Tales out of School:
from 1924 (Chilton Private School) to the present day

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Colwyn Bay Memories: Tales Out of School
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Further reading about local schools

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Cover: Llandrillo Infants School c.1956.
**Introduction:**
‘What changes and what remains the same?’

We can pick out the sites of present and former schools on the local map. The Heritage Group has devoted much energy and expertise in highlighting the historic and remaining structures of our town architecturally, and to discover Colwyn Bay, Old Colwyn or Rhos on a walking tour. It is a worthy exercise, realising much about the buildings. Events over time have been well described. But I maintain that also the past inhabitants deserve credit in forging such a vibrant community. While important past figures may not be forgotten, such as Lord Colwyn, Lady Erskine and others, we must remember ordinary individuals, and those who worked daily to nurture the youth of the district over the years forging the future community. As well as school teachers, there were also Sunday school and dance teachers, scout and guide leaders. It is interesting to read of the experience of school pupils during wartime, also in the ‘50s, ‘60s and subsequent decades. As records are closed for 75 years and we are not allowed to see them, the only way to know now before they are released is to ask for shared experiences. A recent trip to Ruthin Gaol led me to realise even more that only fragments remain and even those cannot be seen for seven and a half decades afterwards! So, the more stories we can collect and preserve the better to have an insight into what life was like in school in our town in living memory.

Read here how former pupils of our district see themselves in their school setting in the past and reminisce about your own schooldays. Those younger contributors perhaps believe their story to be less relevant or enriching, but their memories provide a comparison and will, of course, become so much more valuable and interesting in years to come and fascinating for the future population of children.

Years ago, I completed a study on ‘school discipline’ with contributions from all areas, not just ours. Interesting results were seen with ideas constantly changing with ‘schools of thought’. Looking through educational history I found fascinating information from the past going back to Roman times. It is good to remember that exuberance of youth is perennial, and that the differences in what is acceptable procedure is startlingly apparent over time, even during periods of living memory. For example, you could not go back to a teacher’s house today to work on a project, neither could you get a lift home in a car from a teacher! The law changes. Both of those examples are memories here.

But the nature of youth would not have changed. Those who saw the film c.1990 ‘Dead Poet’s Society’, with Robin Williams will remember the scene early in the story where the teacher showed pupils the group photos hanging in the school corridor and described how those boys from decades past had the same fears, doubts, hopes and aspirations as the present-day students themselves. This thought will be vivid in my mind as the reunion of my own school takes place and I look forward to see if those group photographs still hang there.

Collection of these memories has been sporadic, from those people found at random and willing, from those who have time and inclination to share the memories, and those who have been referred by others. Some memories are from the 1940s, wartime days. In all the collection is but a tiny sample across all establishments and all eras. Some of the teachers who worked at schools in our town are legendary, others don’t get a mention in this collection, they may have been less...
popular or not memorable enough to appear here and so are consigned to obscurity despite all
their efforts, but better than being singled out for detrimental reasons. Some are remembered for
their discipline or their idiosyncrasies and not for what they actually were supposed to have taught
us, others have been inspiritional in influencing our future.

Touching letters are included from a Mr Buckland, going back to the days immediately after the
war which express the depth of his involvement and concern. He for one will be remembered
fondly by the older generation. I searched for information on the internet about a particular
headmaster in my day and found none. (I am sure there are records deep in the archives which are
not easily accessible, at least for about another 25 years!). Yet while at the time a fierce figure to
many, this headmaster, and many others, had devoted their careers and indeed their lives to the
progress and well-being of a local generation, and where was the gratitude? Was it enough to just
know that they had contributed or seen successes? Did they ever get a call or visit from former
pupils? Were they spoken of affectionately? Perhaps here a little credit can be given and
reminiscences revived with reminders of schooldays. Hopefully all who read will experience an
echo of their own school experiences.

Local former pupils will remember that teaching was very much encouraged as a career in our
town, and perhaps this was so all over Wales. Some of our classmates became teachers. I wonder if
our former pupils will remember us as fondly as those who have written their memories here.

Two of the teachers in this collection experienced internment in prisoner of war camps in the
1940s! When we were being taught by them had we only known or appreciated in our youth what
that really meant to survive such an experience, our esteem for them would have soared. One of
the stories is available at our local library; ‘Three Came Home’ in book or DVD. If the other story can
be made available, it would be much appreciated by us all. People can sometimes have very
surprising backgrounds, everyone has their story and I would like to think that Mr David Roberts’
‘No Bamboo for Coffins’ is not lost.

Many may have connections to the contributors of this collection, to those they describe, or they
may remember similar experiences in other areas but similar times. The stories may ‘ring a bell of
recognition’. We would have loved to include everyone’s stories. If you like our e-books of
memories you may be a future contributor on this or another topic, volunteer your memories to us,
your suggestions for the next topic are welcome.

Cindy Lowe
Colwyn Bay / Old Colwyn

1. Old Colwyn School
2. Bryn Elian School
3. Ysgol Bod Alaw
4. Eirias School
5. Douglas Road School
6. Pendorian School / Central School
7. Rydal School
8. Argyle House School
Colwyn Bay / West End

9. St. Joseph’s School
10. College School
11. Lyndon School
12. Conway Road School
Rhos on Sea

13. Froebelian School
14. Congregational Church Hall
15. Chilton House School
16. Llandrillo School
17. St. Mary's College
Findings at Denbighshire Archives, Ruthin Gaol
Visit May 19th, 2017

I had wanted to view the local log books for some years, since I was researching for wartime, but since the rules say that records are closed for 75 years, due to release of sensitive information within living memory it was not possible. However, the war years are now partially available, up to 1942 at the time of writing this!

I was dismayed to find out that even within the rules many log books are not available. Staff told me they had been either lost or had not survived. It is a mystery, could they ever be discovered in someone’s dusty attic? So, the more stories we can collect now and preserve the better to discover what life was like in school in our town in living memory. Below is a fraction of what can be seen at the records office.

Old Colwyn National School (ED/22/6)
Reproduced here by kind permission from Denbighshire Archive Service
On May 23rd, 1900. A copy of the report.
‘This department is less noisily conducted than in previous years, chorus answering being now discouraged in every class. All classes are well advanced in the elementary and other subjects with the sole exception of the third class whose relative backwardness is due to the frequent absence of their teacher on the plea of ill health. The babies are kept in good order and are well and interestingly taught. Having regard to the improved conditions of the school as a whole, I have much pleasure on this occasion in recommending the payment of the highest variable grant.’

(ED/MB/23/1)

On March 2nd, 1921.
There was a discussion between all school managers regarding a site for a new school. Two were proposed.
1. Abbey Road, Rhos
2. Pendorlan

It was suggested that Rhos was the best site, but the education committee urged to purchase Pendorlan at once – 9473 square yards. It was the only central plot available in Colwyn Bay. March 15th, 1921.

War having been declared there were a large number of evacuees from Liverpool arriving to Colwyn Bay area from Friday September 2nd to Tuesday 5th September. [Interestingly war was
declared on the Sunday, 3rd.] A government order closed all schools in the evacuation and receiving areas until this area until September 11th, 1939. In the meantime, the local teachers met the Liverpool teachers on Wednesday and Friday and decided on the receiving of schools and numbers. In the case of this school it was decided to accommodate 46 of the pupils from St Benedict’s and 21 from Christchurch, Liverpool. On Saturday 9th a further letter from the Local Education Authority closed the school for our own children until such time that the evacuees had been medically examined and a clean bill of health presented.

On September 13th the school reopened under the double shift system i.e. from 9am to 1pm [for local children] Christchurch and St Benedict’s from Liverpool would occupy the school from 1pm to 5pm. Sufficient new stock had been loaned to carry on. On 15th it was reported that the double shift system was working efficiently.

On 21st December: ‘School breaks up for Christmas holidays. Each child received two oranges, an apple and a bag of sweets. One orange each was presented by Mr Bilhee. The cost for the school was defrayed by the staff. The evacuees received the same presents.

March 1940: London and Liverpool evacuees sang in Welsh; the vicar was delighted.

November 29th, 1940:
‘Barbara Winifred Stardy, a Birmingham private evacuee was re admitted on 25th. On Thursday news came that her father mother and little baby sister had been killed by a bomb on their shelter.

To read about the experience of evacuees arriving in Colwyn Bay see ‘To Where We Once Belonged’ chapter 1, page 5. Or read about the effect on schools in Chapter 6. In ‘Colwyn Bay Accredited’ available in Colwyn Bay Library.

**Welsh Medium Education - the Welsh Not**

In 1847 a Royal Commission investigated the state of education in Wales. One of the main conclusions was that education in Wales was failing because people continued to speak Welsh and this prevented them from getting on in the world. Following the ‘treachery of the Blue Books’ (Brad y Llyfrau Gleision), a term coined by Welsh speakers due to the colour of the cover of the report, after a number of steps were taken to prevent people from speaking Welsh.

During the late 19th century, most teaching in schools in Wales was in English. Many schools used the Welsh Not as a punishment for any children caught speaking Welsh. The Welsh Not was a piece of wood, often marked "WN", and was hung around the neck of any child caught speaking Welsh. The child wearing it at the end of the day would be punished.

See a picture of the Welsh not here: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/j35VCjYcS0CC3RGzvkLb-Q](http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/j35VCjYcS0CC3RGzvkLb-Q)
The 1911 census recorded the highest number of Welsh speakers – 977,366. It also revealed that the Welsh language had, for the first time become a minority language, spoken by 43.5% of the population.

Towards the beginning of the 20th century things changed slowly, partly owing to the efforts of Owen M. Edwards when he became chief inspector of schools for Wales in 1907. In 1922, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, today one of Europe’s largest children and youth movements, was established. This was followed by the opening of the first private Welsh language school in Aberystwyth in 1939.

Because of the campaigning of parents, who demanded a Welsh language education for their children progress was made with the Education Acts of 1944 and later the Act of 1988.

In 1947 the Welsh medium school, Ysgol Gymraeg Llanelli, opened. This was the first designated Welsh medium school to be fully maintained by an Education Authority. Ysgol Glan Clwyd opened in 1956 and was the first Welsh medium secondary school of its type. Local Welsh language secondary school, Ysgol y Creuddyn, opened in 1981.

During the 50s we learned Welsh from age 3 to 14, compulsory, children who transferred from England found this a problem, but always did better than we local children! Some of us remember learning Welsh in the 1950s and 1960s in infant, junior and secondary schools.

Welsh as a second language became compulsory for all pupils in Wales at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 (up to age 14) in 1990. In 1999, it became a compulsory subject for Key Stage 4 pupils (GCSE - ages 15 and 16). Provision of Welsh as a subject in independent (private) schools is less widespread — only a few provide it, and it is taught as a second language. There is no private designated Welsh-medium school in Wales, although one does exist in London, known as the London Welsh School.

The 1993 Welsh Language Act created the Welsh Language Board and confirmed the equal status of English and Welsh. This was followed, in 2003, by Iaith Pawb, the Welsh Assembly Government’s National Plan for a Bilingual Wales was published.

Plans to increase Welsh medium education have been set out as part of a target to get one million people speaking Welsh by 2050. A strategy to double the number of Welsh speakers in the next 30 years has recently [2017] been set by the Welsh Government. Wales' First Minister has called on the entire nation to take ownership of the language in order to meet the target.

**1944 Education Act and Sir Martin Roseveare**

I was fascinated to discover that one of the incoming civil servants during the Second World War who worked on the points ration system in the offices of the Colwyn Bay Hotel went on from the Ministry of Food to work on the Education Act of 1944.

It was an answer to surging social and educational demands created by the war and the widespread demands for social reform. The mixing of the population was a catalyst for change, something seen acutely in Colwyn Bay on the war years.
The bill was enacted in 1944, but its changes were designed to take effect after the war, thus allowing for additional pressure groups to have their influence. Addison argues that in the end, the act was widely praised by Conservatives because it honoured religion and social hierarchy, by Labour because it opened new opportunities for working class children, and by the general public because it ended the fees they had to pay.

Butler designed the Act as an expression of "One Nation Conservatism" in the tradition of Disraeli, which called for paternalism by the upper class towards the working class.

I was delighted to be contacted by Sir Martin Roseveare's grand-daughter who wanted to get a copy of 'Colwyn Bay Accredited'. His daughter Jean née Roseveare was being brought back to Colwyn Bay as a treat for her 90th birthday and rekindling memories of her father's wartime work. He had an office in the Colwyn Bay Hotel and a senior role in the points rationing system. He worked so hard, he had a bed in a cupboard in his office! Jean, while visiting him from boarding school (Howells, Denbigh) used to sit in the corner and listen to the meetings of the planning of points ration systems as a teenager! (She was moved from her school in Kent where the family came from, as the children were being taught in trenches, she said! (so those pupils were lucky in Colwyn Bay!). But what has this to do with the Education act of 1944? Martin Roseveare as a former schoolteacher himself, was assigned to be a party to the drawing up of the education act too! Our man from Colwyn Bay had a celebrated and distinguished career indeed.

The 1944 Education Act, as it was originally enacted, can be viewed here: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/7-8/31/contents/enacted

ROSEVEARE, Sir Martin  Joys, Jobs and Jaunts
Memories of Local People

Junior Schools

Froebelian School, Rhos on Sea

JOHN WILKINSON's memories of primary school from the 1930's

In 1933 The Froebelian School was started by Miss Bird with three pupils including my brother George, in a room above Beardsalls' jewellers in Penrhyn Avenue, Rhos on Sea.

The following year, 1934, the school moved to the corner of Whitehall Road. In 1935 I joined my brother at school. I recall my first day crying and Miss Bird asking me what I wanted to play with. ‘George’ was my answer. She suggested his class and my class should go out and play together, this seemed to do the trick, I settled down and enjoyed the rest of the time.

As pupil numbers increased the school moved to Abbey Road at the corner of Trillo Avenue. In 1939 many Jewish families lived in Abbey Road. The adjacent house had been purchased as well. The school took on a few boarders. This was ideal for me as I lived down the road, so was able to walk to school and play with boarder friends after school. Miss Mitchell, Mavis Connelly, and Miss Holland were teachers. I recall we did the usual subjects together with French and Science. Our other learning included field visits to the heath and Bryn Euryn.

Colwyn Bay Cricket Club was hired by the school as its playing fields. Matches were arranged against local scouts, there were swimming lessons at the local swimming pool down the road to the school, and the roller skating hall was the gymnasium where teacher Monica encouraged gymnastics. Miss Connelly taught drama and we were taken to the pier to see Shakespeare with Sybil Thorndike. We put on small plays.

There was another small primary school on 19 Elwy Road in a private house called ‘Chilton House,’ run by a Mr Ellis. Also at Eirias Park gates there was in c. 1950 'King Arthur’s School,' run by Mr Davies and College School on the promenade near where ‘The Toad’ is now.

Note: It seems Rhos on Sea was avant garde in having a school in the 1930s run on the principles of Friedrich Froebel. “(He was) an educational pioneer who gave birth to the kindergarten – ‘the children’s garden’. He believed children needed a place where they could be cherished, stimulated and helped to flourish. His ideas were adopted by many ambassadors who spread the methods across the globe. These influenced the upbringing of famous people such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Buckminster Fuller, Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Enid Blyton and Bertrand Russell” and also many of the children local to Rhos on Sea.

Froebelian theories were also used to inspire content of ‘Children's House’ and ‘Listen with Mother’, early TV programmes.
http://www.thepositiveencourager.global/friedrich-froebels-educational-work-and-legacy/

Colwyn Bay Memories: Tales Out of School
Douglas Road School

**KIM BROWN first went to Douglas Road but then moved to Ysgol Bod Alaw**

Kim, from Bangor, and lately, France, is originally from Colwyn Bay. She attended Douglas Road School. She is now the great grandmother of 8 children. I found her on Facebook.

I can remember being put to bed on a camp bed after lunch which I hated because I was a very lively child. I remember the Corona factory which was then just across the road and seeing the girls who worked there coming out for their smoke after lunch and there always seemed to be gales of laughter from them. We are talking about 70 years ago now. Also... being taken to school the first morning and yelling blue murder then having to go on my own after the first day. No rides to school in the car then. There were only 2 cars in the whole street!

**MARY AND BILL (Chairman of Glyn Ward Residents Association) also went to Douglas Road School. Interviewed by Linda Nesbitt**

**MARY:** I lived all my life in Colwyn Bay. Went to Douglas Road Infants School. I hated going to sleep in the afternoon.

**BILL:** Conway Road [school] then Pendorlan. [Mary also] Mary's Mother was from Colwyn Bay. Bill's Dad was from Pwllheli. They don't speak Welsh but understand everything.

**BILL:** Mum and Dad spoke Welsh together but not to the children. When he first came to the Bay he couldn't get a job because his English was poor.

**MARY:** Children were whipped for speaking Welsh in school.

**LINDA:** Imagine that today?

**MARY:** We had a fantastic youth club – I was there until I was 23. Not sports, more dancing and girls’ choir, folk dancing and ballroom dancing.

**LINDA:** Bill, was there rugby or football?

**BILL:** Cycling, going to Snowdon and Bangor every weekend. I took the son when he can keep up with me.

**LINDA:** Do you remember the coronation?
MARY: I can’t remember much about that day or even if we had a street party. On Park Road we had a very good community. If we fell at the top of the road it would be bandaged by the time you got home. But in Old Colwyn I didn’t know my neighbours after 44 years.

LINDA: Do you think TV has done this? Is there a special place for you here?

MARY: The youth club and the pier. Bill Hollywood ran it and he died. We had organised holidays to Ireland and competitions and there were hobbies and church on Sunday. We didn’t spend a lot of money.

**Ysgol Bod Alaw**

At the time we decided to compile this collection I was unaware that the book of memories had been written to celebrate the 50-year anniversary of the opening of Ysgol Bod Alaw, very appropriately on March 1st, 2000. It was a very interesting read, and is available in the library and highly recommended, clearly showing how the school was held in high esteem and affection by those contributing their memories, teachers and pupils alike. With pride the story is told how, as a result of the Eisteddfod being held in Colwyn Bay in 1947, local people campaigned for the first Welsh speaking school of Denbighshire (to which we belonged in those days) in a rather English area, in 1950 in a converted private house in Rivieres Avenue.

I recently have come across some further contributors to add their memories, and I was surprised that not all were children of Welsh speaking parents. I was also fascinated to imagine the many meetings and nursery classes that went on in part of the building across the road from the library ‘Engedi Chapel’, which is sadly neglected and in a state of serious disrepair.
PAUL THOMAS, 'Thommo', at Bod Alaw (and briefly at Old Colwyn Primary School)

I was lucky enough to meet Paul when he came to visit me on business. I gathered he was a local man and asked where he went to school. Also I found he had known my late husband, my late brother and several other acquaintances we had in common. This is one of the wonderful aspects of the close community of Colwyn Bay. C.L.

When Paul first went to Infants School in Old Colwyn he entered the cloakroom and saw rows and rows of big iron coat hooks, we can just picture them. Paul’s young imagination entered a different level as he assumed that these hooks were where children would be hung! In their coats while they were still wearing them! The children’s author Roald Dahl was just beginning to gain popularity then, so we assume Paul had as fantastic an imagination as Roald. Anyway, no one could persuade Paul, traumatised, to return to that school, and he says that it is only just recently that he has ever told anyone of his early fears! As a result, Paul's parents had to choose another school for him, and they settled on Ysgol Bod Alaw. Now none of his immediate family spoke Welsh, but he was three and a half years old, so he was just learning English actually. What a favour his parents did him. He did however have to repeat a year and get put back in year three to year two, but as he was September born this was not a problem.

The teachers he remembers were John Roberts, Rhiannon Jones, Mrs Bowyer, T. Gwyn Jones, the headmaster and Mrs Roberts the headmistress in 1963. Also, Mrs Pope and Mrs Hughes. The building was in Rivieres Avenue. It was big, two semis, three stories high. The cellar was the cloakroom. We hope there were no coat pegs! After Bod Alaw he progressed to Ysgol Glan Clwyd as Bod Alaw was in those days a feeder school for this, to continue in the Welsh medium. Paul’s mother was at Douglas Road School. Her name is Jean Thomas (nee Lewis).

