

THE LINK

EXTRA

The newsletter of the
Lampeter Society/Cymdeithas Llambod

2016



The new Rowland Williams memorial

ON THE 23RD MARCH 2016, UWTSO Lampeter celebrated the 150th anniversary of rugby in Lampeter, the birthplace of rugby in Wales, and paid homage to the Rev Rowland Williams, former Vice-Principal and Professor of Hebrew, who was responsible for introducing the game of rugby football to the students of SDC Lampeter.

The day kicked-off with something that Rowland Williams would have found difficult to believe: a game between the College Women's XV and Lampeter Town Women's XV. On this occasion the Town Women won a narrow victory in a hard-fought game.

There followed the launch of the book 'The Fighting Parsons' written by Selwyn Walters and which traces the role of SDC Lampeter in the early development of rugby football in Wales. (Copies of this excellent little book are still available, price £9.99 from the College).

In the afternoon a UWTSO XV took on the might of the Welsh Academicals XV. The Academicals fielded a very strong team including a number of current Welsh U-20 players. The Academicals were surprised to find themselves trailing by 26-19 at half-time; but unfortunately for the College team the second half was a completely different

story and the Academicals ran out eventual winners, the final score being 26-61.

It was a good afternoon of rugby with the only sad factor being that the games took place on the Town rugby field rather than the College field owing to the dilapidated state of the pavilion and the poor state of the College pitch.

In the evening the celebrations continued with the unveiling of the memorial to Rowland Williams by the great Wales and British Lions outside-half, Barry John. It was fitting that Barry should unveil the memorial for not only is he an alumni of UWTSO Carmarthen but he also played for the Welsh International side against the College XV in the 1966 Centenary Match. Incidentally, Barry also played against the College the following year in the annual Cwmman Casuals game.

There followed a ceremony in the old dining hall in which Barry John was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of UWTSO. The day was rounded off with a dinner in the Lloyd Thomas Refectory in which speakers, too numerous to mention, paid tribute to Rowland Williams, St David's College, Lampeter and the game of rugby football. In time-honoured fashion, drinking and reminiscing carried on into the early hours.

John Loaring (Grad. 1967) ❁

DAVID WALFORD MEMORIAL SERVICE

ON THE 5TH MARCH 2016 A MEMORIAL EVENT was held in the Old Hall for David Walford (1937-2015). The flag on the tower (in which David lived for a number of years) flew at half-mast. David came to Lampeter in 1963 and taught Philosophy continuously (and beyond formal retirement) until 2014. As his colleague David Cockburn who led the proceedings commented, there have been few, if any, others who have amassed 50 years of teaching in the college. The event included a short biography of David, reminiscences and tributes from former colleagues and students, readings of texts closely connected to David's work, and a number of pieces of music of which David was fond (by Monteverdi, Bach, Haydn, Gluck). People came from afar afield as Turkey and British Columbia.

David was one of those academics who published little in his own voice during his career, although he produced numerous translations of philosophical works from German, most notably the inaugural volume of the prestigious 'Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant'. His impact was as a teacher rather than an author. How impressive a teacher he was vividly illustrated at the event by the coming together of students spanning several decades, all intent on acknowledging the impact he had made on them.

Dr John Sellars

GEORGE REPATH – VICAR OF BRAY

GEORGE REPATH WAS A STUDENT AT ST DAVID'S COLLEGE (as it then was) in 1960s; apparently well-remembered as a very keen sportsman. Mid-course he change from the main College to Burgess Hall, heading for ordination.

Intriguingly, in due course he actually became the Vicar of Bray (the parish renowned in the satirical English folk-song). St Michael's Church, Bray, dates from the 13th century and he became its 47th vicar in 1985. He remained Vicar of Bray St Michael with Braywoodside until 2007, when he retired. Lampeter Society Local Liaison Officer Bill Fillery mentions that recently an elderly parishioner had remarked to him how much she had appreciated Revd. Repath's pastoral care.

