

# OLD BUCKWELLIANS NEWS



May 2006  
Number 14

## Relative Success

ONE OF the intriguing aspects of building our network has been to discover the many and varied family links between our members. There were several instances of fathers and sons attending BHCHS. As far as I know, there were no third generation pupils - even though it would have been physically possible!

In recent months our quest to find the remaining 17% of Old Bucks has been helped by several relatives of former pupils - even though they did not themselves attend the school. These relatives may

be easier to find than the Old Buck, particularly if they have a less common first name. So if you know of any relatives of the missing OBs you may be able to help - and it is not important that you had any recent contact with the relative. Of course, male relatives are more likely to be traceable, but that is not always true - name changing on marriage is not so frequent as in earlier years. If you have any ideas I would be pleased to hear from you.

Finally, thanks as always for your support and encouragement and also for contribu-

tions for publication and suggestions for improving OB News.

Graham Frankel



Sidney contemplates kingship. See p 3



Happy prize winner See p 16



Our President marries See p 2



Tourist or worker? See p 9



Valerie and Alan get the keys at last! See p 3

## Inside this edition

Chairman's Corner	2
Old Bucks AGM	2
Bucks Fizz	3
Remembering Chris Giles	4
Reunions and Reassurance	5
Caption Competition	5
Trevor Finds his Niche	6
Crossword	7
Gunpowder Secrets Uncovered	8
Note from Across the Pond	9
Adventures in Epping Forest	10
Boxing Days Remembered	12
Poetry Challenge	13
Birthday With a Difference	14
Datafile	15
Physics vs Biology	16
Gin Corner	16
Caption Competition Result	16
Where are they now?	17
Over and Out	20
Life Begins at 41	20
Name that Teacher	20
Letters to the Editor	21
Crossword Solution	21
Obituary	23

# Chairman's Corner



I'VE JUST returned from a weekend trip to London to meet up with a crowd of my schoolmates and to see Leyton Orient attempt to put out of the FA Cup their second successive Premier League victims. Sadly, in the 90th minute of a pulsating match, Charlton scored the late winner. 6,000 O's Fans bayed their support for their heroes, drowning out the rest of the 22,000 crowd at the Valley.

It was great, as ever, to have an excuse to see my old pals, but really, who needs an excuse? After all, the memories, the loyalty, the friendships, are as strong as ever. Indeed, how many Schools have groups of ex-pupils, let alone Old Boys

Associations, like ours?

But in any event, we offer more chances to meet up as Old Boys in 2006.

One is at the O's home game against Wycombe at the end of March. At the time of writing we expect this could be a crucial match for the promotion hopes of both teams. Many thanks to Barry Hearn for keeping his promise from our 2004 Annual Dinner. Thanks also to Dick Nichols (1962) for sorting out the arrangements for us for this game. We'll give you a full report of the event in the next edition of OBN. (I'll also let you know in due course how our 2005 Speaker, Keith Harris, plans to keep his rash Dinner promise!)

Suffice to say, the 2005 Dinner was up to its usual standard and so well attended that we were virtually at full capacity. Boys: get your orders in early for this year! There is a separate booking sheet elsewhere in this edition.

The AGM looms, if that's the right expression (!) on May 18th at the Houses of Parliament. See below for more details about the arrangements. Our numbers were up last time and we are

hoping that the London location and the grandeur of the venue may tempt yet a few more. You will be most welcome and I look forward to seeing you there. May I extend our thanks to Mike Gapes MP for arranging the room.

I promise that I shall get round once again to putting a short video of the 2005 Dinner on our web-site before too long so that you can enjoy the sight of those ageing school boys once more! Renewed thanks to John Moss (1962) for taking the film.

I still have available some of the much-admired polo shirts featured in the last edition (email me at [alwoods@attglobal.net](mailto:alwoods@attglobal.net)), and OBA ties are available from Malcolm Beard (phone 020 8504 7850).

The Association is in fine form and I send you all my very best wishes.

Alan Woods

## Old Bucks AGM

AS announced in the last edition we shall be holding our AGM this year at the House of Commons. Surely this must be a first for the Old Bucks Association, and we very much hope for a good turnout. We don't have any reason to expect the formalities will take too long, but maybe the surroundings will encourage some healthy debate!

Here are the details.

The meeting will be on **Thursday 18th May starting at 7pm.**

Entrance to the Commons is via the main public entrance (St Stephen's Entrance) which is opposite Westminster Abbey.

Once you have gone through the security procedures (might be worth allowing a bit of time for that) you should go to the Central Lobby and ask an attendant to direct you to **Committee Room 7.**

It would be helpful if you can let me know, preferably by email or by phone, if you plan to attend. This will allow me to estimate how many sets of papers I need to bring.

Also, in accordance with our constitution you need to let me have any formal motion fourteen days before the date of the meeting (and this must be signed by you and a second).

We are unable to have any refreshments in the Committee Room and we have not made any particular arrangements for a post-meeting gathering. One of our members, **Don Morris (1961)**, owns a brasserie about a mile away (The Contented Vine, 17 Sussex Street, Pimlico) and can provide an inexpensive fun supper or a glass or two after the meeting.

Graham Frankel

## Old Buckwellians News



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### Back issues:

(from November 1999) are available from the Editor for £2 each. Discount of 25% if you order five or more!

Cheques should be made payable to the Old Buckwellians.

Please send your news items and other articles for publication to the Editor by email if possible. Original photographs will be returned.

The Editor reserves the right to shorten or otherwise amend items for publication.

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## Trevor's Double Celebration!

WE WERE delighted to learn that **Trevor Lebentz (1946)** President of the OBA, married Karen Walters on 8th October 2005 at Norwich (see photo p 1). Three days after his wedding Trevor celebrated his 70th birthday.

## E-mailing

A COUPLE of points about emailing the Old Bucks Office.

Firstly, please note that I am going to scrap my "Bigfoot" address. Mail sent there should still get through but I will now be using my own domain name for all Old Buck mail. The address to use is:

[graham@genesishr.co.uk](mailto:graham@genesishr.co.uk)

However, if you have my ntlworld address that should be fine too.

Keeping up with changes of email address can be quite a challenge. We now have almost 1,900 email addresses on the database. If you use email and I don't have your address yet, please let me know it: I send out occasional communications either to specific year groups or more generally where it is not feasible to use "snail mail."

# BUCKS FIZZ

News and notes about Old Bucks

## 1945ers Reunions



"R" Stream visit the old school. Front (l to r): Ron Fulford, Allan Charlwood, Vic Lindsey, Dickie Doe, Bill Banks. Middle: Tony Webster, Alan Thomas, Eddie Gold, David Johnson, Peter Oliver. Back: Bill Matthews, Ian Dunbar, Peter Forrest. Photo: Geoff Harrington

In the May 2005 edition of *OB News* we announced the intention of two separate groups of 1945 vintage Old Bucks to hold reunions coinciding with visits to the UK of some far-flung members. Both reunions were successfully held during the summer.

Geoff Harrington reports on the "R" stream event:

*On Sunday 10 July, I was one of fourteen Old Buckwellians who met to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their joining the school in September 1945. We were all members of the 'Remove' stream, and, although*

*several of us had kept in touch over the years, there were also those with whom all contact had been lost for 50 years or more. The reunion was held at the Prince Regent Hotel at Woodford Bridge which provided an excellent leisurely lunch. Afterwards, we made a nostalgic trip to Roding Lane where we had made arrangements for a photo session on the school steps. It was a wonderful day, full of reminiscence and nostalgia, and we all look forward to celebrating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015.*

See page 5 for Bill Waller's report on the "A" stream reunion. There is a photo of this class taken in 1948 on the BHCHS web site.

## Days at Sea

**Alan Day (1946)** and wife Valerie unexpectedly found themselves at the centre of media attention just after Christmas, as a result of their marathon queue for that most desirable of residences....a beach hut.

