**(YET) ANOTHER REUNION - 2022**

. . . . . If there’s a team mate, then you’ll find him

Like a gravitating force;

With a common understanding

And a beer or three of course;

And as you stand there telling stories

Like it was yesterday old friend;

You’ll know that if you had the chance

You’d do it all again.

You see- that’s the thing about rugby;

It will always be the same

And that, I guarantee,

Is why the hell you played the game! (Traditional)

“The late 1960’s and early 1970’s were spectacular years for Bangor University rugby teams. There were three teams though it was the first team that was particularly successful. Between 1966/71 we played in 4 UAU semi-finals and 2 finals actually winning the trophy in 1970; now, add to this a successful 7’s side playing in the National Competition on 2 occasions. Ironically, given that I am writing this with respect to the death of Queen Elizabeth, several of them also played for North Wales in a celebratory game, in Bangor, against Llanelli, to mark Prince Charles’ investiture as the Prince of Wales in 1969.

The 1st team was definitely a high quality playing unit led by Brian Charnley and Foster Edwards with a variety of top class players. All members of the rugby section, in all teams, however, were also afforded an invaluable social identity within the college which was a major part of the success of the section as a whole.

Our first “rugby” Reunion was held in the St Mary’s block in Lower Bangor on the weekend of September 9th 1995 and since then the first weekend in September has become synonymous for all assemblies. In recent years there have been some mini get-togethers in spite of Covid but this year has marked a full return to form, in attendance, after an absence of three years. I do need to point out here that although these gatherings began as a rugby venture, over the years we were joined by the football section, other sports’ players and, currently, students from the appropriate years; although this year we also had students from as early as 1955.

Over the years sufficient money had accumulated from the alumni old stars to be able to make a donation to the University from which an appropriate “legacy” needed to be devised. This has now materialised as two all-weather-all-purpose table tennis tables situated outside Bar Uno/Ffriddoedd site. The early arrivers on Friday afternoon were greeted by Emma Marshall who announced that we/they were to be the persons to inaugurate the new facilities by way of a table tennis demonstration. I think there is information elsewhere regarding the quality of these games - safe to say that it was enjoyed by all and, hopefully, will be appreciated and enjoyed by future students.

Many thanks must go to Bethan Perkins who, over recent years, has become an indispensable ally in organising these meetings. It is one thing getting people to sign their willingness to return to Bangor but the problem then arises of just what we are going to do with them when they do all arrive.

Despite the inevitable facetious comments from certain attendees these weekends do require more than a modicum of organisation and for this we are greatly indebted to the miracles performed by Bethan and her team. They are solely responsible for the Saturday morning meetings in College which have proven very successful despite the simple brief of obtaining speakers who will interest 50+ ex-students - principally rugby players. For at least the past 10 years we have never been disappointed, and this year was no exception with two young men . . . . . .

Lewis Thompson, President of Bangor students' Athletics Union, gave an outline of today’s University sporting clubs, facilities and achievements

Dr Andy Cooke, Department of Sport, Health and Exercise Science. Andy is the Director of the University's Institute for the Psychology of Elite Performance research group and shared details about his interesting work in the field of performance psychology in various domains (sport, military etc).

 . . . . . giving us updates and innovations on the Sporting activity in Bangor.

What has happened to those simple games of rugby, football and hockey?

Tea and coffee with biscuits were served along with some freebies which are always appreciated.

Despite notification that the talks would be light-hearted but interesting the two speakers could not escape the clutches of Lynn “The Inquisitor” James whose total commitment to football in Bangor never seems to waver.

Whilst our search continues for Lew “Now you see him, Now you don’t!” Hardy, as a possible speaker and Bruce “Scarlet Pimpernel” Lloyd and Vaughan-Davies simply as participants remain problematic, we have NOT yet given up hope.

Saturday afternoon was leisure time for which several groups took a nostalgic walk down to the pier whilst they prepared for the evening and the Reunion Buffet dinner in Bar Uno, on the Ffriddoedd Site, accompanied by the obligatory beer and wine.

During the evening, at great expense, to no-one in particular, we were entertained by Stan “Springsteen” Moore minus the E-Street Band on this occasion though not lacking the style with which we are now all accustomed from Stan who led us all in song. As a token sign of maturity we retired to our rooms a little earlier than once might have been the case,

Sunday morning always provides the opportunity for hasty farewells prior to the reality of a new week but with familiar routines. Perhaps recalling absent friends who had not been able to attend or those who have, sadly, passed away.

Some of us, however, might well be dreaming of the possibility of those rugby scholarships which, apparently, are now available. On the other hand the prospect of becoming an international player of Quidditch might well be uppermost in one’s thoughts of sport in Bangor in 2022 and beyond.

Alternatively, the various forms of Yoga and Martial Arts, which our speakers outlined, sounding very much like a combination of “50 Shades of Grey” and “The Kama Sutra” may well prove to be of some passing interest to the contemporary Bangor student.

*“A friend is one that knows you as you are; understands where you have been; accepts what you have become and still gently allows you to grow.” (Shakespeare)*

Many thanks to Foster and Roger for getting the whole thing off the ground and commiserations to those not able to make the weekend. Although you missed this great weekend don’t let it happen again!”

Best wishes from Brian Charnley.

English/Drama 1966/70; Rugby Captain 1969/70.