KIM BROWN continues her story
Now living in France, she sent her memories via Facebook

Bod Alaw was a nice school, though I didn’t want to go there, because I was at a school at the other end of Colwyn Bay, I think it was called Brompton Road. I didn’t want to move at all, I loved the school, but in those days what your parents said was what you did. Thinking about it now, it was quite a long way from where we lived in York Road and again I went on my own after the initial visit. I don’t remember any celebration when Bod Alaw opened but do remember being there when the young Princess Elizabeth’s father died [George VI] and having a minute’s silence for him. Also, I remember standing on the main road with Draig Goch flags when the young Queen came through, standing by Woolworths, we were. My family adopted me as a baby and were indeed welsh speaking. They ran a boarding house in Colwyn Bay. In fact, my father spoke very little English. I now live in France and have been here for the last 14 years since Richard [husband] retired.
I attended Ysgol Bod Alaw, as did my younger brothers Gareth and Dewi, when we moved to Colwyn Bay from Betws y Coed. I first went to the school on Rivieres Avenue and later to the new school when it opened. Our Headmaster was Mr. T. Gwynn Jones, of Llanfairfechan, and some of our teachers were Mrs. Ceinwen Bowyer, Miss Rhiannon Jones, Miss Nancy Jones and Mr. Roberts – who was my first teacher. As we got older we moved up a floor. If I remember rightly, the music room was on the top floor.

We moved to the present-day location of Ysgol Bod Alaw on Barberry Hill, which was the first home of the Technical College which later became Llandrillo College. I remember it being a much longer walk to school. The new Ysgol Bod Alaw building was the newly built single storey building seen today.

There’s a collection of photographs marking the 21st birthday of Ysgol Bod Alaw in 1972 on the National Library of Wales website. The photographs are part of the Geoff Charles Collection. https://viewer.library.wales/1563824#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&xywh=-1%2C-697%2C3656%2C3792

Ysgol Bod Alaw, Barberry Hill
HANS WINS, a wartime Jewish Refugee from Belgium, who attended first College School, then Pendorlan and also the Grammar School. He lived at 9 Bay View Road

Excerpt of Hans' story below from ‘Colwyn Bay Accredited: The Wartime Experience’:
The first school I attended in Colwyn Bay was ‘College School’. It was on the promenade. Coming from the station or Princes Drive you would turn right into Marine Drive under the railway bridge towards the promenade. On the left a slight curve was College School a semi facing the beach. On the right was a large dark Victorian type hotel which has been demolished. (Colwyn Bay Hotel). College School was a private school run by Mr and Mrs Davies and their daughter Nessie, who also taught at the school. They also had one son who was an army chaplain. I think the school closed because of the age of the headmaster. After that I went to secondary school in Eirias Park.
Mr. Eddie Gorst gave us permission to use the data and he thinks it was dated around 1928/29. The College School existed adjacent to the Toad Hall's present location.

Hans says of his wartime schooldays, 'I participated in all school activities which included prayers, hymn singing, sports, etc. Furthermore, I was a keen scout and there were also regular church parades, camping and hiking and all the things boys like to do. You could say I 'blended in 'I never found any unfriendliness but on the contrary much compassion. I know that my parents had their worries concerning my sister and one of my brothers who had remained behind in occupied Europe and other relatives who did not survive the Holocaust. I did not realise the seriousness of the situation. It seemed to me a big adventure. I think my parents protected me from this and it was not talked about in my presence.

Looking back, I am amazed how quickly at a young age one learns a foreign language. There is the grammatical side which is much more difficult but the practical side one learns while playing and participating in the usual boyhood pranks! I was well accepted, and the teachers made allowances for the mistakes I may have made. My fellow classmates, besides the locals, were evacuees from the blitzed cities and from families of civil servants (mostly Ministry of Food). It is here that I received my first 'I love you' note from a girl in the class asking to meet on the corner of Wynnstay Road and Princes Drive. My Father found the note. The girl did not turn up, but my Father did! Most of my school friends returned to their respective pre-war homes but I am still in contact with some. My very good friend and schoolmate lived a few houses away from us in Bay View Road. With a group of the school we twice hiked up Snowdon but both times in the clouds with no view!

Read more about Hans Wins’ story here: http://colwynbayheritage.org.uk/the-wartime-diamond-industry/
**St. Joseph’s Primary School**

**CHRIS WYNNE DAVIES**

I was born in a nursing home in Colwyn Bay on 23 July 1948, the first born of a family of seven. My Dad was born in Caernarvon, but my Mum is from Worcestershire, which is where we live now. I think we lived in a flat in Colwyn Bay but moved to a cottage in Mill Street, Llanddulas early in the ’50s. My school days at Llanddulas are hazy. I remember starting there at a very young age and walking to the school up the hill past the football ground on the left with my mum pushing my younger brother in his pram. The school was one big classroom with the younger ones towards the village end of the building where there were little beds four to go to sleep in the afternoon. Pretty sure we had school dinners and I think I can remember both English and Welsh being spoken. We were a Catholic family - my Dad converting to Catholicism when he married Mum in 1947. So, at around age 6 or 7 I started at St Josephs. I caught the bus from Llanddulas each day and remember being scared by the big drop to the left of the road at the Llysfaen quarry. Funnily enough I remember less about my time at St Joseph’s, but I was there for only a year or less. I remember the nuns of course. I would say they were firm but fair and I can’t recall any instances of ill treatment. I did get 100% in a maths test once but would not consider myself a star pupil. Towards the end of a school day I remember a classmate asking to go to the toilet but being told to wait. She couldn’t! The most daring thing I ever did was to go to watch ‘Rock Around the Clock’ with a couple of schoolboys who lived in Abergele. We went there by train and I can’t remember how I got back home to Llanddulas. I hadn’t told my Mum and Dad of course and when I arrived home they were cross with me but not overly so. In about 1956 the family including a sister by then moved away. I have an aunt and a cousin still in the area.

**JANET MORRIS (née Williams)**

I met Janet when she came to the 1940s festival in May, she had been living in the Midlands but comes back to visit often and hopes to relocate back to Colwyn Bay.

This former May Queen, (voted Queen at age 9 years) went to St Joseph's School from the age of 7 to 12 years.

From 1962 to 1969 Janet was at St Joseph’s then afterwards progressed to Blessed Edward Jones School in Rhyl as did others. Her two brothers went to St Mary’s in Rhos. She remembers St Joseph’s playground being separated from the boys by a row of railings. The sports day was always on the nearby Rydal field.
People used to think that the school was heavily into religion, but Janet says this was not the case, and she says the Church of England schools were more into religion.

Janet’s Grandmother was from Colwyn Bay and converted to Catholicism to marry her Grandfather who was from Ireland. When this happened, her Grandmother became more catholic than her Grandfather had been.

Two of Janet’s brothers were named on the memorial statue in Rydal Gardens. Their name was Williams.

At St Josephs’ there were two teachers who were nuns and the rest were lay teachers. The headmistress was Sister Mary Saviour. Janet says it was a lovely school and she was very happy there. The house next door was bought and converted into a dining hall. There was a play produced for a club attached to the school ‘Cinderella’.

Janet remembers during her schooldays that there was a ‘mini eisteddfod’ in Eirias Park with country dancing and singing. No welsh language was taught in school. If any punishment was given it would be to stand outside the door, this would be for minor offences only. The toilets were at the far end of the playground, this was not good if there was wet weather!

Llandrillo School

GERALD J. DAVEY’s memories of school during wartime

I went to the Infants School at the eastern end of the Church Road Infants and Primary School where I entered the reception class with a Miss Davies as teacher. I remember what seemed to me to be a long walk to school down Colwyn Crescent and along Penrhyn Avenue, passing through Rhos Park by the bowling green and the virtually derelict tennis courts, then up the steeply sloping fields overlooking the cricket club (little knowing that about ten years later I would be helping out with the harvest in those same fields and even later again that I would be part of the team responsible for building 243 council houses, flats and bungalows on those same fields) and so to the school grounds.

I soon learned to walk to school on my own or with Mike, Shirley, Margaret and other neighbouring children, and like them I had to take to school my gas mask in with a cardboard box slung over my shoulder and supported there by string. The type of gas mask we were issued with was mainly of rubber with a transparent cellophane eyepiece and the circular tin trunk though which we breathed air which was processed in some way to remove gas fumes. Being naughty little boys, we would blow into the gas mask and enjoy ourselves by making the rubber vibrate against our cheeks so as to make rude flapping noises. Of course we wanted the grown up military version which had a pair of eye goggles and a tube which led to a shoulder bag containing the anti-gas equipment; but we would have been pleased we had never even seen the babies version, which was really a cot with a sealing transparent cellophane cover and a bellows for an adult to continue pumping in air all the time the baby was in the gas mask.
I remember that for the first year, and perhaps later years whilst we remained in the Infants Department, we always had to have a rest in the afternoon and had to place oval shaped straw mats in ranks on the floor; we were not allowed to talk and were supposed to go to sleep; no doubt we often did but there were other times when we didn’t and giggled among ourselves. I missed that fun when we moved up to the next class.

One of the favourite lessons in the Infants Department was music when we all played different instruments to make a noise. Like the other boys I was pleased when it became my turn to beat the tin drum and wasn’t much interested or good at playing any other instrument.

When I went up to the Junior School, which was at the western end of the building, we had a hard-rough stoned playground on a steep hill. At what we called Playtime we played a game of Tag we called ‘Relevo’, which involved rushing up or down the playground and trying to avoid getting caught by those who were ‘on’. Eventually all would be caught, tired out and ready to go indoors for the next lesson, though we would have had a break from the game if one of the boys fell over and grazed his knee. No possibility of suing the school in those days if a boy got hurt; no Health and Safety legislation saying the child must be protected from anything untoward happening that could be conceived as the school’s responsibility; the boy just got up and got on with it, only going to the teacher if it was a serious cut. We also played marbles there and in the roadside gutters. Although we had separate playgrounds at either end of the school, the one for Boys and the other for Girls and Infants, we were co-educational from the start, so we saw the girls in class and were quite used to them and so never had the sort of hang-ups other boys from single sex schools had about girls, at least not until our teenage lives.

Whilst we were certainly taught the three Rs of reading, writing and arithmetic we also learned the English and Welsh alphabets and the Lord’s Prayer and the Welsh National Anthem in both languages. As a result, I can still read and pronounce even if I cannot translate the Welsh language, and I can pronounce Llanfair P. G. properly especially when I see it printed in full. Singing was also on the curriculum and such standard songs as The Ash Grove, Linden Lea, as well as many Welsh melodies now well out of circulation were learned and quite enjoyed.

Mr. Hedley, the Headmaster of the School, also insisted that we learn a little about the Metric System as he expected the country to change from the Imperial System sometime in the next few decades. He was right about the decimalisation of the currency which came in 1971 but metric measurement is only used in certain industries and is not yet countrywide.

Whilst I was at the school these fields became an army training ground with all sorts of assault training course equipment, and barbed wire fenced off areas signed “Achtung Minen” with skull and crossbones. We soon found out this was German and meant the areas were minefields and we would get blown up if we dared to crawl under the wire on to the grass. Of course, they had no mines at all and some older children, brave souls, did crawl under the wire and were not blown up, but even so as five to ten-year olds we did not dare to. We wanted to try out the assault course because at the time Johnnie Weissmuller was playing Tarzan in the movies (we called them “the pictures” then) and we all wanted to be Tarzan swinging on the ropes. I also remember playing Doctors and Nurses with the other little boys and girls in the long grass in the fields on the way home. Whatever we learned was found to be uninteresting and soon forgotten; it certainly was no help later in life.

Read Gerald J. Davey's memories of Sunday School in the later section.
**JOHN DAVIES, a Mayor of Colwyn Bay**

I had not realised until the second day of the 1940s Festival that the gentleman I had interviewed was the current mayor. He told me that in 1952 he started at the Infants at Llandrillo School.

Mr Davies remembers Mrs Hill as a lovely lady, and everyone thought the world of her. Miss Darley Davies was the Infants headmistress, then in the Junior School the headmaster was Pop Edwards, the two Mr Robertses were Berwyn and Tom.

In the Infants we had an afternoon nap every day, and orange juice served to us. The milk for morning breaks came in its crates, warm in summer and frozen in winter!

John remembers that for the coronation of Elizabeth II in 1953 a TV was brought into the school. (Not many families had them in those days). Also, on another occasion a bus brought the children to Conwy Road where they stood by the railway bridge and watched the Queen come with Prince Philip in an open top car with flags waving and everyone cheering!

In the 1950s an R.A.F. listing station remained on the top of Bryn Euryn. He says, ‘We children watched lorries go up to the top to demolish it’.

John lived in Tan y Bryn Road. Elwy Road estate was not built until around 1959. The ‘Tin shop’ where children bought their sweets was a convenience store for the Avenues. In 1919 the Avenues were built for the soldiers returned from the First World War. The first ‘Homes for Heroes’. They were the first council houses built in the area, costing about £75 each!

John’s Grandfather owned Bryn Euryn Quarry, he was John Owen Davies, so John comes from one of the original families of Rhos on Sea.

**LINDA HUGHES, 1950s to 21st century**

When I started my educational journey, as a 4/5-year-old, at Llandrillo yn Rhos School, little did I know that some 30 years later, I would be returning in a different role - that of an educator!

There are many differences between the two experiences, apart from the obvious ones. There are several things that I remember about my early years at school. I’d like to say that if any of the following memories are not quite correct, then I apologise in advance and can only put it down to
“senior moments!!”

There was originally only the one building, housing both the Infants and Juniors. As far as I can remember we had a Headmaster of the Junior Department, supported by three other teachers, and a Headmistress of the Infant Department, also supported by two teachers.

We had bottles of milk with a straw in at morning break and dinner was served in the main corridor, as there was no hall at that time. There wasn’t a kitchen and I think the meals were cooked in another school and delivered to our school in large serving containers.

In the first years we all had to have a sleep, after dinner, on canvas “beds”.

Christmas parties were held in the classrooms and the dividing partitions were slid open to create more space. Mums would come in to help.

Over the years, numbers increased greatly, and the school just wasn’t big enough. A new school was built on the field across the road. I do not know the year, but I think it must have been in the sixties. This was now the Infant school, and a new head was appointed on this site. The two schools were run independently of each other.

Over time the Junior School still wasn’t big enough and had two extensions built at either end of the original building. One was a hall and a kitchen, which was also to be used as a community centre. This meant that meals could now be cooked there, and the hall used as a dining room and gym. At the other end of the building extra classrooms were added, plus the Headteacher’s study and secretary’s office.

When I returned as Reception teacher in 1987, I was working in the newer Infants School. This was an open plan school with a hall / dining room and its own kitchen where meals were cooked. Being an open plan school, it was a very different “set up” to the original school I attended across the road. The corridor lead to the open classrooms, and as there were no dividing walls between corridor and classrooms, any children, teachers or visitors walking through the school caused quite a distraction to all alike! As my classroom was opposite the hall, it became quite distracting if there was a lively P.E. lesson taking place, or indeed a music / singing activity! However, as time passed, it was decided to construct some dividing walls. A great improvement for all!!

Another change was on the horizon, and in 1984 it was decided to amalgamate the two schools. I would think this was partly a financial move, as it meant that only one Head teacher would be required. This sounds good sense in theory, but in fact it meant whenever the Head was needed, he was more often than not on the other site across the road! One thing was sure, it kept him fit, running backwards and forwards!

The two schools now intermingled more, with the infants going over to watch the juniors’ concerts etc. and vice versa. When computers arrived on the scene, the Junior School had a “computer room” and the Infants were timetabled to use it. In this sense, staff and pupils did interact more.

P.E. was a little more tricky as the field between the two schools had to be shared! A timetable was drawn up as to who used it when, but this didn’t always go to plan and a few words were often exchanged!
In 1988 the National Curriculum was introduced, the purpose of which was to standardise the content taught across schools. This led to assessments, which in turn led to league tables. At first, only certain subjects were included, but in subsequent years the Curriculum grew to include all subjects. It became necessary to give teachers subject responsibilities and teachers became “coordinators” of particular subjects. More work!
Certainly nothing of this nature was in place when I was in the Primary School!

Another difference was the addition of classroom assistants, now known as teaching assistants. These we certainly did not have. We may have had Mums come in to help, but this was done voluntarily.

Nowadays Breakfast Club and After School clubs have both been introduced to schools. A reflection, even necessity, of modern times at the majority of mothers now have to work.

Since I have retired from teaching at Llandrillo, I feel that the most noticeable change that has developed is that of security. There are gates, fences and pass codes in order to enter the premises. This is certainly a sad reflection of the times we live in, but it is absolutely necessary.

Once more, I would like to reiterate, if anything I have written is not quite correct, please forgive me!

I have to say that I had a very happy time as a pupil at Ysgol Llandrillo yn Rhos and also my 20 years of teaching there.

**DARLAH THOMAS' memories of Llandrillo School Infants - the Nursery Class, Darlah is third generation Rhos on Sea**

My friend Cynthia (Cindy) was almost the same age as I was and yet she started school long before me. I remember asking my Mother why this was and when could I begin school? She only replied by saying I could start when I was four. I must have been counting the days, as when my birthday came, (3rd July) I demanded to be taken to school there and then. My poor Mum, realising her mistake walked me up the hill to school and pleaded with Miss Davies the infant department headmistress, to let me stay. Not wishing to curb my enthusiasm, I was sent into Mrs Hill’s nursery class.

Memories of my time in that class are few but include being put to bed every afternoon and expected to sleep - I just closed my eyes and pretended. On one occasion we made papier maché headed glove puppets, of characters from Hiawatha. Mine was the eponymous hero’s grandmother and my big moment came when I introduced her, "My name is Nokomis". I kept the bedraggled and rather ugly puppet for many years.

Mrs Hill was a talented artist and I remember the impressive murals she drew in coloured chalk on the wall blackboards in each of the infant classrooms. They were permanent fixtures, goodness knows how long they had been there or how long they remained after we left the infants.
One playtime Cynthia and I were engrossed in a game and didn't notice (or chose to ignore) the bell being rung calling us inside. The playground became strangely quiet; initially we hid in some bushes at the front of school, but then in our wisdom decided to run away. We got all the way to Cynthia's house and began playing, when to our horror we saw Mrs Hill approaching. The only hiding place was under the dining room table where we felt certain Cynthia's Mother would not give us away. However, after a few moments Mrs Hill took me firmly by the hand and led me back to school. I was burning with indignation at the apparent injustice of the situation when only one of us was taken back.

We had a class photograph taken every year right through the school to age eleven. Strangely, the very first one is the only occasion when I remember being organised in rows on the playground and put into position for the photographer. I still have that first photo stored away safely somewhere. There must have been about twenty of us - three, four and five-year olds all watching the 'birdie', some looking wary, others more confident. All our lives were ahead of us…
CINDY LOWE - Infants at Llandrillo School

When I left the primary school in 1961 I asked all the teachers to have a photograph taken by the front door so that I could remember them. I don’t think I would ever forget them and will always appreciate what they all did for all of us.
I remember that I couldn’t wait to go to school, because I could see from our kitchen window from the end of Pine Grove across the park into the playground where all the children were playing at break time. My parents said I could go when I was a ‘big girl’ to which I protested ‘but I am a big girl now’ – I was 3 or younger. When I finally got my wish, I was 3 years and 2 months of age. A neighbour’s daughter – a ‘big girl’ - Anne Davies, was assigned to take me to school, but quite soon I said I wanted to take myself, being fiercely independent.

In the Infant School my first teacher was Mrs Hill, who was tall, elegant and kind, with a beautiful speaking voice. (She was the aunt of a girl who would become a very close friend, but I would not meet her niece, Pam, until we were 11!). Mrs Hill had been in a Japanese prisoner of war camp in Borneo before returning to Britain as a widow and training to be a teacher, and she was mentioned (as Babs) in the book and film of ‘Three Came Home’ by Agnes Newton Keith. (This book is available to borrow at Colwyn Bay Library). While I was in Mrs Hill’s class my Grandmother had read the book, and I told Mrs Hill that. My Grandmother came to visit us with her brother and sister-in-law from Canada, and my parents collected me from school early one afternoon because we were going to take our visitors to Bodnant Gardens. I was not keen on leaving early, but later that changed.

