



IN THE LEAD

CYFARTHFA HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2021

No. 4

AWARD-WINNING ANDREW!



Stephens and George Centenary Charitable Trust are delighted to announce that the Trustees have awarded Andrew Millar with a bursary award of a new Apple Computer.

The 14-year-old Cyfarthfa High School student has been volunteering with the Trust for 10 months and has contributed to the charity in a variety of ways.

He designed and produced their new website, made a huge contribution towards the Summer Reading Festival and assisted with their Covid 19 response book and food parcels.

The Trust aims to improve life chances of young people, providing opportunities to aspire and achieve.

Andrew continues to volunteer at the Trust, and is working on a number of exciting projects.

Well done to Andrew for his contribution, efforts and time. He is an inspiration to others and a brilliant example of young people giving their time to help others.

Investing in your child's future

Cyfarthfa High School is still welcoming applications from parents / carers of prospective students for this September's intake to our Year 7.

We provide a first-class education here at Cyfarthfa and take pride in the achievements of all of our students as we strive to be the best school in Wales.

This is your opportunity to ensure your child becomes part of our success story.

If you require any advice or guidance on the process, please contact Mrs H. Canney via email transition@cyfarthfahigh.merthyr.sch.uk or telephone the school on 01685 725222.

We look forward to hearing from you.

FROM THE HEAD'S DESK

The Spring Term has been one of the strangest – and challenging – for Cyfarthfa High School.

But thanks to the combined efforts of our staff and students alike we faced the difficulties of virtual learning from home and continued to provide an excellent standard of education.

Fortunately, as the term came to an end we were able to open our doors once more.

It has never been more gratifying to see students walk back through the school gates.

As this newsletter shows, a great deal has been achieved during the recent term despite the circumstances in which our students were taught.

We look forward to the new term with renewed energy and enthusiasm and hope that it signals the beginning of a return to some type of normality for each and every one of us.

Once again, thanks to all those who worked so tirelessly to overcome the range of difficulties we've encountered. Well done!

**ROD FRANCIS
HEADTEACHER**

School Attendance

Once schools open fully, attendance will be mandatory and our usual rules will still apply. Students should self-isolate if they:

- Have coronavirus symptoms or have tested positive
- Live with someone who has symptoms or have tested positive
- Are a close contact of someone who has tested positive

If your child is unable to attend school you must inform us, giving the reason for any absences. From Monday 12th April, our parent/carer class charts app will have a new function for you to message us directly to inform us of any absences.

Messages will be picked up every morning and logged on our system. All absences need to be reported by 8.30am each day of the absence. Please visit the school website for more information.

If you are unable to notify us of an absence please call 01685 725222.



ONLINE LEARNING SUCCESS

Remote learning became an essential provision during the past year and Cyfarthfa High School excelled despite the many challenges it faced.

Due to the Covid-19 lockdowns our staff and students adapted to a whole new way of learning.

Thanks to various online-learning

software we maintained a first-class education provision for students even while working from home.

The students quickly showed a positive attitude to virtual classes by regularly attending live lessons and submitting online work of a very high standard.

Whether it was providing an online St David's Day Eisteddfod or celebrating Christmas, marking World Holocaust Day or British Science Week, students remained engaged and enthusiastic to learn.

Every department used the lockdown period to fully utilise the online provision available to them, whether it was for a scientific experiment, produce artwork, explore religion or cooking some mouth-watering dishes from Indian to Italian cuisine – and plenty of cakes!

This level of interaction also supported their mental health and helped alleviate feelings of isolation away from the school environment, their teachers and friends.

Staff provided a daily registration for students through Microsoft Teams and there was also a provision for regular pastoral calls when required.



Staff also maintained a close relationship with parents by using Teams for online meetings.

Some of the popular online learning included:

Creating instructional videos on Youtube, the engaging features of Pupil Voice, Class Charts, Microsoft FORMS, Microsoft STREAM, and

BBC Bitesize

Students particularly enjoyed using Kahoot! a game-based learning platform that made it easy to create, share and play learning games or trivia quizzes.

