

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Marie Davies

WYNNE MATTHEWS

Second row. 1961-64. 78 appearances, 19 tries, 3 cons.



WYNNE THEN



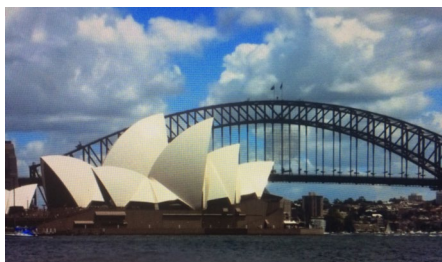
FROM COLWYN BAY...

Today's 'life story' is rather different as it takes us back a long way and only those of 'rather advanced years' among the supporters will remember Wynne playing at Goldington Road!

In February of this year we were forwarded an email from Australia by David Burgess, who is a committee member of the Former Players Association and who edits and sends out the regular newsletter.

The email was from Wynne Matthews who became David's friend in 1961 when Wynne and his wife Barbara moved from Wales to Bedford.

As we didn't arrive in Bedford until 1966 we didn't know Wynne and the main reason he sent this particular email was to ask about some of his teammates from the early 60s. Unfortunately, several of those he mentioned are no longer with us, but we were able to share news of many familiar names like Budge Rogers, Roger 'Tod' Slaughter, Ray Carter, John Cooley, Pat Briggs, Graham Wheeler, Mike Lord and Barry Abrahams. In fact Barry is another of Bedford's players of the 60s who left for a new life in Australia. More of you will probably remember Barry's son Justin who played at Goldington Road from 1998-2001. Justin, his wife Zoe and their daughters returned in the last few years to settle in Australia. Barry and Justin live in Canberra. We met up with Barry in 2003 when we



...TO SYDNEY

went to Australia for the World Cup and he gave us a great guided tour of Canberra. Justin's last visit to Bedford was in December 2019 when he stayed with his close friend James Hinkins and they both paid us a visit.

Now Wynne's story.

Wynne was born in Wrexham in North Wales and although he lived with his Welsh speaking grandparents during the war, English was his first language.

When he was at Colwyn Bay Grammar School a new teacher arrived from South Wales and introduced rugby to the school. Wynne played for the school team and went on to be selected for North Wales Schools' team and also played for Colwyn Bay local rugby club and the Beaumaris club.

He went on to study for his BSc at UCW Aberystwyth University and played for the Uni team, Welsh Universities and UAU. He graduated in 1960.

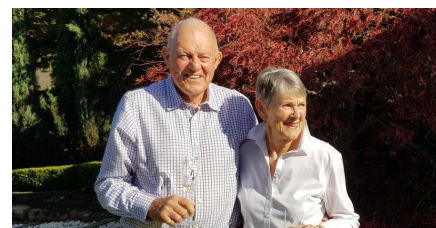
Wynne writes:

'My first job was for a major pharmaceutical company which was based in Welwyn Garden City and I was their representative covering a forty mile radius from Bedford, calling on doctors and chemists.



1963/64 TEAM PHOTO. WYNNE MIDDLE ROW, 1ST ON THE LEFT

My wife Barbara and I went to school together and when we moved to Bedfordshire we lived in Willington. I joined the rugby club and a terrific period of rugby started for me. I met Dave Burgess at the club and a great friendship was born, which has lasted nearly sixty years. Our wives Barbara and Jan hit it off too and became great friends.



WYNNE AND HIS WIFE BARBARA IN THEIR GARDEN

After three great seasons at Goldington Road I changed jobs and was posted to Manchester. From there we went to Lytham and then Warwick.

When I was offered a job in Australia we thought we would give it a try and set off for Sydney with our two young children Simon and Louise.

Initially, it was a three week contract, but we're still here 51 years later!

We live in Sydney, at North Epping on the north side, which is about twenty minutes from Sydney's Central Business District and our children and grandchildren aren't too far away.

In my early 60s I took up golf and I continue to play three times a week in my club competitions. I also enjoy gardening and as we have a large garden that provides plenty of interest and activity.

We used to do a considerable amount of overseas travel which was of great interest. This included making frequent visits to the UK when we always spent two or three days with Dave and Jan Burgess. Needless to say there was always much reminiscing. Maybe when the Covid crisis is over we can travel again!

Looking at Wynne's playing statistics we were impressed that a second row scored so many tries and was also able to kick conversions, but then we remembered he was Welsh! Dave Burgess told us that Wynne was a very skilful player mainly partnering Barry Abrahams or John Bridges in the second row, during his time at Bedford. Dave added that Wynne had an unusual running style with his knees really high which made him very difficult to tackle. Budge was very pleased to hear that contact had been made with Wynne and added that he was 'a very good player'. High praise indeed! Roger Slaughter has often mentioned Wynne (the Welsh connection), sometimes it has been about his rugby skills, but also the social life they shared as a team. He told us to mention the 'interesting' journey to an 'away' game at Leicester to Wynne. Our lips are sealed!

In the next programme we feature three Australians who played for us, but recently returned with their families to settle in their homeland.