Mrs Hill made all our learning fun. One of the craft activities we did in school with her, which I will always remember, was to make papier-mâché puppets of red Indians from the poem Hiawatha. Mine was the ‘medicine man’. At Christmas we made ‘stockings’ out of big brown paper templates drawn by the teacher. Inside were all the small craft items and writing and drawings we had made throughout the term to take home at Christmas.
Every morning we would sit in a circle on very small chairs, we had a tray brought to us and would drink the National Health orange juice, which I believe at that time was given free to very young children and pregnant women. It was served in tiny jars that had held potted meat and sandwich paste previously. At break time we would play in the yard, all the junior and infant girls in the school with infant boys. There was a fence of railings down the middle of the playground and the junior boys would be at the other side of this. There was an alcove at the side of the building we could go inside if it was wet weather. Also, there was a sandpit at the front of the building, next to the railings. Darlah Thomas remembers this and has told the story of when we missed the bell!

At lunchtime we would have trestle tables set up in the hall. The food would be delivered in big silver vats. I remember the mashed potato being lumpy. It was served by ladies in white overalls and white hats, one of whom was the mother of a girl in our class. If children didn’t eat their dinner
a member of staff would sit with them until they had eaten a reasonable quantity. Rationing was still in place until 1954. I noticed some of the children crying during this ordeal and if there was something I just couldn’t stomach at lunchtime I would surreptitiously throw it under the table. When the tables were cleared away it was evident. The teacher said to me once ‘Look what these naughty children have done!’ pointing at the food on the floor. I kept quiet. Everyone’s favourite meal was Irish stew, we ate all of that. It came with squares of doughy bread which we used to squash in our fingers and soak up the gravy. The favourite pudding was semolina with jam which we used to stir up and make it pink.

After reception class at about age 4 we would move on to Miss Jones’ class, she seemed quite elderly, but she must have been under 60! By then we had learned our letters and numbers and could read and write. Then the top class was Miss Darley Davies, the headmistress. I remember doing a craft project with the student on teaching practice, some kind of weaving on cardboard with two colours of wool. She said we could have either red and green, or blue and yellow, but I so wanted red and blue and was quite adamant about that. We sat at double desks opposite another double desk, four children together two girls and two boys.

In the morning was assembly. I remember distinctly the tune which Miss Davies played on the piano as we marched in but never knew the name of it. We would file in and sit on the parquet floor against dark green tiles at the edge of the room. I remember sitting in there with my class while Miss Davies sang a little song where you had to answer the question sung by the class, ‘What are you going to be, what are you going to be?’ and the answer came back from all the children singing in turn ‘I’m going to be a teacher, a nurse, a fireman, etc. When it came to the turn of my friend Darlah and I we said we were going to be film stars! But we both eventually became teachers.

At the Christmas party there was a huge tree, a Christmas scene drawn on the blackboard and all the desks were moved out. We would dance in pairs to piano music. I have photographs of this, and also a picture with Darlah and I sitting under the Christmas tree. The mothers came to serve the food, and there is a picture of that too. I think we had jellies made in waxed paper dishes.
Junior School

So, then we had to go to 'big school' and felt the trepidation in that. We knew we would have to do more proper lessons and serious work. The first teacher was Miss Jones, I remember her sewing class when we would have to queue at her desk if we were in difficulty with our needlework. I think the boys were doing woodwork when we were doing that. I know my brother made a 'plane' out of two bits of wood hammered together at right angles. I'm sorry I don't remember anything else she taught us. Then in the next two years we would keep the same teacher, one of the two Mr Roberts. There was the young Mr Roberts and Berwyn Roberts. My class had Berwyn. He was a kindly man who had pure white hair, dark eyes and softly spoken Welsh voice. I remember doing a lot of mental arithmetic with him and writing lengthy stories. The last time I saw the young Mr Roberts was many years later on Mostyn Street Llandudno, he was pushing a buggy, and in it was his great grandchild, but to all of us he would always be the young Mr Roberts. I remember him introducing us to popular music like Harry Belafonte's 'Little Donkey' and 'Mary's Boy Child' and Chubby Checker's 'The Twist.'

Then the top class was with the headmaster, Mr Edwards. 'Pop' Edwards. I remember him standing in front of us wringing his hands, bristling and building up the suspense by saying, 'There's been a complaint'. I don't remember what any of the complaints were, but I do remember him caning some of the older boys on the hands. We found this shocking and upsetting even in those days, while now it would be unheard of.
It was during Pop’s class that we had to train for passing the 11+ to get places at the Grammar School. Our year was the first in which we had to answer 100 questions in the allotted time in English, Maths and IQ. I was terrified of not passing as my parents had threatened to send me to boarding school if I failed! Pop Edwards used to put on his hat and coat and go out somewhere leaving the class to get on with our practice papers. Unbelievable but true! I shared a front desk with my conscientious friend Shirley, daughter of a schoolteacher at Lyndon School, Mrs Woolcock. We used to get on with our work when the teacher was out. Then in June the results came and many of us had gained a place at the Grammar School. It was a shock going from the small friendly Rhos school to the town of Colwyn Bay and meeting children who compared with us seemed very advanced for their age.

Old Colwyn Junior School

ALINE DAVIES - school memories from the 1940s

When I was at the Infant School the teacher was pleased that my mother taught me how to pick up dropped stitches when knitting because when the children had problems they could come to me for help. I was only 6 when I helped with the knitting. During the war we were told to go and sit in the cloakroom - must have been safer than the classroom. If the siren went during the night, we went to school at 10 instead of 9. Dad’s shop was the Remnant Shop. Mother made my dresses. I was given a sewing machine for my 21st birthday present.

I was delighted when I was put in the School hockey team at the County School. The highlight was the annual match against the staff. I can only remember the geography teacher’s name - Mr Evans. He used to bounce the hockey ball on the blade of his hockey stick. Another thing I remember was the annual Eisteddfod on St David’s Day when the 3 houses competed against each other.

When the National Eisteddfod was in Colwyn Bay, I was chosen to be one of the dancers in ‘Dido and Aneas’ and the gym teacher was one of the chief dancers. The Houses were Brown, Green and White. I was the vice-captain of the Green House.

When in the 6th form one of the boys used to organise dances at the Guide Hall. A friend and I used to do the refreshments. Betty Hughes helped with the refreshments. The proceeds went to the school A.T.C.
BRENDA BURROWS - memories of my young years at Old Colwyn Council School

A Mr Davies was the Headmaster in those days. My favourite teacher was a Miss Peers, or Piers? She was young and always happy and nice to us children. I loved her as a child would love an aunt and I was in awe of her when she played the harp.

One day I was sucking what was known as a gobstopper, (a large hard sweet consisting of different coloured concentric layers that are revealed as it is sucked). Many will remember how we used to take the sweet out of their mouths every now and then to see what colour had been revealed. Eating sweets in class was forbidden, but I had only half got through it before the bell rang to go back into class. We’d just sat down when Miss Peers asked me to stand up to say something. Not wanting to be told off by my favourite teacher for doing what I ought not to be doing in while class, I thought I could swallow what was left of the gobstopper, but it got stuck in my throat and I panicked! And then Miss peers could see something was terribly wrong so she called for help, they tried everything to get the sweet out or down, even turning me upside down, eventually (to the relief of the teachers, and me) the sweet did go down, I recall I was not told off, probably because the adults were so happy I was alright. I never ate sweets in class again after that!

Another memory of junior school and life with my favourite teacher was when she was ill. One day Mr Davies told all of us children at school, that Miss Peers would not be able to attend school for a while because she was ill with INFLUENZA. Being a young child, I had never heard of this or had any idea what it was, but to me it sounded really serious. I couldn’t wait to get home to tell my Mummy. Having to wait all day before school was over was so dreadful, for me. By the time I got home, I was so anxious and out of breath, I could hardly get the words out and had to say them two or three times before my Mummy worked out what it was. I had said quickly, between breaths, Mummy, Mummy Miss Peers can’t come to school because she has ’FLUZENDA’, then I burst into tears! Miss Peers did fully recover and did come back to school for which I was very happy.

Another memory, a happy one, was of when Miss Peers wanted us children to put on a concert for the school. It was to be ’Orpheus in the Underworld’. The children were chosen to play different parts. A girl named Judith (?) was to play the part of Orpheus, she was really good at leaping high in the air when she was travelling to the underworld to search for Eurydice, (his wife) played by Mary Davies, (Headmaster’s daughter). I played the part of one of the many spirits of the underworld. Miss Peers played some of the music on her harp, which was (in my opinion) wonderful. I wish there were some photographs of this concert, but sadly I do not have any.

I have to share this memory of dinnertimes at school, whenever we had spinach at school, it stank the place out, I don’t think a single child ever ate it. And when we had a sago pudding, we all called it Frogspawn.

MARVERN PAGE - daughter of Harry Parker, former teacher at Pendorlan

My school days started at Old Colwyn County Primary School in the 1940’s. My earliest memory is of a row of camp beds that we were expected to lie on every afternoon.
for a nap. We were given milk sweets that I used to secrete into a little yellow and blue plastic handbag. I didn't nap either.

Miss Lewis was the first teacher I remember. We sat in rows of desks boys and girls together. We recited parrot fashion from the blackboard as it was called then. B. a. t – bat, C. a. t – cat, F. a. t – fat, H. a. t – hat ... and so on, which was how we learnt to read in those days. I liked to sit at the back of the class but one day Miss Lewis moved me to the front. Despite asking to move back again I stayed at the front for several days.

Many years after I left school, I met Miss Lewis in the village, she told me she had moved me because I talked a lot and thought several days at the front a suitable punishment for me.

We were also taught how to write "Marion Richardson" a very neat uniform writing but my natural style was large which I suppressed until I left school.

The Headmaster of the Junior School was Mr A C Davies. There were an equal mix of male and female teachers. We were taught Welsh, English Maths, Geography, History, Nature and Sports.

Miss Pearce, Miss Cole, Mr Roberts, Mr Hughes, Miss Cole, A.C. Davies known as ‘Pop Davies’ who took us for Geography and Mental Arithmetic. If you didn’t answer quickly enough you got a thump in the back. As I know from experience when I didn't say quickly enough that a dozen eggs at 3 and a half old pence were 3/6p. I didn't make that mistake again. My mental arithmetic is one of my strengths to this day.

They were happy days, day trips to places like Liverpool and Edinburgh. We had a great school choir and a good athletics team. We won the local schools competition two years running and were in line to win the cup outright for the third year but unfortunately our star athlete Daphne Williams had to have her appendix out. A good lesson for life, was not to put all your eggs in one basket.

In those days we all took the scholarship to try for a place to the Grammar School, which I managed to do in 1954.

Read Marvern Page’s memories of secondary school

**ROGER LEE - we gained the lifelong gift of music**

When you meet someone who attended Old Colwyn Primary School in the 1950’s you may soon find yourself chatting to a person with a lifelong gift of understanding music. This is a legacy of their having passed through that school whilst it was under the direction of headmaster A. C. Davies.

We were all in the choir. Every morning we would sing several properly conducted hymns and my memory of “choir” is that it occupied about 5 hours of our week (in both languages) with Mr Davies simply elbowing aside the rest of the timetable when he wanted to devote more time to these
sessions. Every opportunity was taken to have us sing in two parts: that simple technique which produces so magical an effect for the listener and which gave us a good sense of harmony.

Like Mr Davies, several teachers were able to play the piano well, so I was convinced that he didn’t so much interview members of staff as audition them! Outstanding among these was our accompanist Hannah Pritchard who was also (to my young ears) a sensational mezzo-soprano. For sixty years I have been among those who have had their lives so enriched by that grounding in musical education. I join those of my generation who say to themselves; “Thank you Mr Davies!”

Conway Road Junior School (now a medical centre)

GLEN – 1930

Glen went to Conwy Road School and travelled by tram from her home in Hillside Road. This must have been about 1930 when she first enrolled in primary school. At first someone must have taken her but she doesn’t remember who, she had older sisters. Her mother had B&B guests at their house. When she walked there on her own (she remembers being very independent) she would walk past a house on Kings Road and there was a parrot in one of the houses which would shout at her things it had learned from its owners.

There was milk at break time in little bottles and she remembers it was full fat milk with a thick layer of cream on it. She doesn’t remember any school lunches and says she would go home at lunchtime to eat. Among her classmates there was a nice boy she liked called Alan.

She would have gone to Conwy Road School until about 1935 then she transferred to Pendorlan.

DAVID DAVIES - memories of Conway Road Junior School, 1952 to 1956

The great thing about going to Conway Road was that, at the age of seven, I was old enough to travel there on my own. This meant riding on a tram. I would walk up to the main road and catch a tram from the Greenfield Road stop to the West End of Colwyn Bay. I loved those trams, the whine of the motors as the driver slowly increased the power, the trundling noises as we travelled along the tracks and occasional sparks from the overhead contact. My favourite was the single deck “toast rack” trams that were in service during the warmer weather. On these trams you had to stand up to request the driver to stop. On Mondays I bought a “contract” ticket which lasted for the week and had to be carefully kept.

Conway Road was a far larger school than Douglas Road Infants’ School which I had just left. I met and made friends with children who were from a much wider area of Colwyn Bay. Externally, the school looked then very much as it is now, stone walls, a steep slate roof and high windows. One classroom I remember had a large coke fired heating stove and favoured pupils were given the duty...
of bringing in buckets of coke from a pile in the school yard. One classroom which doubled as a dining room had posters which even then looked ancient, Silence is Golden, Cleanliness is next to Godliness and the Ten Commandments. Sounds quite Dickensian.

The teachers that I remember were Mr Morris, a Miss Allen and a Mr Jones. Miss Allen had the "top" class preparing children who were destined for grammar school entry. Mr Jones had been a hockey player, playing for Wales if I remember correctly. He reinforced discipline with the slipper. *David continues with the story of his secondary school experiences at Pendorlan.*

**GRAHAM ROBERTS – 1952**

I went to Conway Road School (then spelt the English way!) in about 1949.

Mr Griffiths was the Headmaster in whom we were all in awe. He was like some thunderous God; we would tremor in his presence.

Miss Roberts (who lived in Pydew) was for many years the infant teacher. She would choose a pupil each week to be the ‘milk monitor’, a very prestigious and much sort after position.

The school was ‘old school’ traditional; the 3 Rs were the basis of everything. I can’t remember a Geography or History lesson for instance, except when they were allowed to impinge on an English or Maths session. We all learned out ‘tables’ by rote with a representation of a clock drawn on the black-board and a different number chalked into the centre of the clock to show which ‘table’ (from 2 to 12) we were on. The teacher, possibly Miss Heath, would point at a random number on the clock and simultaneously shout out a pupil’s name, this pupil would then have to shout out the answer to the ‘times table’ represented by the number in the centre and the number pointed at by Miss Heap. If you got it wrong, she would be very very displeased.

The toilets were outside in the fresh air. The boys were expected to urinate up against a slate covered wall and it became a game to see who could ‘do it’ over the wall. Anyone who managed this feat became very popular!

It was very important that each class should show a full attendance each week. It would have to be an exceptionally good reason to miss a day’s school. Parents would make sure that their children were in school.

We were taken out of school one day, class by class, to be instructed in how to use the new Zebra Crossing that had been 'installed' directly outside the school gates. We had never seen such a thing before. Miss Roberts explained that if we stood on the pavement at the start of the crossing and simply put our foot on the white lines, any oncoming vehicle would immediately stop and allow us to cross. She demonstrated this theory by waiting for a few minutes for a car to approach the crossing, stuck out her leg and plopped her foot on the crossing while the unsuspecting driver brought his car to a screeching halt. We were impressed.
It was a good school. The whole ethos of the place was to give the pupils a good solid grounding in the basics of education; adding up, taking away and multiplication, writing a coherent sentence with a verb and an adjective in it, and teaching the pupils to have confidence in themselves.

*The late JOAN SATTLER (née Bellis) – a lady with experience of several local schools, whom many would remember*

Joan Sattler, or as she was known then Miss Bellis, was a teacher at Conway Road School for some years, and also taught at Old Colwyn Primary School under the headship of Mr T Gwyn Jones. After her marriage and when her three children were old enough, she took up supply teaching at both of those schools as well as Llysfaen and Penmaenrhos, so she would have seen a great many local pupils throughout her career. As a teacher in Conway Road Junior School she taught the young Graham Roberts to read and write! Having been at a variety of schools there will be a great many local people who remember her, including the children of the Lowe family in the 1950’s, Anne, Mike, Chris and Jane.

Joan was born in 1925 in Manchester, but her family moved to Colwyn Bay when her Father relocated with his job at the Post Office. His Mother had a boarding house on Greenfield Road which is now a block of flats. Back in the day Joan's grandmother had some well to do clients at her boarding house, and at one-time Josiah Wedgewood, (no doubt one of the descendants) who gave her a small china dish which Joan still has.

As a pupil of the Grammar School during wartime Joan cycled to school from Dinerth Road. On one occasion she remembers overtaking a column of American soldiers who were commanded by their officer to salute her. This must have been thrilling for a girl of 17!

After leaving school Joan trained at Bangor Normal College, and during those days she had some work experience at Conway Road where her brother was a pupil. When she qualified her first post was in Manchester, but her mother was convinced that the poor-quality air in industrial areas was making her daughter ill after growing up in the pure air of North Wales, so Joan applied to work back in Colwyn Bay. Luckily, she had learned to speak Welsh fluently at school which helped her secure a teaching post in Wales.

One Christmas Eve she was rushed to hospital urgently and had an appendectomy on Christmas Day, so they decided it wasn’t the polluted atmosphere that was making her ill at all! But Manchester’s loss was Colwyn Bay's gain when Joan applied to work in her own home town.

What does Mrs Sattler remember about Conway Road School? The toilets were at the bottom of the yard. Boys used to enter a corridor between two walls and then compete in trying to wee up above the wall into the playground! If you were passing by at the time you would need to beware! Mrs Sattler wrote a letter to the authorities to press them to build toilets in the main school building, so
ex-pupils you have her to thank for eliminating the perils of the playground! [This aspect of her story corroborates that of Graham Roberts above!].

The heating for the school was from a central boiler, powered by coke. Older boys had the duty of carrying the buckets of coke to the boiler for the caretaker to stoke the fire, this would never be expected of today’s pupils.

Lunch was brought in in big containers from another school, we are not sure where. Apparently, this was common practice in those days.

As for lessons, Mrs Sattler had to teach all subjects as a class teacher. As deputy head in Old Colwyn School she one day found a boy in the cloakroom fiercely pulling the long hair of a girl. When she questioned why he was doing this he said he just enjoyed hearing her scream. That boy from the Glyn estate is now said to be a judge!

In Conway Road School in the 1950s Mr Griffiths was headmaster. His influence subdued children and staff alike, he ran a tight ship. But Joan Sattler thinks that he was justified in doing so. While she was a young teacher in Conway Road School she was approached with a request that she should tutor a girl who wanted to take an exam to get her a place in Penrhos College. The lessons were to take place during school holidays. Mrs Sattler (or as she was then, Miss Bellis) did not want to do ‘one to one’ teaching, and especially in the holidays, so she had to quickly think up an excuse. She said she would be going to stay with a friend in Shropshire. Then she had to ask her friend if she could in fact really go there. It was while there that her friend’s husband had another friend of his to visit, his name was Heinz Sattler. The rest is history.

Joan Sattler is now a great grandmother and her four-year-old great grandson Findlay is a pupil in Old Colwyn Infants School. His classroom is the one where she taught many years ago. Many Old Colwyn residents will remember her as their teacher.

Mrs Sattler passed away in August 2018. (North Wales Weekly News 08-08-2018).