*Photograph on p1 published with permission from Bournemouth News & Picture Service.*

## Pete's Coup

I have got used to hearing praise and appreciation for our website, and we are continually grateful to **Pete Berrecloth (1976)** for his working in improving and maintaining our site. But perhaps the greatest accolade he could receive is to secure new contracts for similar work. So I was delighted to hear recently that he has been commissioned by none other than **The Old Bancroftian Association** to design their site. Needless to say, if they get any new features that we would also like we know just the man to ask!

## Close Call

One of our overseas members who didn't get to the 45ers reunion last year was **Colin Keleher** who lives near New Orleans, perilously close to the devastation caused by the hurricanes last September. Colin wrote:

*Thankfully, we were far enough away from the eye and high enough above the storm surge to escape serious damage. We lost some tree limbs and were without power and phone service for a couple of days, a minor inconvenience compared to folks to our west. My son, his wife and our granddaughter live in up-town New Orleans. They had the good sense to evacuate. This is my fourth hurricane experience and, although it made landfall further away than any of the others, it still ranks in the top two. This is as close to paradise as you can get so we'll stay and survive the next one!*

## Joe Lifts More Medals

It's great to hear that former pupils are still notching up sporting achievements. **Joe Lampshire (1985)**, who featured in the last edition of *OB News*, has had further successes in Powerlifting, with an individual bronze medal representing Great Britain in the Western European Games in Spain in August. This was followed by a silver medal for GB in the Powerlifting Commonwealth Games in September.

## Birthday Bash

**Stephen Wright (1946)** had a 70th birthday party with a difference. He invited more than 100 friends to join him at an amazing day on the South Bank including a trip on the London Eye, a meal at the Royal Festival Hall, and a silent film with a live orchestral soundtrack. Among the invited guests were around 20 Old Bucks and their wives. Some of Stephen's guests are shown in the photo below.



Some of the guests at Stephen Wright's birthday celebration. L to r: John and Marion Delfgou, Mike Meddings, Alan Day, Rosemary Meddings, Ray Caswell

## Will Stancer weds



Congratulations to **Will Stancer (1984)** who married Sarah Bolton at Port Isaac, Cornwall on 24th September 2005.

Will's father, **Dave Stancer (staff 1965-89)** tells me that the happy couple honeymooned in Kruger National Park SA and then on to Mauritius. Will is a Senior Staff Engineer working for Qualcomm in Farnborough. He heads a team of graduate engineers writing software for future generations of mobile phones. Sarah is a Staff Nurse in the A&E department of the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading.

## Exploding the Legend

Explosives expert **Sidney Alford (1946)** appeared on TV in November blowing up a replica of the Houses of Parliament. ITV's £1 million documentary - *Exploding the Legend* - set out to see what would have happened if Guy Fawkes had evaded detection. This disproved the previously held belief that damage would have been limited. If the conspirators had been successful the upward blast would have killed King James and everyone else in the House of Lords. Those of us who live near Hemel Hempstead need no further convincing.

The photograph on page 1 of Sidney (described in some reports as "TV's favourite blower-upper") was an unofficial shot taken by his son just before blowing up James II while contemplating whether he might have made a better king himself.



## Bucks in New York

**Chris Kay (1962)** (above, right) recently held a party in New York to mark 25 years of living and working there. One of those who came along to help him celebrate was **Mike White (French 1963-65)** who taught Chris at BHCHS.

# Remembering Chris Giles

By Cathy Giles

ON August 5th 1975, Christopher Giles drowned aged seventeen. He had just finished his Lower Sixth year at BHCHS.

Chris entered BHCHS in September 1969 as a first year in IZ. He was a very talented horn player, an exceptional musician and consequently played a prominent role in school music. Also in his year were three

I quote from the prologue: My children have often asked me what Chris was like, yet whenever I have tried to describe the multi-faceted, interesting and unique character that he was, I feel I have fallen far short of the sum of him and have failed to illuminate the influence and impression he had on everyone who knew him during his short life. He is but a shadow to the people who came into my life after his death, the part of me that connects with my brother remaining obscured. I wish it

portrait of the family in which he lived. He died thirty years ago. One of my tasks has been to try to contact people who knew him well. My research led me to the amazingly comprehensive, interesting and informative BHCHS web site. Thanks to Graham, I have been able to make contact with several ex-pupils and staff from the years when Chris was at BHCHS. I would be



l-r Cliff Oliver, Simon Mansfield, Martin Koch, Andy Williams, Martin Wheatley, Chris Giles, Michael Maxwell (teacher), Brian Harper, Ian Theodoreson. Three boys on right in front: Neill Cotton, Jeremy Dibble, Ian Brown.

other particularly gifted musicians: Martin Koch - now very well known and highly respected as an arranger/composer/MD, his recent major success being *Billy Elliott*; Martin Wheatley - now a specialist of Trad Jazz, working professionally as a guitarist and banjo player; and Clifford Oliver, who played violin, viola and piano at BHCHS - an instinctive musician who could sit at the piano and improvise tunes by ear. He subsidised his student grant by playing the piano in pubs, but decided in the end that it was no way to earn a living. He now works as a computer programmer.

I am Chris's sister, Cathy Giles. My twin sister, Isabel, and I were his only siblings. Eighteen months ago, I started to write a book, the theme of which is Chris's life.

were not so. Could writing offer a fuller, richer representation of him and allow others to gain some insight into who he was? I soon realised that I couldn't write about Chris in isolation. This is therefore also a biography of the first part of my life and my sister's: a tale of three siblings.

As I started on the canvas of our childhood, I found I had to colour in some historical background to explain why it was that my father, mother and her mother were all living under the same roof when my sister and I, and then Chris, were born. It hadn't happened by chance. Their childhoods and experiences of life before we were born had established their attitudes, influenced their beliefs and were brought to bear upon our upbringing. I couldn't adequately relate the nature of our childhood without reference to theirs.

The book is therefore not only about Chris, but is a

very interested to hear from anyone else who has memories of Chris - do you recall any of his jokes? Strange or amusing things that happened? Did anything about him make a particular impression on you? - or even recollections of that era at BHCHS - anecdotes, descriptions of masters and so on. I would be particularly delighted to find more photographs of Chris.

I am very grateful so far for the generous contributions from Steve Cladingboel, Martin Wheatley, Martin Koch and Cliff Oliver. Thanks also to John Rippin, Ross Pearlstone, Nigel Bielby and to Graham Frankel. I may be contacted through Graham or you may email me direct at [cathy.giles@ntlworld.com](mailto:cathy.giles@ntlworld.com)

## More News

### Sports Day Records

Were you involved in athletics at BHCHS during the 70s or 80s? I plan to publish a feature on school athletics records. While I have got plenty of information about the first 30 years of the school's history the next 20 are a bit more of a problem (mainly because of the demise of the *Roding mags*). I suspect that the information I need may be gathering dust in attics somewhere and if you can help at all please contact me.

### Frank Silver

Congratulations to **Frank Silver (Staff 1970-85)** who has been elected as Mayor of Dunmow from May. We were sorry to hear that Frank's son **Keith Silver (1969)** has been seriously ill recently.

### Panoramic Photos

We are grateful to **John Rogers (1965)** for discovering that three of the negatives from the whole school photographs taken by *Panora* have somehow made their way to the Greater Manchester County Records Office. They can supply prints from these negatives at a cost of £37 (including post and packing). The photos they have were taken in **May 1975, May 1979 and April 1982**. For more information or to order one of these photos contact them at: [archives@gmcro.co.uk](mailto:archives@gmcro.co.uk)

We do not have any information relating to the equivalent negatives from other years, but most of the original long photos have now been scanned and are in our own archives.

