlers, whalers, drifters, paddle steamers, yachts, tugs and the like - Minor War Vessels as the Admiralty called them. HMS Elan was believed to have been a tug.

Stanley Letton Norbury died at Cunliffe Owen's Aircraft Factory on 11th September 1940, aged 30 and is recorded as a Civilian War Dead. He is commemorated at the County Borough of Southampton Cemetery. Stan was classified as having a reserved occupation involved in the production of Spitfire aircraft at Southampton. On the fateful afternoon of 11th the factory was hit in a daylight air-raid and this together with heavy losses of Spitfires in aerial combat necessitated the dispersal of production to more than 60 different sites.

Sarah Eira Durham, SRN, died at St Thomas' Hospital, London on 9th September 1940, aged 29 when the one of the nine blocks comprising the Nurses' Home was struck by a large bomb. She was one of six nurses killed on that night, the second night of the London blitz which continued for 57 consecutive nights. She is recorded as a Civilian War Dead and is buried in St David's churchyard, Llanfaes on 23rd September in what appears to be an unmarked grave. Her name appears in the Roll of Honour in the church and is also commemorated in Lambeth Cemetery, Tooting, London Borough of Wandsworth.

Compiled by Glyn Powell

Owen Thomas William Price - a Brecon high flier!

Old Boy Owen Price (1924-2012) was the eldest son of farmers in the Brecon Beacons and planned to become a teacher until he learned of courses in agricultural economics at Aberystwyth University. Convinced that such studies would benefit farming communities, he enrolled at Aber and graduated with an Honours degree in agricultural economics in 1946. He then was awarded a Ministry of Agriculture research fellowship which enabled him to study at Lincoln College, Oxford, where he gained his DPhil, and then at the University of Wisconsin, USA, where he was awarded a Masters in Land Economics. After a second masters degree at Oxford, Owen lectured in land economics at the Agricultural Economics Research Institute until he joined ICI in 1953. Whilst there he was involved in government discussions on national agricultural policy, and became convinced of the potential benefits of joining the then Common Market - a controversial view.

He published widely in professional journals and in 1967 he joined the World Bank, becoming Chief of the Commodities and Trade Division, in the Economics Department. After a tour of duty of four years in Iran he returned to Washington and was appointed Division Chief in charge of the General Agriculture Division for East Asia and Pacific. Later he became Chief of the Bank's Resident Mission in Indonesia where he supervised the implementation of some 35 projects worth US \$2.5 billion.

Owen is remembered as a man full of life, with a spring in his step, and proud of his accomplishments, his family, being a farm boy and being Welsh. He now lies in the country graveyard close to the farm where he grew up.

(Thanks to Glyn Powell for the article on Owen Price)

Parody

Glyn Powell has suggested that parodies from the Silurian Magazine might be included in the newsletter and he has submitted a selection of them. Here is one written by G S Porte in 1957.

On leaving the Grammar School for Penlan

(with apologies to J Keats)

Thou old and ravished hall of learned men !
Thou mother of the famous and unknown,
Antediluvian, true, but ne'er again
A school like you, for years our second home.
What atmosphere hung around thy walls,
Enclosing B.A.'s boys (and down-right fools)
Who strove to live like one great family !
What whispered secrets told within thy halls !
What mad pursuits ! What struggles and what brawls !
What shrieks and what laughter ! what wild ecstasy !

Who are these coming to the torturer ?
To whose small study, O awe-inspiring Head,
Leads't thou that trembling boy with eyes upturned
And trousers full of books - for cuts prepared ?
What school is this which strangers come to find
Upon old Cradoc Hill above Maendu
All emptied of its boys and so forlorn !
Now little school, thy rooms for evermore
In solitude and dust will silent be,
No hint of where thy scholars all have gone.

Exotic structure ! Eastern shape ! foul deed
To leave th' initialled, plastered passages
To face the ravages of mice and weed;
Thy edifice brings thoughts of other days
(Tho' in those days we longed to get away !)
And when in middle age we shall return
(In Rolls or Cadillac) we still shall find
The dear old place where we once played and learned.
And later still, when old and bent and grey,
Look sadly on the school we left behind.

