

BRUIN

Brecon Rotary Update, Information & News

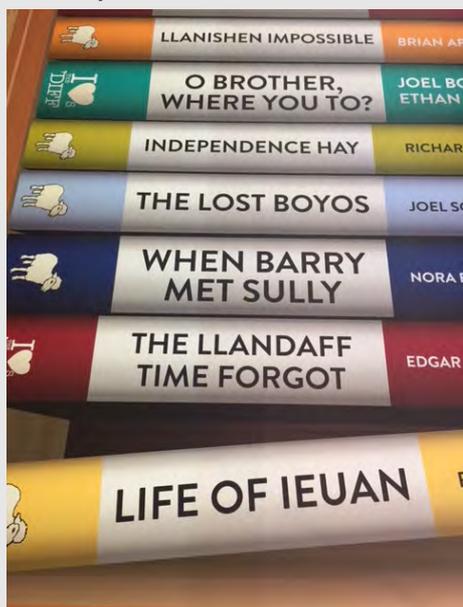
From the Editor's Desk

A very happy New Year to you all and congratulations to **Mike** Evans and **Cath** on their District appointments, Mike as AG and Cath as Community and Vocation chair for 2018/19. We now boast two Club members on the District Executive.

Pursuing the exploration of our surroundings, Melanie and I drove through the New Year rain from Crickhowell to Patrishow to admire the stunning little Church of St Issui, untouched by reformers' zeal, with its intricate wooden rood screen spanning the chancel arch, wall paintings and preaching cross. From there we moved on to Llanthony Priory, quite the evocative equal of Tintern Abbey. After a satisfying Sunday lunch at the Half Moon Inn, we progressed up the Honddu Valley through Capel-y-Ffin, over the spectacular Gospel Pass, quite the equal of the Epynt track from Upper Chapel to Garth, and back to Brecon. The route earns our highest recommendation.

There are fonts, and there are fonts. I'm sure **Peter** would happily expatiate on the singularities of the Brecon Cathedral's massive font, but it was a font of a different kind that led us to Capel-y-Ffin. The hedonistic sculptor Eric Gill lived here from 1924 to 1928, during which time he designed two fonts, Peputua and Gill Sans. To mark this cultural gift from Wales to the world, I'll be setting this and all future editions of BRUIN in Gill Sans, and thereby satisfying my burgeoning patriotic fervour for my adopted country.

Eager to feed the fires of that same fervour, **Brian** Birtles has generously shared with me his library of Welsh classics:





I'd like to invite Club members to send me suggestions of additional titles of Welsh classics such as these to round out my education. I propose to publish any additions to the list I receive from members in the next issue of BRUIN.

Indeed, if members would care to send me any contribution at all, whether or not it bears on my personal development, please feel free to do so. I'd welcome your news and views, notices of personal achievements or milestones, comments and insights to grace these pages.

Tales from the Shed – Part 2



Bargain Hunting

Everyone is amazed by objects that turn up at the Caledonian Market. Why people want to buy them is a further mystery.

Apart from the usual books, clothes, bric a brac and toys, there is always the unusual item that challenges us Rotarians to know its worth and what price to ask, and this is where haggling skills come into play.

Everyone is looking for a bargain; some are looking for that rare item of value that has gone unnoticed.

We were given an old Victorian painting of a rural scene signed and dated by the artist. It looked as if it could be valuable although the person who donated it did not rate it. We did a bit of research into the artist, who was listed with the Royal Academy and whose works had sold for many thousands. Alarm bells were ringing. Had we stumbled across a rare masterpiece?

We put a modest reserve on it but no one expressed interest on the day. The artist originated from Devon and the scene was of Dartmoor. An auction house in Exeter had sold several paintings by this artist, so we contacted the auctioneer who just happened to be a fellow Rotarian. He offered to catalogue the painting in the following sale, but he brought us back to reality by explaining that, though our painting was not a classic, it should achieve a few hundred pounds as the artist had a local following..

The good news was that it sold well above guide price and even better news was that the auctioneer sold it commission free!!!

Another good example of Rotarians helping fellow Rotarians to help others less fortunate.

More tales from the shed next time.