### Dad at 71

Congratulations to **Peter Hollyer (1944)** and his wife on the birth of their daughter in August 2005. Peter tells me this is not a record, having been upstaged by Messrs Chaplin and O'Connor. But it is interesting to note that his baby daughter is a great aunt to the grandchildren of Peter's brother **Alan Hollyer (1950)**.

### Linguist

**Andy Durling (1974)** has recently been elected as a Member of the Institute of Linguists. Last year he undertook some historical translation work for a lady tracing her German ancestors which involved him writing a 6,000 word history paper. If any Old Bucks need any help in German or French translating, interpreting or tuition Andy will be pleased to help.

# Reunions and Reassurance

By Bill Waller (BHCHS 1945-50)



The 1945ers "A" stream reunion group - with wives

A REUNION is what School is all about! Whether you are going to meet all those friends you so easily discarded x number of years ago, or whether you are simply going to do a Charles-Atlas-ad on the one class-mate who made your life a torture, a reunion will have it all. And the longer the time between leaving and the reunion, the sweeter the result! Fifty-five years should be about the time needed to produce a set of reasonable citizens from the semi-savages who invaded the real world at sixteen, confident that they knew it

to benefit from the traditional schooling we received, the one that took many of our fellows to high academic honours, while others were assured of a position, a job, where we could earn and accrue sufficient to marry (two of us celebrated golden weddings in 2005), raise a family (or three), and meet retirement without too much trepidation.

Seventeen of us, with the wives of most, were able to meet on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2005, almost exactly 55 years since most of us had seen each other last. BAV Brown had the



The way they were in 1948 - no wives

all already and they just needed the money to prove it! None of us has an unspectacular life, even if we think so, and a reunion makes us realize that our experiences have made us tolerant persons, ones who accept foibles, ones who can adjust to others where the goodwill is already evident, and at our reunion there was no Charles Atlas. We were part of the Class of 1945, the A stream, most of us shell-shocked at the time and yet still able

inspiration to provide name badges with photos taken from a class photo of 1948, and so we could all assure ourselves that "We knew it was you, anyway, badge or not!" Some had shrunk beyond recognition, including the writer who was about 6 inches taller than everyone in 1950, and was now caught up in a herd of men larger than himself; some had lessened in shape, no one had grossly enlarged; most wore glasses, but we were "us", and the whole afternoon

and evening passed not in euphoria, nor too much nostalgia, but in a genuine gathering of like minds, all of us able to make the connection and re-enter what we had lost.

On the following day we were together again in what was just assumed to be the last part of the reunion, a visit to the School.

I think I speak for all who were there when I say that this was the most affecting part of the whole venture. It would not have been surprising to see Spud quietly surveying the passing throng, suddenly silent, on seeing him, in obeying the no-talking, no running rule; or Pete Sillis striding along, gown billowing, apparently oblivious of all around him; or see our younger selves standing apprehensive outside the Staff Room.

What we did see was our classrooms as we identified each one we occupied in our five years; we saw the dining hall which, in our day consisted of tables of 10, with boys deputed to collect the bowls and serving plates, the head of the table serving each boy, and then the outbreak of noise as we were allowed to eat; we saw desks that could have been ours, even to having the hole for the inkwell (how valuable are

those antiques now!); and we saw, unbelievably, the brick buildings in the playground built circa 1940 as air raid shelters and nearby, I swear, the same corrugated iron cycle shed, although boarded-up.

Like us, midget trees in the front drive have grown into something somewhat larger and more gnarled but the glorious playing field still stands the same. It is fashionable nowadays to pooh-pooh Rupert Brooke and his stopped clock, honey for tea and 'gentleness, in hearts at peace, under an English heaven' but I challenge anyone not to be overtaken by the sudden rush of feeling that is nostalgia, for times lost but, happily, not forgotten.

From our original class of 31, seven have died and seven could not attend for various reasons, and I can assure readers it was worth all the effort of organizing and agonizing. I simply conclude by urging each class to get to it before it is too late. Now, in the A stream class of 1945, we will never have the regret of what might have been, we did it, we have had our reunion and whether we have another or not, our memories are now ever-young and friendships again as they once were. Just do it!

## Caption Competition

THE TWO gentlemen in our competition will need little introduction to the majority of readers, and I hope you will find it a little easier than the last competition.

For the youngsters who started at BHCHS after 1969 I should identify the subjects as **Jack Taylor**, Headmaster 1938-66 (left) and **Fred Scott**, Head of Science and subsequently Deputy Head 1938-69.

This photo was taken in 1978 at Kate Coulson's retirement party.

Once again, we are offering a **cash prize of £25**, kindly donated by **Malcolm Beard (1941)** to the reader who, in the opinion of the judging panel, submits the best caption. Closing date for entries (one only per member please) is 30th June 2006.

*We are uncertain who took this photo but we are indebted to **Steve Newberry (1958)** for improving the quality of the original.*

**See page 16 for the result of the last competition.**



# Trevor Finds his Niche

By Trevor Ireland (BHCHS 1956-61)



(1) Don Groombridge, (2) Chris Dover, (3) Brian Tarry, (4) Dave Lacy, (5) Michael Littleton, (6) Bill Munday, (7) "Bernie" White, (8) Barry Eastwood, (9) Trevor Ireland, (10) John James, (11) Brian Overy. Trevor is unable to remember the names of the other two - can anyone help?  
Photo Martin Bone

WITH some fear that someone out there will be marking my grammar, spelling and syntax, I am finally writing with some memories, thanks, apologies, and questions.

First, some apologies, beginning with Spud. When 3 O-levels were all I had to show for my stay at BHCHS, my dad was so shocked that he asked Spud for a meeting, presumably to find out if there was any hope for me. I was a bit upset at having to attend this meeting as I was missing a session at the King's Head, which

of a student teacher, was summoned to the Headmaster and was due to be whacked along with some others. Spud was flexing the cane and asking me to explain my conduct when Kate knocked on the door. I was sent out to wait and when Kate left I was called back in to be told that my innocence had been vouched for. Whew! Was Kate the reason? What did she say if she was? What had she heard? Whatever, I made sure I was present at her memorial service!

Next, Mr. Webb. After years of my

fat and a little asthmatic, I was last by miles and never going to complete the course in the period. Rescue was at hand....there it was, a pathway along the bank.....with one bound.....! I reached the road bridge breathing heavily, hid under it before joining the stragglers on their return to the gym, last as expected, but at least in time for the next period.

Next, Mr Ray. In a world in which I could not do anything well, I was at least able to sing; not well enough to join the School Choir, but well

"Thank you sir, I am not expecting a recording contract any time soon, but the listeners seem to enjoy what I do and so far have not thrown anything." The other was a family interested in music and prepared to work for good grades, mainly piano, but we do have one saxophonist.

Next, Mr Horne. "Cubes for the following" turned maths into a nightmare for me. "No you did not turn me off the subject sir, but you and your colleagues certainly did not turn me on to it." I think I was probably allergic to maths. I never could care how long it took Jack to walk up the hill if Jill could fill a bath in 10 minutes. Anyway our eldest daughter is now a maths teacher.

