



## History of the Old Buckwellians Association - Part 5 - The 1980s & '90s

Having sold off the 'white elephant' clubhouse for a considerable sum of money in 1975, the phoenix had once again risen from the ashes

For the next twenty three years the OBA continued to function in a state of what might be described as stable equilibrium. Even after the school closed things carried on in pretty much the same way. Membership remained at a few hundred — around 300 by 1999, periodic newsletters were published, annual dinners took place, and AGMs were held.

As far as is known there was never a formal separation of the sporting side. But the football and golf sections carried on effectively as independent clubs from the mid/late 1970s. What difference it would have made if the cohesion of the original OBA could have been maintained is a matter of speculation.



*David Collis (centre) and Trevor Lebentz (right) receive the putter used by JH Taylor Snr when winning the British Open for the fifth time — donated by the great man's son, the former headmaster of BHCHS. This photo was taken at the West Essex Golf Club (Chairman John List, left) in the early 1980s*

In 1988 OBA held a dinner at the school hall as part of BHCHS's 50th anniversary celebrations. The profits from it were subsequently donated to Roding Valley High School – based at the former building of Loughton County High School - into which BHCHS was amalgamated in 1989.



*Three headmasters at the 1988 annual dinner (left to right) : Hugh Colgate, Jack Taylor, Ian Nicholson*

In the early 1990s, when the disposition of the school buildings was being resolved, OBA made a serious attempt to secure a lease on the school playing fields. However when Guru Gobind Singh Khalsa College made a late run on the rails to secure the purchase of the whole site this proposal fell through.

As a result of initiatives by a couple of ex-pupils, the new millennium saw the OBA completely transformed in the space of a few years.

In May 1999 Nick McEwen (1976) had the idea of setting up a BHCHS website to collect photos, get back in contact with others from his year, and provide a means for former pupils to chat about schooldays online.

At around the same time, while on holiday in Cyprus, Graham Frankel (1961) had a Eureka moment and decided to embark on the project of attempting to trace all of the school's five thousand odd former pupils and staff. The opportunity provided by the internet made this a feasible (albeit self-admittedly eccentric) undertaking. Graham soon discovered Nick McEwen's website and a collaboration began. One of Graham's aims was to publish a newsletter for this newly establishing network.

At the time he conceived the idea, Graham had no knowledge of whether the Old Buckwellians Association still existed. He had never joined, but he remembered that his old friend from school, Bill Allan (1961), had been a member.

Graham recalls:

*Bill told me he had not heard anything from the OBA for a number of years, but assumed it still existed because the subscription left his bank account each year. He added, in his inimitable way, that he thought my project was clear proof that I had entirely left my senses.*

As a result of letters sent to local newspapers publicising the project, Graham was contacted by the OBA Membership Secretary Malcolm Beard, who asked him whether he would continue his project under the auspices of the OBA. Graham readily agreed, despite knowing very little about the history of the Association.



Nick McEwen



Brian Hughes

Brian Hughes, after nine years of editing OBA News, was now happy to hand over the job. Graham Frankel produced the first new-look *Old Buckwellians News* in November 1999, of which 420 copies were mailed out. His first editorial decision was to resurrect the BHCHS crest as the Old Bucks logo, replacing the single lion.