G S Porte

Where are they now?

Recently someone suggested including a "Where are they now" column in the newsletter, so here goes!

Brian Mayers, who was at the school from 1953 to '58, was in Vaughan and would like to know the whereabouts of Raymond Stroud, whose family (he thinks) kept the Three Horseshoes pub in Brecon, and Tony (Chalky) Watkins who lived in Newmarket Street.

The Oval Revolution

Introduction

In the late 19th Century Brecon was one of the leading clubs in Welsh rugby. The club helped establish the formal structures that led to the Welsh Rugby Union as it exists today. In 1875, the

South Wales Football Union was created in Brecon. Six years later, in 1881, Brecon RFC was one of 11 clubs who met in the Castle Hotel, Neath and formed the Welsh Rugby Union. Brecon Rugby Club was a founder member of the WRU and at the forefront of rugby development in Wales but the town's Grammar School, which opened in 1896, never played rugby.

In September 1955 two new members of staff arrived and started an oval revolution. Ron Arthur came from Barnsley Grammar School in Yorkshire to take up a new appointment of P.T. and Games Master. Ron was the first PT 'professional' to be appointed to the staff. The second arrival was Gwyn Angell who travelled a much shorter distance from Cyfarthfa Grammar School to teach Mathematics. They were both from the Aberdare area and were used to the oval rather than the round ball. Ron was a scrum half and Gwyn a wing forward. A clue to rugby playing staff joining the school may be that the 'new' Headmaster Aneurin Rees, appointed in September 1954, had played for Llanelli. They should be called the Pathfinders who introduced rugby into Cradoc Road. In a soccer dominated environment they were revolutionaries.

The early days

On Saturdays Ron and Gwyn entertained themselves by playing for Brecon Rugby Club. During the week they decided to 'educate' the rabble and introduce us all to the wonderful game of rugby. Other staff joined in, in particular WH (Taffy) Williams, who was rumoured to have played for Swansea and the Royal Navy. We were lined up and sifted and sorted into backs and forwards. The tallest were second rows, squarest front row forwards, and the fleet of foot wingers. The rest were distributed between the back row and the backs. If my memory serves me correctly three boys had played before. They had all joined the school after the first year. DA was a scrum half, Pancho a lanky second row, and Arwel a superfast winger. DA and Pancho arrived from England and Arwel had learned his trade at Pontypridd Grammar School playing against the cream of South Wales Schools. At least we had a line out catcher eyesight permitting, a passer to get the ball away, and somebody to finish it all off in the corner. We had three of the elements to help make up the 15 piece jigsaw. As an aside, emphasising his speed Arwel. won the Welsh Secondary Schools 220 yards championship whilst at Brecon.

During the year some of the soccer sessions were replaced by rugby and during the spring term games afternoon was suddenly all rugby. The enthusiasm varied considerably from 'what am I doing here' to 'this is fun'. 'Swot' in particular used to take up a position on the pitch and think about his Virgil translations all afternoon. Occasionally he would swing into action by sticking out his right arm to produce a neck high tackle. You were only caught once as swinging around a very strong forearm caused significant discomfort to the neck muscles. We all soon realised that running a yard further over solved the problem.

In mid-February Ron Arthur suddenly announced that we were 'good' enough to play our first match. It got serious, we were all allocated our positions and practice followed practice. The practice opposition was reinforced with Ron, Gwyn and some of their mates from Brecon RFC playing as 'ringers' in the opposition. We learned what tackles were and if it looked dodgy how to throw a hospital pass to an unsuspecting colleague. After this we were deemed fit to play our first match.

The first match – March 1956

In late March the whole school moved to the army sports field down the Watton and over the canal. We were playing Cyfarthfa Grammar School first VX. Cyfarthfa were a new opponent for us as we did not play them at either Soccer or Cricket, our only two existing inter-school sports. They turned up in their all black kit, faded from a season of washing and laundering. We were resplendent in

our brand new shining kit. Light blue and maroon hooped shirts, navy blue shorts and light blue and dark blue socks.

