

OBITUARY

Last headmaster, man of principle and dedication IOLO DAVIES – a tribute

GENERATIONS of past pupils of Cowbridge Grammar School and older residents of Cowbridge, will have been saddened to hear of the death of Iolo Davies, the last Headmaster of Cowbridge Grammar School, on Sunday, April 6 in Cheltenham at the age of 89.

Iolo received his secondary education at Swansea Grammar School, as had his predecessor Idwal Rees. From there, he proceeded to Jesus College, Oxford as a Meyricke Scholar to read *Literae Humaniores*, but, as was the case for so many young men of his generation, his studies were interrupted by the Second World War.

As a commissioned officer in the Royal Artillery, he saw active service in North Africa and Italy, and as the war in Europe drew to a close, he volunteered to serve in the Far East.

The abrupt end of that campaign negated such a course of action, and Iolo returned to Oxford to complete his studies.

On graduation, he was appointed as senior classics master at Cowbridge Grammar School and shortly after taking up the post, became a resident master in the boarding house.

Iolo was a born schoolmaster.

His erudition was widely recognised but for those fortunate enough to be taught by him, the quality of his intellect marked him out as no ordinary teacher, though he seemed largely unaware of his gifts.

Indeed, a distinguished professor of Latin, a former pupil of his, went as far as to say in a foreword to one of his many books, that Iolo was the best Latinist he knew.

And the same might truly have been said of his Greek. He had himself written a history of Cowbridge Grammar School, but less widely known is that, in his retirement, he produced an important translation relating to Alexander the Great, which was published on the internet.

Iolo was always at the heart of school life. He organised the Harriers, the cross-country team; he established a society of change ringers based at Llanblethian church; he took camping trips to Llangorse and was always deeply involved in the school play.

Even Iolo's mode of transport was purchased with his pupils in mind, a 12-seater minibus.

Perhaps it was his creation and editorship of 'The Lion', the weekly school magazine that ran for over 20 years without missing a week, that spoke most for his dedication to the school and its pupils.

On the retirement of Idwal Rees in 1971, Iolo was appointed Headmaster of Cowbridge

Grammar School, a post he held until 1974.

This was a period of bitter argument over comprehensive education and the future of education in Cowbridge. Given his commitment to the grammar school principle and to the boarding house, Iolo felt he had no choice but to fight for what he believed in, at whatever personal cost.

When, despite a county-wide petition of many thousands of signatures urging that the school should continue in its present form, the county council decided in favour of establishing a comprehensive school in Cowbridge, Iolo resigned.

For a year he worked on the Talylyn Railway project (steam trains and Talylyn, in particular, were also abiding interests of his), before returning to teaching, briefly in a comprehensive school, and then in the independent sector.

Eventually, he settled in Cheltenham and taught until his retirement at Dean Close School, where he made many friends who, like the boys he had taught at Cowbridge, were constant visitors after his retirement.

His death is foremost a blow to his family, of course, but also to the countless past pupils and friends who mourn his passing, too.

COLIN LEWIS

A MEMORIAL SERVICE

'Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages,
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages.'
(Cymbeline, Act IV)

A SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING FOR THE
LIFE AND WORK OF

IDWAL REES, M.A. (Cantab)

25th July 1910 - 31st August 1991

HEADMASTER OF COWBRIDGE GRAMMAR SCHOOL
1938 - 1971



AT
HOLY CROSS CHURCH
COWBRIDGE

Saturday 30th November 1991
12.00 Noon

As the congregation assembles, there is played on the organ:

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring.....Handel

When choir and clergy are in their places, the minister declares:

We give them back to thee, dear Lord, who gavest them to us. Yet as thou dost not lose them in giving, so we have not lost them by their return.

Not as the world giveth, givest thou, O lover of souls. What thou gavest thou takest not away; for what is thine is ours always, if we are thine. And life is eternal and love is immortal, and death is only an horizon and an horizon is nothing save the limit of our sight.

Lift us up, strong Son of God, that we may see farther. Cleanse our eyes that we may see more clearly.

Let not your hearts be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many dwelling-places; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. (John 14 1-3.)

The organ plays briefly, the minister reads:

THE BIDDING

We are met together to remember, with thanksgiving, Idwal Rees—his integrity and sense of duty; his enthusiasm and energy; his public activity and contribution to this community; his headmastership of Cowbridge Grammar School and his influence on so many young people and his deep concern and interest in their welfare and education. A rich pattern of life is complete, and for its brightness we thank thee, O Lord.

A silence is observed.

The Minister proceeds:

Now, having in remembrance the resurrection of our most blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who by his death has destroyed death, and by whose resurrection the blessed hope of everlasting life has been restored to all who put their trust in him, let us stand to sing the hymn that affirms the truth of the resurrection:

HYMN: 'Alleluia, Alleluia,
hearts to heaven and voices raise.'

1

Alleluia, Alleluia,
hearts to heaven and voices raise;
sing to God a hymn of gladness,
sing to God a hymn of praise:
he who on the Cross a victim
for the world's salvation bled,
Jesus Christ, the King of Glory,
now is risen from the dead.

3

Christ is risen, we are risen;
shed upon us heavenly grace,
rain, and dew, and gleams of glory
from the brightness of thy face;
that we, with our hearts in heaven,
here on earth may fruitful be,
and by angel-hands be gathered,
and be ever, Lord, with thee.

