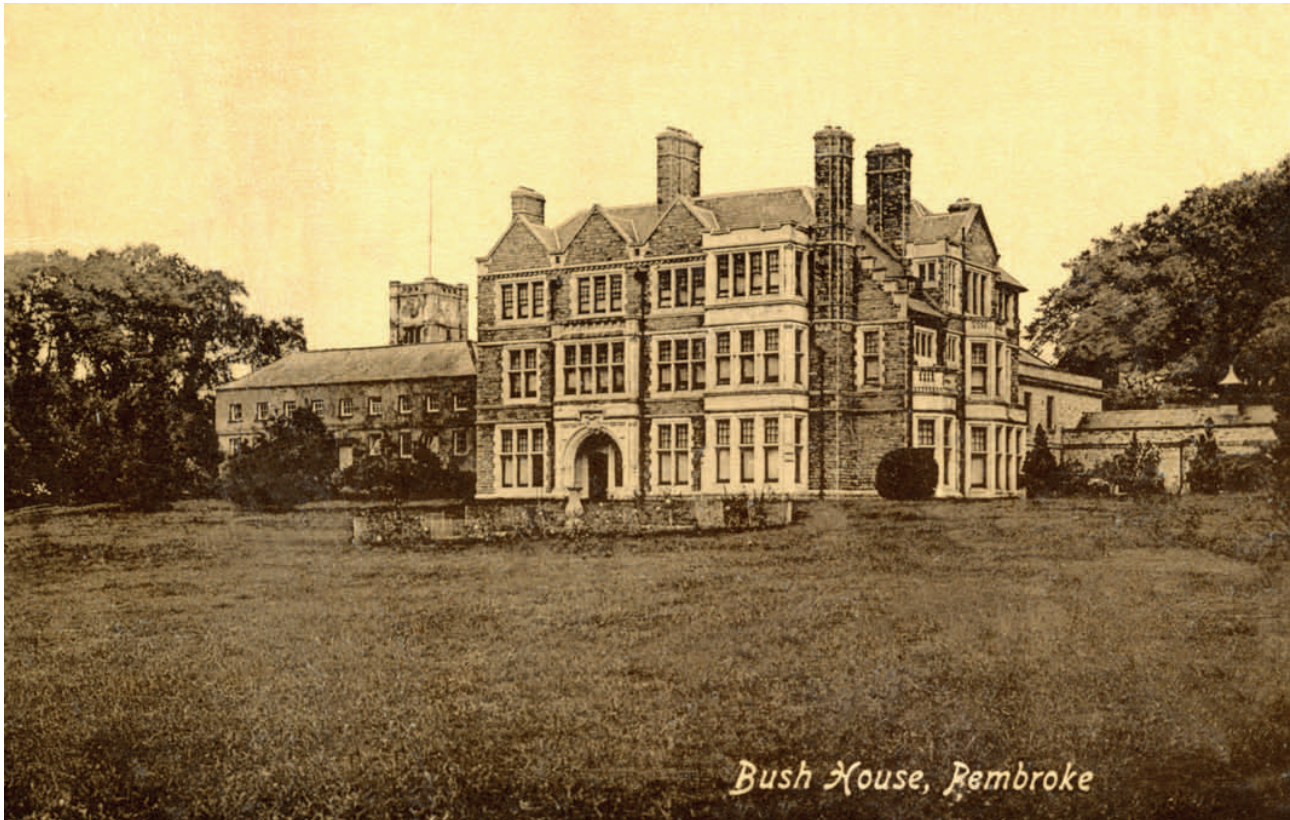


## Ren Hewish 1918 – 2011

*Kate Cartmel, daughter of Ren Hewish has kindly set out for us her recollections of life at Bush House when her father, Ren Hewish was housemaster there. It is certain to revive fond memories for those pupils who stayed at Bush House during Ren Hewish's tenure and those who he taught at Pembroke Grammar School. Our thanks to Kate for providing us with an insight into the place and the man. – The Penvro Team.*



*Bush House in the 1920s*

My Grandfather, Reynell Huyshe was a Captain in the Kings Shropshire Light Infantry, (K.S.L.I) and was posted as Commanding Officer to Popton Fort after he had come home from the First World War. Whilst he was there he met and married Jesse Rees from 70 Meyrick Street, Pembroke Dock. Shortly afterwards my father was born and 5 years later Peter his brother arrived.

They spent a couple of years in south west Ireland when Grandad was posted to Clonmel and then Fermoy during 1918 and 1919. After being discharged from the army the whole family moved to Chipping Campden where he worked in partnership with his step-brother George Hart at the Guild of Handicrafts. Grandad specialized in making silver chalices for the Holy Sacrifice. In 1928 they went to live in Gravesend in Kent where Grandad was Art Master at the School of Art until his death in 1939 aged 44.

