

Memorials in Cowbridge Church: **Richard Williams, headmaster of the Grammar School 1919 – 1938**

The chancel of Cowbridge Church contains memorials to six headmasters of Cowbridge Grammar School: Revd Thomas Williams, Revd Daniel Walters, Revd William Williams, Revd JCF Morson, Richard Williams and J Idwal Rees. The latter two, both twentieth-century headmasters, are commemorated in the glass- and wood- infilled arches between the Taynton Room and the chancel.

Richard Williams, a classicist of Jesus College, Oxford, was the first layman to become Headmaster. Having gained the Military Cross in the first world war, he came straight from the Army in January 1919 to take up the post, having been appointed by Jesus College to succeed WF Evans. Apparently, he spent sixty hours in a horse box travelling from Cologne to Dunkirk, and on crossing the Channel to Folkestone he learned that he had ten days to get demobbed, furnish the School House – which was of course unfurnished accommodation, and find staff (two masters, a cook, three maids and a gardener). Revd WF Evans's sister had run the boarding house, but her illness was one cause of Evans's retirement, and he had taken his faithful gardener to St Quintin's in Llanblethian with him when he left.

Richard Williams's career as headmaster, from 1919 to 1938, is one which was marked by continuing improvement in the fortunes of the school. When he started there were 56 pupils, of whom 24 were boarders; by the time he left there were about 220 students, with over 50 boarders. Facilities in the boarding house were also greatly improved. There was only one bath (to be used by headmaster and boys alike) in 1919, but in 1926 a changing room with showers was built at the end of the long corridor (now demolished in preparation for a new building). A new boarding house was established in Great House on High Street (named Franklen House after the donor, Sir Thomas Mansel Franklen). It was Sir Thomas who had the tennis court built, the surface of which is still visible, among the brambles, over the churchyard wall.

As the numbers of pupils grew, so did the need for additional classrooms. This was met initially by renting firstly Ramoth schoolroom, and then rooms in the Cinema; but in 1932, Old Hall was acquired. This property gave a fine white-panelled library, many classrooms, delightful grounds, a grass tennis court which the boys soon converted into a football pitch, and the garden which became the school kitchen garden. This is the site of the physic garden of today.

All these improvements, and the long list of academic distinctions gained by the boys, were the result of unstinting efforts by Williams and the talented staff which he had gathered around him. 'Dick' was always regarded as a strict disciplinarian, with the highest of standards, always aware of the needs of the boys, and always present to support them on the sports field, in dramatic productions and in music: not a bad definition of an ideal headmaster! He had to retire, of ill-health, in 1938, to be followed by another fine man, Idwal Rees.

J Alden

Retrospect : Richard Williams (Headmaster, CGS, 1919 - 1938)
in *The Bovian*, No 134, July 1938

Parallel with the growth in numbers various changes took place in the buildings occupied. The first alteration was the provision in 1920 of an additional bath and the installation of geysers to provide hot water and many excitements; for the gas jets had a disconcerting habit of sending their flames downwards instead of upwards or going out altogether and leaving the expectant bathers shivering. Next in 1921 came the fire escape staircase running from Top Dorm. to outside my study. This involved the alteration of Pritchard's building by enlarging the windows of Top and Little Dorms. and converting one side of the windows into doors. The arrow slit of the Old Sick Room was at the same time enlarged to a full size window. These alterations luckily did not spoil the beautiful view of the buildings from the lawn.

In 1926 many alterations were carried through. The Woodwork room was very considerably enlarged ; the Lab. was doubled in size by the incorporation of the old changing room and for the first time was equipped with modern benches. A new changing room, with shower baths, was provided by carrying the buildings into Council Twt with a furnace room, and book store on the lower level. This addition projected into what had once been the moat of the walled town of Cowbridge; the builders could find no solid foundation and ultimately had to drive piles into the yielding soil. In the autumn of the same year part of the property in the main street, given to the School four years previously by Sir Thomas Franklen, was converted to provide additional accommodation for Boarders, and was opened under the name of Franklen House and the care of Mr. Reid and his sister.

