

# The Old Dominicans' Association



## Newsletter

Winter 2002

# ODA Contacts

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Christmas is almost upon us as we go to press. It has been an eventful year for the ODA with our first, and very successful, London reunion at the RAC Club in Pall Mall and three meetings of the ODA Rucksack Club. This is in addition to the odd 'unofficial' get together we have heard about.

Application forms for the 2003 reunion are enclosed and judging from the feedback we are getting this should be better than ever.

Our entry on the 'Friends Reunited' web site has brought many enquiries and several new members as a result and I am sure that this trend will continue in the future.

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## **A Message from the Head**

*by Neil Foden BA Headteacher*

We are looking forward to the end of a long and busy term and to a well-earned break over Christmas and New Year.

The autumn term has seen the school carry on along its path of continuing success in both academic and extra-curricular activities.

The Local Authority confirmed that our examination results this summer are likely to put us in the top 25% of schools nationally and at both GCSE and A-level, they represented our best results ever. The school has enjoyed a number of successes outside the classroom as well. At the end of the summer, our under 14 girls athletics team won the Eryri Championships and the netball team recently secured runner-up position in the Urdd National Tournament in Cardiff. The debating team won the Gwynedd round of the National Debating Competition run by the Council for Education in World Citizenship and the team will now be competing in the National Finals in Cardiff. A group of pupils also represented the school in Canada in the Model United Nations Conference and were congratulated on their conduct by the organisers and the National Assembly.

The school remains heavily committed to charity

On the down side we have lost several ODs including one of our Honorary members, Mr Harry Lloyd. It was only a few weeks before his death that I interviewed him at his home and his memory and enthusiasm for all things Friars was astounding. Did we realise that we had such an amazing man as our PE master when we arrived at Friars as tender eleven year olds? I suspect not. His obituary is within.

By the time you receive this Newsletter, Christmas and the New Year will be over. I hope that all our members had a very happy festive season.

R Alun Jones  
Secretary

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work and projects in the local community. As usual, at the end of this term, the VI formers will be hosting the annual Senior Citizen Christmas Party and we have recently collected over 200 shoe boxes full of gifts for children in Eastern Europe, as part of Operation Christmas Child. Items donated as part of a Thanksgiving Service were passed on to the organisation helping the local homeless. The trees for the plantation have now been ordered and we would hope that they will be in position shortly (North Wales weather permitting).\*

It has been a very busy term but once again a very successful one. I hope that all Old Dominicans enjoy their Christmas break as much as my staff and I intend to enjoy ours and I would like to take the opportunity to pass on the best wishes of all at Ysgol Friars 2002 to all who were part of the school in previous years.

Neil Foden BA  
Headteacher

*\*The ODA has agreed to pay for these trees (£81.25) on the basis that they will be in memory of all those Old Dominicans who lost their lives in the first and second world wars. This will be by way of a replacement for the plantation at the old school. It is intended that a suitable plaque will be erected on the site. RAJ*

**The Friars Invasion of Paris 1951 & 53**  
**by Peter 'Spud' Hughes (47-53)**

*Peter (aka Spud) originally a Llanfairfechan train boy and later a Bethesda bus boy was a contemporary of Gary Griffiths, T G Jones, David George, Colin Dixon, Robbie Llewellyn, the late H A (Haj) Jones et al. After leaving Friars he joined the UKAEA in Capenhurst, Cheshire and later the RAF for his two years National Service. After demob and another short spell at Capenhurst, he decided to seek his fortune in the Middle East with Caltex. He liked the life and travel so much that he remained in that area for the rest of his working life. Now fully retired Spud and his wife Maureen live in Fetcham in Surrey. He enjoys travelling, walking, playing golf (badly) and being grandfather to four very boisterous and demanding grandchildren.*

Last October, to celebrate our wedding anniversary, my wife Maureen and I found ourselves in a Best Western hotel close to the Jardin du Luxembourg in the Latin Quarter of Paris. It was in this area that the Friars trips of the early fifties had been accommodated.

One drizzly afternoon we took our 'afternoon refreshments' in the 'Les Deux Magots,' that establishment on the Boulevard Saint Germain, that once had the reputation as the main rendezvous of the literary and intellectual elite of the city. I recounted to Maureen that, my old French Master, Mr. E. Humphreys, (always affectionately known as 'Funf'), whilst leading an expedition down this very same Boulevard, had commented that, whilst the Café was famous, it was far too expensive for us mere Bangorian tourists. I can confirm that those comments are as pertinent today as they were some fifty years ago - a pint of Kronenborg and a café au lait costing nearly eight pounds and that's with *servis non compris*!

After being suitably and expensively refreshed, I decided that we should try to track down the street and hotel where we, as schoolboys, had been accommodated all those years ago. I think it was an hotel on the Rue de Fleurus. We managed to trace the street leading right up to the western perimeter of the Jardin du Luxembourg, and the hotel area. The street/area itself now has little of the 'Allo 'Allo! ambience I remember, but now mainly comprises of up-market boutiques, art

galleries, antique shops and the like. Perhaps, however, I should start at the beginning .....

Immediately upon the commencement of the 1951 Easter term, 'Funf' announced that he would like to take a group of any interested pupils from the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> forms on a school trip to Paris; the objectives being to provide a better appreciation of French life, both social and cultural and most importantly, to improve ones grasp/knowledge of the French language. Volunteers please!

There followed a flurry of activity on the part of pupils, where parents were pleaded with and pressured to come up with the necessary lucre for such a trip. Eventually some 25-30 lucky pupils put their names forward. There followed an even higher level of activity as passports were applied for and processed, deposits paid and overtures made to the local banks for foreign currency. It should be remembered that the U.K. at the time was still experiencing post war rationing and strict sterling constraints. In those days bureaucratic mountains had to be scaled to even get £5 worth of travellers cheques!

Eventually, one evening just before Easter, I travelled down from Bethesda with Robbie Llewellyn, who was in the 5<sup>th</sup> form at the time and met the rest of this pioneering group on the forecourt of Bangor Station. 'Funf' was there, as was his 'No 2' Jim Howarth, the Senior English Master, both going through last minute paperwork. Finally, after much advice from some anxious parents and to some last minute exhortations along the lines of "don't forget to send Auntie Gwen a Card!" we climbed the station stairs to commence what, for the majority of us, was our first trip overseas. As Confucius said, "a journey of a thousand miles begins with but a single step."

A very slow train took us to Euston, a tube journey to Victoria in the small hours of the morning, a breakfast at a Joe Lyons and another morning rail journey to Newhaven saw us eventually embark on a cross Channel steamer en route to Dieppe. After a further journey on the French railways we at long last eased into what must have been the Gare du Nord. On the completion of an initial Metro journey and dinner in the hotel, it was, after some 24 hours continuous travelling a very tired bunch of Friars representatives that finally tumbled into bed. Accommodation was fairly basic but comfortable - three to a room. In my case, two



'juniors' the late HA Jones (Haj) and myself under the watchful eye of a 'Senior' in the form of Robbie Llewellyn.