There was also a demand for Mentimeter, which built interactive presentations and created online polls and questions which in turned generated debate in the online-classroom through a chat feature.

Despite this unprecedented period Cyfarthfa High school provided a daily interactive classroom experience which benefited every year group while isolated at home. Staff and students adapted quickly to the changes circumstances and the ability to work virtually has been hugely beneficial.

WORLD BOOK DAY CELEBRATED



World Book Day changes lives through a love of books and reading. At Cyfarthfa High School we promote reading for pleasure, one of the biggest indicators of a child's future. The 2021 World Book Day was different for every one of us because of the Covid-19 lockdown but we still managed to have plenty of fun. We set a challenge for students to take pictures of themselves reading in weird and wonderful places! We also had a prize draw of an Amazon voucher for the "shelfie competition". Students had to match a photo of a book shelf with the teacher they thought it belong to.

We're back in school at last!

Students returned to school this week for the first time since Christmas and it was wonderful to see them back in class!



In December the Welsh Government announced a new lockdown due to the spread of a variant of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since then all students have been learning from home thanks to a range of online resources. Although challenging at times, staff and students have done a remarkable amount of work through virtual learning.

But we all agree that there's nothing quite like being together again in the school and we are delighted to see the students return after three months! On their first day back the students participated in some health and wellbeing sessions before reacquainting themselves with their surroundings, being reunited with friends and concentrating on their work. Let's hope the new term will signal even more of a return to "normality" for us all at Cyfarthfa High School.



Cyfarthfa Connect

Glorious Food!



Some delicious baking took place in food technology with Miss Richards.

Year 8 were busy making blueberry and lemon muffins! They looked delicious!

Science Week

Pupils participated in some fantastic at-home experiments guided by our staff to celebrate British Science Week.

St David's Day

Well done to all of our students who took part in the virtual St David's Day Eisteddfod. It was a great event, even though it took place through the computer screen. Visit our YouTube channel to see the variety of entries.

Alumni

Thank you to all past students who have offered to be part of our Alumni project. We are very grateful and look forward to working with you.

Cyfarthfa Connect

Get Talking!

Are you concerned about your child's communication skills?

Ever worry that as we spend more and more time online they have fewer and fewer skills to support face to face communication? This term we highlighted the importance of talking. We encouraged our families to take some time out of their day to spend time developing pupils' skills by having a meaningful conversations. Recommendations for helping to develop speaking abilities in children during a school lockdown, are given by the Education Endowment Trust.

Reflection Day

Students and staff stood with the community for the National Day of Reflection. The nationwide event paid tribute to all those who have passed away due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The event marked the first anniversary since the first lockdown in the UK in March 2020. The school supported families suffering in their grief by decorating the buildings with yellow ribbons and remembering those who have gone before us during the past year.

Family Liaison Officer



Samantha Edwards works within the Student Support Centre and is always available to offer parents and children advice.

If you would like to find out more of what support she can offer, then contact her direct on flo@cyfarthfahigh.merthyr.sch.uk She will try and answer all of your questions – or find a person who can!

Samantha's office hours are Monday – Friday from 8am to

4pm. You can also contact her via the school reception on 01685 725222.

Educational Psychology Service

An Educational Psychology Service Support Line is now available to offer parents the opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have regarding the wellbeing, mental health or learning needs of their children.

The service will enable parents to access psychological support without having to wait for a school visit.

To access the EPS Support Line contact EPS@rctcbc.gov.uk providing a telephone contact and brief overview of what you require.

Morlais Castle Logo Designers

Our Art Department wanted to share some of the fantastic entries into the competition run by The Morlais Castle Inn.

They asked for Cyfarthfa High School student input into the design of their newest logo. Students have been working hard to produce a series of eye-catching designs for the popular Merthyr venue.