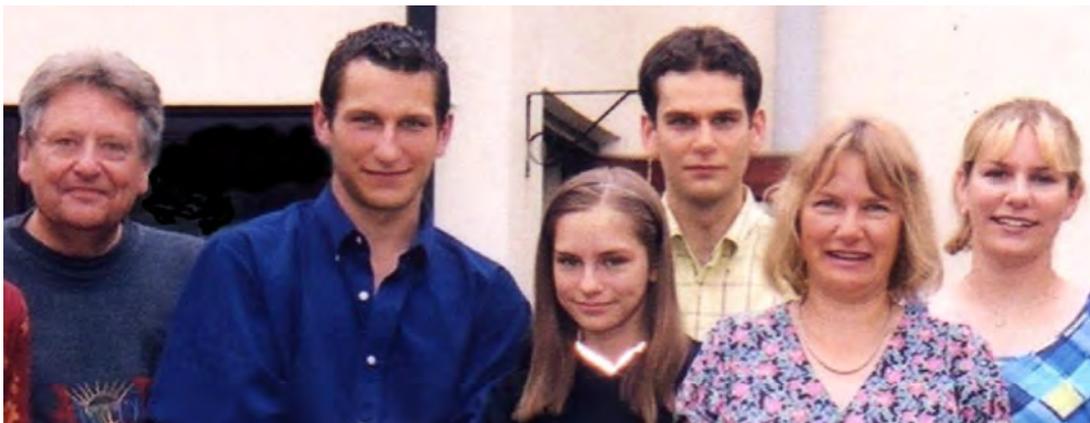
Next, Mr Leek. It was so good to read the immortal words "We're moving" in the last issue.

"Consequently therefore", "Is it not" and on the football field "Find your winger" with a hard "G" became great favourites in 4C and 5beta, with scores kept during each period or match. "Sorry sir, you gave me a love of geography if not the means of passing GCE - maybe I was too busy keeping score." I had Geography as my banker, failed and passed French! (What was it about Mr. Whaler or were the graders from RHM that year?). However, all of our family can identify scree slopes, escarpments, hanging valleys, moraines and of course oxbow lakes at a glance - seriously!!

Next, some questions. Why did Mr. Gorick have to give me the one Saturday detention I got in my five years? Why did Mr. Winmill require public speaking from me in the first year (I was in my late twenties before I gained the confidence to do this)? Why was Mr. North so patient with me? Why did Mr. Wigley have to impugn my character because my writing sloped backwards? - glad he made me change it though. Did Mr. Scott need to be so brutally honest in using a single word in his end of 4<sup>th</sup> year report on me (Idle!)? Why was I more confused about sex at the end of Mr Walmsley's third year lecture than at the beginning? - I can still recite the list of the books of the Old Testament though.

Some more questions and some memorabilia. What ever happened to Fred Eastwood, Chris Dover, Bill Munday and the others on the enclosed photograph? (see above)

I have also found a poster (see p7) purloined from the notice board after the advertised meeting. I joined the



Trevor Ireland and family: l to r Trevor, Rob (30), Vicki (19), Paul (28), Kay, Kirstie (23)

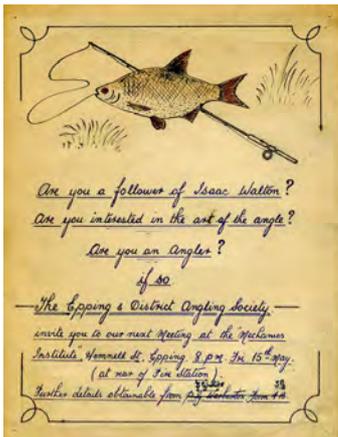
was not just the preserve of the sixth. As father and son left the Headmaster's study Spud said, "Don't worry Mr. Ireland, given your son's disarming manner I am sure he will find his niche in the world". "Thank you sir, I spent 35 years disarming in Lloyd's and a very enjoyable niche it was too."

Next, Kate. I was an innocent bystander to a bit of extreme treatment

malingering on cross-country days, he opened and read my latest epistle from home and excused me with the words "You know Ireland I am not as green as I may be cabbage looking". "Thank you sir, I got the message - well almost." Instead of rattling the weights in the gym store-room I tagged on to the moaning group of boys and set off down the side of the RAF camp. By the time I arrived at the Roding, being short,

enough to enjoy it and to be picked as a treble for the school performance of Messiah. An increase in self-confidence was an immediate result of this and in later life I am sure there were two further results. One for me personally was that I bought a guitar and started to lead the children in choruses at a Sunday school, from there to leading congregations at church services, and later doing sets at a local folk club.

club and won the Christmas chicken, as I was the only person to catch and retain a fish (rumour had it that Bernie White caught a bigger one than mine but put it back as he was certain it would be beaten). Did Pete Warburton draw up the notice? See also picture (below) of Mr. Bell and Keith Grant. Martin Bone took the pictures, I think, and I don't remember why Mr Bell has an arrow through his chest. We've heard about *The Black Cat Bones*, but wasn't there a group called *The Emeralds*? When they played in the garden at my 21st. we had complaints that they could be heard on



The notice that got away.....

the other side of the Roding Valley five miles away. They sounded good to me (hope they were paid) but my memory is not too good on names. Was the lead guitar Pete Richardson?

Lastly a little biography. I have read with sadness those who were bullied, those who felt lonely and those who were unhappy for various reasons. At times I felt bullied by master and boy, I was certainly lonely. How I envied those who came from



Mr Bell and Keith Grant

Loughton and Buckhurst Hill primaries and arrived with a host of friends. I was the only boy from my year to go there. When I was in the third year, Bob Hilder from nearby Stapleford joined BHCHS, so I had some company on the bus from

Abridge. Together we raised pigs and cattle on his dad's smallholding and formed a lasting and a close friendship.

Career? Collins Concise says, "to rush in an uncontrolled way". Well the city was good to me. I ate and drank well, watched a lot of cricket and horses, helmed some great yachts, including putting a British Steel Challenge boat 'in the putty' off Gosport, made some good friends and managed to get a ground floor berth in a small breakaway broking company in 1976. On the debit side I worked long hours commuting between Colchester and Liverpool Street. It was a difficult compromise between working for the family's material benefit and being with them. I was blessed and managed to be with our children at most of the important events including, would you believe, both our sons appearing for school and county at cross-country and maybe making some amends for their father's deceit at BHCHS.

It was only in later life that I realised there was a strong Christian ethic in the school and I thank God for that, as it nurtured my childhood faith into an adult one. As part of a husband and wife team I had the privilege of teaching Sunday School for fifteen years, as well as the other things that members of the church get involved in, such as strawberry teas, cutting the churchyard, Diocesan Synod and lately as a churchwarden trying to nurse our church through one of those difficult times that occasionally seem to beset Parish Churches.

I have the best of wives in Kay. Our children are Robert 30, white van driver, Paul 28, accountant, Kirstie 23, maths teacher and Victoria 19 who services brokers for a small underwriting agency in Colchester. Only Robert has married, left home and given us three grandchildren. We are obviously making life too comfortable for the other three.

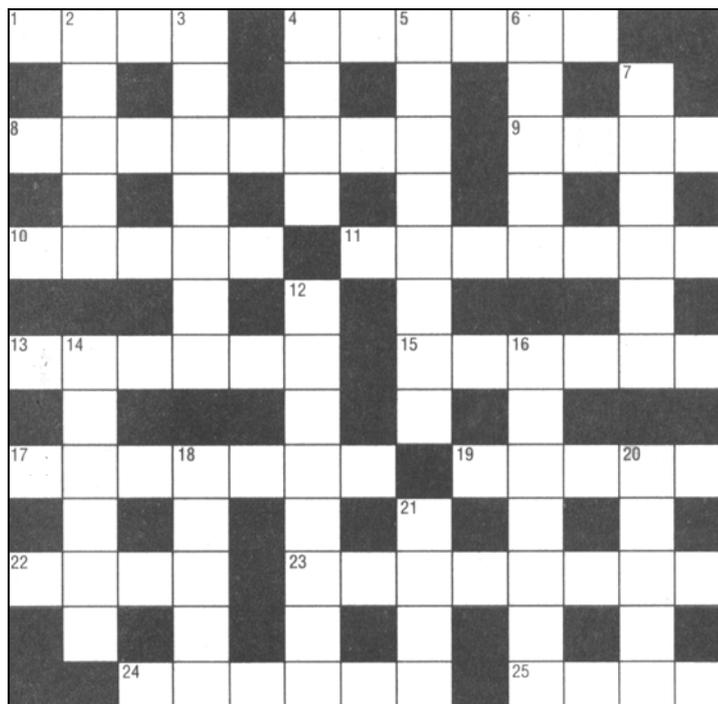
Boring life? Well maybe when compared to some of the illustrious OB's I read about. Perhaps I should have taken my "disarming" manner to the United Nations to fulfil Spud's faith in me. Are we contented? - Yes thank God. Can BHCHS take any credit for it? - Spud certainly can, and from the forgoing so can some others, both teachers and boys.