If I recall correctly, the following morning saw us embark on our first introduction to on-the-spot French culture with a visit to the Notre Dame. Post lunch saw us at the Louvre, where there were many 'oohs' and 'aahs' at the armless Venus de Milo and expressions of surprise at the relative smallness in size of Leonardo's Mona Lisa. A pattern of 'doing' at least two places of interest/landmarks per day was thus established. Journeys were a combination of shanks' pony or the Metro - all well marshalled and controlled by 'Funf' and Jim Howarth. In the evenings, after dinner, we were permitted unsupervised visits to the cinema, where oddly, in the majority of cases, the films were screened in English with French subtitles!! As we grew bolder, we also undertook visits to the local Bar Bistro across the street, where the proprietor, with typical Gallic indifference, obligingly ignored any possible ramifications with regard to our ages. By the end of the week, most of us agreed that the favourite cheap tipple was hot rum grog!

All good things come to an end and soon the homeward journey beckoned; a reverse of the outward leg with one very notable exception. The Channel crossing back to Newhaven was later reported to have been the roughest that Spring. The boat just rolled, pitched and yawed its way back to the home port. It must have been an unforgettable sight to see so many green faced passengers of all classes hanging over the ship's rail. There was indeed much *mal de mer*.

I was also fortunate enough to partake in the second Paris trip in the Spring of 1953 - this time going as a 'Senior'! Much the same preparation took place, the only difference being 'Timber' Lloyd replacing Jim Howarth as 'Funf's No 2. We stayed at the same hotel and did all the same excursions to absorb the culture. On this occasion, however, a lot more of us went on the trip to Versailles. 'Funf' was very accommodating to those of us who had done the trip previously in that he allowed us plenty of leeway to embark on our own journeys of discovery. There is, after all, a limit to the amount of 18th/19th century French architecture the average growing teenage boy can assimilate.

One memorable aspect of this particular trip was that we also shared the hotel with a contingent of schoolgirls doing a similar educational tour. One might have thought that, with a group of schoolboys, some of which were more than aware of ever increasing levels of testosterone, this was a recipe for disaster. But no, everyone remained on their best behaviour.

Sadly, I have in my possession, only one small, fading black and white photo covering these two trips. I can identify the late Ronald Ambrose Jones and one thin PM Walker. The central figure however is a young, suave, debonair Robert Hilton from Upper Bangor. I recall Bob wanting to go into journalism. Can any OD confirm whether this budding Nigel Dempster achieved his goal? All in all they were two very memorable excursions. Everyone behaved themselves. Nobody got lost, hurt themselves or got sick. Above all, they were both well planned and supervised by three masters of exceptional standing. 'Funf' thickset, genial accommodating and every cheerful. Jim Howarth, slight of build, academic, softly spoken, a sort of Evelyn Waugh character.

Finally, 'Timber' Lloyd. Who could ever forget 'Timber'? Track-suited, running-on-the-spot, possessed of an obscene amount of energy and who walked faster than most sixth formers could run! I think in all the six and a half years I was at Friars, it is fair to say, I never heard a bad word said about any one of the above threesome. As they say, 'they don't make 'em like that anymore'. The trips also triggered within me a thirst for foreign travel which, along with spending most of my working life abroad, remains as strong to this very day. Every time I take off from Heathrow or Gatwick and see the French coast below, my mind invariably goes back, not only to those earlier Channel crossings, but also to those far off, carefree, halcyon days of the early fifties - a far cry from today's angrier more materialistic world. What of 'Funf's prime objective in organising these trips, viz; to improve ones grasp and knowledge of the French language? Well, I'm afraid in my case, the jury is still out - I failed French 'O' level ..... twice!!

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## Two Ryders and me

by Trefor E Griffiths (55-60)



*This man's talents and interests know no bounds. After taking early retirement as a banker Trefor, as we read about in the December 2000 Newsletter, pursued a dormant but long held interest in singing and joined a male voice choir in which he is now actively engaged. He has made a CD with them (but please do not strain the already fragile resources of the ODA by jamming the 'phone line to order a copy. All orders to Trefor please. His address can be found in the ODA directory). Since his early days at Friars he has also been a mean golfer and here he describes his visit to the 1999 Ryder Cup and compares it with this years return on home ground. Even non-golfers may remember the disgraceful behaviour of some of the US fans at Brookline. This year's event which took place last September at The Belfry near Birmingham turned out to be more restrained.*

Much has been written about the behaviour of the Americans at Brookline, including the Faldo telegram, the book by Mark James (the European Captain) and more recently, the autobiography of the American captain Ben Crenshaw. This is my

version of the happenings during that week because in the words of the Blessed Max Boyce - I know - cos' I was there!

I had decided some time previously that I would attend and I duly arrived in Boston on the Monday prior to practice days (Tuesday to Thursday) with the match taking place on Friday to Sunday. The package included transportation to and from Brookline on a daily basis (25 minutes to get there in the morning and an hour to get back!).

But first a brief history of The Country Club. It started life as a tennis club at the turn of the century with sheep grazing at the front and a horse racing track on the outside. With the then increasing demand for golf courses, they built a few holes and over the next 25 years bought more land and ended up with 18 holes. It is still a big tennis club with golfing membership limited to 150 members. Apparently there is a waiting list of 20 years, entrance fee is \$125,000, annual subscription is \$75,000 and you have to pay a further \$50,000 annually in the restaurants and bars (non-refundable if you don't spend it all! (expensive or what!!)

During practice days I wandered the course with my map marking good strategic places to watch the action and which sides of the fairways to stand to get the best views. In that time I spoke to a number of the marshals (members of the Club) and native American golfers. Without exception I was made most welcome and how pleased they were that I had made the journey to support my side. They all said that they hoped it would be a good clean fight and may the best team win.

The Friday and Saturday matches went well for Europe and by the end of play on Saturday we had what appeared to be an unassailable lead. During those two days there was obvious support for both sides but nothing really nasty apart from reports on my radio headset (Brookline 5 Live with Renton Laidlaw) that Colin Montgomery was getting a little bit of flak. Otherwise it appeared to be fairly good natured.

Then came Sunday!! From my arrival at the West Gate at 8.30 it was obvious that a different type of supporter was arriving at the course that morning. Loud and ebullient with shouts of USA, USA all over the place. Fuelled by beer which was on sale from the moment that I arrived there I knew then

that this was going to be a different day indeed.

I spoke briefly with John Inverdale, a roving reporter, on the first fairway when the Americans were up in the first four matches and he agreed with me that it didn't look good. As I walked round I heard words that I normally would not expect to hear on a golf course. This coming from the mouths of men with their families present and ladies making rude gestures to our players and shouting for the Americans. It really was disgraceful behaviour.