HANNAH THOMAS
@hannahtomasitv

I was asked by my old school @CyfarthfaHigh to post a picture of myself as part of their #InternationalWomensDay ♀ celebrations 😊 Proud to have been Head Girl of the school that spurred me on to forge a career in television journalism #IWD2021 ♀



11:19 · 08 Mar 21 · Twitter for iPhone

1 Quote Tweet 9 Likes

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATES SUCCESS AT CYFARTHFA HIGH SCHOOL

International Women's Day is a global event celebrated annually on March 8 to commemorate the cultural, political, and socioeconomic achievements of women.

It is also a focal point in the women's rights movement, bringing attention to issues such as gender equality, reproductive rights, and violence against women.

Cyfarthfa High School celebrated International Women's Day with an impressive social media campaign which highlighted the success stories of former students.

From beauty therapists to television presenters, police officers to nurses, we are proud of every students' achievements.

Over the next few pages you can see how Cyfarthfa High School helped mould the futures of so many inspiring students. We are very proud of you all!

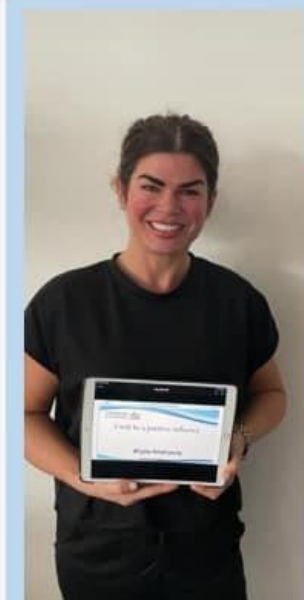
Louise Minett Volkes

School Years at Cyfarthfa
1991-1998

Best Memory at Cyfarthfa.
My favourite memories in Cyfarthfa are always about friendship and laughter with my life long friend Natalie Mcloughlin.

Where am I now?

My pathway in school was to be able to go to University to train to be a Nurse. Whilst in University I realised that, nursing wasn't the right pathway for me, so I changed my mind. My career path led me into the 3rd sector where over last 20 years I have worked with the homeless, clients with mental health issues and domestic abuse. I have done lots of vocational and at home study. The most recent qualification I have gained at age 40 is to be qualified as an IDVA (Independent domestic violence advisor). I have lived and worked in Cardiff but am now living and working in Merthyr. My children are now on their Cyfarthfa journey. I work for a local Charity called SMT. At SMT we believe that everyone should live a life fear free. We support clients who are experiencing domestic abuse regardless of Gender, Sexuality and Ethnic background. The most important thing I can say to current pupils is that, its ok not to know what you want to do with your life at age 16, its ok to change your mind. You can train/re train and still get qualifications throughout your life.



Rhianne Evans

School Years at Cyfarthfa
1991-1998

Best Memory at Cyfarthfa.
Best memory of cyfarthfa was definitely the school production of All Aboard!



Where am I now?



I currently teach beauty therapy in coleg Gwent and have been for 17 years but I also run my own company Bee Beautiful which is based in merthyr and specifically specialises in skin care and is 5 years old. I've recently won a British award for my skin care and the skin products I use have awarded me brand expert.



Louise Evans

School Years at Cyfarthfa
1991-1998

Best Memory at Cyfarthfa.
My first few years in Cyfarthfa enjoying break times and lunchtimes in the amazing castle grounds.



Where am I now?



I'm a Regional Director for Travis Perkins. The Builders Merchant sector is predominantly male led industry so I'm doing everything to turn that around by being the first ever female RD in the South East and only woman on the Senior Leadership Team. I'm currently living in Worthing, just beside the sea which has certainly made lockdown easier.



Carys Davies

School Years at Cyfarthfa
2008-2013

Best Memory at Cyfarthfa.
I have so many great memories of my time at Cyfarthfa and I cherish them all, but one that definitely stands out is organising the first Year 11 prom. It was a lovely way to say goodbye to the school and its staff, especially as my year group was the first to attend sixth form in the college.



Where am I now?



