

OLD D'VORIANS ASSOCIATION

REPORT OF PRESIDENT 2024-25

I took over as President at the annual dinner in May 2024. That event included an after-dinner speech from the former Ospreys Coach, Sean Holley which was both entertaining and informative, including – unusually – a singalong!

The year has passed much more quickly than I had imagined. I have attended several coffee mornings at the School which seem to go from strength to strength in terms of numbers attending. Not all are ODA members but it must be a positive sign that former pupils note these events – whether by word of mouth or Facebook – and take time out to attend them. Hopefully we can carry on offering to hold the coffee mornings. We also had a curry night at the Rose d'Indienne restaurant (owned by a former pupil) which was very successful with promises of follow ups.

In January, I attended visits with former President David Taylor and ODA Secretary Pam Bashford to Crug Glas and Pen y Bryn schools to present cheques to both schools for them to use as they considered fit to promote their excellent work. Crug Glas had a piece of equipment in mind to be purchased with the donation and we were shown an example of how it would help. Pen y Bryn took a different approach with the headmaster deferring the decision on what to do with the funds to the school council which had pupils and staff on it. We are going to be invited back to see what Pen y Bryn have decided to do with the donation.

With Pam I also went to Talking Hands charity in Hafod after this had been suggested as a suitable charity to benefit from an award. We were shown around this remarkable building which has been adapted with activities for children with impaired hearing as well as having a social space for them to meet up. We were made to feel very welcome with the parents and youngsters having questions for us on the ODA and our own educational/occupational backgrounds. Talking Hands were considering using the donation towards a visit to Folly Farm – one of their most popular days out.

I went to Penderyn Distillery for a fascinating tour followed by a short guided walk around the former Copperworks sites. Being a regular visitor to the Swansea.com stadium, I have often wondered what had survived the site clearance in the 1970s and the subsequent creation of the stadium and retail park. The tour by local historians was most informative and revealed that the Landore Social Club was once the ICI offices where a 3 course lunch would be served for the office workers each day. One of the surviving buildings is destined to become a restaurant so more interesting times lay ahead for that part of Swansea.

The Joint Talk with UWTSD was held at the school on 2 October 2024 where we heard from Jo Ashburner about her time and experiences as an innovative entrepreneur.

On 12 March 2025 my immediate predecessor Hywel Davies lectured on the French invasion of Pembrokeshire in the Napoleonic Wars as discussed in his book 'The Last Invasion: war, women and memory 1797-1997' in which Hywel spoke of the concepts of 'fake news' even

in that time. It was an interesting and innovative look at an event which – for many of us – had been shrouded in mystery and folklore until we heard from Hywel.

Sadly in my time as President we have lost several Old Boys, most notably former Presidents Jim Rosser and David Dickinson, and our long-serving and much-admired Treasurer Steve Way. Steve was a pillar of the wider ODA community and a vital member of the ODA committee with his efficient manner and cool-headed approach. We are trying to find a new Treasurer but are conscious that Steve will be a very hard act to follow.

I hand over the reins to Gareth Payne at the annual dinner but will still have the honour of presenting awards to the UWTSD students for 2024-25 which falls after my 'term of office'. It has been most enjoyable being President and humbling to see how local schools and charities support vulnerable young adults and children in the Swansea area.

My thanks go to Pam Bashford for her unstinting work and enthusiasm for the ODA. The role would be impossible without her invaluable help and advice.