Rumours were abounding on the radio. Ex president George Bush had addressed the American team the night before and quoted the last speech at The Alamo in an effort to instil in the American players a sense of pride and need to win the battle! Towards the end of the afternoon it became apparent that the Americans were going to win and I have to say that the Yanks went bananas in their vocal support. I couldn't get anywhere near the last two holes so I stood by the Jumbotron TV screen close to the 16<sup>th</sup> green. I was dismayed to see the actions both on the 17<sup>th</sup> green (after Justin Leonard's putt) and what happened to the European players on the 18<sup>th</sup> fairway and around the green. It really was over the top.

That then was my Ryder Cup. Full of surprises, suspense, aggravation, foul language but mostly very impressed with the way our team dealt with all the intimidation. Much respect for Monty who took it all in his stride and great affection for the late Payne Stewart who did his best to calm things down in his match with him.

Then came the return match at The Belfry last September. OK I didn't actually go there in person. I had been there in 1985 and knew that the viewing areas were not good and certainly not in the same league as the Country Club in Boston, Mass that I visited three years earlier. My mission was to compare the two Ryder Cup clashes as roving sports reporter for the OD Newsletter - although for some reason the Americans would not give me press accreditation and I thought that my luck would not have been much better at The Belfry.

I therefore relied on the media this time. Forget about Brookline and the Histrionics of some of the American players - confine that to history. it's over.

Underdogs yet again but if we believe what Sam Torrence, the captain, said *'It is mano y mano. They put their shirts and trousers on the same way as we do. We have nothing to fear'*. Both he and Curtis Strange, the American captain, had worked hard to get this event back on track, in their understated ways, to convince the British fans that it wasn't a state of war.

Throughout the Friday and Saturday, everyone, players and fans alike, behaved with incredible fairness to each other, cheering their own and applauding the other side. Then came Sunday and to put it briefly, Torrence got it right and Strange got it wrong in their selections. The match stood at eight points all, so it was important to get points on the board early.

We all now know the result which is Ryder Cup history. The Americans deserved every commendation. Curtis Strange made a noble speech at the closing ceremony which added another notch to his reputation. This was a memorable event in every way and when, after three days sport and sportsmanship the Americans eventually lost, but there was no disgrace in defeat. One final thought and it occurred on the Saturday. Two old ladies stood by the ropes on the second fairway clutching American flags. They jumped as a roar erupted on the fourth green. *'Aw shoot'* said one lady *'Europe's won another hole.'* Her friend patted her arm. *'Don't be that way honey'* she said, *'We're lucky to be here.'* She spoke for us all. Courage and character, flair and imagination, tenacity and skill. It was all there. What a contrast between the two events.

Next stop Oakland Hills, Michigan 2004. I may well be there. Anyone else fancy going? Good golfing everybody.

*He's serious about arranging a trip to the 2004 Ryder Cup. Tref's report will be in the December 2004 Newsletter. Apply for your press card now Tref!*

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## Obituaries

We regret having to report the deaths of the

### Mr Harry Rhudian Lloyd

by *Alun Jones.*

*I visited Mr Harry Lloyd, one of our Honorary members, on 26 March 2002, just before Easter, in order to get some background information for a profile of him for our Newsletter. It was a nice sunny day and I sat with him and his wife Ciss in their pleasant conservatory at Trefonmwyys, only a stone's throw from Friars, enjoying a cup of tea and reminiscing about Friars. When I arrived he had typed detailed notes on his career. Little did I think at that time that these would be used for his obituary. We went through the notes together and I asked various questions as we went along. What I have written here therefore is substantially his own story punctuated by my questions. His memory was phenomenal. He could remember the names of most of the boys in the many school photographs he showed me. His stories about Friars were vivid and humorous and he had genuine affection for all his pupils - even the shirkers! He talked about the other masters and of course Boss. He told me that he took up woodwork to make up a second subject at the Normal, a decision that was to earn him the nickname of 'Timber' Lloyd to all those who attended Friars during his tenure there. Here is his story:*

Born 1920, Harry Lloyd came from a family of three brothers and three sisters. He left Aberdare Boys County School in 1938 to spend a year as a student teacher, being paid £1 per week which he considered was excellent preparation for a Teachers' College Course.

following Old Dominicans. Our most sincere condolences go to their families.



*Mr Harry Lloyd with his wife Ciss - March 2002*

He came to Bangor Normal College in 1939. I asked him why BNC. 'Because it had a reputation of being the best in Wales' he said. But war was upon us and in June 1940, half way through his course, he volunteered for the RAF. After intense training in wireless operating, gunnery and parachuting, he was posted overseas and left Liverpool on the 'Stirling Castle' in a convoy of 19 boats. After putting into Freetown for supplies they continued around the Cape, through massive seas, to Durban. After a few weeks break in



Durban it was all systems go on the 36,000 tons Niue Amsterdam sailing solo to Suez. On more than one occasion, they were lucky that this ship could really move when required. After reaching the Egyptian desert towards El Alamein in late October 1942 (by then he was a Warrant Officer) he served in air communication with the Desert Air Force and was involved in locating crashed aircraft - both allied and enemy - sometimes in remote and hazardous desert areas. He later saw service in Italy.

After the war in 1946, he returned to BNC to complete his course and gained the post of PE Master at Friars School. *'Two of us were due to go to Manchester for an interview' he said 'but two days beforehand the Principal called me in and told me there was a vacancy at Friars. Why Friars I asked, 'because it had the reputation of being a very good school' was the answer. I asked who interviewed him. 'IW' [the then headmaster Ivor Williams, known to all the pupils as Boss] 'On his own? 'Yes, in the dining room on a Saturday morning. He asked me a few questions and declared "You look good to me Lloyd, the job's yours. But I'll have to clear it with Caernarfon you understand". My first impression of him was of a Churchillian character oozing with humour. And so it was that in January 1947 Harry R Lloyd joined the staff at Friars. 'This was a very challenging and most rewarding experience for me. There is a great deal that could be written about this grand school'. 'What did you call Boss?' I asked. 'Always Mr Williams to his face and 'IW' amongst the staff'. He later wanted to sample comprehensive education, so became Head of PE in a boys school in Coventry. He was not there for long for he succeeded in getting a post as Lecturer in PE at Bangor Normal College. The BNC was not the only attraction for at that time there was a very attractive school meals organiser for Caernarfonshire who used to visit Friars and most of the boys knew full well that as soon as she arrived Timber would be appearing in the canteen on some pretext or other. Was it the good food? Or perhaps a desire to see that the boys were properly fed? Possibly, but the lads knew full well that the real attraction was Ciss, and it was not long after that they were married.*

In 1961 he was made Head of PE at the Coleg Normal and Deputy Principal in 1976, retiring in 1983.

He worked hard to help establish the Welsh Colleges Sports Association in 1960 and in 1961 the British Colleges Sports Association was formed. He became President of the Welsh Association in the late 1970s and was responsible for staging the 1959 Schools Cricket International (under 19) at Colwyn Bay. He officiated for the entire Empire Games at Cardiff in 1958.