The Glamorgan Water supply reached us just before the end of that same year and enabled central heating to be installed in the School the following term. Since then it has not been possible to roast potatoes or chestnuts in the Schoolroom but the huge chimneys have provided extra nesting places for jackdaws and starlings. An almost greater boon was the electric light that came in the following year, and in that same year the Tally Court wall collapsed into the Churchyard. When the wall was rebuilt, the addition of a central wall and of a new wall on the Church St. side produced a Fives Court. Unfortunately the new game has never caught on and the only use made of the Fives Court is to provide an extra space for soft-ball cricket.

The October of that year saw the School expand beyond the bounds of its old foundations; an extra classroom was sought for and found in the Baptist Chapel Schoolroom five minutes walk away. The following year two rooms were taken in the new Pavilion Picture House which Mr. Mills had built. These provided for two more classes but it took eight minutes to get from the Pavilion to the Baptist Schoolroom and the masters had plenty of walking exercise. Mr. McAdam complained that he found it very difficult to adjust himself to the sobriety of the Baptist Chapel when he had just come from the frivolity of the Cinema.

For three years we laboured under the disadvantage of widely separated and not very suitable rooms, and then our problems were solved by the acquisition of Old Hall with its numerous rooms and delightful grounds. It was in 1932 we first took possession and gradually we took more and more of the building into use, until at the present time nearly every room is occupied. Old Hall also added a grass tennis court to the

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hard court which had been constructed in Franklen House garden in 1928. Now a spacious new Gymnasium, together with changing rooms, and a fine Dining Hall to provide for 150 are almost completed and will be opened next term.

RICHARD WILLIAMS

Address given by the Rev. D. Rhys of Southend at Hastings Crematorium, 25 March 1968.

Rev. 21, 1-7

We are here not to mourn the passing of a truly great figure but to give thanks to God for the life of Richard Williams, one who will not be easily forgotten by those privileged and honoured to have known him & to have been touched by one or other aspect of his many-sided life. As the stone dropped into the pool sends ever widening circles out beyond the centre, so the life of Richard Williams has had its far-reaching influences.

Born in the Principality of Wales his love of Wales never diminished and his spirit was restored by regular visits to that corner of his native land which nurtured his great soul. Early in life there were signs of that which later developed into the keen and penetrating intellectual grasp that characterised his thinking. It was not to be long before his sterling qualities were recognised, on the field of battle when he was awarded the high honour of the military cross for valour, and while still serving in Germany was called to the headship of Cowbridge Grammar School.

There are those more competent than I to pay deserved tribute to the memory of the massive figure to whose mortal tenement we say farewell this day - Richard Williams, Holder of the Military Cross and master of arts. There are those who lived more closely to him over a longer period of time, but in the final analysis he himself might well have felt it only right & proper that the honour of saying these final words should be given to one of his "average" boys to whom the task of translating Periclean funeral orations was to say the ~~last~~ no mean struggle.

Richard Williams's long and distinguished career as an educationist began at Coventry, followed by a short spell at Llandovery, proceeding hence to Monkton Combe, and finally to the headship of Cowbridge Grammar School in 1919. Here he began his real life's work, and from this date it is a story of dynamic and inspiring leadership that forged an educational establishment second to none in the essentials of true learning and character building. There were to be eventually 782 boys who were to owe to this one man the guiding principles that were to rule their lives as adult and responsible members of society.

The best tribute we can pay to this man who still lives in the lasting influence of his character is not the tribute of tears but to live in the memory of his sterling qualities, his massive integrity, lion-hearted courage in the face of adversity and crippling handicaps, his simple kindness and capacity for friendship born of his care and concern for individuals. His own passionate concern for integrity and moral rectitude, his hatred of the slipshod and careless, his meticulous concern for detail and his unswerving loyalty to the school for which he did so much and to which he himself owed so much.

A strict disciplinarian he was called, but he was so only because he truly cared for the boy and did him the honour of expecting the highest of which the boy was capable. Worse than the punishment inflicted was the thought that you had let him down.