Richard Fenwick, Bishop of St Helena, recalls 'George... had a lot of "political" common sense, which enabled him to do some very good work in the very demanding parishes where he served. Again, he had a good brain, and completed a Master's at Oxford in the mid 90's.' He goes on to remark that George 'was never one to be taken for granted. When he moved to Bray, the Vicarage was a wonderful house with about 100 feet of absolutely prime Thames frontage. His back garden included the riverbank itself. Of course, the Diocese, realising the commercial value of the property, told George that he would have to move in a few months to a more "convenient" house the other side of the parish. I would love to have been a fly on the wall of the Diocesan Office when George's letter politely informed them all where to go, and exactly how fast to proceed there! I suspect that there was also a fair bit more plain speaking as was George's gift.'

The Revd. George Repath died on 18th February this year, aged 72.

IAN "BIRTY" BIRTWISTLE

IT WAS WITH GREAT SADNESS that we learned of the untimely death at the age of 70 of Ian "Birty" Birtwistle on March 19th. Ian died at home, very suddenly. His wife, Elaine, was with him.

Ian and I went through Accrington Grammar School together, before our years in Lampeter. We both graduated in 1967 – Ian took Honours English.

SDC cricketers and footballers of the 1963-67 vintage will remember Ian with great affection. As a medium pace swing bowler he played a key role in St David's reaching the '64 Welsh Universities final. During his time at Lampeter Ian took well over 100 wickets---legendary stuff.

John Wolfe was captain of cricket at the time. "I had the privilege of skipping Ian, and he gave his all for the cause come rain or shine – and being Lampeter, it was mainly rain. Ian got shedloads of wickets. There were not many stumpings – our keepers weren't good enough! Most dismissals were bowled off stump (played down the wrong line), caught at slip (nearly played down the right line), and caught extra cover (driving at the apparent half-volley that was never quite there).

Birty was generally pretty relaxed about life in general but he could get roused if something was not up to his expectations with cricket. There was a feisty, competitive streak in him – possibly something to do with the mop of red hair he sported in those days.

I still recall getting on the wrong side of him once. It was during an evening game against Morris Motors in Llanelli. They had a decent group of players, some of whom had been in and around the Glamorgan 2nd team. Birty couldn't wait to get the ball in his hand. However, there was a gale blowing down the pitch, and I asked Ian to bowl into it. He didn't refuse, he never would, but several of our players told me that steam was coming out of his ears. He took 7-19, so I thought he would be happy to talk to me between innings. 'Well bowled, Birty' was my overture. 'If I'd bowled downwind I'd have taken all f..... 10!' was his response."

Ian was also a part of the St David's football team which went a season unbeaten to win the Cardiganshire League title in 1963/64. A tribute display of this team's success can be found in the University library. Ian was a classy midfielder, a great passer of the ball.

He will be fondly remembered by members of Accrington Cricket Club and by several Lancashire League --- and England --- stalwarts. Birty played for Accrington until his early 50s and took over 1,000 wickets for the club. The club captain recalls "The big question that everyone always asked about Birty was 'what was the secret of his bowling?' Every opposition batsman wanted to know. Every captain told us stories of batting pros sitting in the dressing room and seeing Birtie (slow-moving, bald, getting on a bit) come on to bowl. Their eyes would light up and they would immediately want to be next man in regardless of batting order. Despite dire warnings they would come dancing down the wicket only to be 'castled', stumped or caught in the deep." He was a legend!

My crown green bowls partner will be sadly missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with Elaine and Ian's son, Steven.

K.B.A.

DON JONES 1933-2016

I AM SURE THAT MANY, like me, were saddened to hear of the death, earlier this year, of Don Jones following heart surgery from which he did not fully recover. I would like to thank everyone who has sent me their memories and thoughts of him.

Don arrived in Lampeter in 1961 as an assistant lecturer directly from Cardiff University where he was one of the Professor of History's star pupils. He was the first of a batch of extra lecturers appointed, following lengthy negotiations with the University Grants Committee, when it was agreed to fund what was then known as St David's College.