Secondary Schools

Pendorlan School (Central School became Pendorlan School)

NORMA KIRWIN (née Pickerill). Norma is one of the many who relocated to Guildford with the Civil Service (Central School)

We were living in a rural area not far from Liverpool. During the late spring of 1940 the German bombing raids started on Liverpool so although at the time there was no actual bombing in our area we were up most nights sitting under the table until the ‘all clear’ sounded. So, in August 1940 it was decided that my mother, sister and myself should return to Colwyn Bay. We had lived there...
before moving to Lancashire, so it was like coming home. At that time there were many pupils at Colwyn Bay Central School who were strangers to North Wales. The Ministry of Food had been evacuated to Colwyn Bay from London, many of the married staff bringing their wives and families with them. Many of the 1939 evacuees from Liverpool had returned home by Christmas as the bombing of Liverpool had not started. The few remaining were absorbed with the local pupils. Other individuals were classed as 'Private Evacuees'.

So, in September 1940 I became a pupil at the school and put into form 2A with Mr John Buckland form master, teacher of English and geography. Meeting 60 years later former pupils still remembered and praised his teaching of English grammar. Most of them had retained a love of maps and the geography of places. Unfortunately, since that time many countries have changed their names.

To the best of my recollections the staff members at that time were Mr Buckland, Mr Jones, Mr Gaunt, (woodwork) and Mr Rowlands. I seem to recall seeing him in army uniform but later he was teaching full time so perhaps had been discharged. Miss Nellie Morris taught history and music, Miss Beatrup Art and craft, Miss Roberts housewifery and cookery. During my first year at CBCS a Miss Lewis taught us needlework and when we were all settled stitching away at cotton knickers she would read 'Just William' stories to us. A Miss Williams replaced her, and she was always stressing that biting cotton rather than using the scissors would ruin our teeth, damage the enamel. Miss Sackville taught science and biology. I remember few lessons on these subjects. I can only assume that as the school was overcrowded some of us missed some subjects. Miss Jones took PT and games. She married and became Mrs Powell and left when she was expecting a baby. Much speculation among the girls during the weeks before her departure. It was probably in 1942 that a young glamorous lady teacher arrived. Shoulder length hair and long red varnished nails. Her name was Miss Walsh and she took Speech training and drama.

Each pupil was allotted to a ‘house’ and there were inter house netball and football matches, there were also house points for academic achievements. The four houses were Ednyfed – yellow, Ceiriog – red, Gibson – blue, and Myddleton – green. Each named for a famous Welshman. Every morning the whole school assembled in the hall for prayers and a hymn and any announcements.

Mr Roberts was a strict disciplinarian and if there was not complete silence when he entered the hall we would be marched out to our respective playgrounds and marched back in. Tuesdays and Thursdays the prayers and hymns were in Welsh. The school song was also Welsh ‘Yr ysgol ger y lli’ I still remember parts of it as I was kept in after school until I could recite it. Not being Welsh I found it difficult. Now I can belt out ‘Mae hen wlad fy nhadau’ with the best of them.

Despite the way Mr Roberts insisted that we all wore the correct school uniform. I had to abandon the yellow gym slip girdle from my former school for the plain navy-blue belt. However, he could not insist that the few who had compete school uniforms – gym slip and blazer in maroon or brown should abandon them. We also had to wear black plimsolls in school and I still feel uncomfortable wearing outdoor shoes in the house. He would do spot checks to ensure that we were all wearing our plimsolls and on one occasion he sent a girl home to Rhos on Sea to get her plimsolls.

Netball house matches were held in the playground with supportive cheering on the players. However, if there was any hint of booing Mr Roberts was out there and the match was abandoned.
In the 1940s the school leaving age was 14. Children moved from junior to senior school at the age of 14 and went out into the wide world at the age of 14 at the end of their 3rd year usually in the July. Teenagers and gap years were unheard of in those days.

Mr Buckland was a good teacher with a sense of humour but also given to flashes of irritation when he would bang on the desk and shout ‘Oh dash man’. He was our form master and also taught geography, English and maths. In my third year he also taught book keeping a subject I took to like a duck to water.

My first year at CBCS is a little hazy. We had moved back to the Bay after a six-year absence and there had been a family upheaval. Plus the fact that I was extremely shy. Mr Buckland believed that we should know the geography of Wales before reaching out to the rest of the UK, so we started with Denbighshire and progressed round north and mid Wales learning about sheep and cattle farming and the names of the mountains in Snowdonia. One very upsetting incident for me was having to read out in class what I had written. I did not know how to pronounce Welsh as I had only been back in Wales a short time. I pronounced Llanidloes LANIDLOSE. Mr Buckland slammed the desk and said ‘Llanidloes you fool’. Ever since then, when I have heard the work Llanidloes I have mentally added ‘you fool’.

The last two lessons on a Friday afternoon when I was in 2A seemed to be devoted to literature. We ploughed through ‘Ivanhoe’ Mr Buckland reading aloud but dropping on a pupil to continue to ensure we were still awake and unfortunate for one boy who was reading a comic under cover of the book. Some Fridays Mr Buckland would depart from the curriculum and tell us of the ‘ghost of the Denbigh moors.’ The blinds would be drawn, and Mr Buckland would set the scene. I remember nothing of the story only at one point the classroom door would open stealthily and a black hooded figure would put his head round the door. I think that ended the lesson. The ‘ghost’ was Mr Jones.

In September 1941 we went up a year and we were now 3A with a different classroom and Miss Nellie Morris as our form teacher but apart from registration she only taught us history music theory and singing. Miss Beatrup the art teacher was a very gentle lady. Whilst in 2A we learned leatherwork, dying the leather and making a small purse and comb case each. However, restrictions of the war meant that there was no more leather for schools. I remember some classes weaving, collecting wool from the hedgerows, preparing it and dying it yellow from boiled onion skins. We in 3A learned Roman lettering and drawing from still life. Not very inspiring for most of us. Miss Roberts was the domestic science and cookery teacher. In the 1940s we were all expected to be aiming for marriage. However, I enjoyed the lessons and although housework and washing are no longer the chores they were, and it seems that routine is an unknown word, the systems we were taught were to my mind excellent.

During my last year at school we had a whole day in the Domestic Science block. This may have been due to a shortage of staff, or because we were exam candidates so had dropped several subjects. We worked in groups of four. Together we planned a menu, shopped for it. Two girls would be hostesses and two waitresses, and two boys and two staff members were invited to a meal. We learned how to write invitations, cook and serve a meal and wash up. The following week roles were reversed.

Music theory was a trial to most of us although in one series of lessons we listened to the BBC schools broadcast and learned about the ‘William Tell Overture’. Classroom lessons I did not enjoy. Miss Morris would bang her tuning fork then put on somebody to sing Soh or Ray from there. I had no idea where the original note was let alone pick up from it. Singing I did enjoy and we sang many
classics. One boy would sing the solo part of 'Oh for the wings of a dove' but then his voice broke. We had two choirs Welsh and English. I was in both as was my friend. We would cycle along the lanes singing trying to perfect our Welsh songs.

CBCS did not have a gym so we did our apparatus work in the assembly hall. In our final year the games lessons ended Friday afternoons. Rounders or netball according to the season, also stoopball. The games were played in the schoolyard. I have no recollection what or where the boys played. There was a school netball team and we travelled to Rhyl to play against a school there, also to Bangor for a match against what appeared to be the Amazons of the Normal College. Another introduction for our physical education (girls only) was barefoot dancing. This was in our senior year. We wore our summer dresses and in our bare feet pranced around learning to be graceful! We also sat in a circle, supposedly beside a lake and trailed our hands back and forth in the 'water' in a graceful fashion.

The latest addition to the staff – the young and glamorous Miss Walsh taught speech training and drama. Apart from having to read a passage from a book and being told that I had a Liverpool accent I have no recollections of actual lessons on improving my speech. However, Miss Walsh introduced another innovation, a verse speaking choir. It sounded most effective and was 'conducted' by Miss Walsh, flashing her red varnished fingernails. She also produced a play 'The Ivory Door'. This was performed at the pier pavilion in the Spring of 1943. We would rehearse at the school on Saturdays and this formed a bond between the leading characters well into their adult lives. I doubt that all school speech days were held at the pier pavilion, but I attended two. Mr Roberts decreed that there should be no babes in arms at the event. The English and Welsh choirs did their bit and in 1943 the verse speaking choir. Dame Sybil Thorndyke was the guest speaker and to my horror I was chosen to present the flowers to her, I was very shy. This might have been 1942. Anyway, I had to learn to curtsey and one of the staff lent me a decent blouse as mine were too short in the sleeve.

The school leaving age was 14 in those days and I should have left in 1942. However, it was decided that about a dozen of us were exam material, London Chamber of commerce elementary, but it meant staying on at school for another year. My mother agreed and obviously so did other parents, so we were in a newly created 4th form but shared a classroom with 3A. Despite having to concentrate on examination subjects I enjoyed my final year at Colwyn Bay Central School. Apart from Mr Morgan and Mr Buckland we were not taught by male teachers. Mr Morgan taught us maths when we were in 3A. It was said he was a boxer. Anyway, I always felt uneasy in his classes as I found algebra to be a difficult subject. Again, probably in 3A we had music with Mr Rowlands, he had us singing a song about Matilda to which he had composed the music.

There was little evidence of the war at the school. Brick blast deflectors were built round the entrance, boys at the wireless college and girls at the other. In the domestic science block there were dozens of enamel mugs, no doubt for the use of people who were bombed out of their homes. The main entrances were at each end of the school with cloakrooms and stars leading to the upper story. The woodwork room and Domestic Science were at each end while the classrooms including science art and needlework overlooked the playground. The assembly hall took up space on the sea side of the ground floor while classrooms, Mr Roberts study and staff room looked out on to the playground. On the occasional summer morning the doors on the sea side of the assembly hall would be opened and some fortunate pupils would get a glimpse of the sea.
We had two German Jewish refugee girls at school with us. Margot and Miriam. Margot excelled at English. After the war she went to live with relatives in the USA as her parents could not be found. Margot kept in touch with several of the friends she made at CBCS and corresponded until recently. During the past 12 years a group of us from forms 3A and the 4th have become reacquainted and held a reunion each year. The teacher held in most respect was Mr Buckland, in fact Margot wrote from America and suggested we should be called ‘The Buckland Babes’ Old has- beens would be more to the point. I forgot to mention that during the winter we girls wore horrible black woollen stockings. In the spring they were uncomfortable so some of us rolled them down to our ankles. If Mick (Mr Roberts) came along and noticed he would say ‘Either all up or all down’.

Norma wrote her memoir by hand and posted it to me and says in her covering letter to me:

Although we all went our own ways when we left school and those of us who went into the Ministry of Food were transferred south. In our old age a bond developed between some of us who shared these days. As I have mentioned in our reunions conversation revolves around Mr Buckland in fact we have sometimes said that he must be spinning in his grave.

No doubt you have realised that I too love Colwyn Bay.

DON WHEWAY MATTHEWS

Don, who now lives in Canada still takes a keen interest in the town of Colwyn Bay and the area where he grew up.

My early schooling was pretty much screwed up by the war. In the early part of the blitz when kids from England were coming to Colwyn to escape the bombing, so were parts of the government. One such department was the Ministry of Food, they took over the place where my father was employed, Glan y Don, it was then a private nursing home and farm.

There was no place available in Colwyn for us to live as a family so Mom and I had to move into an aunt’s house in Denbigh until something came available. During the two or three years we were away from Wales Dad was assigned to work on a farm in Essex. The farmer gave us a 600-year-old house to live in (it’s still there, updated now), in those days it came with no mod cons. Lighting was by oil lamp or candle, water from the pump outside, and toilet in the outhouse in a bucket. I felt a bit like I imagine the present-day immigrants from Asia must feel, as a Welsh boy in an English school. All the chasing about from one venue to another did, I am sure, have an adverse effect on my schooling. Even today, as a successfully retired engineer, I still have problems with simple mathematics.

I myself ended my school career in Pendorlan as a prefect along with lads such as Mike Breese, (his dad ran the swimming pool in Rhos.) Gordon Pattison, scheduled to become a Shakespearian actor. Norman Buroughs, gifted violin player, and one other whose name I forget. This would be at the end of the forties or so. I can’t recall the exact date now.
**GLEN**

Glen went to Conwy Road School until about 1935 then she transferred to Pendorlan. Her favourite subjects there were science and P.E. She remembers a very nice lady teacher who took Glen to her home one day to show her something connected with the science lesson. Such a thing would not happen nowadays.

There was a big room for the P.E. where all the main functions also took place, such as assembly, there was singing and playing of the piano. *(Glen used to play piano herself).* One day when she looked over the balcony at some pupils in the hall she spotted a nice looking young man called Tom. They never spoke until one day when she was running on the stairs and Tom, as a prefect, told her to stop and walk. It wasn't until a long while later that she went to a dance with her brother on the pier and the same young man, Tom, asked her to dance. He would be her future husband, but they could not marry until he had left the RAF after the war. They had two daughters who also went to Pendorlan in the 1960s, (one of whom became a teacher and married a teacher) and four grandsons, one of whom would follow Tom into the RAF.

**ELIAN FORSTER (née Davies)**

*Elian has very fond memories of her time at Colwyn Bay Modern School (Pendorlan) c.1947-1951*

The main hall had high oval windows (three I think) overlooking the impressive Victor / Victrix Ludorum hanging. I remember our enthusiasm to win – be it Sports Day or at our school Eisteddfod on behalf of our “houses” – Gibson, Ceiriog, Ednyfed and the fourth - I can't remember the name.

We had a strict Headmaster – so we were all well behaved. We had English, Welsh, choral speaking, drama and biology. We also had shorthand, art and nursing classes. We now had a school magazine – it was great to be mentioned. We also had a school library.

We had Sports Days and our Swimming Gala was held at the swimming pool in Rhos on Sea. We wore a new style of gym slip – no pleats just flared.

Our school hymn was “Thank We All Our God, with hearts and hands and voices” and the school motto was “the Good, the True and the Beautiful” – “y Da, y Gwir a’r Prydferth”.

The building was architecturally bland, I remember the extension being added – near the Wireless College.

Teachers included: Miss Walsh, who became Mrs Bremner (Speech Training), Mr. Ernest Roberts, Miss Morris (History), Mr. T. J. Roberts, Mr. Alan Roberts (Art), Mr. Elwyn Roberts (Music), Mr. Emrys Jones (Geography), Miss Beatrup (Weaving), Miss Hughes (Library), Mr. Walker (Science), Mr. Parker (Woodwork).
These are two photographs from Elian’s schooldays.

c. 1949-1950. Nativity plays, organised by Miss Walsh, were performed at the Pier Pavilion the first year and the Arcadia Theatre the second year.

c. 1951-52. The performance of “The Merchant of Venice” at St. John’s Church House, Old Colwyn.

Elian would love to know where her fellow students are now. Do please use the “Contact Us” link on the Heritage Group website if you’d like to get in touch.
In 1956, at the age of eleven I went to Pendorlan Secondary Modern School which was on East Parade. Both the school and East Parade no longer exist, having been demolished to make way for the Expressway. There was a panoramic sea view from the front of the school but strangely enough all the classrooms faced inland, overlooking the playgrounds. Although Pendorlan was a co-educational school there were separate entrances and playgrounds for boys and girls. There was an annex to the school, on the other side of the road, comprising of two rows of single story wooden buildings. A large part of the annex was devoted to “practical” subjects such as biology, art, metalwork, needlework and cooking. Beyond the annex was a plot for gardening and the school field.

As was the norm in those days, new entrants were assessed as to their academic ability and segregated between A, B and C streams. These in turn were also divided into upper and lower sets, A-upper being the top set of every year. For lessons there were no mixed ability groups and certain subjects like gardening were restricted to children in the "lower" classes.

The headmaster at that time was Mr Roberts, nicknamed Mick by all pupils. He was a small man and by reputation much feared. The staff that I remember and their subject areas are as follows Mrs Bremner (English), Mr Lesley (Book binding), Mr Walker (Science), Miss Morris (History), Mr (Sid) Smith (Maths), Miss Hughes (English and Librarian), Mr (Daddy) Rowlands (Music), Miss Evans (P.E.), Mr (Harry) Parker (Woodwork), Mr (Dick) Dodd (P.E.), Mr David Roberts (Art), Mr Elwyn Roberts (P.E. and 5th form Tutor), Mr (Big Ben) Jones (Metalwork).

In the 1950s many of the teaching staff had had military service during and after WW2 and could call upon their experience to give a wider perspective to their lessons. The geography teacher Mr Emrys Jones was an aerial photographer in the RAF. The art teacher, Mr David Roberts was widely travelled and had served in the Royal Navy. Mr Parker always gave the impression of being a military man. Years after, I read a book by David Roberts in which he described his horrific wartime experiences as a prisoner of the Japanese.

On a lighter side, there was a female supply teacher, who, irrespective of the subject area she was covering, would take the opportunity to promote her religious beliefs. She was a member of an organisation called Moral Rearmament and would give us their viewpoint on current affairs. It was often a light relief from normal studies.

I left Pendorlan in the summer of 1961 to join Manweb as an apprentice electrician but over the next few years I worked on various electrical contracts at Pendorlan School. The following picture is of the school prefects for 1960 -61

I am uncertain of some of the names but I'm sure someone will know and correct me.
Left to right from the back row: David Russell, Philip Horsley, (? - became vicar of Colwyn Bay), (?), Graham Gadsby, Terry?, Chris Oldham, Bernard Lunt

Middle row: Michael Moriarty, Frank Hayward, myself, Charles Davies -head boy, (?), Peter Dorricot, (?)

Bottom row: Janet Moriarty, Anne Kelly, Ann Rowlands, (?), (?), Monica Zeraski - head girl, Anne Davies, (?), (?), (?)

**ELERI A. CAPPER (née Williams)**  
*Memories of Pendorlan Secondary Modern School 1963 – 1967*

I left Llysfaen Controlled Junior School in 1963 having failed my 11+ examination and went to Pendorlan Secondary Modern School. In fact, only 1 person passed the 11+ that year from Llysfaen!

I remember catching the bus with some friends and feeling a little scared wearing this new uniform of navy and white with a beret for the girls’ heads. (We didn’t have a uniform in our Junior School). Girl Prefects wore a beret with a white pom pom. We were ushered in to the hall – which was also used as the gymnasium – where we were put into classes. I was in 1A Upper with one other person from my old school. I seemed to thrive on the teaching and stayed in the A Upper years all through my time there. I enjoyed school but know that a lot of former pupils hated it as well.

Taffy – Mr Owen H Roberts, the Welsh teacher, was Clog Dance Champion of Wales. Mrs Elaine Bremner the English Mistress was my favourite. Mr Elwyn Roberts was the history teacher. There
was Miss Jones domestic science. Mr Harry Parker woodwork. Mrs Jones Maths. RE teacher I cannot remember his name. Mr Dick Dodd and his wife Mrs Cynthia Dodd were PE teachers.

As the school had outgrown its premises (my parents were schooled there in the 1930s) there were porta cabins across the road and you had to pass the Wireless College boys / men congregating outside having cigarettes. (I recently met one previous College pupil whilst travelling on the Ffestiniog Railway). They would all shout and whistle at the girls as they ran past.

There were two entrances in the old school block, one for boys and the other for girls. The girls were not allowed to go in nor out through the boys’ entrance and had to walk through the playground. But if no-one was looking, teachers or prefects, we did try our luck and if caught had to walk all the way round.

In the porta cabins were Mr Geoff Williams metalwork, 'Daddy' Mr Rowlands music, Mrs Owen needlework, her husband Mr John Owen gardening, Mr Leslie craft for boys, a female teacher craft for girls, Miss Owen biology, 'Dei Art' Mr Roberts (who wrote a book “No bamboo for Coffins” about his time in a POW camp), Mr Emrys Jones geography who had responsibility for First Aid/Sickness, Mrs Protheroe was the remedial teacher (not a word used nowadays in education).

The canteen was also on this side of the road with long tables and benches. All the finished plates had to be sent down to the two pupils sitting at the end of the table and it was their duty to clear the plates into the bins which were collected by the pig swill men.