PS for David Waller. If you fancy a pint at Chelmsford cricket ground, I am usually there at Essex matches. I also attend second's matches at Coggeshall and Halstead and I can be found between the members' beer tent and the wicket during Colchester Cricket week.

# OB NEWS CROSSWORD

No.7 "Flight of fancy" By Mike Ling

The answers to the asterisked clues have a common theme.



### ACROSS

- 1\* Amusing adventure or escapade (4)
- 4 Long loose robe with wide sleeves, tied with a sash (6)
- 8 Enforcers of eviction (8)
- 9\* Express great pride or triumph, often gloatingly (4)
- 10\* Feel or show fear or apprehension (5)
- 11 Division of mathematics (7)
- 13 A marked accent, especially Irish or Scottish (6)
- 15\* Complain or grumble (6)
- 17 Old name for sulphuric acid (7)
- 19 Internal organs used as food (5)
- 22\* Wind-blown toy (4)
- 23 Adulation (8)
- 24 Decorate lavishly (6)
- 25\* A strong untwilled linen or cotton fabric (4)

### DOWN

- 2 Wine-growing province of France, around the Loire (5)
- 3 Informally, lively and exciting (especially of music) (7)
- 4\* Unit of speed (4)
- 5 Fail to arrange in correct relative positions (8)
- 6 Mother-of-pearl (5)
- 7 Easy chair with open padded arms and adjustable back (6)
- 12 Murder of a particular ethnic group, or nation (8)
- 14 A partially dried grape (6)
- 16 Nonchalant, or without consideration (7)
- 18\* Historically, a chief magistrate in Anglo-Saxon England (5)
- 20 Relating to gold (5)
- 21\* To defraud, swindle or overcharge (4)

Solution on page 21

## All the World's a Stage

OUR series tracing the history of drama at BHCHS will be resumed in the next edition. If you have any contributions - memories, photos etc of productions from 1958 onwards - I would be pleased to hear from you. I am not looking for full accounts: assorted memories will be fine!

## Apologies.....

..... to those of you who have sent me items for publication that have not yet appeared. I would like to thank you for your patience and ask all readers to continue sending me material and ideas for features. I enjoy the challenge of trying to decide what to include in each edition.

# Royal Gunpowder Mills: Uncovering the Secrets

By Les Tucker (BHCHS 1947-54)

The photograph of Sidney Alford perched on a bomb casing in the jungle (OB News November 2004) caught the attention of Les Tucker, who is now Archivist at the Royal Gunpowder Mills Waltham Abbey, in the Lea Valley. Les has contributed the following summary of the history of the Waltham Abbey Mills.



Les Tucker

THE EARLIEST records of gunpowder manufacture in England (in a mill as opposed to hand mixing methods) are from the 1550's, in Rotherhithe, after the Government decided that reliance on foreign imports, mainly from the Low Countries, was too insecure at a time when an increasing quantity of good

part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century concern was growing over the inferior quality of privately supplied gunpowder and in 1787, with the intention of creating a centre of excellence for powder production, the Government purchased the Mills from the Waltons. Under Lt. General Sir William Congreve a process of refurbishment and expansion commenced and continued under his son, also Lt. General Sir William Congreve, of Congreve rocket fame, and the Mills became established as the standard-setter for the industry. Under the Waltons the factory had been one of the first instances in Britain of an industrialised production process and the Congreves were leaders in the application of scientific method to manufacture.

The process of innovation and scientific development continued over the next 200 years of the Mills' history and many developments there influenced practice in private industry, producing both for the military and for

civil use in mining, quarrying, tunnelling, construction etc. Inevitably the Mills saw significant increases in production during times of conflict - the Napoleonic, Crimean, Boer and two World Wars. In World War 1 the number of employees increased from 1000 to 5000, with female workers from surrounding areas largely supplying the increase - a major social phenomenon at the time.

By this time production had largely changed from gunpowder employing the natural products - charcoal, sulphur and saltpetre to chemically based material, largely cordite employing nitroglycerine and nitrocellulose (guncotton).

The Mills continued technical leadership. Textile dyes and explosives were the triggers of the organic chemical revolution from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and processes developed at the Mills were a significant feature in military and civil production.

In spite of its large extent the factory remained a closed and secret place. By the 1930's it was apparent that the site at Waltham Abbey was vulnerable to air attack from Europe and a process of transfer of production to safer areas in the West commenced. Waltham Abbey continued as an important producer of cordite and other vital explosives until 1943/44 with final closure of the factory in 1945

In the same year it reopened as a research establishment, initially in explosives later extending its activities to applications such as space rocket propulsion fuels and specialised high strength materials for military and civil use, ultimately closing in 1991 following Govern-



A mid 1850s water powered hydraulic gunpowder press house - a unique surviving example of this type of hydraulic application

mental research reorganisation.

In 2001 after over 200 years of official secrecy the Mills opened to the public as a major interpretative and visitor centre. In what is now a tranquil parkland setting extending over 170 acres, facilities include an exhibition centre including interactive displays, a cinema, specialist exhibitions, and a café. There is an impressive range of Victorian gunpowder buildings and in all about 250 buildings survive along with a canal system with two locks for internal transport, a unique surviving example of an internal industrial canal system. The Mills also had a railway system and an industrial railway system is being recreated, with working locos. The northern chemical production 'wilderness' area can be toured by land train, with commentary. Special events, such as Civil War re-enactments, are staged in the central meadow throughout the season.

The Mills provide something for everyone from families wanting an enjoyable day out in a peaceful setting, with much to interest the younger generation, to the industrial archaeologist.

For further information the Mills' website is - [www.royalgunpowdermills.com](http://www.royalgunpowdermills.com)

More information about Les Tucker will appear in the next edition.

Sidney Alford's recent TV appearance is featured on p.3.



Hydraulic accumulator, canal bridge and magazine loading porch

quality gunpowder was required for naval protection of growing trade routes. By the 1640's production had started in the Lea Valley, well placed for supply of timber for charcoal and with good water supply for power and transport. One of the earliest was at Sewardstone, near Waltham Abbey, from the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Gunpowder manufacture at Waltham Abbey started later in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in a mill converted from vegetable oil production and prior to that a cloth fulling mill dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The gunpowder mill was first owned by the Hudson family then the Waltons. By the latter



1860s steam driven gunpowder mill

# A Note from Across the Pond

By Richard Reid (BHCHS 1979-84)



WHERE to start? To be honest I have very few memories of being at school all those years ago! Most of my memories consist of degenerating into a bit of a waster both academically and athletically! Of course I knew it all and could not be told by any of the teachers to change my course of self destruction. And that was that, no promising football career, no qualifications and away I go into the big wide world. After leaving school and working in various manual jobs I finally found my calling: hod carrying! But to be fair, even it was hard graft, I met some good lads and I had some of the best days of my life working on sites all over the South East. Working hard and partying just as hard for about ten years and then it was time for a change. Who would have thought it all those years ago that I find myself living in Margate, (just north of Fort Lauderdale) after graduating University and football being the very reason that I was given that second chance! Back in '94 I was offered the opportunity of going back to school, being offered a football (or should I say soccer!) scholarship to educate myself with a direction and purpose. A very good mate of mine, Mark Abery, who had been over to the States a few years earlier attending school had spoken to the coach. Abes told him that he knew of an old but fairly steady centre half who would do fairly well in his young and inexperienced side! So off I go to Spartanburg, South Carolina, attending Spartanburg Methodist College knowing nothing about their educational system or what to expect.