Robert Pritchard led out the team on to a sun drenched pitch - the sun always shines in Brecon. The game ebbed and flowed and we did not disgrace ourselves. We tackled and fought like tigers but were let down by our lack of basic skills at crucial moments. The final score was Cyfarthfa 2? against 1? We scored at least two tries from our fliers Windsor and Arwel. For our first game we had done the school, Ron and Gwyn proud.



A handsome bunch – Didn't we look smart
No wonder the Girl's School Sixth form came to watch us

Ron Arthur, John Stroud, Twynog Williams, Roger Williams, Hywel? David, Andrew Thomas, Brynmor Like, Aneurin Rees
Stephen Pritchard, Brian Bell, Bernard Pritchard, Robert Pritchard, Windsor Griffiths, John Taylor, Arwel Edwards
Geraint Jones Lindsey Powell

Researching this has been a problem as there was no record in the Silurian and the Brecon and Radnor did not report the match. The only mention of Grammar School Rugby in the Brecon and Radnor in March/April 1956 was in a report of the 1956 Old Boys dinner where Aneurin Rees said that rugby had been introduced into the school

One other question is who finally played? Arwel sent me a copy of the photograph and a scan of the back with the autographs of all the players. There were 15 autographs, Arwel had not signed it. DA Thomas signed the back but he is not in the photograph. This was taken a little time before the game when all the winter teams had their photographs taken. The answer was in a Silurian and the article about the Jacob Morgan prize winner. Brynmor Like was the first reserve and made up the 15 as DA was not present for the team photo.

The first season

September 1956 saw the revolution completed. Suddenly there were three teams representing the school: Senior XV, Junior XV under 14, and Junior XV under 13. The Senior XV results were mixed with two wins and 4 defeats. One of the wins was against a rugby only school Vaynor and Penderyn. The game against Brynmawr was a new experience for our front row as they came up against John Puddle who was a Wales Schools international who toured South Africa with the Welsh Dragons, the secondary schools international squad, later that year. The props learned a lot

in one morning. The Junior XV's fared better. The under 14 team won their first 4 matches and then lost the following three. Their worst defeat was 6-0. The under 13 team won one, drew one, and lost one. They only started playing at the end of November and there was only a three point difference in any game. Overall the three teams won 7 games, lost 7 and drew 1. Not bad for the very first term of real competitive rugby.

The second season

The seniors had high hopes of an improved year but it was only marginally better. The Senior XV played 8 matches won 3, lost 4 and drew 1. The first two games resulted in heavy defeats to Brynmawr and Maesydderwen after that the results improved and ended with our first ever win against a Maesydderwen XV. Their first were not playing so an 'A' XV played us and it was



The 1956-57 First Team



The 1957-58 First Team

probably our best performance of the first two seasons. We won 8 – 3. In another game we beat Llandrindod 9 – 0 but I missed 5 penalties. On the following Monday 'Taffy' Williams was asking everybody if they had seen the large column of smoke over Crai where I was burning my boots.

There were three junior teams: Under 15, Under 14, and Under 13. In total they won all 6 games that they played scoring 92 points against 5. The overall seasons record was therefore Played 14 won 9 Drawn 1 and lost 4.

Personally I learnt a lesson in life that the referee is always right. In the first ever Old Boys match Ron Arthur went over for a try except he didn't touch it down. A group of us bundled him over the dead ball line. The referee, who shall be nameless, awarded the try with the comment well he could have touched it down. Over the tea and cakes after the match, as Captain, in my speech, I commented strongly on this saying that rules are rules and it wasn't a try and shouldn't have been awarded. The next morning I was in the Headmasters Office. Aneurin Rees gave me what might be termed a volcanic eruption of a telling off. The message, hammered home, was 'the referee is always right'.

The end of the second year saw the end of my school rugby career. I played in every one of the first fifteen games and enjoyed them all. Looking back the performances of the junior teams during the second year showed that rugby in the school had a future. The revolution was not only occurring at Cradoc Road but further north in Builth and Llandrindod where the Grammar Schools had also taken up rugby. Old rivalries were now extended to the rugby field.

