

THE LINK

EXTRA

The newsletter of the
Lampeter Society/Cymdeithas Llambed

2013



View of the quadrangle from Frankie Newte's tower. A Lampeter Society funded memorial plaque to Classics Lecturer and Bletchley Park codebreaker F.R. Newte M. A. Oxon. is to be unveiled at the 2013 Lampeter Reunion.

CHESS CLUB: THE FRANKIE NEWTE CONNECTION

THIS BRIEF MEMOIR OF THE COLLEGE CHESS CLUB in the mid 1960s has a link with Frankie Newte as will become apparent. I joined the Chess Club at Freshers' week in 1963 without any real expectation of playing in the College team. However, I was drafted into the side to play Trinity College in Carmarthen within a few weeks, undoubtedly overawed by the sophistication and expertise of the leading players, Dane Young and Martin Thomas (the latter I believe was also Editor of Gownsmen). St David's College won 6-0 and thus started an amazingly successful three year run for the team which played in the Mid Wales League. Other teams in the League included Aberystwyth University College, Aberystwyth Town, Builth Wells, Llandrindod Wells, Newtown and Brecon. It was customary to play in the evenings and for the host team to provide refreshments: SDC's lack of funds meant that we preferred to travel across the length and breadth of mid Wales in order to enjoy the beer and sandwiches provided by our opponents - nearly every game we played was "away" in some of the area's most expensive Spa hotels, but also in draughty cafes with wind and snow whistling around. One such, I believe, was played in Llangurig. My recollection is that SDC's team won the League in at least two of the three years.

Inevitably we needed transport. Some players had cars, some friends such as Bill Kenwright were prepared to act as chauffeur in return for a pint and a pie. And then there was Frankie Newte. Word got around that he was prepared to lend his car to a deserving cause, and luckily he saw the Chess Club as such. The key was handed over, and we were off - invariably overloaded. Initially he had a Morris Minor but eventually this was exchanged for a Mini. I can now admit that we probably doubled the mileage and tested the little car's road holding strengths to the limit but we always got back with the car undamaged! At one point the team included a Philosophy lecturer, a temporary refugee from Skopje University following the earthquake there. His gasp of exultation (or perhaps fear) "So, thees ees a Mini" has stayed with me for nearly 50 years.

Members of the team during this time included Kit Windle, Geoff Davies, Clive Balchin, Cyril Starling, John Simms, Dr Josipovsci, Martin Johnson (?) and Howard Jones (?). I apologise for omissions or incorrect names.

Peter Bosley (1967)
Lampeter Society Vice Chair

MALCOLM SMITH

IT IS BEST TO REMEMBER MALCOLM SMITH as the young, promising History Department senior lecturer in the 1970s and 1980s. Malcolm's lectures on the Second World War were among the best I attended at Lampeter. Later he was responsible for introducing cinema studies into the History and Social Studies curricula as the university expanded. He was energetic and curious.

Malcolm was a friend of myself and my family. My daughter, now an adult with her own children, still has the teddy bear Malcolm brought to her in London when she was two years old. Malcolm was tall, handsome, kind and gentle, and loved by many students, as we all know, in various ways.

We also know that Malcolm's family was visited by grave tragedy. How could such events not have a negative and debilitating effect on

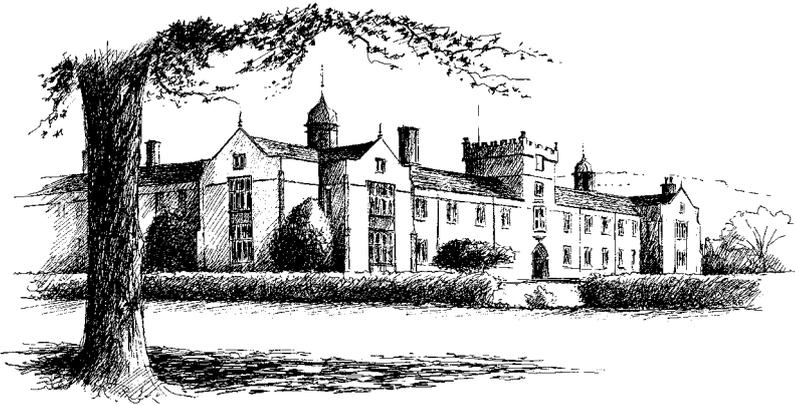
any soul? After a series of mis-steps Malcolm's career was disrupted at Lampeter and never recovered.