By this time my Dad had moved to Southampton to study at the University. His time there was interrupted by the Second World War and Dad enlisted in the same Regiment that his Father had served in. He served in Africa and Burma so the War finished for him slightly later than for most as he had to wait for the Japanese to surrender. Finishing his service in the K.S.L.I as a Captain, just like his Dad.

It was after the War in 1946 that he changed the spelling of his name by Deed Poll from Reynell Price Warren Huyshe to Ren Hewish.

While he waited to be discharged from the Army he was posted to Hereford and it was in Leominster at a dance I think, that he met his future wife, my Mum, Beryl Joan Williams (Bobbie). They married in 1947 and moved back to Southampton for Dad to finish his degree course.

His first job was in Marlborough. He taught Geography at the Grammar School and Mum and Dad lived in a bungalow in the town. When he was offered the post of Housemaster to the Boarding House attached to the School they moved into Wye House. My brother Mark had been born in 1948 and I followed a couple of years later in 1950.



*Ren Hewish. Housemaster at Bush, Ca 1956.*

In 1955 Dad was offered the post of Housemaster at Bush House. His Mother still lived in 58 Meyrick Street, she had moved there after Grandad died. Dad has a passion for boats and all things boat related so it was the obvious move to make. Dad was Housemaster and taught at the Grammar School. Mark and I attended Albion Square School.

We lived on the top floor of Bush House. To Mark and myself it was an idyllic childhood. We had the run of the grounds and woods and when Dad wasn't busy with the Boarders we took a short walk across the fields down to the river for a spot of boating. These fields were edged by electric fencing and I can still remember the 'tick' of the electricity as we walked by. Mark used to try and get me to lay a grass straw across the wire to get a 'kick'. I soon learned not to do that! Sometimes it was just rowing around in a dinghy and sometimes it was out in a motor boat trying to catch mackerel.

I remember being given the tiller of the boat and told to steer towards a chimney on the horizon. In my innocence I thought I had to keep the nose of the boat exactly pointing at that chimney. It wasn't until many years later that I realized I could have gone anywhere on the water as long as it wasn't near the big tankers that frequented the Haven.



*Ren Hewish and one of his favourite pastimes—  
Sailing on Milford Haven*

Mark and I often joined Dad and the boys in the room where the boys did their homework. This was the room that overlooked the side of the house towards the lovely magnolia tree; it may possibly have been a library. I just know we had to be extremely quiet in there; we all sat on high stools facing the walls at a desk around the outside of the room so we couldn't see anyone else's faces and distract them. Often on a Sunday we joined the boys for lunch in the dining room and that was always a treat.

One year John Arlott, the cricket commentator, came to visit. I suppose he must have given a talk to the school and maybe he stayed in Bush House. I just remember being taken into the Common Room to meet him, and was intrigued by his soothing gruff voice.

We had fresh bread delivered to the front lobby and it was my job to take it upstairs. I don't think any of the loaves made it up to Mum without being nibbled on the corners. It was a long way up the 52 steps!

My overriding memory of Bush House is the lovely wood everywhere. Wooden stairs and paneling and wooden floors in all the 'show' parts of the House. Wonderful. Dad's office was the first room on the left as you went into the House in the lobby. We were never encouraged to enter there! On the first landing were large glass topped tables full of fossils. They were a lovely display and I always enjoyed having a look at them on my way up stairs.



Mum's garden was a long way from the House. We had to go up some steps behind the small garage (where we kept our guinea pigs) and along a path until we were level with the roof of the main garages. These garages had glass skylights on a flat roof. Mark ventured onto the roof to fetch a ball and slipped through the glass skylight. Luckily he managed to stop himself falling right through by his elbows and Mum ran on to grab him. If he'd gone through he would have landed on concrete bike stands below and likely would have been killed. I was sent to fetch Dad so I had to run back down the steps, across the yard to the House, and up the stairs to find Dad. No mobile phones in those days. Dad was in our sitting room at the far corner of our flat with some of the senior boys watching a rugby match on television. The lights were out and the curtains were drawn and we as children were not supposed to speak while he was watching a match. It took me a while to get my breath back and to explain to Dad that he was needed immediately and it couldn't wait until the end of the game. How my Mum held onto Mark for so long I don't know. The roof was fairly fragile but between them they managed to pull Mark up and back onto the roof. He had cut his knee and leg very badly and it was many stitches and a long road to recovery but thankfully it didn't leave him with a limp.



*Bush House, Staff and pupils, Ca. 1956.*

Another person I have fond memories of is John Bevan who was Dad's Assistant Housemaster. His rooms were one floor below our flat and I used to go down and watch him shave as he had an electric shaver and Dad used a wet shave. John used to rub his razor over my face to make me laugh. I presume he always put the guard back on before he did this as it never hurt. He came to visit us in Keswick after we moved as he and Dad had got on well together.

John and Mary Hunt were great friends also. John was Farm Bailiff and they lived in the house at the bottom of the hill just on the corner before you turn into Bush drive. John used to take us round the farm to see all the baby animals.