In Brecon our two pathfinders or revolutionaries had established rugby as an integral part of the school's sport curriculum. They had proved that change even revolution is possible and that it was of benefit to the school, the pupils and Brecon Town.

[Any errors or inaccuracies are due to a lack of records of the first match held 58 years ago and memory loss. My email address is at the end of this article for any corrections.]

Andrew Thomas (1951-58; andrew@gaht.co.uk)

Corrections

Page 6 of march 2014 newsletter: Bayley should be Bagley

WWI issue: Albert John Price: name changed to Bert and place of death added (page 12). The corrected version is on the website (www.brecongrammar.org)

Obituaries

Elwyn (Jeff) Jeffries (1934 - 38)

Elwyn acquired his lifelong passion for History and reading whilst attending Brecon Grammar School. He went on to a career in Banking before and after a stint in the RAF. After retiring in 1983, Elwyn and his devoted wife Jean enjoyed the best part of 30 blissful years before his death in April 2013. Jean followed just a few weeks later in June. He is survived by two sons, Richard and Peter.

David Francis Candy (1943-50)

David was one of the pre-eminent pupils of his time which covered war years and the post war period of austerity. He was Head Boy and attended the first OBA dinner as a guest. He was editor of the first edition of the "Silurian", launched in 1950. He graduated from UCNW Bangor with Honours in French.

Desmond Tidley (1941-48)

At school "Des" was a very good all round sportsman and athlete, gaining his colours in both soccer and cricket. After graduating at University College, Cardiff he pursued a post graduate course in personnel management. He worked as an H. M. Inspector of Factories all over the country, including a brief spell in Belize, Central America, until his retirement in 1989.

W. Gwynne Davies (1937-42?)

A member of the extended sporting family from Talgarth, Gwynne served his military service in the Navy. On demobilisation he joined the police service in the Midlands. On leaving the force he worked in sales with a pharmaceutical company eventually becoming a distribution manager. He maintained a keen interest in sport throughout his life, playing golf and supporting Aston Villa.

John Spencer (1940-45)

In 1940 John was evacuated to Pentre'r Felin where he lodged with Gwilym Griffith's Welsh speaking family. By the end of the first year in the County School he was top of the form in Welsh and was mentioned in the London Evening News ("London evacuee Top in Welsh"). In 1942 he moved to Llanfaes to stay with Ken Hopkins' family and no longer had to cycle to Sennybridge.

A. Bryan Winstone (1944-51)

Bryan graduated in Physics from University College of Aberystwyth, and then completed his Diploma in Education. He was a successful quarter-miler at School and County levels. In his youth he was a keen scouter. He was for a short time a Maths master at Brecon, but in 1955 was appointed Head of Physics at Neath Girls' Grammar School where he remained until his retirement.

William Edward Watkins (1944-?)

“Billy” did not find school or “digs” to his liking, taking “early retirement” to return to the family farm. As a hard working forward looking farmer with high grassland management skills, he built up an extensive farming enterprise with a reputation for top quality stock. He was a keen supporter of the YFC and a dedicated churchman who served for many years as churchwarden at Llywel.

Bryan John Stephens (1949-53)

Bryan elected not to pursue his studies to external examination level and left to join the family building company, eventually becoming its manager. He was extremely popular within his village community and was highly respected as a considerate employer providing work primarily for locals. He served the Talybont community in numerous capacities and was very sports orientated.

Trevor Brian Millichip (1949-54)

Trevor distinguished himself as an athlete in field competitions. At the school sports in 1953 he won the discus, weight and 800 yards events and competed at both the County and National championships. He joined the police service progressing to the rank of Inspector based at Fishguard with special responsibility for policing the ferries. His three children followed him in the force.

John Hutchinson (1961-67)

John qualified as a primary school teacher at Trinity College, Carmarthen and, after being unexpectedly diagnosed with MS, he obtained a position as a classroom assistant at Llanfaes. Though confined to a wheel chair he was responsible for games at the school. He had a keen interest in soccer, being a loyal “Swans” supporter. He worked out regularly at the Leisure Centre.