Many of the PE specialists who trained at Coleg Normal became School Inspectors, Directors of Leisure, HMIs, Heads and colourful teachers. Other appointments included being a Member of the Sports Council for Wales (1976 to 1990). He derived much satisfaction in assisting to (1) improve facilities in Wales (2) improving standards with better coaching. In support of the Sports Council he staged money-raising sporting evenings at Plas Menai Nat. Centre, near Port Dinorwic. He brought there Seb Coe, Lynn Davies, Ossie Wheatley, Ron Pickering, Berwyn Price, Jack Peterson and the colourful Brian Johnson among others. Very many Old Dominicans attended these functions. He played most games in the book and captained teams in his school and college days. To the last he enjoyed playing golf, swimming, badminton and snooker. The word 'retirement' was not in this man's vocabulary for he also regularly attended Test Matches at Old Trafford, Lords and the Oval, the Millennium Stadium for rugby and soccer, also Wimbledon, Indoor Athletics and quite regularly the Golf Open every year. He certainly led a busy life.

Any free time was devoted to the 'Association of former staff of the Coleg Normal'. He was its first Chairman (lasting 4 years). In all he organised about 250 activities - to Manchester, Liverpool, Llandudno for Musicals, Operas, Plays and cultural visits in both Wales and England.

But back to Friars. He tells of some of his memories: *'From time to time there were outstanding performers, the late Gwynfor Lewis with his tally of goals and who joined Everton. Then J. Ungood Evans who was awarded a 'Len Hutton Autograph' bat for his performance with bat and ball against a strong Ruthin School side at Ruthin in 1950 under skipper A Bryan Jones. There was additional flavour to this visit to Ruthin. The Head of Ruthin always invited me to a sherry as I arrived and this time, EWJ [E W Jones] had joined me. The inevitable question came from the Ruthin Head - "Well Lloyd, what sort of side have you this year?" I gave a*

measured response! The Ruthin side was strong, but it was to be our day, with Friars gaining a 5 wkt. victory. The Ruthin Head (after a little persuasion!) was asked to sign the scorebook, as being a correct record of the game and to the satisfaction of "The News Chronicle," - for the award of a cricket bat. There were many other great performers.

The Swimming Gala at Siliwen baths always provided amusing moments and incidents. We had to get the 'all clear' from the City Council to hold the Gala and tides and safety issues had to be checked. Many a haversack 'sailed' for Liverpool Bay and then there was Mr Ned Darke, who was a swimming enthusiast and was always ready to judge at these events. On one occasion, we nearly lost 'our Ned' to the Menai Straits, when he tried to retrieve his cigarette from the mossy, cement perimeter of the pool!

The creation of a 4-lane track on the awkwardly shaped school field defied all geometric principles and would challenge a modern computer. But EPJ.[E P Jones], JCL.[Jack Lowe] EH [Edmund Humphreys] and EWJ [E W Jones] and a number of boys succeeded in laying down an accurate Track - a 220 yards staggered track with permanent marks put in the ground, quite a success story - and it was to the inch!!! The school heating system broke down one cold January and heat was lost for 10 days. IW made one of his rare visits to the staffroom and discussed the problem with us. IW told us that Mr Wood [a senior manager at the Gas Works who was a friend of Boss]. They used to socialise together by way of the odd drink], father of the late Dennis Wood, was doing his best to remedy the problem. However, IW asked the staff if they were prepared to carry on, coats on etc. - we all supported him fully. Then he added a rider; 'make sure that every form walks for ½ an hour daily, quite apart from PE! He then added, humourously, 'we don't want to find that the odd class is walking all day and other classes kept at base'. During this period Mr R J Evans was on Lines Duty in the Quad and he turned to IW who was nearby and asked him "Is it in order for me to take my form for a walk?" IW's reply was amusing, "Ewch a nhw dros y bont a boddwch hanner y diawlad!" [Take them across the bridge and drown half of the buggers!].

IW and cricket. The theatre created by IW when demonstrating his square-cuts on the cricket square with seemingly hundreds of boys ready to be 'marked for life' when trying to field the leather. Quite a performer IW in his youth.



My visits to Old Trafford with him for Lancs.v. Glos Matches, where IW had to admit to shared allegiance. It was Jack Sharpe (Sports Outfitters) a stalwart of Lancs. Cricket, who had arranged for our entry tickets. But then IW thought that Charlie Barnett, the Gos and England opening bat was an improvement even on WGG. A spasm of good play came Glos way, and IW re-acted with robust clapping and made the remark to 'mine host', Jack Sharpe, "Glos Does not give me many opportunities to applaud them right now, but Charlie Barnett is special" Of course Barnett had been invited to play in IW's XI when he was teaching at Rossall School and Barnett had obliged by getting 101 and walking. One day IW stopped me in the corridor. 'Do you know whose birthday it is next week Lloyd?' I racked my brain but to no avail. 'Sorry Mr Williams but I don't' ' Hmm.... Charlie Barnett see. Would you get me a box of King Edwards for him. Get the shop to wrap them but tell them to leave the wrapping loose and to leave a gap so that I can put a letter in.' This happened twice with me but I have no doubt that there were other occasions. Years later I happened to meet the Glos chairman and asked him whether Charlie enjoyed the King Edwards

*that my old Head had been sending him. 'I shouldn't think so' he said 'Charlie doesn't smoke!!'*

*Many Old Dominicans will recall the challenge and pleasure of staging the Welsh Sec. Schools Athletic Championships at Ffriddoedd in 1950 and 1952. The Triple Crown (3 shields) were won by the 3 age groups at County Sports many times but it was the mass participation that gave the greatest satisfaction. The pleasant memories of the visit by Lewis School, Pengam in 1953 for cricket, tennis and athletics and how parents helped to make the entire venture a success.*

*Finally, it is very pleasant to be stopped for a chat on home ground and overseas by an Old Dominican. I think they call it 'job satisfaction'*

He told me later that he found it particularly disappointing when an OD 'blanked' him in the street. To me that epitomises the man for he would have loved to have stopped for a chat with anyone he had known.

On his retirement in 1983 he and Ciss spent four months with their daughter Anna and husband Alan in Australia. They visited Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra and, of course, Don Bradman's birthplace Bowral. By sheer chance Clive Lloyd and his strong squad were in Australia at that time - December 1984/5. They visited much of USA and Canada and motored and flew to most of Europe as well flying in Concorde from Manchester to Toronto in 3½ hours!

Harry Lloyd led a very full life to the end but enjoyed nothing more than to see the smiling faces of youngsters when taking part in sport and to enjoy the abundance of humour in the company of many colourful friends. He was greatly impressed by the warm welcome given him by Boss, the entire staff and the boys. The restrictions of the war years were now to be beaten by the general enthusiasm to forge ahead.

The school enjoyed much success in cricket, soccer, athletics and tennis with rugby joining the list in 1949.