- Gareth

Rounding off the Year



Top Table, Christmas lunch on 18 December



Mike horsewhipped at the start of the Brecon Hunt on Boxing Day. Peta has served as Secretary of the Hunt for many years.

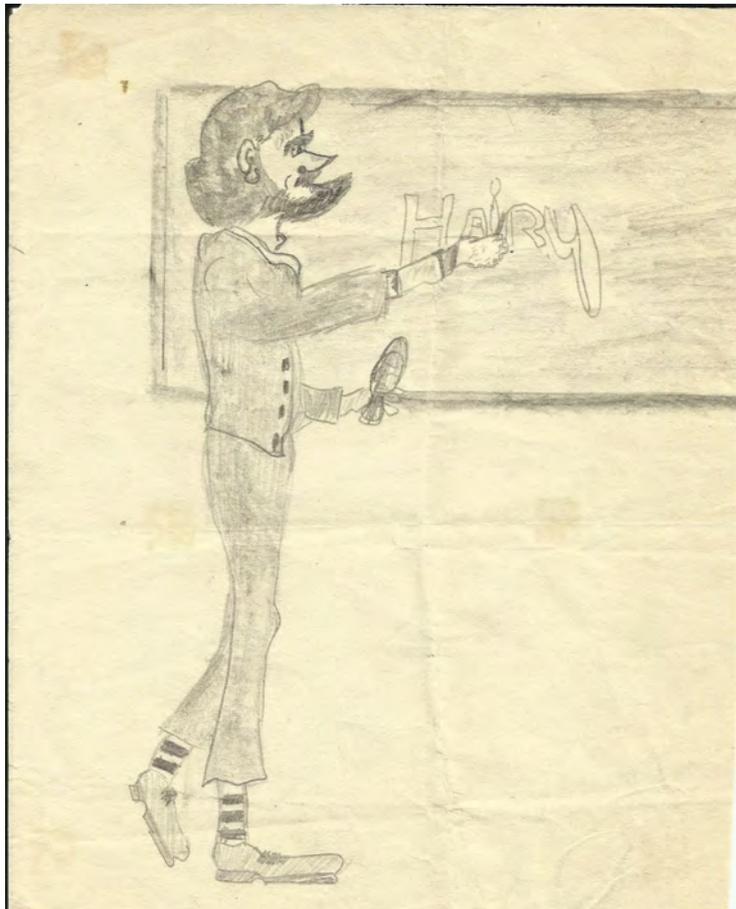


The Rotary Carol Service in the Cathedral, 18 December (**Cath's** evocative photo)

Profile – Roger Reese

Following a typical childhood in the valley town of Newbridge, ie, running wild, causing havoc, playing truant, that sort of thing, it was brought to my attention that I needed to consider my future. This was something that had completely missed my thought processes. Given a choice of being an apprentice or working in the local coalmine, I realised that I didn't fancy either. Of course, they were honourable and respectable options for a valley boy. I decided to opt for an apprenticeship as the thought of being covered in coal dust did not really attract me. After a myriad of interesting aptitude tests and medicals (I still haven't worked out why "drop and cough" was so important!), I secured an electrical apprenticeship at Pontypool Nylon Spinners. Result!

Fate though intervened to foil my plan. For some strange reasons my exam results surprised everyone, including myself, and I was informed by a respected individual, ie, my mate, that it was possible to continue my studies to A level at the local grammar school. This was all news to me and after a few nights of tossing and turning, I decided that perhaps I wasn't yet ready for the world of work. What's more, I could get to wear some really smart clothes including a blazer and look really posh. I felt sure it would raise my girl appeal.



I applied, was accepted and began two enjoyable and eye-opening years that set me on my path to future glory.

After two years of serious study and innumerable romantic liaisons and many broken hearts, including my own, it was time to move on and once again consider my future options. At least this time I was given advice on what was possible and the prospect of college was set out before me. But what did I want to study and where did I want to go? Art was one of my A levels and thinking about my future happiness, as you do, I decided to apply for a foundation course in Art and Design at Newport College of Art, which is

As seen by one of my students during a lesson at Blaenavon in 1977

sadly no longer with us in its previous form. That was a really wise decision as I failed to pass two of my A levels (you can't win them all) but I succeeded in Art. Phew, a close call!