The toilets and bicycle sheds were situated at the back of the building and one job that prefects had to undertake was the inspection of the toilet block as girls in particular would congregate to try to keep warm if play was outside. There were cloakrooms inside the building with washbasins, mirrors and pegs for hanging up coats. Girls would love to admire themselves in the mirrors and had to quickly escape if prefects were about.

The classrooms were along one side of a corridor with a hall opposite. They had windows above the wooden walls and windows in the classroom doors. PE classes for girls and boys were alternated with outside games / indoor gymnasium. If girls were playing netball outside the boys would be inside in the gym and vice versa. If it was raining the corridor had to be used as a gym and if you were in the Welsh & English classrooms you would see pupils performing their gymnastics through the windows above.

The playground was split into 2 with a row of trees separating the boys from the girls. The staffroom was in the middle of the row of classrooms next to the Head’s & Secretary’s office – Mr Gwilym Griffiths, the Headteacher, and Mrs Grace Thomas, the Secretary. Teachers would knock on the staff room window if girls or boys ventured onto the opposite side of the playground. The slipper was still used as punishment by the Headteacher.

There were many after school clubs including Netball & Football. The School Choir, Clog Dancing, Penillion singing and Welsh recitation were encouraged to compete for the Urdd Eisteddfod.

I remember Gladys Aylward coming to school to talk to the morning assembly about her missionary work in China. I also remember Mr Griffiths banging so hard on the lectern that his top set of false teeth fell into his hand. Even the teachers were laughing!

Mr Richard Longley was the caretaker who did all the odd jobs required in the school.
In my last year at Pendorlan – before the school amalgamated with the Grammar School to become Colwyn High School – I was chosen to become Head Girl and Ian Towers became Head Boy and we sat our GCSE O Level examinations. I then moved up to what is now Eirias High School to finish my education. I stayed at Eirias to re-sit 2 exams then did the 1st year of A Levels in Welsh and English before I left to start my working life in the TSB.

**NATALIE FOOT**

The most terrifying moment of my young life had arrived, the day in September 1953 when I had to step into the unknown. I was just 11 years old and had hesitated outside the Big Iron Gates of Pendorlan Secondary Modern School looking up at the huge and imposing building and a feeling of utter panic overwhelmed me, and I had to fight the urge to turn tail and run home instead I stepped through the gates and headed up the steps to the Girls Entrance.

From the age of 3 years I had attended the tiny Church School at the top of my road, it was a two-roomed school which catered for a maximum of 60 pupils. The 2 rooms were divided by partitions to separate the classes, Mr Hayward the Headmaster and Miss Reece the 'other one' were our teachers and the lessons changed when we were instructed to open a different exercise book. There were 2 small concrete yards which doubled up as our sports day venue, so a very small school indeed.

In the vast Pendorlan, pupils were expected to hurry from one classroom after another to take their lessons, and we used the open-air swimming pool in Rhos on Sea which we reached by travelling on the bus, often returning to school with damp clothes and wet hair! Sports day was held on a field situated behind the annexe, so a vast difference between my first and second schools.

I liked many of the teachers and feared one or two, although more from hearsay than actual appearance. My favourite teacher was Mr T. J. Jones, he was a funny, kind and inspirational English and Welsh teacher, and I thrived under his guidance. My first report states that “Natalie is 4ft 7in and weighs 4st 7lbs” I was very timid and endured many many jokes about my name - Natalie Foot. Not unusual these days but way back then no-one had ever heard the name Natalie and coupled with my comical surname I was a target for teachers, pupils and even their parents to make jokes about. I survived by keeping my Mother’s words in my head, "if they call you names and make fun, smile and pretend you don't care and eventually you won’t" and I've done that for most of my life.

One morning in assembly, my friend who also had the unusual surname of Webb, and I were caught giggling about something and the teacher yelled out ”WEBB FOOT” get out and stand in the corridor until I come for you. This of course fuelled even more jokes, but by then even we found that quite funny, and I think the teacher must have felt the same because he just told us to skidaddle along to our next lesson!
Like many other pupils, my time at Pendorlan was filled with incidents, accidents and anecdotes, far too many comical ones to mention here, but each and every one of the teachers and pupils had a distinct influence on my life in Pendorlan Secondary Modern School, for the most part shaping me into the person I am today.

The fact that I came from probably the smallest school in the area to what was an extremely large one was relevant in so many ways.

**Grammar School** (later County School and Eirias High School)
**Prospectus given by JOHN WILKINSON, a pupil in 1941**

Prospectus of Grammar School, founded 1920
Chairmen of the Board of Governors

1920    David Lewis Esq J.P. CC
1920 – 32 Edward Allen Esq J.P. C.C.
1932 – 35 George Bevan Esq. J.P. C.C.
1935 - Thos. E. Purdy Esq J.P. C.C.

Clerk to the Governors

J.T.L Holmes Esq
Midland Bank Chambers, Colwyn Bay

Staff

Head master: Mr W.P.Dodd M.A. M.C. (Late open exhibitioner St John’s College Cambridge)

Nicknames pencilled in

Senior Mistress: Miss K.M.Hughes B.A. (Wales)


Mr.T.O. Griffiths, B Sc (London) A.I.C. F.C.S. Toggy
Mr E.J.Evans B.Sc (Wales) Toggy
Mr Llewelyn Williams, B.A. (Wales) Willy
Mr L.Lines M.A. (B’ham) B.Sc ( London) Larry
Mr J.W.Turner M.A. (Cantab) Tubby
Mr Tudor Jones B.Sc (Wales) Joss
Mr W.G. Newnes A.L,C.M. Popeye
Mr Walter Gaunt ( City and Guilds Adv Hons) Hep
Miss M.E.Heptonstall, B.A. (Leeds) Little Will
Miss E.J. Williams B.A. (Wales) Nancy Stitch
Miss S.C.M. Treharne M. A. (Wales) Trenny
Miss C.M. Jones, B.A. (Wales)
Miss N. Roberts (Diploma Dom. Science. London) Nancy Stitch
Miss S. Story Jones (Dipl. L’pool Physical Training. Coll)
HISTORY AND CONSTITUTION OF THE SCHOOL

The school was the first of its type to be established in North Wales under the terms of the Education acts of 1902. (Not the intermediate Education Act 1890.) It is identical in constitution and scope with the Municipal Secondary Schools to be found in many large areas of England and Wales. The Denbighshire Education Committee is responsible for its maintenance but has delegated its functions to a Board of local governors who deal directly with the administration of the school and render an account of their proceedings in due course to its parent body. Boys and girls may enter the school at the age of ten and remain on the books until the age of 19 is reached.

The school aims at imparting a good general education up to the standard of a good school certificate or Matriculation examination (attainable in most cases about the age of 16) and then preparing pupils for such professional or academic examinations as their prospective careers demand.

Pupils have won state scholarships for Cambridge and the modern universities and have passed the intermediate examination for B.A. and B Sc. Examination at the University of London (External).

The staff has been carefully chosen on a specialist basis, each teacher being fitted by his previous education, training and experience to carry the work to the high standard required. Every teacher of an academic subject holds the degree of some British University and in almost every case has graduated with good honours in the subject chosen.

The teaching of practical subjects is also in the hands of those who have won their diploma in well accredited colleges and given evidence of good teaching proficiency. All laboratories workshop and subject rooms and the gymnasium have been carefully equipped on modern lines.

It has been found possible to cater both for the highly proficient and the more average pupil. The proportion of pupils successful in School Certificate and Matriculation examinations gives ample proof of the soundness of the instruction given.

Domestic Science, Manual work, Art and Music have all been successfully taught up to this stage and endorsed on many of the certificates won. Boys and girls are normally taught together in class subjects, but are separated for Gymnastics, Games and Practical subjects.
Intake to Colwyn Bay Grammar School

September 1941

Peter Bulleyshole
Julia Allen
Gordon Ashworth
John Batten
Ted Boothell
Ramon Brewer
Till Budden
John Butter
Alan Cheplin
Dorothy Clay
Peter Cloaghe
Sheila Cockley
Ann Cooper
Dennis Dodd
Husiel Doyle
Janel Eden
Gerard Fisher
Alec Francis
Peter Greenhalgh
Vincent Garrett
Margaret Griffohs
Gwen Hadfield
Bridget Harley
Harry Harter
Robert Hemphill
David Howard	
Beryl Hunter
Raymond Judge
Jan Kalders
Jim Kings

Heather Long
Bill Hartman Jones
Mike Lloyd
Geoffrey Llewelan
Beryl Meredith
David Miles
Elmer Miller
Brenda Pickrell
Max Price
Brian Riley
Michael Rowd
Gwen Roberts
Paul Roberts
Ronnie Sandford
Peter Smith
Sheila Tame
Enid Thomas
Gwyn Thomas
Josephine Walsh
John Watson
Emily Watson
Ivan Wood
Daphne Woodbridge
Hedd Wynne
Ann West
Gwen Jones
Denis Jones
Vivien Jones
John Wilkinson’s memories there:

I joined in 1941 having taken the 11 plus and was the only boy pupil from Froebelian School. Dependant on results pupils were placed in three classes – ‘2 Latin; 2 French’ 2 Welsh’ and in 3 houses – brown green and white.
By 1945 many pupils had departed as they were Ministry of Food families. We received a certificate from the King in 1946, [congratulating us for sharing the hardships and encouraging us to be proud of our families who have by their courage endurance and enterprise brought victory].

The headmaster was Mr W P Dodd. Physics master was Mr T O Griffiths, Maths T Lines and B Thomas. English Miss Williams (Little Will) Geography Mr Evans, History Miss Heptonstall, Woodwork Mr Gaunt, Physical Education Mr Roberts. There were 3 weekly tests to monitor progress in all subjects.
We travelled on the tram to Greenfield Road. We had school dinners in the 'huts' at the bottom of the yard. Mr Hobbs lived on a farm and used to bring in a large milk churn which Ma Rowlands would fill with left overs for his pigs. Physics class 2 boys were instructed to put the churn and fix it with straps to the back of his car. I never liked the tapioca! Sometimes I went for lunch at the British Restaurant in Sea View Road. He would warm up a saucepan in the break room between Physics and Chemistry lab and shave and then heat up the same saucepan for his coffee. He heated it on a Bunsen burner.

We played cricket on the hockey field and I recall hitting the ball to Mr Barnes the caretaker's house. We played football against the local schools and travelled by train especially to Holywell. We went from Colwyn Bay to Holywell junction and then catching a train to Holywell. Sports day was when our Houses competed against each other in 3 categories. Junior Middle and senior boys and girls, I remember travelling to Ruthin to the open invitation relay race. The winners presented the shield to Mr Dodd at an assembly for Denbighshire. We went to Wrexham to the County Sports which included Grove Park, Wrexham and Llanrwst, National and County.

There was an 'Inter House Eisteddfod', a speech day at the pier. Three ladies 'The Bangor trio' would visit the school to give a musical recital.
The Oxford school certificate examination was held in the school room opposite the library. The oral examiners in French came from Bangor on the bus. Fortunately, I was last. I joined the Colwyn Bay County School ATC, commanding officer was Mr Hobbs, other officers were Mr Evans and T O Griffiths. We marched through Colwyn Bay on November 11th and spent time at the RAF camp at Valley.
HANS WINS - A wartime Jewish Refugee from Belgium, who attended first College School, then Pendorlan and the Grammar School

‘Testimonial from the Grammar School Colwyn Bay, dated 25.1.49’

Dear Hans,

I was very pleased to hear from you when I first opened your envelope. I wondered who was sending me a card. ‘Mr and Mrs G Wins. Lopez Cardoza’, I read and wondered who they were. Then I wondered for a moment if you had got married or something, for I recognised the ‘Wins’ but the G did not fit in. Your signature did not help much (It looked like Harry) Your handwriting however I recognised, and your way of expressing yourself, I could almost hear you speaking as I read your note.

I still remember you and Henri coming to Central School. How philosophical you appeared to be taking everything both at the Central and the Grammar School, and how cheerful you managed to appear whilst you and your mother were keeping that long and lonely vigil in Bay View Road, keeping to yourself your grave worries concerning the other members of your family. I suppose your mother wonders how she survived the ordeal. I felt very sorry for you in those days but could do nothing to help you.

You remember visiting my hut up in the hills, well I am spending the last few days of my Christmas holidays there, it is now comfortably furnished and a haven of rest. We reopen on Tuesday January 10th. Many of those in your form have left. Gwilym Jones, as you probably know is now in VI A So, I think is Chapman, and some of those younger boys you escorted to my retreat here are in VI B. A couple of years and there will be no trace left of your fellow pupils, they will all have left, how time flies.

When you come over again to Wales you will of course visit me at the school or my lodgings. I shall always be pleased to see my old pupil. I’m afraid I was on one occasion at least very impatient with you, especially when we consider the wonderful progress you were making in mastering the English language. Anyhow that is what you can expect from myself imposed nom de plume of ‘Ye Olde Slave Driver’

Best wishes and kind regards

J Buckland.
Dear Hans,

Thank you again for a Christmas card. I appreciate your wishes for a happy and prosperous 1951. As Gwilym has now left us I have no one to talk to about you, although many of the lads remember you quite well I am sure. Whenever I go along Bay View and Sea View Roads my mind automatically thinks of you, as I gaze up at the houses on the street where you lived.

Gwilym has done well to gain a major scholarship and enter London University. I do not suppose the money means very much to him, but the honour probably means much. Ieuan Williams also won a major scholarship and David Ifor Williams a minor scholarship. Pete Chapman and Cyril Hughes were also amongst those who passed their Higher Certificates. They should gain scholarships this year (1950-1951)

Mr Hobbs has retired to his farm, being followed by Mr T O Griffiths as Senior Master, and by an experienced newcomer as Physics master. Several other changes have taken place on the staff. Miss Hughes retired a few years ago, Miss Heptonstall succeeding her as Senior Mistress. Miss EJ Williams, my English colleague has also left to nurse an ailing sister: she has been succeeded by an Australian lady who has taught in New Zealand and finds our ways somewhat strange. The other changes would mean little to you if I mentioned them. We are expecting a new French mistress next term. Incidentally I understand that Miss Foulkes Williams is a lecturer in the University of Paris. She is certainly in the French capital.

Regarding myself I still take the Junior Geography, most of the School Certificate English and some middle school and junior English. I have resumed the teaching of Book Keeping taking a night school class in the subject, so if you have any business worries consult your truly (free to ex pupils)!!

I am writing to several old pupils this week. Two of them are sailors; one of them being Brian Nolan who I think was one of three lads you escorted to my hut. He has already circumnavigated the Globe and has been as far afield as Japan and South America, India and the West Indies. Yet at one time he thought my hut a long way from Mochdre.

I hope that you are doing well at your business and mastering a few more languages. Should you come across the channel, we shall all be very pleased to see you.

Kind regards and thanks once again,

Sincerely yours,

J Buckland.
The late June Lee - at school during the war years

June Lee was displeased with her education which she felt was disrupted greatly by the war. Although she had a good job as a legal secretary for 51 years she felt she could have done so much more. She described the mix of children from Manchester, London Ministry of Food and the locals from Wales, and their segregation according to the second language they would learn – French, Latin or Welsh respectively. Only those who spoke Welsh at home were allowed to continue due to the shortage of teachers. This underpins the feeling outlined in the North Wales Weekly News that evacuation diluted the Welsh language and culture.

‘There is alarm at the monoglot English children, plans to give instructions in Welsh. Financial and cultural loss to Wales’ 7th January 1940 North Wales Weekly News.

Marvern Page

... continues the story of when she gained a place at the Grammar School in 1954

"A school by the sea with the hills looking on, 
A school I remember long after I have gone,"

These are the opening lines of Colwyn Bay Grammar School's song which was written by one of the Maths teachers Mr C.I. Jones during the 1950's.

I set off on the first day with my friends Carole and Susan. We were so excited at going to "big" school... Wearing oversize brown gym slips to grow into and the dreaded berets.

Our first year was spent in "the huts" temporary classrooms that had been erected when my father was there in the 30's.

It was new to us to change classrooms for different subjects like science, biology, cookery and gymnastics and to have different teachers for each subject.

Most of the teachers were known by their surnames or had nicknames. The Headmaster Mr Roberts was referred to as RE he always stood between lessons, in his gown, in fact all the teachers wore gowns, at the top of the corridor to observe the behaviour of the pupils changing classroom.

I remember: Toggy (Mr Griffiths, chemistry), Ma Parry (Miss Parry, biology), Dorky (Mr Dorkins, history), CI (Mr Jones, maths), EJ (Mr Jones, geography), Tudor brick (Mr Jones, maths), Danny Daniels (French), Marsden (art), Nancy Stitch (Miss Roberts, home economics), Scraggy Aggie (Miss Hughes, French), Hep (Miss Heptonstall, history).

Miss Heptonstall the Headmistress, a formidable character though well liked, who used to insist that girls always wore their berets even in town after school. If she saw you without it was automatic detention, where I often found myself. She told me I would never be a prefect as I never wore my beret. And I never was. My reluctance to wear it was no doubt vanity as I didn't think it suited me.
Nancy stitch taught cookery and needlework. She once asked me where my Yorkshire puddings were. I had to own up to having put them in the bin as they had not risen. Still can't make them.

Somebody must have sworn in class, DC Jones an English teacher asked who it was but of course no one owned up. The whole class had to stay behind after school and write 500 times.

"My diction shows poverty of the knowledge of the English language." Another good lesson.

Tudor Brick another Maths teacher told me "to stop staring out of the window girl, like a cow" I didn't understand "The square on the hypotenuse is equal to sum on the other two sides" until I had to find the distance across a lake on a surveying exercise many years later.

Scraggy Aggie sent me out of the room for answering back. Whilst standing outside I thought. What am I doing here, I am not learning any French out here. I always behaved after that and Miss Hughes always exchanged memories of school days long after I had left.

Whilst I was at school the athletic track opposite our playing fields was opened by Chris Chataway and Chris Brasher who had been pace makers for Roger Bannister which enabled him to be the first man to run a mile in under 4 mins. Many a Saturday afternoon was spent taking part or watching school athletics on that track.

As we got older we were allowed to wear a skirt. The brown gym slips were still part of the uniform, we wore them for hockey, the shorter the better.

As sixth formers we had the freedom of the library, to study. It also enabled us to make friends with boys as equals, which certainly helped in the workforce in later years.

"We lift our heads to strike the stars
A high endeavour is our aim
When we play we play the game
But over all our loses and our gains
The one familiar refrain remains
We love our school sincerely
Guardian of our younger days"

Some of the lines of the old school, lost in the fullness of time but stumble out from time to time not necessarily in the right order but a gentle reminder that indeed for some, they were the most carefree days of our lives.

**ROBERT PARKER (Marvern’s brother) - arrived at the school a few years later**

Third of September 1961 was the day I arrived at Colwyn Bay Grammar School aged 11. I was a very small, thin boy with spindly legs and blond hair wearing short grey trousers and a brand new brown blazer with a bright yellow and green badge proudly displaying the Colwyn Bay Oak Tree and matching cap which had been bought by my proud parents from Bradley’s of Colwyn Bay a few weeks earlier.
The Grammar School had about 600 pupils in those days and initial streaming of pupils on entry at aged 11 was based on performance in the infamous 11 plus exam (thankfully long since abolished), which all pupils in the top class of the feeder Primary Schools had to sit in March each year. I was placed in Class 1C, the lowest of three forms, A, B and C, which indicated that I had just managed to scrape through the dreaded tests. I was quite non-plussed about all of this since I had made it to the Grammar School and didn't really mind which form I had been put in. This was not however my parents' opinion and I was left in no doubt that I had to work much harder and do much better and had a term to address the issue. Much to my great surprise I came top of the Class in the December exams in 1C and as a result had a meteoric rise to 1A in January 1962. However, I was never to find myself as the top of the class again.

The form teacher who encouraged me a lot in my one term in Form 1C was Mr Dorkins, known as Daddy Dorkins - the History Master. He was a short bespectacled man with a mainly bald head but with a "monk like" tonsure of hair around the back of his head. He always wore a black gown, as did most of the masters in the school, and was constantly adjusting the gown's long sleeves. In my naivety and ignorance, I thought the gown was to protect his clothes from the chalk dust generated by the chalk duster he often used when cleaning the blackboard, but only later realised it was the apparel of a graduate teacher.