James Ogden recalls arriving in Lampeter, also as an assistant lecturer, at the same time as Don. They had adjacent rooms in the old Canterbury Building James says: "I believe he at first regarded me with suspicion: I was an Englishman from the old-fashioned universities of Durham and Oxford, he a Welshman from ... progressive Cardiff. However they soon and formed what they called "the Jones-Ogden entente" as a supportive alliance against what James described as the somewhat reactionary powers that seemed to rule the College in those days. They would meet for lunch in the "Mile End" in College Street, avoiding "the piece of cod which passeth all understanding" in the College refectory. They stood for higher academic standards, co-education [controversial, in those days of the all-male St David's College. Ed.] and scholarship."

All those who had the very good fortune to be taught by Don hardly need me to say what a star performer he was and the affection and esteem in which he was held. Don was a consummate and gifted teacher and more than one person has made mention of his clarity and ability to get his students to think analytically. He had a great sense of humour which, on occasion, could be outrageous.

Richard Fenwick (grad. 1966), now Bishop of St Helena, recalls his commenting on the death of Edward II by means of a red-hot poker. Richard says that he paused for a moment, to gather maximum effect, and then proclaimed theatrically, "this will go down in the annals of history!" In rather similar vein, John Morrison-Wells (grad. 1965) points out that Don's "theories concerning the virginity of Queen Elizabeth I were original for those days..."

I must sadly admit that, as an undergraduate, I quite often skipped lectures for one reason or another. Not so with Don; he was an inspirational lecturer and was the only one who could get me out of bed and into a nine o'clock lecture. Others who wrote to me also mentioned his ability to fill a lecture room at nine o'clock on a Monday morning or four o'clock on a Friday.

David Jones, who graduated in 1966, said that his abiding memory of Don was of his voice, "a rich baritone, resonant and sonorous. It made you want to listen, indeed it compelled you to listen, to whatever he had to say about any facet of medieval history".

Bob Fonow recalls Don as "the first person in the History Department I met in the summer... of 1975... while looking for a place to study after leaving the US Air Force... He helped guide my application into the Department for 1976."

Chris Staples (grad. 1962) mentions that Don "was largely responsible for the students organising a History Society" (with John Morgan-Guy) and that he considers himself "privileged indeed to have known him..."

Fred White (grad. 1981) remembers that Don's lectures "were always packed..." and recalls, too, his kindness: "I could not be in College when the degree results were posted, because of family circumstances. Don knew of this and rang me with the results."

Richard Fenwick declares that Don "was one of the best lecturers I was ever fortunate to study under (in Lampeter and then in Cambridge after that)."

James Ogden asks to publish his view that Don was one of the best colleagues he ever had in a long academic career and that "Donald was one of my first, best and last academic friends. For over fifty years he was a remote but reliable presence in my life."

John Morrison-Wells says that he was "an inspiring teacher and a solid and uncomplicated friend".

Jonathan Hughes (grad. 1966), says "...truly, Don Jones was a member of a department that was fully committed to its undergraduate teaching, even at the expense of its members' own careers".

One could fill a whole "Link" and more with memories of Don. He touched everyone who had the great good fortune to know and be taught by him.

For me, Don was not only a lecturer but, as with many, a friend at College and it was a friendship that continued to the very end. It was always a pleasure when, on return visits to Lampeter, meeting up with Don for a drink or a meal. He will be missed by many but certainly not forgotten.

Mike (Barley) Evans; grad. 1974 🌸



Don Jones (picture by Howell Harris)

A FAREWELL

After 16 years, it's time for us to step down and invite fresh blood to take on the task of running the Link. With best wishes to our readers, we are now signing off –

Pushka Evans (1974) and Mick Manson (1976) 🌸

RODERIC BOWEN RESEARCH CENTRE UPDATE

WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL TO THE LAMPETER SOCIETY for the annual grant of £1000 to the RBRC. This year the grant has financed the conservation of 78 early printed books, including a set of text books bound in Oxford in the 1540s that were reinforced using vellum from discarded thirteenth and fourteenth century manuscripts (see photograph). Original bindings such as these are unique and each provides evidence of artistic, cultural and social history.