I have a BSc (Hons) in Biomedical Science and a Masters in Cancer Biology and Therapeutics. I graduated just before the pandemic began and I'm proud to say that I work for the NHS in Prince Charles Hospital's COVID-19 lab where I run inpatient COVID tests. Also, since leaving Cyfarthfa I've spent many years volunteering in the local community within both the education and health sectors.
Ultimately, I'm a proud woman in STEM!

I WILL SURROUND OTHER WOMEN WITH POSITIVITY

#CyfarthfaFamily



Sophie Hulbert



School Years at Cyfarthfa
2003-2010

Best Memory at Cyfarthfa.

High School provided me with memories that I forever treasure and there are far too many to only discuss one. Cyfarthfa felt like an extended family and without high school I wouldn't have made the best of friends that I still have today. With inspiring teachers, fun experiences and endless opportunities, it shaped the teacher/person that I am today. Cyfarthfa played a huge part in the success that I have, and my time there, really was the best!



Where am I now?

Currently, in my 7th Year as a Business and Travel Lecturer at The College, Merthyr Tydfil. I am also the WBQ Co-Ordinator at the College.



Heidi Jehu

School Years at Cyfarthfa
2013-2018

Best Memory at Cyfarthfa.

When I took part in the trip to Slovakia to Ski.



Where am I now?



UNIVERSITY OF
BATH



Studying Business at the University of Bath, where I am currently living. In the summer, COVID permitted, I will be moving to London for 6 months to complete my first placement.



Name: Caitlin Newman

Years at Cyfarthfa: 2010-2015

Where are you now?

Student Paramedic



Name: Lois Collins

Years at Cyfarthfa: 2010-2016

Where are you now?

Special Constable



Name: Emilia Scott-Thomas

Years at Cyfarthfa: 2006-2013

Where are you now?

Primary School Teacher at Goetre





Belinda Jane Davies

School Years at Cyfarthfa
1980's



Where am I now?

Belinda joined us in 1990, and spent most of her career in South Wales Police Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. She moved to South Wales Police Cardiff in 2011, becoming Divisional Commander of the capital two years later. In 2017, she returned to Merthyr and RCT to become Divisional Commander there. C/Supt Davies was awarded the Queen's Police Medal in the 2019 New Year Honours for her services to policing. She is a champion of LGBT rights, and has been ranked on the Pinc List of the most influential LGBT people in Wales. Belinda retired from the Police force in 2019.



Hannah Bevan

School Years at Cyfarthfa
2006-2013

Best Memory at Cyfarthfa.
Firstly the experience of going to school in a castle (how many people can say that?) and secondly the experience of successfully achieving my Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award, for the reasons of me being able to connect my passion for outdoors with a challenge of teamwork in the beautiful welsh settings of the Gower and Brecon Beacons.



Where am I now?

After 9 months of undertaking an Executive Lead role with Hockey Wales, I am now back in my main day job of Head of Development at Hockey Wales, an organisation I have worked for since graduating with a Sports Development Degree from University of South Wales in 2016. Outside of work, I am currently settling into a new house that I bought back in November 2020 in Rhydyfelin and in my spare time love going on adventures, finding new walks with my two dogs Maddie and Lola (Pugzus) and generally being around people, including my friends and family.



Charlotte Ridley

School Years at Cyfarthfa
1991-1998

Best Memory at Cyfarthfa.
I have so many great memories from being at Cyfarthfa, my experience as a whole is one I would never change. But one memory in particular will always make me laugh.
For PE in year 7 Mrs Lewis (Miss Watts to us then) had us running around the lake. PE wasn't my strongest subject in school so three of us walked at the back and had a chat. My one friend decided to walk backwards so that she could face us having a conversation and the next thing we knew she was in the lake!! Without thinking I reached in with both arms to pull her out and she was covered head to toe in fish eggs and slime from the lake. Mrs Lewis's face was a picture. A moment in her teaching career I'm sure she will never forget.



Where am I now?

I am currently a Maths teacher at Afon Tâf.

Cyfarthfa is where I met my best friends, my fiancé and where I was inspired to become a teacher myself.





Ceri Showers

School Years at Cyfarthfa
1991-1997

Best Memory at Cyfarthfa.