Dorkins was one of the many characters of the school and I had quite an affection for him. He had taught my eldest sister Marvern and she had given me the low down on him before I went to the school and like me she was quite fond of him. Dorkins set himself and others very high academic standards and with some notable exceptions had quite a low opinion of the abilities and potential of his pupils, which in fairness to him was more often than not borne out by the exam results. He always used a red pen for marking and was constantly annotating and underscoring key passages of his history books and pupils exercise books to highlight key points. Unfortunately, as he thought there were so many key points to emphasize his books were littered with indecipherable comments and red marks. He had a stock of well-known words and phrases that he liked to trot out such as "this monstrous regiment of women", "history is not romantic fiction", "ad nauseam" (I may think of some more of Dorkins sayings to include as they are part of one's unconscious and may pop out at any time - I have developed the habit of trotting out well known words and phrases just like Dorkins used to do and now realise where I get it from).

Forms 1, 2 and 3 were housed in "temporary" huts in the lower end of the school grounds between the main building and the canteen which backed onto the Dingle. These huts had been temporary at the school since the 1920's. Prior to that they had been at Kinmel Army Camp and the story in the school was that in 1919 they housed some Canadian soldiers who were waiting to be demobbed who were involved in the Kinmel Park Riots.

See link to wiki web site which gives more details: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kinmel_Park_Riots

The bodies of five Canadian soldiers who had been killed in the riots were said to have been held in a temporary morgue in one of the store rooms in the huts and this store room was said to be haunted. So, a challenge for the more daring pupils was to hide in the store room for a whole lesson to brave exposure to the tortured souls. This practice of hiding during a lesson was part of the school culture and there was another occasion when Roger Lee put me up to hiding in a large cupboard in the form teacher's desk in Form 4 in the main building. We did this during an English lesson and the poor teacher J.J Jones or Jo Leg (the derivation of his nickname is another story) had
no idea I was in there. Periodically, when the teacher wasn't looking Roger came up to tap on the front of the desk to give me a fright, but Jo Leg remained blissfully ignorant. I recall Lawrence Dunne, otherwise known as Twp due to his short stature, being dared by Roger Lee and myself to do the same thing. I think there was one occasion when someone was caught doing this and they had hell to play.

**PATRICK SLATTERY**

I passed the 11+ on the strength of my English Comprehension and Essay. I'd never had an easy time with maths. During my first few weeks at Colwyn Bay Grammar I realised I'd soon be out of my depth with fractions and geometry and what on earth was algebra? Homework had to be done and delivered. There were probably more red marks and corrections by the teacher in my book than anyone else's. Whether it was fate or fortune my father who was a painter/decorator did a lot of work for our maths teacher Mr. Tudor Jones. He tried hard to help me understand Pythagoras’s Theorem and the Rudiments of Algebra without much success. He was gracious enough to give me a few marks 'for neatness'. I remember his comments on my first years school report that was posted to my parents; “A hard trier but will never make a mathematician”.

I was keen on playing football until in one lesson I was put in the goal and ended up being hit several times by the old type leather football. One shot hit me on the side of my face and bruised me. This put me off football. A group of us were excused football and allowed to go for a cross country run. We would run out of site of the school and down the Old Highway and up to Nant y Glyn Valley. This was great we were unsupervised so went at our own leisure. If it was a very wet day football practice continued but our sports master, Mr. Dennis Griffiths would get us to tidy up the sports shed that was often very untidy. This was a treat for us not getting wet or muddy.

Most boys were familiar with the headmaster and his study. I was one of the few who never saw inside his study nor did he have reason to speak to me. Amazingly he knew me and had to seek permission from the Education Committee to allow four of us to leave the school before sitting G.C.E. O Level examinations. Our parents had sent a letter to the headmaster asking for permission for us to leave when we were 15. This was an unusual request as the point of being in a Grammar School was to enable one to pass G.C.E.s at O and A levels and go on to University. However, we were exceptions and wanted to leave at the age of 15 prior to sitting G.C.E.s. Permission was granted on condition we were given apprenticeships to learn a trade. 3 became apprentice gas fitters, I became an apprentice joiner. A few days before leaving school the headmaster saw me coming out of our form room one break time. He came to me and asked me where I was going to work. When I told him, his face lit up and he said, “The best firm in the area, you’ll do well there.” He wished me well and even said, “If ever you require a reference let me know.”

We were based in ‘The Huts' and Ralph Dicken was our Form Master. He was a great guy and everyone was fond of him. You are correct in saying Tudor Jones was known as 'Joss.’ R.E.Roberts was the head and known as ‘The Boss’. I think most of us dreaded him. He was also a great ‘Tory’ and encouraged the ‘Young Conservatives’ which was a group of pupils who met after school for debates etc. He also became a Denbighshire County Councillor.

From a young age I was keen on D.I.Y. and always making something out of scraps of wood. My father got me a job as an apprentice joiner and I loved the work. We made everything by hand and
fitted kitchens and bedroom units before flat pack killed the trade. Joiners became fitters as everything became ready made to fit and fix.

I was also a ‘good listener’ and aware of people’s problems and wanting to help. I was a keen member of the Sunday School and Youth Group led by Les Morris at Old Colwyn Methodist Church until I left school and started to work. Then I drifted away making new friends and having new interests. Eventually I was gradually drawn back by what I call a gradual conversion experience. I became a keen church member and was very much encouraged by my minister Haines Davies (Father of Arfon Haines Davies who was well known on HTV). Eventually I took a part time theological course and became a ‘Lay Preacher’. This eventually led me to give up my work as a joiner and although married and with a baby son and a mortgage I went to theological college at Manchester for 2 years.

In 1985 I became a Methodist Minister and we spent 3 years at Bangor 1985-88 and from 1988 were moved to Dolgellau. Although I officially retired in 2013 I am still kept busy helping many churches who are without ministers. Ministry was / is my true vocation.

I have seen from time to time there have been reunions for past pupils at Colwyn Bay Grammar, but they were for pupils who were there much later than I was. There is very little about the school on the internet.

NICK HASTIE F.R.S., C.B.E. Professor of genetics. Director of the Institute of Genetics and Molecular Medicine in Edinburgh – Memories

I have very fond memories of my time at Colwyn Bay Grammar School, though most of these relate to the social rather than academic side. In spite of my rather mediocre A level results (3 Cs) the teaching must have prepared me well as I went on to get a PhD and ended up as a research scientist. I am embarrassed to remember how silly we could be and how insufferable it must have been for some of the teachers, for example, all turning our desks to face the back of the room in preparation for a certain English teacher's arrival.

I recall happily the school lunches- or dinners as we called them. Pretty good food was cooked on the premises. Everyone vied to be head of the table whose prerogative was to give him/ herself twice as much food as anyone else. I graduated to head of table pretty early and I'm afraid conformed only too readily to this practice. Who could forget the advent of chips and that wonderful dessert "Rock of ages" or when a big boy called Raymond broke the record for the number of prunes eaten at one setting - 53, I believe.

My only distinction perhaps came through my singing. The music master Bob Williams (?) can be thanked for spotting my singing potential and putting me forward for various solo parts. Hence, I was Noye in Benjamin Britten’s Noye’ s Fludde and Captain Corcoran in HMS Pinafore - what fun. I was also wheeled out to sing a spiritual at every school speech day. I'll never forget standing there in front of all the parents and pupils waiting to sing "steal away to Jesus" or was it "nobody knows the trouble I've seen". As Bob played the introductory notes my " friends" David Roberts and
Richard Pugh started making faces at me from the front row - so I got the giggles and poor Bob had to play the introduction another couple of times with the headmaster, RE Roberts whispering, "get on with it Hastie".

Many years later, about 2003 I was invited to give a talk and present the certificates to all the graduating pupils at Colwyn Bay High School, now one of the top 4 rated state schools in Wales. My wife Alison and 2 children, Claire and Adam came with me. We were all so impressed with the school and the pupils we met. Claire and Adam said "Dad - you were so lucky to grow up here and to go this school". They were right. Thanks to all the teachers and fellow pupils for giving me such a great start in life.

**JOSÉ DIXON (née Thomas) - another star of the production of Noye’s Flood**

I attended Colwyn Bay Grammar School from 1961 - 1966. The music teacher Mr R Williams, who we all called 'Willie Music', was a very inspirational teacher. He ran the choir and 'Willie' used to sing along with us. In 1964 we performed Noye’s Fludde in St. Paul's church in Colwyn Bay. The voice of God was played by one of the Welsh teachers Mr Gwyn Hughes. His voice was absolutely so right for the part and Nicholas Hastie who played Noah had a wonderful singing voice. I remember clearly all the performers walking down the central aisle of St Paul’s church singing Kyrie Eleison.

I played the Raven who Noah released to see if the flood waters had abated. I climbed over the pulpit and jumped to the floor and danced down the church aisle looking for signs of life. When I jumped down from the pulpit I faintly heard a violin string going ping! The Raven does not return. However, Noah also released a Dove who did return. Cindy Lowe (nee Gough-Roberts) and Darlah Thomas (née Anderson) were my school friends from Llandrillo days and both took part in the production. Both of them have now have written books about their home town.
Colwyn Bay Grammar School Choral Society's production of “Noye's Fludde” at St. Paul's Church Colwyn Bay on Wednesday and Thursday of last week, proved to be a memorable North Wales premiere of Benjamin Britten's opera.

One of the Chester Miracle plays provides the libretto for the opera which tells of the building of the Ark of Noah and his family, the gathering of the animals into the Ark, the storm and the flood, and finally the rainbow coming as a symbol of God’s promise to mankind that he would not again destroy them.

Written in simple style the opera is meant also for simple presentation. So as to resemble as near as possible the original mystery plays, scenic devices had to be extremely simple and carefully designed. The set in the local production was developed stage by stage in full view of the congregation in a most efficient and exciting manner by the property men.

With a cast of 100 this was undoubtedly the most ambitious musical production ever undertaken by the school and for local people who were fortunate to obtain tickets – there were many who were disappointed – it was an unforgettable experience.

Sixth former Nicholas Hastie was an excellent choice for the part of Noye. With his rich voice he gave an impressive performance and the part of his wife was well played by Judith Mason. One of the highlights of the production was the singing of boy soprano Paul Formstone as Sem, one of Noah’s Children.

Gwyn Hughes with his strong voice was a wise selection for the Voice of God. Claire Hanna and Jennifer Jones, as Ham and Jaffet, also Noah’s children, gave creditable performances.

Other principal parts were admirably played by Jane Price, Christine Little, Pamela Hughes, Ruth Davies, Katherine Jones, Pamela Owen, Pearl Owen, Beryl Roberts, Eleri Williams, José Thomas and Barbara Waterworth.

The chorus of animals and birds contributed in no small way to the success of the production, which reflected great credit on the producer and musical director, Mr Robert Williams, head of the school’s music department.

The 28-piece orchestra of professional musicians and pupils led by Mr John Morava, gave a performance of the utmost competence and created vivid climaxes which almost left one breathless, particularly in the flood scene.

Property men were Peter Webb, Alan Roberts, Philip Davies and Laurence Jones.

Two years later the school performed The Bartered Bride at the Prince of Wales Theatre. I was in the choir and also one of the dancers. Valerie Pugh and myself were the dancers in this production and Margaret Lacey choreographed this dance for us both. My Father's brother had brought back a Portuguese National Costume many years earlier and I was able to wear this for the show. My friend Darlah mentioned above was also in this production.
Colwyn Bay Grammar School Choral Society

present

The

Bartered Bride

(Smetana)

By permission of Boosey and Hawkes, Music Publishers Ltd.

The Prince of Wales Theatre
Colwyn Bay

Thursday, Friday, Saturday
March 17th, 18th, 19th, 1966
at 7.0 p.m.

PROGRAMME — SIXPENCE
Cast

KRUSINA (A peasant) .................... RICHARD MULLOCH
LUDMILLA (His Wife) .................... GILLIAN ROOKE
MARENKA (Their Daughter) .......... CAROL EVANS
TOBIAS MICHA (A Peasant) .......... GARETH WILLIAMS
HATA (His Second Wife) .......... CAROLINE ROBINSON
VASEK (Her Son) .................... JENNIFER JONES
JENIK (Son of Micha’s First Wife) .... BRIAN GREY
KECAL (The Village Marriage Broker) .... BERYL ROBERTS

Travelling Circus People

THE MANAGER ...................... TONY EDWARDS
ESMERALDA ....................... JANET MITCHELL
THE INDIAN ....................... MICHAEL EDWARDS
THE STRONG MAN ................... BRIAN COSSEY
CLOWNS ...................... GAVIN TUNSTALL, ROGER BIRD
DANCERS ...................... JOSÉ THOMAS, VALERIE PUGH

Chorus of Village People

ACT I—The Village Green.
ACT II—Interior of the Inn.
ACT III—The Village Green.

Orchestra

1st VIOLINS — D. R. Cashmore, L. F. White.
2nd VIOLINS — D. Sudell, Werner Gans.
VIOLA — G. K. Clatworthy.
‘CELLO — J. W. Ellis, Nicholas Roberts.
TRUMPET — R. E. Baddeley.
CLARINET — D. Harper.
FLUTE — P. Mills.
Percussion — Eldeg Richards, Ann Jones.
PIANO — Eleri Williams.
Chorus of Villagers


Dancees


PRODUCER AND MUSICAL DIRECTOR .............. Mr. R. Williams
STAGE MANAGER ........................................... Mr. F. Pollitt
SETS ARRANGED BY ...... Mr. F. Pollitt and Mr. S. V. J. Marston
                        assisted by R. Baddeley, D. Edwards, J. Hughes, P. Davies,
                        D. Haygreen, J. Swain, C. Bartlett, G. Jones, J. Jones,
                        S. M. Roberts, O. Morris, B. B. Roberts, P. Gibson
DANCES ARRANGED BY ......................... Mrs. A. Bowyer
WARDROBE ......................................................... Miss M. Parry
                        assisted by Miss M. E. Jones, Susan M. Roberts, Dorothy
                        Breeze Jones, Mary Edwards, Pamela Parker, Caren Roberts
MAKE-UP .......................... Mr. D. C. Jones, Mr. G. Hughes
                        assisted by V. Thomas, Y. Redford, C. Bartlett, R. Baddeley
PROMPTER ....................................................... Mary Edwards
HOUSE MANAGER .......................... Mr. P. Wycherley
STAGE MANAGER FOR PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE
                                  Mr. K. Rainford
These shows, and carol concerts were great fun to be part of. I also took part in a sketch for school speech day and that is recounted in another book from the historical society.

These school day memories are stories that bring back many happy school days and will always remember being in a class that had 4 sets of twins - 2 of each sex. Such fun!

**CHERYL TRACEY (née Morris) of Newcastle**

Yes, I do remember Noyes Flood. We had to file down the centre aisle of St. Paul’s church as animals entering the ark, I was a swine with Michael Vaughan, Pam’s brother!!!

I also remember doing HMS Pinafore and The Bartered Bride at the Prince of Wales theatre which I, believe has a new name now.

The music teacher was obsessed with his choir. We used to sing an inspirational song for speech days which were held in the pier pavilion!!! We had to go down to the pier the day before to practice, all filing onto the stage in our white shirts and ties.

We sang in the North Wales community schools choir when the Eisteddfod was on the sea front in Llandudno.
Wendy’s year (my sister) won the Eisteddfod in Llangollen. She said the teacher had been quite overcome and delighted. A great accolade for his beloved choir and of course Colwyn Bay Grammar!

Anyway, I’ll keep thinking of more memories. I have loads of sporting ones.

**PAM ROWLATT (née Vaughan)**

In the early 60's, before the days of girls being able to wear trousers for winter uniform, we wore skirts and socks or thin tights. The North Wales coast was freezing cold and we’d all try to cling to the radiators, as long as we could, before being evicted outside by prefects during break. One day I’d managed to survive most of the break time indoors, when some prefects spotted me, I said I was signing up for events on the notice board above the radiator, improvising, I hastily began signing my name without paying too much attention to what I was signing up for and they left me to it.

To my amazement, next day in assembly, my name was read out among others to report for trials, to select new members for the Hockey team. My best friend Cheryl, who was very athletic, encouraged me and it turned out to be one of the best things I did during my time at Colwyn Bay Grammar School.

I started in the 2nd eleven and then the 1st and even played for a local women’s team, Mochdre Scorpions. It kept me fit and I got to some lovely venues in the Welsh valleys for away matches.

**The late LINDA BERRY (née Vaughan) - sister of Pam**

My first memory is one of complete awe on the first day of attending Colwyn Bay Grammar School [1961] resplendent in stiff new collar and tie etc., seeing so very many pupils assembled in the gym. (I wonder if they were as nervous as I was, the first-year pupils I mean). It was such a culture shock after Old Colwyn Primary!!

The second is my memory of ‘Hep’ Miss Heptonstall, a curious looking lady, who insisted on her pupils wearing their berets. One morning walking down to school from the gates into Eirias Park (the bus dropped us off there) I wasn’t wearing my beret, over my shoulder I saw Hep’s car approaching, so quickly whipped the beret out and crammed it on! Unfortunately, she had seen the whole scenario and mistaking Pam for myself took her on one side after assembly and gave her a good rollicking! Poor Pam was aghast as she always wore her beret.

I can also picture sliding on the ice in the goal mouths of the hockey pitch in the winter, before they stopped us playing there for health and safety reasons.
During the school holiday that summer when we were waiting to start the term at the new secondary school we had to go to ‘Juniorwear’ in the arcade on Station Road to get our uniform. I can still remember the scent of the expensive new clothes. The colours in those days were brown, with a brown and emerald green striped tie. Girls had to wear a beret. If you were caught without it, you would get a detention as Linda and her sister Pam found out! and there are many girls who have memories of being found without their beret. We all hated wearing them, but decades later when I thought they were French I liked them and still wear them now. We wore a gabardine mac, double breasted with a belt. The novelty of uniform soon wore off. I had to also wear big brown clumsy lace up shoes which I hated, this was because I was said to have weak ankles. The orthopaedic shoes were so expensive no wonder my parents wanted me to get some wear out of them before I outgrew them. Years after we left school my brother told me the school doctor had been to the junior school after I had left for the Grammar school, and he had been called in to the office, asked to remove his shoes and socks and walk around. The doctor said, ‘Your feet seem to be alright now’. I roared with laughter when he told me this years later. Because we had the same surname, and my brother’s feet were alright no one ever bothered me to wear ugly shoes again! Later, when I was 14 I had some brown ‘winkle pickers’ with kitten heels, but the only place I wore them was church.

I struggled with lessons, all those subjects, French! Latin! Even maths, which I had been good at before bewildered me with all the methods to remember. However, in later life I put my arithmetical skills to good use in my work, (another story) and also used some Turkish I had learned while I lived in Istanbul for a year, although I had struggled with French, Latin and Welsh. I loved art lessons and our teacher Sylvanus Marsdon, a well-known cartoonist, ‘Zyl’. He had a wicked sense of humour, and if he didn’t approve of a pupil’s work he would tap them on the head with his T square, which he named ‘Excalibur’. One of his sayings was ‘What you know about [whatever subject] could be written on a gnat’s kneecap and still leave room for the 10 commandments. He was my favourite teacher and I was honoured when he named one of his female daschund puppies after me with a ‘Z’, ‘Zynthia’, how many people have a bitch named after them?

Morning assembly in the gym was sometimes spectacular. I think the younger pupils sat on the floor, and then middle school may have been on benches while upper forms stood at the back. I remember seeing a sea of brown hair, all-natural colouring blending in on the girls’ side. Boys were opposite, I never looked at that side, but I know they all had to have short hair, or else encounter the wrath of ‘Rupert’ Roberts the headmaster. One of the senior pupils would do a reading at the lectern, then the headmaster would read out notices, while afterwards we sang hymns.