2

Christ is risen, Christ the first-fruits
of the holy harvest field,
which will all its full abundance
at his second coming yield;
then the golden ears of harvest
will their heads before him wave,
ripened by his glorious sunshine,
from the furrows of the grave.

4

Alleluia, Alleluia,
glory be to God on high;
Alleluia to the Saviour,
who has gained the victory;
Alleluia to the Spirit,
fount of love and sanctity;
Alleluia, Alleluia,
to the Triune Majesty.

Christopher Wordsworth (1807-85)

All sit for:

THE FIRST LESSON : ROMANS 8 : 31 - 39

The lesson ended, all stand to sing:

Psalm 121 — "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills".

I will lift up mine eyes / unto · the / hills: from / whence /
cometh · my / help?
My help cometh / from the / Lord: who hath / made heaven ·
and / earth.
He will not suffer thy / foot · to be / moved: and he that /
keepeth · thee / will not / sleep.
Behold, he that / keepeth / Israel: shall / neither / slumber ·
nor / sleep.
The Lord him-/self · is thy / keeper: the Lord upon thy right /
hand shall / give thee / shade;
The sun shall not / strike · thee by / day: neither / shall the /
moon by / night.
The Lord shall preserve thee from / all / evil: yea it is / he ·
that shall / keep thee / safe.
The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy / coming / in:
from this time / forth for / ever-/more.

All sit for:

THE SECOND LESSON: JOHN 5 : 24-29, and 6 : 37-40.

HYMN: "Praise my soul, the king of heaven".

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|---|--|
| 1 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven,
to his feet thy tribute bring;
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
who like me his praise should sing?
Alleluia, Alleluia,
praise the everlasting King. | 3 Father-like, he tends and spares us,
well our feeble frame he knows;
in his hands he gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes;
Alleluia, Alleluia,
widely as his mercy flows. |
| 2 Praise him for his grace and favour
to our fathers in distress;
praise him still the same as ever,
slow to chide, and swift to bless:
Alleluia, Alleluia,
glorious in his faithfulness. | 4 Angels, help us to adore him;
ye behold him face to face;
sun and moon, bow down before him,
dwellers all in time and space:
Alleluia, Alleluia,
praise with us the God of grace.
H. F. Lyte |

ADDRESS: REV. P. COBB, M.A.

The School Choir sings:

"O Iesu Mawr . . ."

Then follow:

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING and INTERCESSION

Ending with:

All: Almighty and Everlasting God, who holdest all souls in life, keep in thy loving care and protection the soul of thy servant, Idwal. Enfold him with thy love; uphold him with thy strength; embrace him with the arms of thy mercy; Keep him ever close to thee, and be thou ever close to him; for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Minister: Grant him, O Lord, eternal rest:

All: And let light perpetual shine upon him.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.

HYMN: "Now thank we all our God".

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| 1 Now thank we all our God,
with heart and hands and voices,
who wondrous things hath done,
in whom his world rejoices;
who from our mother's arms
hath blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love,
and still is ours to-day. | 2 O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us:
and keep us in his grace,
and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ills
in this world and the next. |
| 3 All praise and thanks to God
the Father now be given,
the Son, and him who reigns
with them in highest heaven,
the one eternal God,
whom earth and heaven adore,
for thus it was, is now,
and shall be evermore. | |

BLESSING

Former Grammar School head Iolo is remembered

On Saturday April 28 at 12.30pm a service of thanksgiving and praise was held in The Church of the Holy Cross, Cowbridge, to honour the memory of Iolo Davies, the last headmaster of Cowbridge Grammar School.

The service, organised by the Cowbridge Grammar School Old Boys Association, was attended by some 150 people, including Iolo's family members and a huge number of his ex-pupils, many of whom had travelled from far and wide (even Canada) for the occasion.

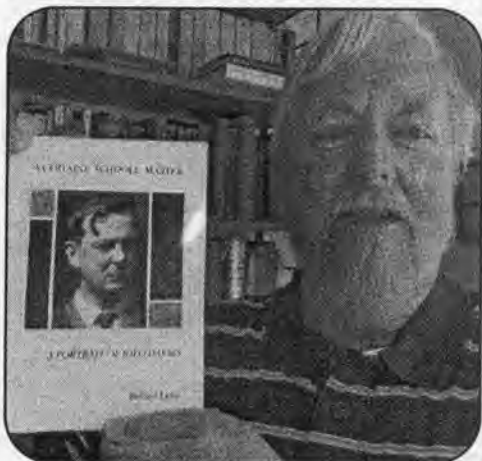
The service concluded with the unveiling and dedication of a memorial tablet to Iolo

in the chancel of the church.

A commemorative lunch at the Cowbridge Leisure Centre completed the celebration of this extraordinary man who, as a teacher, boarding master and finally headmaster, devoted his life to Cowbridge Grammar School until its end in 1973.

To coincide with the commemoration of Iolo Davies' life, a biography has been published, written by ex-pupil and boarder Richard Lewis, entitled: '*A Certain Schoole Master*'.

The book is available direct from the author (contact him on: info@richardlewis-books.co.uk) or from Cowbridge Bookshop, 72 Eastgate, Cowbridge.



Author Richard Lewis with his biography of Iolo Davies.