My favourite memories in Cyfarthfa are school discos, sixth form common room and making fabulous friends. Living in Merthyr.



Where am I now?



I loved Cyfarthfa High so much I'm still there as an LSA. That means I'm a Learning Support Assistant. I help children in school who made need extra support. I'm a proud single mam to two amazing kids who are both a part of the #CyfarthfaFamily.



Sian Bernard-Henderson

School Years at Cyfarthfa
1987-1994

Best Memory at Cyfarthfa

Getting to be a pupil at a castle. How many people can say they were taught in a castle?



Where am I now?



I am Head of RE and Welsh Bacc at Cyfarthfa High School. I am a wife and mum of two.



Amie Lencioni

School Years at Cyfarthfa
1991-1996

Best Memory at Cyfarthfa.

One of my many favourite memories was being at Cyfarthfa Castle, spending lunchtimes in the park with all my pals without a care in the world except for what sweets to buy in the tuck shop (by the bandstand) to eat with my cobb and crisps!



Where am I now?



I am now living in the San Francisco Bay Area and work as an ICU nurse at UCSF Medical Center. I am married and have a 1yr old and 2yr old daughter. My family all still lives in Merthyr and I love coming home as often as possible to visit.



I WILL SURROUND OTHER WOMEN WITH POSITIVITY

#CyfarthfaFamily



Name: Jodie Wall

Years at Cyfarthfa: 2006-2013

Where are you now?

Police Constable with the Gwent Police Force.



Name: Leah and Jodie Jones

Years at Cyfarthfa: Leah; 2009-2014 Jody; 2006-2013

Where are you now?

Leah is currently studying as a student nurse. Jody is a Health Care Support Worker.

Name: Lucy Barnett

Years at Cyfarthfa: 2009-2014

Where are you now?

Owner of Elbe Beauty



I will be a positive influence

#CyfarthfaFamily



Name: Zoe Harding

Years at Cyfarthfa: 2006-2013

Where are you now?

Palliative Care Nurse



Name: Emily McCabe

Years at Cyfarthfa: 2005-2012

Where are you now?

Specialist Children's Community Nurse



Name: Alice Williams

Years at Cyfarthfa: 2006-2013

Where are you now?

Dental Nurse



Kate Williams

School Years at Cyfarthfa
2003-2009

Best Memory at Cyfarthfa.

There are lots of memories to choose from, but I'd have to say every English lesson with my favourite teacher Mrs Mulcahy. She gave me the confidence to be myself, instilled a passion for learning, whilst pushing us all to exceed what we believed possible. Reaching the Welsh schools cup final in football for two years running was awesome too.



Where am I now?

After moving to Yorkshire for university, I've not really left! I live in Sheffield with my wife to be Kathryn. I'm an Ecommerce manager by day, and in my free time I work on my own businesses. My passion is rugby, and after retiring in 2015, I took up coaching. I coach Sheffield Swans girls rugby teams, as well as the inclusive rugby team Sheffield Vulcans. Later on in life, I'd like to return to grass roots politics- I promised Mrs Mulcahy that we would have dinner in number 10.



I will be a positive influence

#CyfarthfaFamily



Louise McCarthy



School Years at Cyfarthfa
1994-2001

Best Memory at Cyfarthfa.

I have really fond memories of my time at both the castle site and Cae-Mari-Dwn, particularly being able to use Cyfarthfa Park during our breaks and buying treats from the infamous 'Tuckie'.



Where am I now?

After leaving sixth form I didn't really know what to do career wise and went to Manchester Met Uni to study a course that I was accepted on by going through clearing. I didn't enjoy it and was back home by Christmas. I had to find a job and heard that the One 2 One call centre was recruiting, so I applied and started there shortly after. I only intended to stay a few months but that was almost 20 years ago. I was able to build a career there and was also able to study part time to complete my degree in criminology and psychology. I've worked in various areas of the business and was most recently successful in securing a role with the corporate affairs team. I also run my own independent travel agency as a hobby and organise various events to help the community.