There I am, at the ripe old age of 26, going back to school, washing dishes by day, going to school at night and playing in a team whose average age is about 18! Believe me, living in a very small town in the middle of the "Bible belt" where strangers actually smile at you in the street, talk to you in the stores wish-

ing you to "have a nice day", (and mean it!) where you could leave your car unlocked with the windows open at anytime day or night, where you can't get pint on a Sunday and people think you're mad if you walk anywhere! Quite a contrast! A little bit different to travelling up town every day on the train, where everyone (myself included) hasn't got the time of day, looks generally pissed off and thinks, "what's that geezer want?" if someone looks at them more than once! After applying myself in the classroom following a ten year absence and being fortunate enough to win the National Championship and being honoured as the National Player of The Year during the very first season I was on top of the world! Thinking this happened every season I couldn't have wished for any more. The next season disaster struck. Our coach left, none of the "kids" respected the new coach and we never even managed to make the play offs to the National Tournament. As Spartanburg was only a junior college (a two year school) I transferred to Lander University, Greenwood, South Carolina in the summer of '96 and proceeded to assert myself as their new Tony Adams at the back! Once there, with a few older more experienced players from all over the world we managed to reach the National playoffs



College soccer

only to be knocked out by Tampa University but winning the double within our South East Region. The next season we were stronger, fitter, faster, and ready to make up for the previous year. Seven or eight games into the season with only one loss and looking very good, once again disaster struck! Five minutes into the game I go into a 50/50, and being

named the Terminator by some of my team-mates I expected to come out with the ball! Somehow I managed to shatter my leg into a million little pieces with my foot facing at a very funny angle! This can't be happening I thought to myself, I just don't get injured! This was the best shape I'd ever been and the team was coming together nicely. It's funny how fate has a way of rearing its ugly head. I had only told the



At the beach

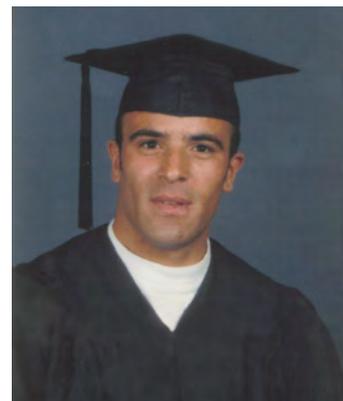
younger and very gifted players at the start of the season who were failing in the classroom and were unable to play because of their grades just how important it is to focus on school work and play every game like it's your very last. It sounded very familiar to those days when Mr Pink, Mr Wyre or Mr Marsh would say very similar words to me, simply wanting the best and trying to persuade me to focus on school work and continue to play football. After surgery, a steel rod, plates and pins from my knee to ankle and six months of hobbling around on crutches I could finally walk unaided and see if I still had it. Seven years later here I am playing on a Sunday morning for the Fox and Hounds (over 30's), in 90 degree heat, still getting butterflies before each game, going into 50/50's as I did on that fateful day, running around like a little school kid and playing each game as if it were my very last!

After graduating Lander University in '99 with a BA in Visual Arts I moved to Miami to find a job in the graphics or design industry. After living in Miami for a few months and not hearing many English accents I had the great fortune of finding an English pub team up in Boca Raton. After one training session I met an English lad and Scottish lad who needed a room-mate so off I go once again! After living in Boca for a few

years I first moved to Deerfield and more recently Margate. The only things missing are the jellied eels! I currently room with an English lad, who played on that pub team in Boca and whose family have taken me in and "adopted me" as their fifth son! I currently work down in Hollywood, FLA as a designer for a small men's and ladies manufacturing company, ([www.zeppro.com](http://www.zeppro.com) and [www.palmshorescollection.com](http://www.palmshorescollection.com)).

I am working towards getting my Green Card and still taking classes of an evening to obtain either a BA or an MA in Multi-Media and Technology. Although I've been very close a couple of times over the past few years I've still yet to meet Mrs Right but that will happen when the time's right I believe! And although I've also yet to live the "American Dream" as it were, I'm determined to keep plugging away and please God with a bit of hard graft things will eventually fall into place! I'd like to thank any of the old teachers who may read this article and who attempted to steer me in the right direction all those years ago, who clearly knew better but were told otherwise by a headstrong teenager who just wanted to get out of school as quickly as possible and earn a few quid!

I still get back home from time to time and meet up with some of my mates from Loughton and the surrounding areas but I have lost contact with a lot of the hooligans I used to run with in school, terrorizing teachers and pupils as much as we could get away with! Recently I've had emails from Mark (Matt) Richardson, Ricky (Puff) Fleming and Lee (Flea) Roberts which was a nice surprise! So if any of the "old firm" come across this by all means drop me a line, I'd love to know what you are up to? "Have a nice day ya!!!"



Graduation

# Adventures in Epping Forest

By Jim Tredinnick (BHCHS 1939-44)



experiences in this far greater, greener environment. The school playground was pretty unusual for a start. It had a huge wrought iron gate which, on dry days, was open for us to play in the forest glades. At the end of each school day I was thus able to make my exploring way home. And what a very delightful exploration this was for one whose outdoor experiences had consisted only of local parks. The feeling of freedom – especially after the dry confinements of the classroom – was

MY FAMILY first moved into Forest Edge, Buckhurst Hill in 1935 when I was 6½ years old. The road was well named, as only a handful of houses had been built, and was still unmade – what had been just a cart track with fields on one side and the thick holly bushes and trees of Lord's Bushes on the other. On the other side of another rough track known as Knighton Lane, was Knighton Woods, which was soon to become my personal paradise. Newly opened to the public, Knighton was an unspoilt wonderland for a boy who had grown up in the suburban streets of Chadwell Heath.

Before I ventured into Knighton, however, I was required to continue with my education at the nearest church school, which was Princes Road Junior. I set off for my first day on my own, but I was naturally somewhat nervous as I trudged down this unfamiliar stony excuse for a road, to endure the possibly traumatic experience of being a "new boy" – so I was completely unprepared for the crashing noise which suddenly came from the forest, heralding my first encounter with a herd of cattle, which burst out of the bushes and blocked my way – causing me to beat a hasty retreat back to the comparative safety of my new home! So, on my first day, I had to suffer the ignominy of being escorted through these menacing wild beasts by my mother.

After a few days of finding my feet in totally alien surroundings, I became aware of the excitement of new

enormous. It was simply quite breathtaking to find so many new birds and other woodland creatures I'd only ever seen in books. I'll attempt a list: jays, woodpeckers (three kinds), nuthatches, tree creepers, blue tits, coal tits, great tits and long tailed tits and, of course, robins, blackbirds, thrushes, finches (four kinds), dunnocks, and even kingfishers on the ponds. Squirrels (red and grey), stoats, grass snakes, adders, slow worms and lizards. Later, of course, when I ventured much further into Epping Forest proper, I came across the famous black fallow deer. I was told these were the only *black fallow* in Europe, and in my early teens, with a Loughton friend, he and I would enjoy tracking them in the snow. We worked out a scheme so that each of us in turn would see them really close up. After locating a herd in the Loughton camp area where there were lots of ups and downs, where brooks had cut deep into the land, one of us would go upwind and station himself hopefully behind bushes next to one of the herd's favourite jumping off points over a stream. The other would circle wide around the herd and approach so that his scent would get them on the move. Then adopting a somewhat sheepdog style of stalking, he would attempt to get them on the rise above the hollow, and then rush them!

Occasionally this actually worked, and the hidden one would get a wonderful close up view as one after the other they would bounce off the

bank, as if in graceful flight. Then we would switch jobs to give the other a rare ringside seat.