The burial service was held at Capel Pendref and the chapel was full, many of the congregation being ODs and many well deserved tributes were paid. How pleased he would have been that at that

very moment England were having a good day at the crease on the first day of the final test against India. At the close England were 336 for two with Michael Vaughan having made 182. But alas the match and the series were drawn. He would be drawing little comfort either from their winter tour of Australia. But of one thing you can be sure. Whatever sports facilities there may be up there Harry Lloyd will be out there in the thick of it - organising teams, marking out pitches, encouraging the participants etc etc.

Harry Lloyd was born on 25 May 1920 and died on 1 September 2002 aged 82. He is survived by his wife Ciss and daughter Anna.

### **Eldon Elis-Williams (39-46)**

*by David Hywel Williams (39-46)*

Eldon Elis-Williams was the third son of Rev Elis-Williams whose name I never knew) and his wife Gwennie. His father, who was the minister of Pendref Chapel, died soon after (or even before) he was born. His mother then taught at Cae Top School in order to bring up the family. That they were well brought up there is in no doubt for his eldest brother, Merfyn, gained a State Scholarship to Jesus College, Oxford and his elder brother, Dewi, gained an honours degree at Bangor. Eldon was perhaps, overshadowed by the academic achievements of his two brothers. because of his chapel connections Eldon attended services at Pendref three times every Sunday and had to do his drinking and smoking as far away as possible in the Garth Hotel to avoid detection by fellow chapel-goers.

We were inseparable friends from the time we were put outside in our prams, sitting always together in school until we went our separate ways after our education at Friars. Eldon was good at History - which I wasn't - and used to whisper the answers to me during our frequent tests in that subject. We were both in the soccer and cricket elevens. He did his national service in the RAF and became a wireless mechanic; relating afterwards many humorous stories of life at RAF Yatesbury. He later grew a luxuriant Fg Off Kite moustache!

On our very first morning at Friars, our form master, Mr J R Griffiths, was compiling his register in alphabetical order. He came to the 'Ws' and eight Williamses put up their hands. Mochyn saw that Eldon was among them and lost his cool shouting 'You're not a Williams, you fool, you're



an Elis-Williams! You should be in the 'Es'! Out of school we climbed the trees in Victoria Park, where we both lived, improvised games on the unmade road such as lamp-post cricket, pots at goal, and 'badminton' hitting home-made shuttles over aerial wires. There was also the quarry where we would leap from a ledge onto the piled up rubbish at the bottom. If our mothers had only known!

Eldon met his wife, Eileen, while teaching in North London. They had a son and a daughter and lived finally at Seaview on the Isle of Wight where he died aged seventy four.

### **Hugh Lloyd Davies (48-53)**

*by David Lloyd Jones*



Hugh died on 31 October 2002 after a short illness. He was one of those boys at school who caused no offence to anyone, having an affable temperament and a friendly disposition. Hugh was of the well known Bangor family, H O Davies the undertakers. He was born in Glanadda and went to Glanadda Primary School. In his early days he sang in the choir of St. James and went to Friars in 1948. At school he was a fine footballer and on leaving in 1953 chose not to enter the family business but instead joined the civil service and

started work in London. He remained there for eight years during which time he did his National Service in the RAF. Hugh then returned to Bangor and took up an administrative post with Bangor City Council, eventually progressing to Principal Administrative Officer with Arfon Borough Council, from where he retired in 1996.

To many people in Bangor, Hugh was the Council and people turned to him for help and advice. Hugh was a true character and very popular with all who knew him - a Bangor 'lad' through and through! After retiring from soccer Hugh became one of the best snooker players in North Wales. Hugh would not thank me if I tried to portray him as an angel. He was certainly not one. He had a great sense of fun and a wicked sense of humour. He knew the inside of more than one pub and club in Bangor and could find his way to the odd betting shop too!

Hugh is survived by his wife Rene, daughters Anne and Rhian, son Gwyn and by two grandchildren.

### **Peter Noel ('PN') Williams (48-55)**

*by David Williams (55-60)*

My brother was born on 18 February 1938 and started at Friars in 1948. He was in the 6<sup>th</sup> form when I arrived there in 1955. He excelled at sports and at that time was only the second pupil to obtain his colours in the four disciplines of cricket, football, athletics and harriers. The other, I believe was Tony Pumfrey who was a notable middle distance runner for Wales. Along with Dewi Bebb, Peter held the 100 yards record in a time of 10.2 seconds. His ability at cricket put him in the school 2<sup>nd</sup> X1 in his first year after which he spent his time in the 1<sup>st</sup> X1. He played in a Wales Grammar Schools versus Wales Public Schools cricket match in which Bob Barber played for 'them'. A comment in his school report at the end of the first year stated "his cricket should show great prowess and application this coming season." On leaving school, Peter joined the Metropolitan Police where he was employed on a wide range of duties, including being part of a highly successful robbery squad. At the age of 37, whilst playing cricket, he suffered a heart attack and subsequently had a triple by-pass. This eventually cut short his police career and he reluctantly accepted early retirement.

Peter moved back to Bangor about 12 years ago and became very active in fund raising for deaf



children in Gwynedd. He was also a much respected member of the Royal Leek Masonic Lodge. His funeral on 11<sup>th</sup> November was attended by a large number of his family and friends, including many Old Dominicans, and was conducted in a manner that celebrated his life. Peter died on 4 November 2002 at the age of 64. He is survived by his second wife Donna and daughter Megan and Debbie, a daughter from his first marriage.

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**Both PN and Hugh** were in the school 1<sup>st</sup> eleven soccer team under the captaincy of **David George** who writes as follows; *'It was with a distinct feeling of shock and not a little sadness that I heard of the deaths of PN Williams and Hugh Lloyd Davies. I knew both well, not only as contemporaries, but because I had the pleasure of being their captain in the very successful Friars soccer teams of the early 1950s.*

*They were very different characters and this was reflected in their play on the soccer field. PN - better known to the team as Panky - was a resolute, direct and athletic winger. He was totally one footed, his right foot being solely an essential aid to his running, but he functioned for the two seasons I was captain as a very efficient winger. He was very quick - I seem to recall him winning County Championships over 440 yards - and he had a shot like a howitzer, scoring goals from spectacular distances. In fact, the problem was that he could only propel the ball at one speed, rocket-like, and his centres from the extreme left would often end up as opposition throw-ins on the extreme right. Subtlety was not a word he was familiar with. His effectiveness to the team was maximised by the fact that E B Davies played at centre forward. Brian, unlike some of the other forwards, would head anything and as often as not, as a result of Brian's intervention, PN's crosses would end up rocketing past the opposing goalkeeper at almost the speed of light.*

*Hughie was, in complete contrast, non-athletic but despite that an inside forward of subtlety and ingenuity. He had the most wonderful vision and could do things on the field which, in my experience playing at school, University and Welsh League level, I have rarely seen equalled. The player who most readily comes to mind as playing the sort of game Hughie played is Glen Hoddle. The difficulty with Hughie was that he would very often disappear from the game for 80*

*or 85 minutes, spending the time wandering aimlessly up and down the pitch. I was often rebuked and questioned as to why he was selected for the team. (In those days the team captain largely chose the team he wanted.). The fact was that, although he could be totally anonymous, he was the one player who was capable of moments of genius and his 5 or 10 minutes' contribution could, and did, win us games. I remember as I write one pass on the Normal College pitch on a wet Saturday morning of such geometrical exactitude that it would have necessitated any other player using a set square, compass and a book of log tables to produce the same result. I can well understand that this may seem like hyperbole. It is not and I maintain to this day that every team, whatever the game, can afford to carry a player of real vision, which is what I consider Hughie to have been, albeit at schoolboy level.*

*I am sure that all who knew and those played with both characters, for that's what they were in their individual and contrasting ways, will mourn their passing as I do.'*

## **Dr. T. Meurig Owen**

*by Dr Tom G Jones (1947-55)*

The death occurred suddenly on 11 September, 2002 of Dr Meurig Owen, an old Dominican who had spent most of his working life as a general practitioner based in the Cambridgeshire village of Papworth Everard, where he was also medical director of the Papworth Village Settlement.