I was then accepted at Newport on a degree course and gained a BA (Hons) in Fine Art. I must admit the 70s were a great time to be a student. Great music, long hair, not having to wash, free love and plenty of demonstrations to go to. Those were the times! It so

happened that during this time I met Ann who, amazingly, still finds me attractive, charming, irresistible and best left alone in the garden.

With a Fine Art degree there were only two realistic career options, 1) be an artist or 2) teach. I opted for teaching as by now I was ready to settle down with Ann and make a valuable contribution to the youth of the country. I duly completed a PGCE at Brighton during the wonderful summer of 1976 and gained my first teaching post at Blaenavon Secondary school. As Dickens says, “it was the best of times, it was the worst of times”. I realised that if I stayed at Blaenavon my career would come to an abrupt end so both Ann and I decided to relocate to sunny Sussex where she became a programmer and I, a humble art teacher at a 2000+ comprehensive school in Crowborough.

I swiftly moved through the ranks becoming an Assistant Head of Year then, after moving to another very large school in Angmering, Head of Art, Faculty Head and Curriculum Leader, finally becoming a Senior Leader and Professional Tutor.

Ann meanwhile had moved on to Project Management at Royal and Sun Alliance in Horsham before changing career to work in adult training.

During my teaching career I continued to produce my own artwork, albeit at a modest rate, selling and exhibiting around Sussex always in group exhibitions. At one such exhibition at the Pallant House Gallery in Sussex, I was awarded the prize for best artwork (I do like blowing my own trumpet!) which was presented by the *Yes Minister* star Paul Eddington, who some of us might remember. Unfortunately, I was not there to receive it as the traffic getting to the gallery in Chichester was so bad that he had been and gone by the time I arrived. That's life.

The move to Brecon was a conscious decision by Ann and myself to do something different with our lives before we are too old and decrepit. Amongst the many interests that Ann has is a love of history, hence her volunteering at the Brecknock and Military museums (she has a History degree from Aberystwyth University).

I now have an opportunity to spend more time on my work, although still not as much as I would like. My work is mainly figurative (realistic) and inspired by the local landscape and town of Brecon. I am currently working on a series of coloured pastel drawings recording the Brecknock Museum before its current redevelopment.

I am the Chairman of the lovely and petite Llangasty village hall and the Chairman of the Llyn Syfaddan History group. I enjoy giving talks on historical themes with a local interest. I am a member of the Brecknock History Forum and a Regional Volunteer for the War Memorial Trust, which supports local communities in the care, maintenance and refurbishment of war memorials throughout Britain.

It is a pleasure to be a member of Brecon Rotary Club and I hope that I can make a modest but useful contribution

Oops, I forgot to say “When I am really bored I garden!”

- Roger



Owen on the move



In a flurry of activity at the meeting on 8 January, **Owen** inducted Richard Walters as a new Club member, and presented a Club certificate to the Castle Hotel in recognition of their support of our Polio campaign.

We offer Owen our very best wishes for the success of his forthcoming 8-week mission to Lesotho, under the auspices of the Welsh government, to assess and offer advice on their treatment of mental health.

Dates for the diary

19 January	Dinner meeting	5 February	Business meeting
22 January	Speaker meeting	12 February	Dinner meeting
29 January	Breakfast meeting	19 February	Fun night
		26 February	Speaker meeting

Speakers

22 January	Julie Williams, Regional Fundraising Manager, Ty hafan
26 February	Katie Evans, report back on Guides grant
26 March	Roy Garnell BEM* on anti-terror duty during the Troubles
23 April	Julian Atkins, new CEO Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
25 June	Rebecca Chamberlain and Gill Colerick, The Stroke Association

Bottle Rota

15 January	Andrew Wakley	12 March	Gareth Griffiths
22 January	Brian Birtles	19 March	Carol Herbert
29 January	Pat Blake	26 March	Howard Hoare
5 February	Hywel Davies	2 April	Bank Holiday
12 February	Terry Dewan	9 April	John Hopkins
19 February	Anthony Edwards	16 April	Owen Hughes
26 February	Brian Ellams	23 April	Anne Ingham
5 March	Mike Evans	30 April	Peter Jenkins