In addition to conservation work, next year the RBRC is hoping to acquire a hand printing press, type and bindery equipment so that we can operate a small print shop and bindery in order to offer opportunities for students, alumni and members of the public to learn more about the processes involved in book production. We are hopeful that the Lampeter Society will lend its support to this exciting new venture. For further information please contact the Roderic Bowen Research Centre (RodericBowenLibrary@uwtsd.ac.uk



UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE RECALLED

FOLLOWING THE UC ARTICLE IN LINK 2016, we received some further enlightening correspondence, from Bob Bird and David Jones..

Bob Bird (grad. 1971) wrote regarding the 1967 St David's College team's University Challenge campaign and told us what one of their opponents recalled some years afterwards:

"I can still remember the name of the captain of St David's, Lampeter, a theological college in North Wales for heaven's sake [Note: a common misconception! Ed], which trounced us in the very first round and demolished the complacent Balliol myth of 'effortless superiority.'"

Apparently Bob came across this gem in Christopher Hitchens' 2010 book *Hitch-22*. (London: Atlantic Books, p.93.)

David Jones (grad. 1966) also contacted us in connection with 1960s UC campaign led by Harvey Cox. David is the 'Dave Jones' noted as the reserve in this competition [The Link, LXIX, p10]. To fill in the Gownsmen-gap mentioned in the Link article, (the mysteriously missing 12/2 edition), David explains that following the win against Corpus, the SDC team took on Bamber Cascoigne's alma mater, Magdalene College, Cambridge – a foursome that included the young, extremely handsome and already married John Simpson of BBC Foreign Correspondent fame. And beat them!

But next came the formidable Oriel College, Oxford team, and they were Lampeter's undoing. David believes that this team was the eventual winner of the competition. (He checked the Wiki entry for UC and this confirms that Oriel did win in 1966.)

David added that " we hugely enjoyed the unstinting Granada hospitality, and on several occasions. Doug Terry, the series producer was a very jovial presence in the pub that served as the 'green room', as was Bamber Cascoigne himself, a lovely man who entertained us and showed an authentic interest in us and in Lampeter – even on the occasion we had shown his old college the door, as it were."

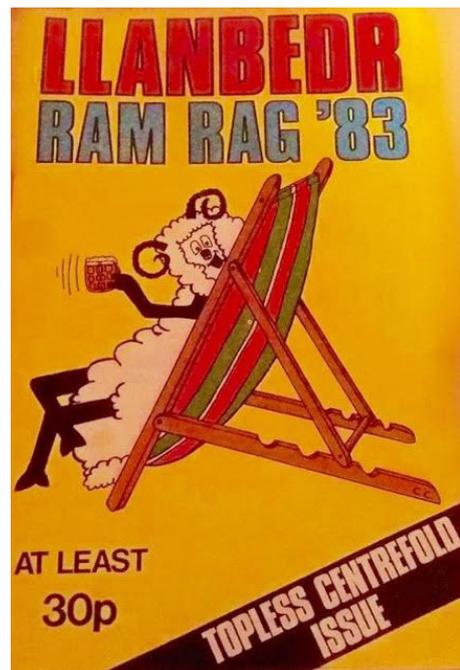
Pushka Evans (grad. 1974) ❁

PROFESSOR DANNY DAWSON – A FURTHER TRIBUTE

THE ITEM BY ROGER BROWN, about History Professor Danny Dawson (originally issued on page 3 of the 2014 Link Extra, re-printed on page 21 of Link 2016) was itself a follow-up of an earlier 'Reminiscences' article by Chris Staples. Roger's piece, in which he mentions Eric Morris as the history student (and later, military historian) who used to help the disabled Professor to and from his lectures, elicited the following touching tribute to Professor Dawson:

"I am the Eric Morris who used to collect Professor Dawson to and from his classes. Professor Danny had a profound influence on my professional life and encouraged my interest in Military History. This resulted in publications and appointments in the field at Liverpool University and the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

Later in my life I was appointed as a military history mentor to both NATO High Command and Headquarters Allied Rapid Reaction Corps in Germany. Both allowed me the opportunity to lead what the military called battlefield rides, for the most part on the Italian Campaign. Without Danny's initial encouragement I doubt if those opportunities would have come my way."



Helen Macfarlane kindly sent this image (provided by Carole Boyce) of the front cover of 1983's Lampeter Rag magazine.