This friend, Reg Harrison, lived originally in the village (as we called Loughton in those days), but since his father worked in the Warren Office, as soon as one of the keepers' cottages there became vacant, they were able to move in there. I was now able to visit him regularly during the school holidays, and one afternoon we had what must be a unique experience.

We were in his front garden when, zooming up the Warren drive, an open MG Tourer came bearing a most unusual passenger.....! It was a live full-grown stag. Stopping in front of two open-mouthed boys, the driver calmly asked us if there was a forest keeper about who could painlessly put the injured creature down. Whilst Reg went to get a neighbour I was enlightened by the driver about the hair's breadth escape he had just had. Between the Wake Arms and the Robin Hood pubs, the Epping New Road cuts through quite a high rise. As he was driving past this spot, the stag had launched itself from the bushes and landed slap bang in the back – missing him by inches and breaking both its forelegs. Reg found the Keeper who soon put the poor beast out of its misery. The driver was amazingly quite phlegmatic and, after a cup of tea, seemingly mindless of the fact that if the stag had jumped a split second sooner, it would have landed on his head and almost certainly caused him to crash!

But I must return to the earlier days, those first months after our arrival in Buckhurst Hill. Every spare moment I had was spent on my own in my most favoured part of the forest, Knighton Woods.

For some reason I had an inborn respect for all these new growing things. It didn't occur to me to snap off branches or break off the flower heads of the rhododendrons, as was the custom of most of the local boys. But in every other way I of course behaved just like them in the matter of climbing trees. One day, when I was doing my Tarzan act up a particularly well-branched beech tree, I was startled by a loud bellow from below. A man in a brown uniform and gaiters accompanied by two black retriever dogs was ordering me to come down in no uncertain terms – and I was swift to comply!

As I stood petrified in front of this fierce apparition with his dogs sniffing vigorously at my legs, he demanded to know if I had seen the by-law stating that "breaking branches was forbidden", and for two pins he'd take me to the nearest police station!

Luckily I was so outraged at the injustice of his assumption that I forgot my fear and protested that I loved trees and that the last thing I'd do was to harm them in any way. The Keeper was probably used to telling off little boys who would dissolve at his words – so he must have been sufficiently taken aback by my retort to give more thought to this unusual boy. He glared hard at me for a long minute, seeking to detect if I was being deliberately cheeky or was in fact telling the truth, unlikely as it would appear!

He said he hadn't seen me before, and where had I come from anyway? Relieved, I told him my parents had just moved here from Dagenham and that I had never seen so many trees before with so many different kinds of leaves and berries and such. He paused again and then said: "So you really like our trees, do you?" And upon my respectful reply of "Oh yes, sir", his expression changed to one of interest and he asked, "Would you like to learn a bit about them and some of their names? Mind you, I don't know some of them myself yet, but I can give you a fair understanding of most of them, although quite a few are from foreign parts and were planted here by the former owners of these woods."

Naturally, I couldn't believe my luck and was thrilled that such an important grown up would want to take such an interest in me. Anyway, my subsequent enthusiasm obviously convinced the Keeper that he was doing the right thing, and my gratitude must have been self-evident. For over the following weeks and months, which eventually extended into several years, a wonderful friendship grew up between us, and I admired the knowledge and kindness of this unusual figure of authority.

I never did learn his name, but he had been a policeman and he was living in one of the keepers' cottages nearby. Amongst the many things he taught me were the names of some of the specimen trees. There was the Great Corsican Pine, next to the pond, then the huge Giant Sequoia,

whose bark he invited me to punch because it was so soft and thick that it couldn't hurt me. I learned the purpose of such bark, which was to preserve the tree if it were ever in a forest fire. I remember when he showed me the Turkey Oak with the unusual "mossy cups" to its acorns. Then the Wild Cherry with two main trunks stretching up into the canopy like twin gun-barrels on a ship. And the lovely Rowan and its cousin the Wild Service Tree with its bunched brown berries. Later he showed me where to find a Spindle Tree with unusual deep pink and orange fruits – quite a rarity in the forest – as was the one and only Medlar (now long gone) not far down from the pond with the "rocks", which, as he explained, were actually not rocks at all, but carefully crafted concrete.

He pointed out the tumbledown remains of what had once been a boat house built into the pond's banks. He told me how to differentiate between the Beech Tree and the Hornbeam, and the story of how the latter had developed its strange broom-like upper branches, because of a historical custom of the former locals known as pollarding. Also the valiant part played by the Willingales of Loughton in defence of their rights (which gave me renewed interest in one Willingale, a descendant of the family and the most prominent personality in my class).

On my own, as I usually was, I discovered for myself the four giant Mirror Carp which cruised majestically round the pond and disdainfully ignored the earth worms twisting miserably on the bent pin I hopefully dangled before them. One open gravelly inlet about six yards wide was a magnet for sticklebacks. During the breeding season, I'd spend ages there watching the high drama of courtship and defence, enacted by what seemed far too many fish attempting to survive in too small a space. The males, having built their nests, were doing the usual chasing of the females into them for the required laying of eggs. This alone appeared brutal enough, but when one Red Throat trespassed into another's territory all hell was let loose! I was amazed at the ferocity and tenacity displayed by such tiny creatures. Spines erect, they lunged and parried like lightning, and sometimes one would grab hold of the other's ventral fin and they would go into a mad twisting spiral.

Another part of my wild life education (with help from an Observer Pocket Book) was the distinguishing between smooth, palmate and great crested newts. I made a great find of the latter beauties. I had been inves-

tigating a drainage ditch at the place where the back gardens adjoined the forest. Although the water had seemed too shallow, I nevertheless located about two dozen. A friend of my mother's had given me an outdoor aquarium, and I brought these fine creatures home for a sideways viewing, hopefully to watch them settle down and breed. Unfortunately, although it was a large aquarium, and I had furnished it with gravel and plenty of water weed, and kept up a supply of worms, they didn't seem to me to be at all happy. So before a tragedy occurred, I took them all back to their former home. Sadly, within a couple of years, that ditch had dried up completely and I never found any other in either of the big ponds.

With the advent of the Second World War several small bombs fell in Knighton Woods and Lord's Bushes but one night a land mine was dropped, and its parachute must have become caught in branches just before it touched down. The resultant explosion made only a shallow crater, but the blast had denuded many trees of branches and torn the parachute and ropes into many small pieces. Small boys at that time would do almost anything for shrapnel and other war relics. Picture us, therefore, every spare moment for weeks, rushing off to start another hunt for pieces of what was a *real* rarity.

We had all amassed a fair collection of bits of anti-aircraft shells from the battery next to the school in Chigwell Rise – and quite a few of us had the nose cones – but a land-mine was *something special*. The oddest thing was that this latest hunt turned into more of an excavation, since the blast had embedded most of the shrapnel in the trunks of trees left still standing! A witness would have observed a motley collection of boys at various heights perched precariously as they whittled and probed away with their pen-knives at projecting pieces of bent aluminium bristling from the bark...! The pieces of shredded parachute and brightly coloured cord were of course soon swiped up by the early birds! My cache was kept in a pre-war metal biscuit tin in the garden shed.

The last really childhood incident which happened in the latter part of wartime (by which time my old Forest Keeper friend had retired) was to do with firewood..... As fuel was short throughout the war we often went on foraging expeditions for dead branches in the forest, usually two of us using the strongest pieces as a pair for making a rough stretcher. We never took live wood,

as at the beginning there was plenty near to home. Anyway live wood was against the by-laws. However, as the war lengthened, there was less to be found. One day, my best friend Micky Fishlock (who was destined to become the architect in charge of the rebuilding of the burnt-out Hampton Court) and I decided to take the risk of pushing down a dead tree about the length and girth of a telegraph pole. This was sometimes possible when the roots had sufficiently rotted.