I also remember the wonderful rhododendrons around the front lawns of Bush. Dad used to bring armfuls of them to Albion Square School but I'm not sure what the school did with them. We also had parties and what I suppose were fundraising events on the front lawns.

I remember stalls being set out and sports taking place on the grass. Christmas parties were held in the central hall and very exciting with a huge tree in the corner.

We spent many hours standing on the side lines of rugby fields. I suppose Dad was reffing as I don't think he played much. The main field used was at the top of the hill at Bush by the gate but we also visited Pembroke and Pembroke Dock rugby fields but whether Dad was working or just watching I'm not sure. I remember the Quins being spoken of. I think he also umpired cricket matches through the summer.

There was talk of a ghost at Bush and the Press came to interview Mum. I'm not sure if it was a local paper or the local telly but I know she wasn't pleased with the way she had been portrayed. She was made to look as if she believed in the ghost but really she didn't. I remember waking up and screaming one night after something had floated across my face and startled me. I was convinced it was 'the ghost' but on reflection I expect it was nothing more than a daddy longlegs. One of the gardeners reported that he'd seen a ghost floating across the lawns to the side of the house but that had been a frying pan that Mum had thrown through the window from our flat after it had caught alight.

I don't know if Dad started a Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme while he was at Bush. I know that he started it at Lairthwaite School when he moved there. He was very keen for his students to try all forms of self-advancement and the D.O.E. had been started in the mid-fifties so he may well have tried to bring it to Bush.

Dad had never wanted to teach either Mark or me so when Mark passed the 11 plus we left Bush House and moved to a house on Pembroke Street. Dad astonished the Bank Manager when he said he didn't need a mortgage he would just write a cheque for the house. We rented half of it out to the local G.P. as his surgery. Dad got a job teaching at Greenhill School in Tenby for 2 years and when I passed the 11 plus Dad took a Headship at Lairthwaite School in Keswick, Cumberland. Lairthwaite was a Secondary Modern School and Mark and I attended Keswick Grammar School. Many years later these two schools merged to form one Comprehensive but we had left the area before then. Whilst Dad was at Lairthwaite he had responsibility for starting a boarding school. I presume that is why he was appointed because he'd had a working knowledge of two boarding schools by then.

Our next destination was Chepstow in Monmouthshire. Dad was Head of a large Geography Dept. at Hartridge School in Newport but he never really settled there so he took a temporary position in a School in Gloucester until he was appointed Head of Geography at Chepstow School. He stayed there until he retired in 1983. The previous year Mum and Dad had bought a house in the same village as me and my family in Penkridge, Staffordshire and Dad travelled between Penkridge and Chepstow at the weekends for a few months until the end of the school term in the summer and he could retire fully.

Dad's itchy feet kicked in again when his Mother died in the early 1990s so they moved back to Pembroke Dock and bought a house in Upper Park Street. I thought that would be their last move but in 2002 they came back to Penkridge and Dad finally had to give up boating. I think they realised that it was very difficult for me to give them the time and attention that they required when I lived 4 and a half hours away. My Mum died in 2007 and Dad died in 2011. Mark had died in 2005 at his home in Virginia.

Dad had a wonderful life. His main passion outside the family was boating. We had many boats over the years, some he'd built himself and others that he shared with his brother, Peter.

When he didn't live close to the sea he used to travel back to Pembroke Dock for the summer holiday and spend just about every day on the water. It didn't matter if he was in a dinghy, motorboat or sailing, as long as he was on the water.

Dad also loved to write letters. He wrote at least one every week to various members of the family always using a fountain pen never a biro. Often he put little ditties or rhymes in with the letters, sometimes these had pictures or photos stuck on them especially to commemorate birthdays, or anniversaries. He put a lot of thought into them and they could often cause a tear or two by the recipient. He wrote to each of his four Greatgrandchildren every week. He constructed an A4 size booklet and wrote little captions to pictures he had drawn or cut out of magazines each reflecting the interests of the individual child.

Dad had an artistic eye and often painted little pictures more to amuse himself than anything else but they were very good for an amateur painter and he took commissions and sold a few in a local craft shop when he lived in our village. He worked mainly in watercolours but sometimes turned his hand to pen and ink which I personally think were his best. He also built little wooden boats out of scrap bits of wood or anything else he could find that would float, for his grandchildren. Although we live just about as far from the sea as you can get there are reservoirs nearby and the canals and it was on one of the reservoirs that he used to float his boats. They were built on battleship designs and he painted them battleship grey.



*One of Ren Hewish's Watercolours.*



He also loved his garden and although he didn't have much time for weeding as such he did love trees. A modern estate house does not have a very large garden and I had a constant good natured battle with him to stop him from planting silver birch trees which would have dwarfed the house very quickly.

Dad was a very proud Father, Grandfather, and Greatgrandfather and thoroughly enjoyed his long life.

Kate Cartmel, March 2017.



*Bush House as it is today. Now a Residential Care Home.*