I have not seen Malcolm in many years. He was elusive, the darkness never fully lifting. But I prefer to remember his warmth and smile. After my degree exams in 1979 the History Department Chair told me that I had earned a good degree, but was "never in danger of getting a first". In fact I only had one exam paper graded an A. That was the paper on the Second World War, my special subject, taught by Malcolm Smith. I wasn't a very good student, but he was a very good teacher.

May God bless our friend.

Bob Fonow (grad. 1979)

IN SEARCH OF AN ARTIST



initials somewhere in his pictures, but one has to look carefully! Apparently the two views shown here were produced as part of a series of images of Lampeter which were used on information boards around the town as a heritage trail. Mr Blayney generously agreed to the institution freely using the university images, and indeed they are still used by TSD - one appeared on the cover of this year's Saint David's Day Menu.

LINK 2013 ASKED IF ANYONE KNEW the artist responsible for the line drawing of St David's Building reproduced above.

Kevin Evans at TSD, who is responsible for printing the Link, was able to advise that the artist is Robert Blayney who used to teach art & pottery in the early 1980s in Lampeter Comprehensive School. Kevin kindly attached another picture by Mr. Blayney (see right)

He also explained that the artist always hides his



WHO IS S.M.?

The quotation below was spotted on the internet, under the initials S.M. Does anyone know who S.M. is, or might he be one of our readers?

THE BOOK I STARTED TO LEARN FROM at school was *The (or A...)* New Latin Course, which naturally became *A Newt's Eating Coursets*. Nothing remarkable there but it did mean I was unable to take seriously for a while one of my first lecturers at university – F.R.Newte. At first I was too young and ignorant to see

what a great scholar he was but it was later brought home to me when he was dissecting my weekly Latin offering. He opened his Lewis and Short and, on looking up a word, said he did not agree with their meaning of it. I could see copious marginalia in his spidery hand. The secure foundations of my little world shook but it taught me an important lesson – have the courage to be sceptical even in the face of accepted authority.

HONORARY FELLOWSHIP 2012 – DEGREE DAY SPEECH

THE PREVIOUS LINK EXTRA reported the award of a TSD Honorary Fellowship to 1979 Lampeter Honours Graduate Bob Fonow. This year we are happy to reproduce here the remarks he made to the 2012 Graduates who were present when he accepted that Fellowship on Degree Day last year:

Bore Da, Good Morning,

33 years ago, on this same day, July 13, 1979, in this same Arts Hall, I was in your place. And I was wondering "what next"? I didn't have a job and my daughter, Nia Edwards Fonow, was born two months before final exams. But I believed that my degree from Lampeter was special – that it prepared me for any opportunity – or any challenge. Just like you must have felt a few minutes ago, it was wonderful for me also to hear those beautiful Welsh words that received us as members of the University of Wales? That's a significant achievement. But you and I know this: only a select few, only a very few, can graduate from Lampeter and Trinity St. David.

As you heard just a minute ago, I'm a turnaround manager and corporate troubleshooter. I get called when the situation is dire, when companies are deeply distressed and unlikely to survive. And somehow I'm usually able to make a contribution, and save jobs. At least so far – and in many countries.

People sometime ask me how I do this work? Well, I work hard and study hard, but I think it also has something to do with what I call Lampeter and Trinity St. David values.

What does that mean?

First, it has something to do with struggle and self reliance. This institution is nearing 200 years. It has always struggled to survive. At several dark moments the people in charge, and others, have found a way to survive and move forward. Often with very little help. That quality remains part of everyday life here. If you want to perform a play, you produce the play. If you want a sports team, you organize the sports team. Self-reliance is a Lampeter value.

Second, there is a Trinity St. David spirit, founded upon a spiritual foundation, in many ways a very Welsh openness that all beliefs can be practiced without prejudice. Many of you will find this Lampeter value in the Chapel which is in the centre of Old Building, the original College, but others might find it in the prayer room, or the extraordinary beauty of our campus and the surrounding hills, or the friendships that will last a lifetime.

The third Lampeter value is decency: a quality of kindness, consideration and fairness that is inherent in Trinity St. David life. I don't mean a sentimental kindness, or a fake niceness. I mean manners, respect and collegiality.

Today the forces of greed, aggression, and intolerance have gained ascendancy. A winner take all attitude prevails. And every day we hear the bleakest of bleak words: austerity – a word totally without political imagination. These are seductive forces for some people, but destructive to a fair and moral society.

I can tell you from my experience in Iraq, rebuilding the country after the war, more recently in Palestine, and other turnaround assignments, that Lampeter values of kindness, consideration and fairness are much stronger forces.