David Tudor Lloyd Harvey (1949-54)

After school David joined the National Provincial Bank in Brecon before undertaking his National Service in the RAF. On demobilisation he returned to the bank in London before moving to Cardiff in 1969 as a branch manager. A gifted sportsman he played for Brecon RFC and was a member of Cardiff RFC for 38 years. A lover of the outdoors he was a regular deep sea fisherman.

William Ben Wooley (1942-45)

Of farming stock from Glangrwyne, Ben’s family was obliged to move to the Abergavenny area on his father’s early death and Ben transferred to King Henry VIII School there. He worked initially for British Nylon Spinners which later became ICI Fibres. He then joined the Fire Brigade Service, completing 30 years of service and reaching the rank of Chief Officer at the Abergavenny Station.

William (Bill) Frederick Letton (1940-45)

Bill was a keen sportsman and played for the school XI, and for a very successful Brecon Youth team, and later for St John’s. On leaving school he was a Railway Clerk before National Service in the RAF. On discharge he became a clerk in the local authority Roads & Bridges Dept. and later became a postman. Bill was a long serving committee member and a Vice President of the OBA.

Brian Arthur (“Bryn”) Morris (1948-53)

An active member of Vaughan House Bryn was a keen cricketer and stylish footballer. On completing a short term in the RAF, he spent the rest of his working life with the Prudential Insurance Co. A life member of RAFA, he was also a past chairman of Round Table and Brecon 41 Club. Bryn retained his interest in sport and was a keen supporter of Glamorgan CCC.

Alan Randle Powell (1960-67)

Alan read History and Politics at Swansea University and in 1970 joined the Civil Service. His first post was with the Ministry of Public Buildings and Workers before he joined the Welsh Office Transport and Highways Department. He was very involved with the Severn Bridge project. He was an accomplished pianist and a lifelong member of Glamorgan CCC and supporter of Cardiff City

Gordon Guest (1959-64)

After his O-levels Gordon worked with the Council and Sennybridge Camp before joining the RAF, where he served 24 years. He attained the rank of Sgt Chief Technician with responsibility in part for surveying crashed aircraft. In 1989 on retirement from the RAF he took up a high pressure job as a licensed aircraft engineer responsible for signing off Airbus and Boeing aircraft for flight.

Fred Jenkins (1931-36)

On leaving school Fred joined the RAF and was posted to Lahore, India. After WW2 started he was posted to Malay where he fought the Japs. His post war service included periods in Malaya and Borneo during the insurrections. Before retirement in England he was a glider instructor. After the death of his wife, Dulcie (née Jones), he returned to Singapore to live with his son, Roger.

Contact details

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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.

Questionnaire re Reunion Lunch

At a recent committee meeting of the Old Boys' Association the possibility of having a lunch reunion at midday was discussed because some members who live some distance from Brecon don't like having to stay overnight after the present evening reunion. Also anyone who has to rely on public transport is faced with a very limited service from Brecon on Sundays.

Members' opinions on the present arrangements and the possibility of having a lunch instead of an evening dinner were sought in 2011 and were reported in the newsletter that year. A large majority favoured retaining the present evening reunion but only 26% of members responded. The committee decided to sound opinion again on two possibilities, namely either having a lunch at midday instead of the present evening meal or having a second reunion as a lunch at a different time of year e.g. September.

Please let us know your opinion by returning the questionnaire below **by 31st March 2015** to Tom Protheroe at 14, The Rookery Drive, Nantwich, CW5 7DD, or send your opinion by email (t.protheroe@talk21.com).

1. Would you prefer a lunch reunion at midday instead of the present evening meal? Yes/No*
2. Would you prefer a **second** reunion as a lunch at midday at another time of year? Yes/No*
3. Would you prefer to keep the present arrangements? Yes/No*

*Delete as appropriate.

NB Present arrangement for the 2015 reunion, scheduled for 11th April, are unchanged.