Meurig was born in 1918, the youngest of five children, and as a boy lived in the Penrallt area of Bangor. He received his secondary education at Friars, being a contemporary there of Merfyn Elis-Williams, a subsequent Headmaster of the school. He showed an early aptitude for music - his piano-playing remained a source of enormous pleasure to both himself and others throughout his life - but it was to study Electrical Engineering that he won a scholarship to the UCNW.

The war came at about the time that he gained a first class Honours degree and Meurig was asked to put his newly-acquired knowledge to use in the war machine, possibly extending into the realm of nuclear physics. He did not however want to follow down that path and, having registered as a conscientious objector, he joined instead a Pacifist Service Unit associated with the late Rev. Donald Soper. For the next few years he worked as a

nursing theatre orderly at Guy's Hospital where he was much involved in helping victims of the London blitz.

In 1940 Meurig met his future wife, Ronnie, and in 1942 they were married. By now he was coming to realize that his true vocation lay as a doctor, and in particular as a general practitioner. This realization led him, at the end of the war, to seek, and gain, admission to Guy's Hospital Medical School. The decision to do this had been made jointly with Ronnie and the full support that she gave him throughout his course was a critical factor in enabling him, in 1950, to qualify as a doctor.

While living in London, Meurig and Ronnie used frequently to venture into the country to visit Ronnie's aunt who lived in Papworth Everard, a village between Cambridge and Huntingdon. Some 30 years earlier this village had famously been developed into a settlement of houses and light industries for people whose health had been seriously undermined by TB and who would have been unable to withstand the rigours of an open employment market. Here they could live in a safe and understanding environment and undertake sheltered employment in occupations such as printing or trunk-making. If their health deteriorated, they had quick and easy access to the TB Sanatorium situated in the village, now better known of course for its pioneering work in heart surgery. Shortly after qualifying, Meurig met, on one of their visits to Ronnie's aunt's house, the physician then in charge of the settlement. He was about to retire, was clearly impressed by the young Dr. Owen, and invited him to become his successor. Meurig and Ronnie were delighted to accept.

The work was part general practice, part occupational and rehabilitative medicine. In 1952 Meurig extended the general practice part of the work by joining with a single-handed doctor in a neighbouring village; in the same year he and Ronnie built the house in which they were to spend the rest of their married life. This was in the nearby tiny village of Knapwell, and they called it Bwthyn Bach.

The ensuing years saw considerable growth in both the Settlement and the practice work. As TB became, on the one hand, less common, and, on the other, more treatable, the emphasis of the Settlement changed to embrace a wider range of

disabilities; Meurig, as the Medical Director, played an important part in steering this development, giving ever-increasing amounts of his spare, as well as his formal working, time to the work. The practice work was also growing as increasing numbers of patients from surrounding villages decided to join the list. A third partner was taken on in 1964 and, in the early 1970s, a fourth.

Meurig retired from the practice in 1979 but continued on a voluntary basis to play an active part in planning care for disabled people in Cambridgeshire. He was for some years, chairman of the Cambridge Housing Association and was actively involved in planning, and later managing, a new Cheshire Home in Huntingdon. He also continued to work with the Trust which he and Ronnie had set up in 1970 to provide quality accommodation for disabled people in Papworth itself. This Trust - the Haynes-Owen Trust - is still thriving and performing an essential function.

Meurig and Ronnie shared an abiding interest in Boxer dogs and for over 40 years they have not only been breeding this species but also making their large rural garden regularly available for events run by the East Anglian Working Dogs Association. They even had a small building in the garden turned into public toilets for these events, making sure that casual passers-by on country walks did not use them by labelling the building 'Ty Bach', having first of course ensured that their Anglian colleagues in the canine world understood at least that much Welsh!

Meurig's activities were somewhat curbed by indifferent health in the last year or two of his life, but, right up until the day before he died, he was able to enjoy his garden and the abundance of nature in and around it. And, it was only a few months previously that he and Ronnie had enjoyed celebrating 60 very happy years together of marriage.

Meurig is survived by his wife Ronnie and two surviving sisters, one of whom, Ceinwen Owen, still lives in Bangor.

*Most of the information in the above Obituary comes from an address given by Dr. David Marsden, Meurig's practice partner from 1964, at the Service of Thanksgiving held in Knapwell church following the funeral on 20 September.*

*Tom here tells of his own contact with Meurig:* I first came across Meurig Owen in 1961 when I was working as a junior hospital doctor in Cambridge. His Bangor origins – and his Bangor accent on the ‘phone when admitting patients! – gave me an immediate feeling of kinship with him. But it was in 1963 that I really got to know him, when he was kind enough to offer me a four-week locum appointment in his practice, my very first experience of working as a GP. Even more kindly, he and Ronnie had me to live in ‘Bwthyn Bach’ during the whole of this time. I shared most mealtimes and evenings with them and in this way came to learn at first hand so much of the life and work of a GP in general and of the kindness and commitment to the needs of his patients of this one in particular. It was this experience that finally made me decide that my own calling within medicine should be in general practice; within a few weeks, I had embarked on a year’s traineeship in this discipline.

Two years later, when trying to find my own niche within general practice, Meurig invited me to join him as a third partner in his practice and I spent

five extremely happy years in this capacity. I learnt an enormous amount of medicine during those early years, but above all I learnt from Meurig, all by example, how important it is for a GP not only to be kind and compassionate to his patients, but also to maintain a superb sense of humour and never take himself too seriously!

I am indeed fortunate to have known and worked with Meurig Owen. The world is the worse for his passing.

*The death has also been announced of* **Dr George Howell Guest** who was born in Bangor on 9 February 1924 and went on to become organist and choirmaster of St John’s College, Cambridge. He died on 20 November 2002 aged 78. A full obituary will appear in our next Newsletter.

Our sympathies go too to **John Merfyn Jones** (42-47) who lost his wife Dorothy recently.