Best of all was the irreverent version of Cwm Rhondda, although now it remains a favourite in its original version. I was amazed the first time I heard the chorus ‘Bread from Evans, Tea from Thomases, Fish and Chips from C.I Jones, C.I. Jones’ (C.I. Jones was the maths teacher who wrote the school song mentioned by Marvern Page). How the pupils got away with the wrong words I don’t know. During the singing of the morning hymn it would often happen that one of the most senior girls would feel unwell and have to be escorted by a friend from the back of the room to the front and out of the gym. We never did find out what was wrong with some of these girls, women’s trouble? ‘the vapours?’ It seemed to go out of fashion later on in the ‘60s. I never heard of it.
happening in my school year when I was in the sixth form. However, I often used to skip assembly, I didn’t make it in time. I would be still at the bus stop when it took place, having left the house late, since I was applying my make up!

Nancy Stitch the headmistress stopped me in the corridor one day in the late ‘60s and said, ‘a little less make up on those eyes!’ Her real name was Miss Roberts. She also announced in assembly that she would like to take a pair of scissors to some girls’ hair. One of the junior girls brought a letter from her mother one day addressed to Miss Stitch, believing it to be her real name. She was very kind; I will always remember her looking after me during my sickness during a cookery lesson. Ralph Dicken drove me home in the lunch hour. That wouldn’t happen today, a teacher wouldn’t risk having a pupil in their car!

Miss Stitch’s predecessor as headmistress was Miss Heptinstall. She seemed very proper, really old school. She spoke beautifully and wore shoes with tassels on them. She taught us history in our second year at the school, but I cannot remember the topics, although I remember her shoes, with tassels! Some of the pupils attending the Grammar School when it was the County School during the war years also remembered her teaching them, some 20 years previously! Things were done differently then, who would believe some of our stories and how things are now!

MIKE HALL

I’ll try to take your advice & crank the memory banks back into life regarding those school years back in the mists of time! My only immediate memories are of the teachers rather than any particular occurrences.

You’re right about ‘Rupert’ [the headmaster] having a permanent slot in the memory - you could hear him at the other side of the school if he was ranting at an unfortunate pupil. I was on the receiving end twice when my hair dared to encroach on my shirt collar above & beyond the regulation 1/8 of an inch! I remember him banning anoraks too, as he didn’t want his Grammar School ‘looking like a holiday camp’!

The only other personnel who are ingrained in the memory are Scraggs, the French & RI teacher who had the most inconvenient stutter for anyone who was trying to convey the niceties of French pronunciation. Woe betide anyone who happened to be in the front row of desks if she left her seat, as they would be showered with spray as she demonstrated some of the more guttural sounds required to speak the language.

Then there was Danny, of course, who, after wheezing & pedalling up Eirias Hill on his bike in the mornings, would fix you with a steely, if cross-eyed stare. You never knew if he was actually talking to you, as his vision was so askew that he would be looking in the opposite direction when he was calling your name.

Fred Pollitt, & his accuracy with a piece of high-velocity chalk, will always have a treasured place in my memory. If you happened to be in his woodwork class, of course, a convenient piece of wood replaced the piece of chalk in his armoury, this, hammering on to the top of your head, was presumably more effective for a close-range assault!
I think Joss & Ma Parry canoodling in the doorway is the only other frequent occurrence which springs to mind.

[Ma Parry, our biology teacher, is reputed to be the grandmother of Jude Law. This is plausible since he was said to have been at her funeral in Bangor and had said how proud he was of her standing in the community].

**BRYN ELIAN SCHOOL**

**LOUISE WEIGHTMAN**

Louise, formerly Gwendoline Louise Dell has her own dance school now. She can inspire others. See how her Colwyn Bay education impressed her. She loves returning to Colwyn Bay with her partner Chantelle and their children to relive the memories of growing up

I was part of the very successful clog dance team and also group speaking - we often won the national eisteddfod - when I was 12, we (the winning team) were invited to join a group of university students who were attending the international eisteddfod at Zvolen, Czechoslovakia - my sister and I were away for nearly 3 weeks touring Eastern Europe - we visited Prague and Zvolen, Budapest, Vienna, somewhere in Holland...... It was amazing! Prague particularly was stunning. The clog dance team was taught by "Taffy" as we affectionately called him, but in class it was Mr Roberts - the Welsh language teacher. He was immensely strict in class but produced a fabulous clog dance team. He also trained the group speakers. As a non-Welsh speaker, it was more difficult to be part of the group, but we must have been good, as we often won at Llangollen! I'm not sure what happened to the team - maybe it fizzled out due to lack of interest....

I had a wonderful time at Bryn Elian 1982 to 1987. My sister was there for longer as she stayed to sixth form - I went on to performing Arts college at 16. My younger brother chose to go to Eirias, where my Mum went many years before. Ironically - her Geography teacher at Eirias High, Phillip Wycherly, became our head teacher at Bryn Elian.

Mum (Gillian Wells at the time) was the daughter of Harry Wells, who was Colwyn Bay Borough Treasurer for many years. When we moved to Rhos in '82, we moved to 12 Llannerch Road West. The house opposite was home to one of Mum’s close school friends - Mavis. I became close friends with her daughter – Abigail nee Morris (now Abigail Woodyear). Mum has many memories of working at the zoo during her teenage years. She worked in the cafe with the round room, lots of windows and a fabulous view, which is next to the penguins (I love the zoo!), she was often left to run it singlehandedly - something which would never happen now!

**Eunice Roberts**

Bryn Elian was a new school when we arrived from Pendorlan and we were eventually the first Sixth Form. Among the teachers I remember were: Mr. Jacks (maths – we did our maths o-level in 12 months and then did a statistics o-level during the following 12 months), Mr. Ifan Lloyd Williams (science), Mrs. Margaret Owen (needlework), Mr. Owen Huw Roberts (Cymraeg), Mr.
David Roberts (art), Mrs. Clark (English), Mr. David Leeder (history), Mr. Bob Morris (history), Mr. Wycherley (geography, I think, and later headmaster), Mr. Gwilym Griffiths (headmaster), Mrs. Grace Thomas (school secretary). My brother Gareth also went to Bryn Elian. Little did I know then that helping Mrs. Clark in the school library at lunchtime would eventually lead to my working at Colwyn Bay Library.

Mr Owen Huw Roberts passed away in August 2018.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

CHILTON PRIVATE SCHOOL, Rhos on Sea

DARLAH THOMAS - remembered as a neighbour

This small school must have opened around 1924 in a semi-detached house on Elwy Road, and was run by John Edward Ellis. The census of 1911 showed that these houses had six rooms (excluding kitchen, bathroom, hall, etc) and as the house was also home to both the teacher and his mother, accommodation for the pupils was relatively small. As a result, a few years after opening, the building was altered to provide more suitable accommodation.

These improvements were reposted in the North Wales Weekly News on 21st August 1930, as follows: The principal of this progressive private school, Mr Edward Ellis, B.A. (Hons), has pleasure in announcing alteration of the premises, provision being made for bright and spacious rooms with single desks. At this school for boys and girls, pupils have the advantage of individual attention in Classics and French at an early age. Mr Ellis coaches regularly in Classics for school and university examinations and with successful results. The school re-opens September 16th.

Mrs Ellis died on 25th March 1943, aged 80 and not very long afterwards the school's closure was announced in the Weekly News of 25th July 1946:

Chilton School closed after over twenty years owing to the retirement of the Headmaster Mr Edward Ellis - presentation made.

My family moved to Elwy Road in 1958. Mr Ellis was still living at Chilton, opposite our house. He introduced himself to my parents and we learned a little about his former life. He was born in Denbigh in 1893 and was the oldest of three boys. Their father John was an engine driver on the railways and all the family was fluent in both Welsh and English. We heard that Edward had been a Greats scholar at Oxford and that he had a love of literature.

While exploring Rhos on our roller skates, as we did freely in those days, aged 9 or 10, my friend Cheryl and I would often encounter Mr Ellis. He would always be dressed in a dark tweedy overcoat, whatever the weather, and would walk, one hand behind his back and the other holding a small volume aloft as he read and walked. He would give us a cheery greeting and read us a phrase or two, and we, I am sorry to say, would skate away giggling. My mother used to chat to him over the garden wall and surprised herself one day by being able to finish, to their mutual delight, a
verse of poetry he was reciting. Mr Ellis was called upon during my early days at the Grammar School to demystify the algebra homework I had been given; I was very grateful.

**CLIVE BLACKBURN**

I was lucky enough to find a former pupil of Chilton House, through John Wilkinson. Clive Blackburn went on to the Grammar School where they were classmates. Chilton House opened in the 1930s with one master, Edward Ellis, a small rotund fellow in his ‘50s. It was said to be a ‘crammer’ to gain entry into Rydal School. There were only ever about 8 pupils there at one time all aged between 9 and 11 years. The subjects taught predominantly were maths – Algebra and Arithmetic and English Literature and Grammar. Two of those pupils attending with Clive Blackburn were said to have been killed during military service. That is Robert Hempel and Peter Scandling who gained the Sword of Honour at Sandhurst. The school motto was ‘Manners maketh the man’.

Edward Ellis died in June 1969, aged 76.

**ARGYLE HOUSE SCHOOL**

I have tried without success to reach the person who wrote on ‘messenger’ and to find out more.

This is what she wrote: ‘Do you have anyone that remembers Argyle House Private School in Greenfield Road Colwyn Bay? It was run by Miss Jones, the Headmistress and when I went there she used to take us on school trips to Ostend in Belgium in the late 1950’s, long before foreign travel was the norm. She took us to Dunkirk Beach and to the Menin Gate, Ypres to see the war graves. It has stayed in my mind all these years as to what a clever lady she was.’

**HELEN CROWTHER (née Jones)**

At ‘Then and Now’ I was lucky enough to meet Helen Crowther who also attended Argyle House School in 1936 and 1937. Helen remembers the late Beryl Russell at school with her and they both became hairdressers when they grew up and eventually left school. Helen trained with Vidal Sassoon.

She had gone on from Argyle House to attend Conway Road School and Central School. While at Argyle House the teacher, who was also the owner was Miss Jones, who had also taught Helen’s mother. The school was relocated to Argyle House, a building near Brompton Avenue but had previously been in a building near Greenfield Road. Other pupils Helen remembers are Bertha Cushel and Harold Westwell, whom she remembers as a blond boy immaculately dressed. He went on to become a brewer. Another classmate Mair Jones lived around the corner.
They learned no Welsh, but French, some of which Helen still remembers. This was perhaps useful since she tells me she has met Prince Rainier and Grace Kelly! She has had an adventurous life and in recent years went to Arizona to discover more about her ancestors who prospected for gold. This she knew from documents she had. This is an inspirational lady, born, schooled and a lifelong resident of Colwyn Bay.

Records of Argyle House School from 1966 to 1969 can be found at the National Archives but has not been digitised. (Reference: ED 172/477/4).

**ST. MARY’S COLLEGE**

**JOHN MEERWALD of Guildford.** John was one of the original pupils at St Mary’s when it was on Dinerth Road

Who knew that this school started out in a different location, and with a different name, and now it does not exist at all!

I started school at St. Joseph’s in Brackley Avenue 1933-1940, then Colwyn Bay County School 1940-1943 and finished up at St. Mary’s College 1943-1946. I joined MOF, the Ministry of Food, in April ’46 until November, when I was summoned to do National Service Nov.46- Feb 49 then returning to MOF in April in Colwyn Bay and transferred to Guildford in March 1950. I’ve been here ever since! My recollections of St. Joseph’s are but few. When I first started I was looked after by one of the big girls, Joan Lunt, who was 5!

When war broke out some evacuees from Liverpool were sent to Colwyn Bay and attended our school using the room next to mine. I recall that at music we used to sing ballads like Linden Lea and the Ash Grove, whilst we used to hear them sing pop songs like ‘Coming round the mountain’. Jealousy abounded! I did my only show on Colwyn Bay pier when Pauline Judge was the town May Queen (1939 I think). I was Sleepy in the 7 dwarfs!

I was always in the bottom end of the class in the county school, so when St. Mary’s opened in 1943 I was no.7 on the school register, only 6 others were older than me. John Turton was the eldest. My step-father paid the fees for me to go there where I was able to have more attention by the teachers (all priests and Irish!) as I was in a class of 8 instead of 35 as in previous school. The first year the teachers were finding their way so we did not do too well in exams but the next year they got their act together and we did better.

One of the boys who was at St. Joseph's and at St. Mary’s with me was James Hodkinson who came top of Denbighshire county in the scholarship (now 11 plus) so he was a bright lad. I understand he was ordained and eventually became Abbot of Downside. I have not seen or been in touch with him since 1946! one other thing; the college was known as ‘College of Mary Immaculate’ until it relocated to Abbey Road from Dinerth Road.
PAUL MORRIS, now lives in Canada

‘When I finished at St Mary’s I was at a bit of a loss as what to do so I applied to one of the three emigrating countries, so we picked Canada. I worked in the oil and gas industry for 27 years had a family, 2 boys and retired.

St Mary’s was a very good school it was run by the OMI’s Oblate Mary Immaculate. The school consisted of 85% boarders and the day pupils. Many were from outside the country, such as Middle East and Africa.

There were about 7 houses to board the students, each one ad a name e.g. St Josephs, and a priest. There were meal preppers and cleaning personnel. I myself used to catch a train from Pensarn then a bus from Colwyn Bay every day. My younger brother went there and my nephew, then it became co-ed. The priests were very good at teaching. We had to take Latin and pick one other language German or Welsh amongst the others. I believe I’ll be making a trip there next Spring (North Wales) for 2 or 3 weeks to see my two sisters and a brother.’

LYNDON SCHOOL

The late HELEN FINCH, from Colwyn Bay Accredited: The Wartime Experience. Cindy Lowe

Helen Finch remembered some disruption to her schooling during wartime and over a weekend in September 1939 the numbers of pupils at Lyndon increased by half again. ‘Desks were rearranged to accommodate the Manchester people and the Jews from Cheadham Hill’. She said, ‘All the teachers were being called up so you had different mistresses, very new teachers were coming here, so when I came to take my school certificate I had to go to boarding school’ Through overcrowding curriculum changed, yet pupils gained a valuable insight of the outside world.

SUE BARRETT (née Hill) - daughter of Mrs Hill, a teacher at Llandrillo Junior School, Lyndon School in the late 1940s / 1950s

Lyndon was a private Girls’ school from kindergarten to O level, run by 2 spinster ladies; Miss Anthony and Miss Withy. Uniform was Royal Blue, including thick, grey lisle stockings, which were much mocked by Grammar School boys!

Miss Anthony was the Headmistress and also taught maths. She ran a very tight ship, in school and out (one girl was hauled over the coals for tarnishing the school reputation by appearing in public with her hands in her blazer pockets!) There was a strong emphasis on religion, and sex was the great unmentionable, to the extent of censoring any vaguely ‘risqué’ words from hymns and Bible readings.
Miss Withy taught various subjects and also cooked lunch for the whole school. She could be sarcastic, but I was very fond of her, and kept in touch with her until her death, taking my children to tea with her in Penrhyn Bay.

There was only one male teacher, Monsieur Verriest, who taught French and could be a bit volatile (he once threw a chair across the classroom in exasperation at the naughtiest girl's behaviour (luckily missed her).

I think it was a good school overall. Academically it held its own, and got good O level results, those of us who went on to the Grammar School for A levels, found ourselves well up to the work (for example, I was the only pupil at the Grammar School in my year and many years previously to pass Latin A level (not to boast, but to demonstrate the standard at Lyndon).

There were good extra-curricular activities; recorder club, a school rabbit club Brownie pack and elocution and spelling competitions. Also, there was an annual trip, for seniors, to Stratford on Avon to see a Shakespeare play.

We did have to travel to Rhyl Grammar School by train, to sit our O levels, as Lyndon wasn’t a registered centre.

There were also no sports facilities on site, so we had to walk to Brompton Avenue tennis courts, to Penrhos College for netball, and to Mochdre, by bus for hockey. For gym (P.E) we went to the Territorial Army drill hall- as teenage girls, it did little for our images when the soldiers occasionally walked through the hall as we exercised in voluminous navy knickers and T shirts! Prize Givings were held at the Pier Pavilion, Welsh was not taught at Lyndon, but for this event we had to learn the Welsh National Anthem, written on a blackboard for us to master phonetically, we hadn't a clue about the meaning!

Lyndon's main school was in Grosvenor Avenue but there was a boarding section in King's Road. I made lots of friends at Lyndon and still keep in touch with 2 after more than 60 years. This refers to Lyndon in the late 1940s/1950s.

**AUDREY PARRY**

I have so many memories of Colwyn Bay. I went to Lyndon School in Grosvenor Rd. in the West End, (the year was 1947) a small private school run by Miss Anthony the head mistress. A very strict lady, but kind too, she did not tolerate bad manners, if you did something wrong you were punished, but if it warranted praise you got praise--looking back it was fair enough. There was also a boarding house in Kings Rd, I can't remember the name which I think has been changed.

In the late 1940's, if my mother was teaching music after lessons I would go back to the boarding house for tea. It was quite austere inside looking back now, very, very basic and we always had bread and butter with a little jam. I'm sure there must have been more, but I don't remember what, and rationing was still quite strict.

We had to wear our uniform properly, which comprised of a navy gymslip and jumper for winter, a royal blue beret for rain, a felt brimmed hat for winter and a panama for summer, how I hated these hats. We were known as 'bluebottles' by other local schoolchildren on the buses we travelled on to and from school. Our uniform had to be bought at Madame Gray's shop in Penrhyn Road. In
those days of the 40’s and 50’s Lyndon was for ages 3 to GCE stage. I was there twelve years, leaving just after my fifteenth birthday, and looking back they were happy years on the whole.

I can remember sweets, butter and sugar still on ration and there was Rowley’s sweet shop just around the corner next to where the Barkers fur coat shop was with Townsends the grocers and Avery Scales a little further along. The trams were still running and a ride on them was a real treat, the Toast Rack being the best.

We played hockey on the playing fields in Mochdre where ‘Williams Glass’ is now and in the fields behind. Netball was down past the Drill Hall (where we did PE) on Princes drive over the railway footbridge along the passage alongside Penrhos School and to the pitch overlooking the sea at the top of the Cayley embankment where houses or flats are now. (It was freezing in winter) Tennis was played on the Brompton Avenue pitches which still exist today.

Getting the bus to school or anywhere really was no problem, they were every fifteen minutes on the Conwy to Mochdre to Tan Lan service M22 was the number of the bus for school.

We had a service at the end of every term at St Andrews Church on Lansdowne Road always taken by Canon Huw Rees, and a special service when it was 25 years after the school was first established, a beautiful stained-glass window was commissioned to celebrate those years. It is just at the back of the church and has the school’s white rabbit on it, which I always took home to care for during the holidays.

Graham Roberts

I went to Lyndon School in the West End when I was 4 years old in 1947. It was a private, boys and girls, school. The Infant department of the school was in a large house called ‘St Michaels’ in Kings Road (the house still exists and the name is still on the gate post) while the primary department was round the corner in Grosvenor Road. We used to walk in a crocodile round the corner to Grosvenor Road for our lunch. We were not taught anything much in St Michaels, it was really a ‘play group’.

Miss Anthony was the headmistress. She was a kind matriarch and the pupils more or less did as they were told. The building still stands next door to the car sales park. At the back of the school building was a large pre-fabricated garage like building in which we ate our lunch and were taught once the lunch tables had been removed.

The lessons were formal, old-style. We sat, sometimes cross-legged on the floor, while the teacher read to us. Discipline was non-existent because we all did as we were told anyway. This was 70 years ago when we assumed that adults knew everything and we naturally obeyed them. There was no home-work.

Children could stay at the school until they were 16, but very few did so. There were perhaps two girls who stayed until they were 16.

There’s a history of the school: ASHWORTH, Ann - Lyndon School 60th Jubilee Booklet, which was privately published in 1993.
RYDAL SCHOOL

The late JOHN WAINWRIGHT,
from ‘Colwyn Bay Accredited: The Wartime Experience’

John was born in Old Colwyn and attended Rydal School during the war years. With the arrival of the Ministry of Food he was one of the boys chosen to remove the furniture when the boys were evacuated to Oakwood Park in the Conwy Valley. It had been a five-star hotel with an 18-hole golf course in the grounds.