When you leave here today you may feel that you face an uncertain future. You may. Let's be honest. We are in a serious recession. But this place goes back a long time. You are part of its history now. Let me ask you to reflect for just a moment on the graduates who sat here in the summer of 1914, or the summer of 1939, or the Great Depression and other recessions over many years. They made contributions, and so will you.

Some of you have jobs already, some will go abroad, some will go on to further study. Others, just like me, may have a more difficult time getting started. I came to Lampeter as a mature student, almost 27 years old, after 8 years in the US military, and didn't start my career until I was 32 years old. And it took many years to establish my career. These Lampeter values will sustain you as they have sustained me. With these Lampeter values you will be strong, and with these Trinity St. David values you will succeed!

Now, let me leave you with one last thought.

Do all of us a favour, and go out and get involved. Take our Trinity St. David degree and make the world a better place. Be a credit to our university, be a credit to your families, but most of all, be a credit to yourselves.

Congratulations. Good luck. And have a great life!

Bob Fonow
SDUC BA(Hons) 1979

AN AMAZON AUTHOR

LAMPETER GRADUATE BRENDAN SOMERS (1973) has had an eclectic career including acting both on screen and stage, Actor-in-Residence at a well-known girls' school, writing both screen and stage-plays, practicing as a Thai massage therapist and so on and so forth. His most recent (and merrily lunatic) project is 'The O'Bannion Archives': its protagonist, Seamus O'Bannion, may well be the twentieth century's most bizarre detective!

It is said by some that, because of the intervention of several governmental departments, publishing the book in print form proved impossible. However, as a result of a loophole it was placed on Amazon's Kindle sales (price £2). A free sample can be seen on the amazon.co.uk site and it can be found there by looking for BRENDAN SOMERS or THE O'BANNION ARCHIVES. Meanwhile, a short introduction is reproduced below for the benefit of Link readers.

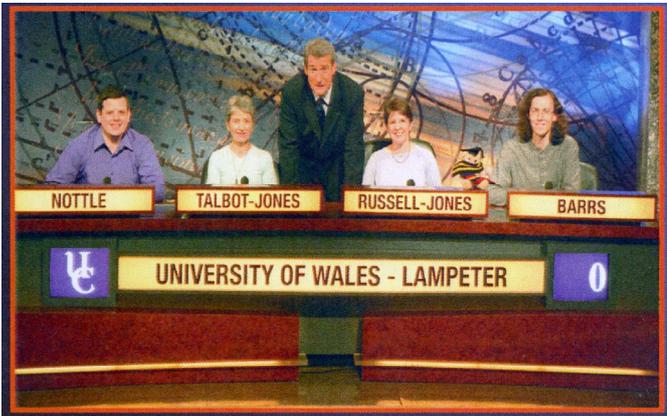
THE O'BANNION ARCHIVES

IN KNOCKNASHEEN, AN ISOLATED VILLAGE in 1920's western Donegal, the headless corpse of Finton Leary is discovered. The village elders seem disinclined to investigate the matter so Sianad, Finton's bedridden sister, decides to contact her old lover, Seamus O'Bannion, who, for the last seven years has been living in Dublin and telling her through letters of his great success as a private detective.

The truth is that for the past six years O'Bannion has not spoken a word and has been a resident patient at an infamous institute for the insane. The institute presided over by a mysterious government official, is run by the dark and ambiguous figure of Dalmaine and his psychotic and homicidal assistant Finlachen.

The letter from Sianad being smuggled in by Deirdre, a prostitute and O'Bannion's only visitor, O'Bannion decides to escape and solve Finton's murder. He takes with him Deirdre and Malachi, another inmate, an unwanted son and abused poet.

O'Bannion's fascination with detection springs from his reading of CRIMES AND THEIR SOLUTIONS a bizarre treatise on detection written by the ephemeral O'Flaherty



Lampeter University Challenge team circa 2005 – Ian Barrs, Alistair Nottle, Ruth Russell-Jones and Jan Talbot-Jones. They beat the University of Exeter but were narrowly defeated – just 5 points! – by the University of Hertfordshire



*F. R. (Frankie) Newte in 1963
[from "A History of St David's College" Vol. 2, by Canon W Price]*



'Nymphaea Coerulea' from Dr Robert Thornton's (1768-1837) 'Temple of Flora, or Garden of Nature' (Roderic Bowen Library & Archives)



An unusual view of St David's Building, showing the VC's offices.