There are many today in our country who will remember his unobtrusive and quiet acts of kindness and generosity, recorded only in the Book of Life. So one can thank God that when memories bring tears, that we have immortal hopes as well as mortal memories. He would be the first to say to us today that whatever happens life must go on, and would ask of us that we continue to face life with steady eyes. He would have us remain unconquered by sorrows. St Chrysostom the great preacher of the Early Church used to urge upon his congregation not to sorrow over much as those who have no hope, because too much sorrow is in itself a denial of the hope of the life to come. To have no tears as we say farewell to Richard Williams would be inhuman but we have to remember that beyond the tears there lies the glory. The motto of the great Scottish clan the Armstrongs might well be that of one we remember and honour this day - *Invictus maneo, I remain unconquered.*

To the end he remained a deeply spiritual man, not with the piety that repels but with the catholicity of mind and graciousness of heart that forged strong personal friendships. Of course, we shall miss him, but none more so than Joan and David around whom his life had centred during these many years of his retirement. But you can now always be content in the memory that with you he found great joy, peace and contentment. That your home and garden provided the simple things of life that meant so much to him.

For him now the trumpets have sounded on the other side, and for us his life will remain as an enduring inspiration.

Sursum Corda. Lift up your hearts.

Richard Williams, M.C., M.A., Headmaster of Cowbridge Grammar School, 1919-38.

Hinkley Funeral Service

Telephone: 617

52 Mount Pleasant Road,
Hastings.

OUR REF. 368/9786.MG/LVC.

YOUR REF.

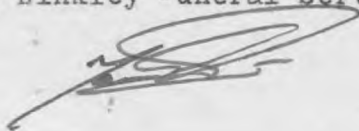
3rd April, 1968

Mr. J. I. Rees,
The Headmaster,
The Grammer School,
Cowbridge,
Glamorgan,
Wales.

Dear Sir,

Following a request from the Rev. D. Rhys of St. George's Church, Southend-on-Sea, we now enclose herewith the notes of his Address, in connection with the funeral of the late Mr. Richard Williams at Hastings Crematorium on Monday last week. These notes were kindly loaned to us, in connection with the local Newspaper.

Yours faithfully,
p.p. Hinkley Funeral Service.



Encs.

Richard Williams

Rev 2111-71

25 March 1968

We are here not to mourn
the passing of a truly great
figure but to give thanks to
God for the life of Richard
Williams, one who will not
be easily forgotten by those
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have known him or to
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other aspect of his many-sided
life. As the stone dropped
into the pool sends ever
widening circles out beyond
the centre, so the life of
Richard Williams has had
its far-reaching influences.
Born in the Principality
his love of Wales never
diminished and his spirit
restored by the sea.

visits to best corner of
his native land which

Do not write
in this
margin

nurtured his great soul.

Early in life there were signs
of that which later developed
into the keen and penetrating
intellectual grasp that characterized
his thinking. It was not to
be long before his sterling
qualities were recognized,

Question
Write on both sides of the paper

on the field of battle when
he was awarded the highest
honour of the military cross
for valor, and while
still living in Germany was
called to the leadership of
Columbia Grammar School.

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2011-10
Do not write
in this
margin

~~March 25th 1968~~

(3)

~~Richard Witham M.C.M.A~~

There are those more competent
than I to pay deserved
tribute to the memory of
the massive figure, whose
mortal tenement we say
farewell this day - Richard
Witham, Holder of the
Military Cross and Master
of Arts. These are those
who lived more closely
to him over a longer
period of time, but
in the final analysis
he himself might well
have felt - tonight

Question.....
Write on both sides of the paper

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margin

(4)

^{to} proper
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 that ~~they~~ were

to become as adult
 and responsible members

(6) ~~(4)~~

of Society

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 much

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To have no tears as we say
farewell to Richard but
would be in heaven but
we have to remember that
beyond the tears there
lies the glory. The motto
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well be that of one we
remember and honor this
day. "Victus non
conquertus" remain
unconquered.

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Write on both sides of the paper

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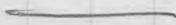
But you can ^{now} be content
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you he found great joy
~~and~~ peace, and contentment.
That your home and garden
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to him.

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have sounded on the other side,

Do not write
in this
margin

and for us his life will
remain as an everlasting
inspiration.

In them Corda- lift up
your hearts



Question.....
Write on both sides of the paper

Do not write
in this
margin