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**2003 AGM and Reunion** The next reunion will be on Saturday 26 April 2003. As in 2001 the General Meeting will be at 2.00pm at the Regency Hotel (opposite Bangor Station) but the room will be available to us from 11.30am. There will be a buffet lunch for those who want one. The evening dinner this time will be at the Victoria Hotel, Menai Bridge at 6.30 for 7.00pm. Please make a note in your diary!

## **The ODA Rucksack Club**

*by Philip Williams-Jones (40-47)*

The third, Old Dominican Rucksack Club, walk was on Saturday August 31, 2002. The rendezvous was in the car park at the top of Sychnant Pass, between Conwy and Penmaenmawr. Surprisingly the weather was fine and warm, eight of us were there, on time, and getting out of our cars ready to start, when someone said “Isn’t that John Pilling walking towards us off the hill over there?” Sure enough, he had walked over the mountain from his home in Llanfairfechan to join us, saying that it was such a nice morning it was a pity to waste it with such a late start at 10.30 am!

We set off on time, David Fielding with his wife Betty and his brother Colin, John Reynolds with

his wife Avis, Denis Harbird, Jack Renshaw, John Pilling and myself. It was a perfect summers day, just right for a gentle stroll over the coastal hills above Penmaenmawr.

About midday we reached the Afon Gyrach, and stopped for lunch. It was an idyllic situation, sitting in the warm sunshine, with the very gentlest of breezes and the gurgling, tinkling sound of the stream running over the rocks close by. Lunch over we carried on up towards Tyn y Ffrith, then turned South, back over the Afon Gyrach, by a footbridge this time, and wended our way gently back to the car park, enjoying the views To the North, the sea and the coastal hills, and to the South, the Vale of Conwy and the Denbigh Moors stretching away into the distance. The most memorable impression of the walk was the warm sweet smell, and the glowing purple colour of the heather in full bloom. Back in the car park we said our fond farewells



Back in the car park we said our fond farewells and waved goodbye to John Pilling as he retraced his steps back over the hills to Llanfairfechan. Not bad for a 67 year old!

On November 3, 2002 another walk had been arranged starting from the same car park at Pen Sychnant, but this time over Conwy Mountain and back along the lower path to our start point. The week before had been very wet, windy and some days had been very stormy, not really 'walking for fun' weather. However when I got up on the Saturday morning I was amazed to find that the sky was blue, there was a crescent moon and no rain or wind. Could it be that we would be lucky again? Jack picked me up at 9.45 am, by which time it was overcast but the cloud base was higher than the Carneddau although the westerly wind was picking up.

By the time we were ready to start, it was drizzling slightly. Still ten of us turned out, John Reynolds with his wife Avis, Denis Harbird and his wife Olwen, Ken Banes, Alun Jones, John Pilling (by car this time), Colin Dixon, Warren Martin and Jack Renshaw.

On Conwy Mountain it was raining horizontally with quite a strong wind blowing across the ridge, we paused briefly on the summit, braced against the wind and rain to take in the view of Conwy and the Great Orme, then turned, and hastily descended to the return path, which was more sheltered. We did not stop for lunch, but returned, a very damp but happy party, to the car park.

Had the weather been kinder the views would have been spectacular, and we could have enjoyed our lunch on top of the old Iron Age Hill Fort on the summit of Conwy Mountain.

However everyone said that they had enjoyed the walk but it was decided that November was not the best month for an expedition even on the lowest of hills.

**The next Meeting** of the Club is planned for Friday April 25 2003, the day before the next reunion. Meet in the Aber Falls car park at 1100 hrs. Please telephone Phil for final confirmation a few days beforehand. We hope that more members will be able to join us and make a long weekend of it. Think of it, a walk on the Friday, the reunion on the Saturday with Sunday to recover! What could be better. As

usual bring lunch and walking gear. You can contact Philip 01248 716 203 or after about 1000 on the day on his mobile on 0779 980 8751. We look forward to seeing you!

**In brief.... Eddie Longden (45-52)**, who lives in France, has moved into a newly built house. He says '...the catalogue of disasters and delays has been beyond belief! The builders in 'A year in Provence' know nothing about avoidance and broken deadlines. They should come to Normandy for lessons. We're moving in shortly with no skirtings, decorations or toilet. We'll have to use the garden shed and a bucket!!

## Gair o brofiad ar ddiwedd blwyddyn

gan Dafydd Prydderch Williams (49-56)

Bum yn ddigon ffodus i fod yn ddisgybl yn Ysgol Friars yn ystod asbri'r blynyddoedd wedi'r Ail Ryfel. Wedi'r ymladd roedd gwawr o obaith a delfrydiaeth yn y byd gwleidyddol ac fe adlewyrchwyd hynny yn agwedd y rhan fwyaf o'r athrawon. Roedd bywiogrwydd hynod yn yr ysgol ac o ganlyniad roedd llwyddiant arbennig iawn i bopeth o chwaraeon i athletau ac o ddramau i siarad cyhoeddus. Yn naturiol roedd digon o ddireidi a sbort. Yn fy achos i yr athletau a'r direidi fu gryfaf eu tynfa a bu'r ddwy elfen yn bwysig imi byth wedyn. Bu'r agwedd athletig yn fodd imi gadw mewn iechyd rhagorol, tra bu'r profiad fel 'hogyn drwg' yn sylfaenol bwysig imi ddeall sut i drin hogiau drwg yn fy ngyrfa fel athro ysgol.

Wrth gwrs nid delfrydiaeth oedd ymateb y Prifathro i bolesïau Attlee a'i gyd fforddolion. Iddo ef dyma ddechrau'r diwedd ac roedd ei ymateb i'r Wladwriaeth Les, Y Gwasanaeth Iechyd ac i Annibyniaeth India yn hynod chwynn. Yn ein gwrthdaro syniadol gydag ef y deffrowyd ymwybod gwleidyddol yn llawer ohonom am y tro cyntaf, ac yn gwbl anfwriadol fe greodd cenhedlaeth o genedlaetholwyr a sosialwyr. Braint fawr oedd trafod gwleidyddiaeth gydag ef yn ystod y gwersi Ysgrythur a hyd heddiw rwy'n falch o'r ffaith ei fod yn fodlon trin a thrafod gyda ni.

Ond Cymro edifar iawn oedd Mr Williams. Saesneg oedd yr iaith ddychafedig a Seisnigrwydd oedd sail ei gymdeithaseg. Anffawd iddo ef oedd bod yn Gymro Cymraeg. Iddo ef nid oedd



cydraddoldeb o unrhyw fath rhwng y ddwy iaith na'u traddodiadau. Yn ffodus nid dyna agwedd y Cymry ar y staff a diolch iddynt am gadw'r ddesgil yn wastad. Ond stori arall yw honno.

