

Report from the Secretary and Committee Officers 2023

During the past year your committee has continued working hard to engage with members and to offer a range of activities. We have also endeavoured to ensure the association returns to the pre-Covid calendar of events; we're nearly there.

1. **A review of the Working Party's 2017 Report** was undertaken with points agreed by committee members, some of which have a bearing on the points below. The review document and agreed actions can be accessed here: <https://dynevorrevisited.org.uk/agm-documents/>
2. The **2022 Reunion Dinner** was again held at the Village Hotel with an attendance of 105. People were canvassed as to the time of year preferred for the next Annual Dinner, the results of which showed a clear preference for a spring-time date. A number of members also expressed a wish for the evening to once again include an after-dinner speaker. Keith Ferguson and Jeff Vaughan, with all haste, immediately began planning for the 2023 Dinner, with 6 months rather than the usual 12 to get everything organised.

The **2023 Dinner** took place on Friday 26th May at The Village Hotel; 122 members booked and paid. From comments received, it appears to have been well accepted by those who attended.

There were a few innovations: welcome drinks were provided by the hotel; there was wine on the table, courtesy of the committee, Graham Price a well-known ex Wales Rugby player as after-dinner speaker; beer at the bar. The speaker was courtesy of Alun Griffiths, who offered to make enquiries for next year for Gerald Davies, another well-known ex Wales rugby player.

There is no doubt that members enjoyed the guest speaker, though it is questionable how many would be prepared to pay the likely ticket price if the fee had to be reflected in the cost. It is amazing that so long after the school closed the ODA is still able to attract such a large number of guests.

The move back to the traditional date undoubtedly helped, but it is unlikely that numbers will significantly rise in the next few years without a specific attraction.

There are only a limited number of hotels willing and able to hold such an event. The event is well suited to the current location in all ways, and from the reaction to our needs, and the attention the hotel gave to getting the evening right, it is obvious that our business is valued.

3. The **ODA Lecture** was delivered via *Zoom* in November 2022 by Prof. Peter Kokkelaar and a donation made to the Gower Bird Hospital as a way of thanking him for his time. *Zoom* continues to be used to facilitate communication between members of the ODA and as a means of conducting the business of the ODA. It also allows those members unable to attend meetings in Swansea the opportunity to play an active role in the work of the Association. This year we are planning to hold the Lecture at Dynevor with members having an opportunity to choose to attend in person or via *Zoom*. Although discussions are ongoing with staff at the UWTSD in order to arrange a **Joint Lecture** we regret that it is not yet possible to announce details.
4. **Membership of The Association:** Committee members have continued to work to boost membership, especially with pupils from the comprehensive school era. However, despite significant effort and time spent, little progress has been made. Last year we closed with 461 members, at the time of writing there are 451 members, 2 new, 3 resigned, 2 suspended and sadly 7 deaths.

5. Our use of **Facebook** has been utilised to a greater extent this year, advertising ODA events and highlighting key news items, and has seen an increase in the number of 'followers'. Comparing the number of followers (587) with membership numbers (451), and with 32% female followers compared with 3% female members it shows that there is significant interest in the association and potentially a source of new members.
6. **Mailchimp** is a simple and effective means of delivering targeted email messages to members. Approximately 80% of members subscribe to this service and, over the past 12 months, 19 messages have been despatched to around 400 email addresses, with an impressive 'opening rate' of 63% regularly achieved.
The content of Mailchimp messages essentially focuses on new editions of "TOD", the Association's magazine, and on new events, such as the Annual Dinner, ODA Lectures, and our recently introduced Coffee Mornings which are being well attended.
If you are missing out on these important communications on Dy'vorian matters and wish to subscribe to our Mailchimp service, please contact Secretary, Pam Bashford, on pam_bashford@hotmail.com
7. **The Dy'vorian**: Copies of editions 37-40 that were only available online during the pandemic were printed and delivered to those who requested them.
In the past year the ODA covered the cost of printing editions 37-41 and we are grateful to Prof Ian Walsh, Provost at the UWTSU, for covering the cost of printing editions 42 and 43. He will look at his funding for next year to see if he is able to support us further.
Whilst reducing the cost of printing and postage is important, we intend that printed copies will continue to be available for those that require them.
N.B. In the next few weeks members who wish to access online editions of The Dy'vorian magazine will be required to sign-in; the required password will be circulated to members by email.
8. **The Dynevor Revisited website**: at the time of writing there were 600 sessions in the past 30 days with 2,350 separate page views, 61% of visitors accessed the site on a desktop, 37% on a mobile device and 2% via a tablet. Find Your Years photographs and The Dy'vorian magazines are consistently the most frequently viewed pages on the site. Work is currently underway to update the existing landing page and to make the website easier to access on mobile devices.
In the past year the number of requests for help with research into family members' time at Dynevor has increased. Having website administrators on the ODA committee has enabled us to respond promptly to these requests.
Many photos of former pupils and staff have been added in the past year, and we would welcome your help in trying to date or to identify the so far unknown faces. If you can help us improve our photo archive or have photos of your time at Dynevor please contact us on: findyouryears@dynevorrevisited.org.uk, describing in as much detail as you can the content of your picture(s).
9. **Coffee Mornings** were held in Dynevor Café on a Saturday in February and April for ODA members and non-member Dynevor pupils and staff. The attendance, especially of non-members was encouraging; especially as several are keen to hold more events.
10. The **Golf Day** planned for the 26th May 2023 was cancelled due to a number of unavoidable and unforeseen circumstances. If feasible the event will be organised later this year. Best wishes are extended to Peter Samuel, organiser of the Golf Day, for a speedy recovery after major surgery.

11. **ODA Donations** have been made in the last year:

- a) £1500 to UWTSD students at the Graduates' Summer Show at Dynevor. The President awarded £375 to each of four students who completed the year/course having faced significant challenges.
- b) £500 was donated to each of three local feeder primary schools, St Helen's, Terrace Road and Sea View, with whom the school forged close ties in the 1980s and '90s, the sum to be spent on an activity, visit or guest visitor(s) that would enhance pupils' experiences.
- c) Mixtup, a youth club that provides a support mechanism for young people with different abilities in Swansea, received £100. The young people decided to use the donation to buy a new karaoke machine, replacing a well-used machine that was 'on its last legs'.
- d) £50 was gifted to Gower Bird Hospital, a charity chosen by Prof. Peter Kokkelaar, as thanks for delivering the ODA lecture in 2022.
- e) Belatedly, £50 was gifted to Llys Nini Animal Centre, a charity chosen by Dr John Alban, for a previous ODA lecture.

As Secretary to the association I wish to extend my thanks to committee members for their hard work this past year as well as to those who have helped prepare this report; without you we would not have such a vibrant association.

A special mention must be made of three committee members who are stepping down after many years of service to the ODA.

Keith Evans, as Communications' Officer, has been responsible for writing and posting Mailchimp notices, in the past he has undertaken a number of roles such as Webmaster and supporting our Membership Secretary;

Keith Ferguson, as Annual Dinner Organiser. The amount of work and attention to detail that the role entails cannot be understated, meeting the many challenges especially organising the first Annual Dinner as we came out of the pandemic was particularly demanding;

Francis Morgan, as Editor of *The Dy'vorian*. When Francis accepted the role, he agreed to produce six editions; his final edition this summer will be the ninth. I'm sure you will agree that the quality and content of his editions have been outstanding and exceptional.

All three leave a significant gap on the committee and will be greatly missed. If you think you can offer time to provide support or would like to know more about how you can help, please get in touch with me pam_bashford@hotmail.com or telephone 07799570333.