‘It was suggested that some of the local boys might like to help with the move so some of us went up there to carry out hotel furniture and carry in desks etc. It was all quite amazing that there was a relatively smooth transition, and with the general ethos of Rydal at the time which was to be helpful to others, and everyone pitched in, the joiners making laboratories out of some of the old buildings, the chaplain scrubbing the kitchen floors, the state of which had reduced the school housekeeper to tears, and everyone doing what they could to ensure the school could start up for the winter term.’

John became a doctor in Colwyn Bay from 1957 to 1985.

GRAHAM ROBERTS

I went to Rydal aged 9 years old in 1952.

It was all boarding and all boys. During the 2nd World War the whole of the Senior School moved out of their premises in Colwyn Bay to Oakwood Park in the Sychnant Pass outside Conway. The Preparatory School remained in Walshaw on Oak Drive. At the end of the War the school moved back into Colwyn Bay and the Prep School moved out of Walshaw (which became a ‘sleeping house’ for the senior school boys) to Oakwood Park.

I enjoyed the freedom of the grounds at Oakwood Park. I, and my new school friends, were very ‘home sick’ for a long time. We had kind parents whom we loved and found ourselves, young boys, with masters who would beat us if we were found talking to one another after 'lights out'.

We were taught well by masters who had been left behind by the war, most of whom were bachelors. The headmaster was Mr Lewis whom we called 'Jaw Bones' because his head looked just like a skull over which the skin had been drawn tight. He had no sense of humour and was unapproachable.

After a year, the Prep school moved into the old Pwllycrochan Hotel at the top of Pwllycrochan Avenue. During the war this was another building which had been requisitioned by the Ministry of Food. I can remember the 'plateau' being dug out of the slope in front of the building. This made the playing of football and cricket possible.

On the last day at Oakwood Park, all the boys in each of the four ‘sleeping’ houses (I was in Turner House) were instructed to tie coloured cotton around their beds, lockers, desks etc; a different colour for each different house. The idea was that when the removal men arrived during the
holidays, taking note of the differing coloured cotton, would place the furniture in the correct place in Pwllycrochan.

There was no health and safety precautions. The main gates were never shut and there were no bars on any of the windows. Corporal punishment continued unabated.

At 13 years of age, we transferred to the Senior School down the road where for the first time we had to wear ‘long’ trousers. On a Sunday we had to wear collar-less white shirt and then attach a stiff collar which we would attach to the shirt with a stud at the back and a stud at the front which bit into our Adams-apples! There were two services on a Sunday at 11.00am and 6.00pm in the school chapel.

The architect, Sydney Colwyn Foulkes designed the Memorial Hall (the chapel) which was completed while I was at school. The original School Chapel became a dining room and is now a library. There used to be a gym in the middle of what is now an open quadrangle.

We each had a ‘sleeping house’ which with the exception of New House and Old House were set apart from the teaching bit of the school. I slept in School House which was up the Pwllycrochan Avenue, which was presided over by Percy Hughes, the school music master.

The teaching years were split up into 5 years: the 4th Form, Shell Form, Fifth Form, Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth. We took our O Levels in the Fifth Form. The idea that I may have to stay in the Fifth Form if I did not pass sufficient O Levels spurred me on to work hard and arrive safely in the Sixth form.

The school was very games orientated. Rugger (the playing of football was frowned upon) was played exclusively in the winter and Easter Terms, and Cricket and Athletics in the Summer Term.

The Headmaster was Donald Hughes. He was a wonderful man whom we all respected. There was no corporal punishment in the Senior School but a system of attracting ‘bad marks’ for bad behaviour. If you accumulated a certain number in a week (I think it was 12) you were placed in ‘detention’ over the weekend.

You were allowed to go home once a fortnight on either Saturday afternoon (after lessons in the morning) or Sunday (after the Chapel service). I never went home on a Saturday preferring to play for the school at rugger either at ‘home’ or ‘away’ at any of the other public schools dotted around North Wales and The Wirral.

The discipline of the boys was left in great part to the School Prefects who also used to sit in front of every class in the evening while the boys did their ‘home work’.

Rydal was a good school; the boys were happy, hardworking and the staff were interested in the welfare of the boys. We left the school well prepared for life in the outer world.
JOE COOPER - now British Ambassador in Seville

While at school in Rydal I spent many hours fishing off the end of the pier but caught very little. I can remember digging for lugworm for bait at low tide but the only thing I ever caught was a couple of dabs (small flatfish if you're not into fishing). I also remember the dance Hall on the pier as a friend of mine was a bouncer there, but I wasn’t a regular as the evenings usually ended in a fight (did you spill my pint?).

Re: Rydal anecdotes, I have many but perhaps the one that stands out is the time I played the cymbals for the Manchester Mozart Players. I must have been about 14 at the time and had always sung in the school choir. We used to do a concert in the Philharmonic Hall in Liverpool every year just before we broke up for the Easter holidays with the girls from the Wirral Grammar School for Girls. We usually sang an oratorio such as Handel’s "Messiah" but my voice had just broken and was at that croaky stage, so I couldn’t sing in the choir.

"Doc" Britten, the school physics master, usually recorded the concerts on an old Ferragraph reel-to-reel tape recorder (I wonder where those recording are now) and knowing that I couldn’t sing in the choir, recruited me as his recording assistant. I remember I had to climb up inside the domed ceiling of the Phil to suspend a microphone over the stage for the recording. We always opened the performance with "God Save The Queen" and on the evening of the performance the orchestra was short of a percussionist to play the cymbals, so they asked me if I would do it. With some trepidation, I said yes and thus began my short but brilliant career as an orchestral percussionist!

I have many more memories of school and of Colwyn Bay which would fill a book. Let me see if I can think of a couple more.

Sunday Schools

Congregational Church, Rhos on Sea

GERALD DAVEY

My mother was quite keen on my going to Sunday School on Sunday afternoons, and sometimes we were taken to Morning or Evening Service at the then Congregational Church (now United Reform Church) in Colwyn Avenue on the corner of Abbey Road. After the War my father’s name was incorporated with others in a Roll of Honour erected in the Church corridor of names of those Church members who had seen active service during the War.

The Sunday School was in the Church Hall on the corner of Penrhyn Avenue. I remember being disappointed when I found the other children's names were on the Cradle Roll hung on the wall of the Infants classroom. It made no difference to me to be told that my name was on a similar roll in the church in Old Colwyn where we had first lived during the early 1930s and that I had been enrolled there, I wanted to see my name on the Roll in the Sunday School not far away in Old Colwyn. I never did get to see it and forgot all about it. The Sunday School was run in the main by a Mr. Hoskins and his daughter Glenys, assisted by some older girls. He was the agent for the
Liverpool and Victoria Benefit Society and I was impressed when calling at his house in Penrhyn Avenue to see the polished brass plaque by the front door declaring who he was.

We had an Annual Sunday School Anniversary Service in the church. One year I had to sing solo a hymn about Samuel’s ear; I never understood the meanings of the words I was singing but did as I was told. We also had the annual Sunday school treat; this more often than not comprised hiring a special tram, which in itself was a very special event to us, to take us to Llandudno. It seemed a long way from the Sunday School, down Penrhyn Avenue, past the toll gate opposite the golf links on the private road owned by the tram company alongside the sea wall, then rising through Penrhyn Bay and up and over the Little Orme and crossing the Glan Afon fields into and through the main streets of Craig-y-don and Llandudno itself to the terminus at the sand hills at the West Shore terminus at Llandudno. We then played around the boating pond and the Lewis Carroll memorial to Alice and the White Rabbit and went into the sand hills and sand dunes for playing and jumping about; a big tea was provided nearby at a café within walking distance, and we all thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon out.

It was also the Sunday School which provided the annual Children's Pantomime; one year I played Buttons opposite Rowena Reynolds as Cinderella and I had to sing the current romantic song 'Near You'. The panto was organised and run by the sisters Helen and Cissie Turnbull whose full-time work was the ladies gown shop on Rhos Road.

For more memories of Rhos on Sea during wartime please go to www.colwynbayheritage.org.uk.

Dancing Schools

Miss Margaret Lacey

AUDREY PARRY

I went to Margaret Lacey's ballet classes and remember her with affection. She put on a show at the Grand Theatre in Llandudno which I was in at about the age of six. I loved to dance.

The pier Pavilion played a large part in my younger days and indeed in school life too, where our Prize Giving was always held each year, and a local dignitary would sometimes attend. The two Miss Guys from 'The Wrens Nest' also visited school on special occasions and prize giving--I think they must have been friends of Miss Anthonys. Also, our Christmas party was held there every year, where we'd be put into houses---Colwyn, Mostyn, Penrhyn and Guy and we'd start by singing the alphabet which had a great tune, it was actually a fun way of learning it, and it didn't take long. Later on, I taught my daughter and grandchildren the same way.

We played games e.g. pass the parcel, musical chairs, musical bumps, followed by jelly and ice cream and party food. Simple pleasures. Every year I would be taken to the pantomime at the pier, it was produced by Bill (bananas) Williams (I think it was Williams) who ran a greengrocers in Old Colwyn. Fantastic pantos, we laughed until we cried.
The Youth Club in Mochdre run by Les Blease was another great place to go and where many of us learnt to jive and rock to the wonderful music of Elvis and Chubby Checker. Great memories.

As I grew up the pier still played its’ part in my life. The Boxing Day Coffee morning dances were wonderful, full of people of all ages dancing and enjoying themselves, having a go at all sorts, such as the Valeta, the Military Two step, Polka, Conga, the Gay Gordons as well as the Waltz, Foxtrot and Quickstep and some rock too. Happy days and even a bus home from the station at 1 10 pm. It was awful when these dances were no more.

Above 'Burtons’ going back from the front almost up to the library was a Snooker Hall with about eight full size tables on the first floor and a dancing school/club at the top run by Harold and Mary Young... a fantastic place for young people in the early 60’s, great times great memories.

José Dixon (née Thomas)

Margaret Lacey was a rather eccentric lady. Her outfits were colourful, and the layers did not always match. Her hair was worn in a rather dishevelled bun, but her bearing was always ladylike (Maggie Smith in the film “Lady in the Van” was very similar to Miss Lacey). Her voice was deep, rough and gravelly. She lived in Wern Cottage in the village of Rowen outside Conwy with her Mother. Margaret loved drama and dance and ran a ballet school that was held in the Metropole Hotel in Colwyn Bay every Saturday throughout the day. The Metropole in those days, (I attended there from 1953 until 1966), had a wonderful sprung dance floor. However sometimes in the summer the Metropole was unavailable, and the dance class would re-locate to the now demolished St. Winifred’s Hotel in Rhos on Sea (currently Harbourside on the promenade on the corner of Colwyn Avenue) which also had a sprung dance floor.

Margaret was an enthusiastic dance teacher, she wanted to pass on the joy and freedom which she herself found in dancing. I first attended her dance classes at about the age of 3. All the little girls taking part wore their best party dresses. We learnt how to point our toes and also the different rhythms of dance by firstly clapping hands and saying little mantras to the beat. For example, the Waltz was ‘I AM SLOW” and the quickstep “I MUST BE QUICK”. I especially remember learning the Polka where the right foot was taken out to the side, stepped on and arched to make a bridge. The left foot then became a train moving to under the bridge. The right foot then moved to the right again as a brake that you stepped on before hopping. I particularly enjoyed the Mazurka, a polish dance in triple time. How about some of these old dances in Strictly Come Dancing. We were all
encouraged to imagine ourselves as dancing fairies, animals or birds, and we learnt to curtsey in the correct manner. Over 50 years later the influence and the memory of her personality remains with me.

Old Mrs Lacey (Margaret’s mother), sat at the side of the dance floor every Saturday watching the dancers. A very patient Mr Fairlie sat at the piano on a little stage at the top of the dance floor playing the appropriate music. This stage can be seen clearly in the photograph of the young dancers posing holding their smart dresses and pointing their toes. Parents often sat around the dance floor as well but quite often disappeared for a cake either in the Metropole itself or to the wonderful tea and cakes on the first floor at Buckleys on Abergele Road, Colwyn Bay.

As I got older I mainly wore black leotard with adjustable belt and black fishnet tights.

She was a good dancer herself and she had many friends in the world of cinema. Mr Roy Boulting (one half of the film makers, “The Boulting brothers”) used to visit her dance classes from time to time although I do not remember his twin brother visiting. One of the highlights of Margaret’s career was appearing in the James Bond film “Diamonds are Forever”. She was only on screen a short while before she was murdered and the body recovered from an Amsterdam Canal.

Margaret used to organise regular concerts at the Prince of Wales Theatre (now Theatr Colwyn) in Colwyn Bay. All the children in the dance school of various ages took part and had costumes made for each sketch in the concert. It was a huge thrill to hear all the parents and friends clapping and to be asked to take a bow.

From the approximate age of 12 years her ballet school pupils were given the opportunity to dance in the various operatic shows in Llandudno. She used to choreograph the dances and we travelled one night a week to Llandudno to practice. The one show that stays in my memory is where four black witches were around a cauldron on the stage. I was “inside” the cauldron and the four older dancers (the witches) lifted me (“The Spirit of the Cauldron”) out of the cauldron. I remember wearing a grey leotard made by a Mrs Stanley who lived in Old Colwyn. On top of the leotard she

Colwyn Bay Memories: Tales Out of School
placed a red chiffon top which was then ripped into shreds to replicate flames. Mrs Stanley, who lived in Old Colwyn, often designed and made the costumes for the various shows.

My Mother often was the “hairdresser” for Margaret before she went on stage to take a bow. Margaret used to visit our house every Christmas morning, usually just before lunch. My Mother always gave her a small Christmas gift. Margaret had a “set route” and called on many people during the day. She had many stories to tell. The one I remember best is about her being on a roundabout in central London in her very old car unable to make her exit. Eventually a large Rolls Royce stopped and allowed her to leave the roundabout.

Margaret Lacey was an absolute “one off”, and writing this makes me remember what a fun and wonderful person she was.

**Miss May Berry**

**LOUISE WEIGHTMAN - Sunday school and dance school**

Mum became Captain of the Boys Brigade which was based at my church- Rhos Methodist. I used to assist with the anchor section - the youngest boys. Rhos Methodist was a huge part of my life - beginning with several years of Pantomime, followed by joining the youth Orchestra, led by Rev Phillip Barnett, plus MAYC, (Methodist Association of Youth Clubs) on Fridays and Sundays, Badminton on Tuesdays and Thursday’s, and of course, Sunday services.....when you add in my dance lessons at Pearl Shaw School of Dance (now run by her daughter, Caroline) which were Wednesday's, Friday's and Saturdays - I led a very full, very busy, teenage life. I was very lucky - I get the impression that current teens don't feel quite the same way?
Scouts

The late GLAISTER GOUGH-ROBERTS, reminiscence of scouting, from a Rhos on Sea Scout, 3rd June 1967

I came across this while clearing my loft. I don’t think I had seen it before. It was among certificates, including Queen’s Scout, and Venture Scout records. I am sure it was a character-building adventure, but I was amused by the detailed reference to food. I don’t know who his companion was, but I hope he finds and reads this.

Fourteen-mile hike

After having finished my Saturday morning butchers round early at 11 o clock, I packed my equipment and food into my rucksack. Then my friend and I set off from Conwy Castle at 12.15pm after having a lift to Conwy. We went along Gyffin Hill and arrived at Henyd at 1.20 pm. We went past a school down quite a steep hill and entered into a small shop to buy some drinks and sweets.

We carried on with our journey past a few fields holding 27 sheep including one with a black head. At about 1.30pm we stopped for our lunch in an old barn containing bales of hay. I had a meat pie, a few sandwiches, and a banana. My friend had two meat sandwiches and an apple. At 10 minutes to two we left the barn and walked towards Roewen or Ro-Wen as some people say. After arriving there we were cold and wet after the shower of rain. We decided to have a cup of tea and entered the ‘Willow café’. We went in at 4.00pm and came out at 4.20pm and walked towards Llwyronn camp site. We turned right past the ‘Willow café’, up a steep hill, turned right by a sign saying [road works]. We carried on farther along that road, past a house and at the end of the road we turned left again up a hill. Llwyronn camp site was on the right-hand side of the road.

After pitching tent, we had a tea of ‘Tom Piper’ stewed beef and oxtail soup. In the evening my friend went down to Roewen to fetch some sweets for us. I stayed behind in order to keep watch over the fire and tent. I then noticed a few boys whom I knew down the field and seeing their neckerchiefs realised it was the Mochdre Troop. We turned in when my friend came back at 10.00pm.

Next morning, we arose at 5.30am and lit the fire which lit quite easily as there were still some embers from the previous night. We then cooked our breakfast which was fried bread and crispy bacon. We broke camp at about 8.30am and climbed up the hill which continued past the camp. We took a pathway leading north west and passed a brightly coloured sign saying that we had not to light any fire as they could be extremely dangerous as there were a great deal of dry twigs and leaves. We ascended this steep zig zag pathway until we reached the top. There was a small cottage nearby. We continued to climb yet another hill until we saw the small church. There were some holidaymakers from Yorkshire there whom we asked the name of the church. They looked in a little book and told us that it was Llangelyn old church. I then realised that this was what the locals called ‘Daffodil Mountain’ because they can pick as many as they want as they grow wild there. The door was unfortunately locked and the keys were down the hill in the cottage.
This church was said to have been built in the year 1350 and it stands 927 feet above sea level. We drew the church and then moved off towards the other church. There was a farm on the way to the other churchyard and a diagram of the farm and church and points of interest on a board on the gate of the farm. We also passed a telephone box. At about 1.30pm we arrived at the other church near a place called Groesffordd. There were a few graves about, but as there was thunder and lightning we could not draw the church in much detail.

At about 3.30 we arrived back in Conwy. I telephoned my father and asked him to meet us in the car at the railway crossing. We then walked to the crossing and there was my father waiting for me in the rain sitting in the car.

Suggestion on how to improve the traffic trouble at present in Conwy

There’s a new bridge which has just been built to help the traffic problems, but now it is discovered that the railway crossing is another great drawback. The new bridge is very useful in allowing dual carriageway through to Conwy, but it has not yet solved the problem. I have noticed that a project to build a flyover over the crossing is in motion, but I feel that an extra bridge across from Conwy to Deganwy would solve the problem, but the cost would be too great.

Comments by Mr K.D. Roberts were ‘the sketch of the old church is very good’

Points to remember for future logs:
1. Draw more thumbnail sketches
2. End your log with a route map.
3. Look up places of interest before you go on a hike so that you can tell others where they are and what places are named, in your case churches.
4. State who you go with on hikes.
5. Draw road junctions and other items of interest.
6. Try to make your log so interesting that others want to borrow it, to make the hike themselves.

**********

I for one would love to go on this trip myself and would love to have discussed it further with Glaister. This was just the start. He was only 15 when he wrote this and went on to travel extensively abroad in his lifetime.

Further Reading

With thanks to Graham Roberts for this reading list.
Some of these may be out of print and difficult to find.

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**THANK YOU**

Cindy Lowe and Colwyn Bay Heritage Group would like to thank everyone who has kindly allowed us to share their memories and photographs here.

If you’d like to share your memories of school days in Colwyn Bay and the local area please use the Contact Us page on our website:

[www.colwynbayheritage.of.uk/contact-us](http://www.colwynbayheritage.of.uk/contact-us)
COLWYN BAY HERITAGE GROUP

Visit our bilingual website to find out more about the group and our current projects: www.colwynbayheritage.org.uk

THEN and NOW

Quarterly meetings at The Station, Colwyn Bay to discuss the history of Colwyn Bay. Visit our website for the dates and topics of these events.

COLWYN BAY MEMORIES eBooks

This is the second eBook in this series. The first, Pier Memories, is also available to download from Amazon or our website.

HERITAGE WALK BOOKLETS

The Group’s bilingual walk booklets are available, free of charge, from Colwyn Bay Library. They can also be downloaded from our website.