*Y mae Dafydd yn briod efo Bethan ers 1966, ac y mae ganddynt ddau blentyn, Guto, sydd yn heddwes yn Glasgow a Gwenno sydd yn athrawes yn swydd Lanark. Y mae Dafydd a Bethan yn byw mewn pentref y tu allan i East Kilbride a bu'r ddau yn athrawon yn lleol. Y mae Dafydd wedi ymddeol ers blynyddoedd. ond yn parhau i weithio yn ysbeidiol fel athro llanw. Y mae i'w glywed o bryd i'w gilydd ar y radio a theledu'r BBC yn rhoi sylwadau ar bethau fel y sefyllfa wleidyddol a chymdeithasol yn yr Alban, a hefyd ar gerdded a dringo mynyddoedd. Y mae ef a Bethan yn parhau i feicio a cherdded llawer iawn yn yr Alban ac ar y Cyfandir! Er nad yw Guto na Gwenno wedi byw yng Nghymru am unrhyw gyfnod, y mae'r ddau yn siarad Cymraeg yn rhugl, ac yn siarad Saesneg gydag acen Albanaidd. Y mae Dafydd a Bethan yn ymweld a'u cyfeillion a'u teuluoedd yng Nghymru yn gyson bob blwyddyn.*

## Where are they now?

*In our last Newsletter Dennis 'Pop' Harbird (41-46) wondered what had become of Cyril Reuben who was a first class musician. Dennis did not know him personally but had heard him play and even to his unsophisticated ear at that time recognised a talent.*

We are pleased to report that Cyril lives in Maidenhead, Berkshire. **Eric Thomas (43-47)** tells us that he was Cyril's next door neighbour in Caernarfon Road and still regularly speaks to him on the telephone. When Eric mentioned to him a couple of months ago that an ODA member was wondering what had become of him, his reply was 'I was wondering that too!!' Cyril was indeed an accomplished musician and developed his skills on the clarinet and baritone saxophone in the RAF Regional Band at Henlow during National Service. He went on to play in many well known bands including The Squadronnaires (5 years), Jack Parnell and Geraldo (18 months). He played too in many theatre orchestras for West End shows such as Oliver (5 years), Charlie Girl (2 years) and Singing in the Rain (2 years). He did numerous regular shows including Bennie Hill, Thunderbirds,

Stingray; films such as The Fall of the Roman Empire; live recordings with the Beatles, the Carpenters and Bing Crosby on his last ever BBC broadcast in London; many European tours with American artists including Liza Minelli, Johnny Mathis, Peggy Lee, Liberace; he played on tour with Frank Sinatra in London, Jerusalem and at the Shah's Palace in Teheran,.... the list is endless. Cyril's son Danny is a teacher and clarinetist and he has a daughter who is in the Met Police. Regrettably Cyril lost his wife Sylvia ten years ago. He has recently had a minor op but is now making a good recovery and is back at work in his specialist woodwind instrument shop in Maidenhead.

**Karel 'Charles' Lek (41-46)** has written as follows: I write following Dennis Harbird's enquiry about Cyril Reuben. At the age of about 58 I decided to learn the clarinet and having had lessons for 18 months, my tutor suggested that I should exchange my plastic instrument for a professional wooden one. After this encouraging news I could feel my head swelling, and I could already see myself as a budding Artie Shaw! I immediately agreed. 'If you wait a moment, I'll go into the other room and ring someone who could supply you with a good Yamaha' said my enthusiastic teacher. 'He lives in Maidenhead, by the way.' On his return he told me that this supplier knew me from school days at Friars and that his name was Cyril Reuben! After an absence of about 45 years, I was too embarrassed to get in touch with him but as my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday was looming my wife arranged with him to buy the clarinet for me as a special present. When I met our secretary, Alun Jones, in Beaumaris last summer we began to reminisce about our schooldays. I mentioned Cyril and his talent and Alun suggested that I ought to write something about him for our Newsletter. It is because of Alun that after 56 years I am now in touch with Cyril once again. Quoting him when we spoke 'Voices from the past!' But back to the beginning. I must have been about 13 or 14 when my father bought me a coveted ukelele banjo which was on display in the window at Crane's Music Shop in Bangor High Street. It was about £4.12s.6d. cased, and it had a George Formby autograph on the sound box. The latter later proved to be a rubber stamp which soon rubbed off! A neighbour who played this kind of instruments showed me how to read the chord finger positions which were printed above the staves on the then sixpenny sheet music. To my

mother's annoyance my whistling to accompany my plinking and plonking kept me away from my Friars homework. She blamed my father for buying this stringed frying pan which would lead me to ruin. Topping it all, Cyril Reuben, a clarinet playing boy in my class had asked me to join a dance band who met and rehearsed on Sunday afternoons at the bungalow of another Friars boy, Vernon Buckland, who played the drums!

Only three of us in the group were Friars boys. The others were a few years older. They were men of the world! The trumpeter was a coal delivery boy. How I envied this worldly wise self-confident cheerful lad who was not bound by homework or nagging parents. The pianist had every reason to be carefree. He had a very pretty girl friend who sang 'I'll be with you in apple blossom time.'

To be asked to join this group by Cyril Reuben, a genius who played the clarinet and saxophone, was almost too much for me to bear! He, and the other boys could read music. I could not! There I sat next to Cyril Reuben, the object of my hero worship. The gang put up with my noisy off-key contributions and encouraged me.

Cyril played on the stage in the Assembly Hall at the odd school concert. When he played, even Boss listened attentively with his head bowed. Some of our neighbours along Caernarfon Road shook their heads at me disapprovingly when they saw me with my little ukelele case on Sunday afternoons. I was desecrating the Sabbath! One day, the group were asked to play at a Friday evening hop in St. Mary's Church Hall. My

parents would not let me go. If I did, they would disown me! My mother told me that I would meet "bad women!!" I had never heard of bad women before and now that prospect being denied to me appeared very exciting and unattainable. In later life I did meet some bad women\*, but the ones I never met at St. Mary's Church Hall must have been much more appealing. I was shame-faced at not being allowed to go to this hop. The group no longer wanted anything to do with me. I was a typical Friars donkey (an early 1940's term for goody-goody Friars boys).

There is a herd instinct in boys which suddenly rendered me quite isolated. Early adolescence ended. With my pocket money I bought Parlophone records of Harry Parry the great clarinetist from Caellepa. However, he could not play like Cyril Reuben whose talent I worshipped from afar.

Late adolescence ended. I went to Art College, yet somewhere Cyril had left his mark on me. At 58 I started to take clarinet lessons. For the last 10 years many unfortunates can hear me strutting my stuff in the foyer of Ysbyty Gwynedd to raise funds for the hospital charities. I know that after his National Service Cyril became a lead player with the Squadronnaires, and accompanied Frank Sinatra at the London Palladium - some of you may know more!

To me, the moral of the story is, that often those we do not know well, can influence us most!!

*\*Really Charles! The subject of a future article perhaps?*

*Please let Alun Jones have the name and brief background information of any old friend that you would like to find and we will be happy to do our bit in trying to locate him.*



*Cyril Reuben from memory - as I remember him 60 years ago. KL*

## And finally.....

We hope you have enjoyed reading what we have produced in this newsletter but as we are only here for the benefit of our members please let us know of any changes you would like to see or new ideas we should try out. Don't forget we are always glad to accept any items of news, however small.