This particular tree, however, turned out too tough for us so, after much futile effort, we gave up our concerted pushes, and Mick went to get his father's bow-saw. We had been on our knees each side of the tree, and sawing for about five minutes, when I felt a wet canine nose prodding the back of my neck. Yes, it was the nose of yet another Forest Keeper's black Labrador – but this fellow we had never encountered before. Mick and I froze! He hauled us both up by our collars and then came the "What d'you two think you're up to?" which at least was preferable to clouts round the ears. After we'd stammered something about being desperately short of fuel, he read us the riot act about it being against the law and "how come your parents allow you to do such a thing? And where are your fathers anyway?"

Mick answered truthfully that his father was an officer on a Merchant Navy ship bringing food to Britain from America. The Keeper looked impressed at that since it was well known how many such ships were being sunk by U-boats to keep the war effort going. Turning to me, he said "Where's *your* father then?" I too told the simple truth with the solemn statement "My father is a corporal in the Home Guard." There was a long silence whilst the Keeper deliberated (afterwards Mick told me that when I'd said about my dad being in the Home Guard he was sure he'd seen the Keeper suppress a smile). Anyway, the upshot was that he let us off with a warning and took the bow-saw. He said it would be at the Police Station if my father cared to retrieve it.

I still carried on with my tree climbing and was near the top of the aforementioned Corsican Pine when I observed the last red squirrel I ever saw in the forest. It was a very cold day and I had been

very still and quiet for some minutes looking at the view, when I suddenly heard a familiar sound of small claws on bark. Looking down, I saw this red squirrel climbing towards me. He reached my feet and paused, looking upwards while I held my breath until I was forced to breathe out. In the cold air my breath must have looked to him as frightening as steam coming out of a kettle – and he was off down in a flash. I only ever saw greys after that.

When I reached sixteen I felt very ashamed of myself as I was still frightened of the dark. So, in order to correct this unmanly state of affairs, one dark evening I made myself walk up Farm Way to the forest's edge and forced myself to walk up the track to the pond. By the time I reached it the moon had come out, and I determinedly walked slowly around the eerie reflections glistening on the dark water. I heard an owl hoot, automatically cupped my hands in the manner I'd been taught by my Keeper friend, and gave a fair answering hoot.

A couple of minutes later, my hair was parted by a sudden waft of air as a ghostly shape dive bombed me and gave me the fright of my life. All thoughts of manliness deserted me as my legs took on a life of their own – not stopping until they deposited me back home.

In the early 1980s the long summer's drought had a bad effect on the forest. Fires doused by firemen's hoses went literally underground, springing up in new places as the leaf mould acted as a slow burning fuse. That autumn I went around doing a "Gilbert White", pushing a stick into the ash-strewn floor, and dropping a conker, an acorn, beech nuts, hornbeam seeds, cherry pips and rowan berries to give nature's renewal a helping hand. Which is virtually where I came in!



# Boxing Days Remembered

By John Beard (BHCHS 1949-56)



John Beard (right) in action against "Nobby" Clarke (Royal Wanstead) at the "Coronation Fete" in 1953

Photo: Peter Hodder

A BHCHS Boxing Club was first established in the 1951-52 school year under the guidance of Mr. R.M. Webb, who had joined the staff to teach physical education.

He worked untiringly for a number of years running the club, training the team, and developing the status of boxing at BHCHS.

My own interest in boxing started well before this, and was crystallized when my father took me to the White City Stadium in July 1948 to watch Freddie Mills fight Gus Lesnevich for the Light Heavy Weight Championship of the World.

Before my family moved to the Debden Estate in Loughton, we lived in a fairly rough area of North East London. Thus, even before I reached my teens, I was taught to "look after myself". The same was true for John Ford, who was one of my best friends at BHCHS. His family lived in Battersea, South London, before moving to Debden. His father was an ex-professional boxer, and he built a boxing ring in his garden at Debden, so that he could train us.

Barry Bright, another BHCHS student living at Debden, who was a big strong lad of Welsh origin, also joined our training group. We were amongst the first to join the BHCHS Boxing Club when it was formed.

Brian Saley, an excellent all-round sportsman, was appointed as the first Captain, and he wrote a report which appeared in the 1952 issue of *The Roding*. Training was held in the School Gymnasium every Monday evening, and there was a regular attendance of about twenty-five. A tournament was held with Royal Wanstead School, and the BHCHS Boxing Club was affiliated to the Amateur Boxing Association, ABA, soon afterwards.

The Club continued to develop during the 1952-53 season, and the number of active members and the quality of individual successes increased. Matches were organized against St Olave's Grammar School, Norlington Secondary School, Cranbrook College, and Royal Wanstead School. The aims for the following year were listed as: to

strive for more experienced competition and to acquire a boxing ring which, besides providing more scope for training, would have enabled full-scale House Championship contests to be held. Unfortunately, as far as I am aware, the boxing ring was never acquired.

For the first time, three of us were entered for the School-boys' Amateur Boxing Association Championships. Duke Maskell reached the quarter finals, and I managed to reach the Essex County finals in the 8st 4lb class. These finals were held at West Ham Baths on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1953. I also have a copy of the programme, which cost threepence, and it shows that Terry Spinks from West Ham (who a few years later became a British Professional Champion) won the 5st 11lb class. An even more impressive boxer at that time was B. Gardner from West Ham, who won the 6st 11lb class, but I never heard any more about him.

Another major boxing event in 1953 was in connection with the School "Coronation

Garden Fete", which was organized by the Parents' Association to raise funds for the BHCHS Cricket Pavilion. As part of the Fete four bouts were organized against Royal Wanstead School, and I boxed my old rival (and good friend) "Nobby" Clarke. The Fete was considered to be a great success, in spite of the rain, and a net sum of £650 was raised. This amount was matched by the Essex County Authorities. A fuller report about the Fete by L. W. Farmer, Hon Secretary of the Parents' Association, appeared in the 1954 issue of *The Roding*. It seems incredible nowadays that a cricket pavilion could be built for £1300, even without labour costs.

During 1953 some of us, (including Duke Maskell, Trevor Pellen and I) also joined the Roding Amateur Boxing Club. Duke's Father was one of the trainers there, and we took part in a number of inter-club tournaments. John Ford, my good friend, had left school in 1953, and his family returned to Battersea. Unfortunately we lost contact, and I was very sad to find out recently that he had died some time ago.

B.K. ("Bill") Hunter was appointed as captain of the boxing team for the 1953-54 season, and his report is included in the 1954 issue of *The Roding*. New members joined the club, and tournaments were organized against Leyton CHS and Royal Wanstead School.

Unfortunately Mr Webb had an accident early in the following season and broke his ankle, so no tournaments were organized.

I have been unable to find any further information on boxing at BHCHS after 1954-55. No reports appeared in the 1956 and 1957 issues of *The Roding*.

My own interest in boxing began to diminish towards the end of the 1953-54 season for a number of reasons. I

was constantly troubled with nose bleeds (despite minor surgery), and my knuckles were regularly bruised and swollen. In fact I still have regular nose bleeds, and I have mild arthritis in my hands (sufficient to affect my grip on a squash racket and a golf club). In general, however, I do not regret my involvement with boxing at BHCHS, and I am grateful to Mr Webb for all the time and effort he put into the sport.

I did not encourage my two sons to become involved in boxing, although they became involved in a number of other sports.

*Editor's note. I am very grateful to John for these memo-*

*ries. Minority sports were generally not supported at BHCHS and it didn't surprise me to learn from Roger Webb that JHT did not really approve of boxing at the school. So the ring was never acquired and the serious injury that Roger suffered in 1954 (his accident was not sustained during a boxing session) effectively ended the era of boxing at BHCHS. Roger Webb remained Head of PE until December 1962 when he moved to Somerset on his appointment as Organiser of PE in the region.*

*Brian Hunter went on to represent Oxford University at boxing.*

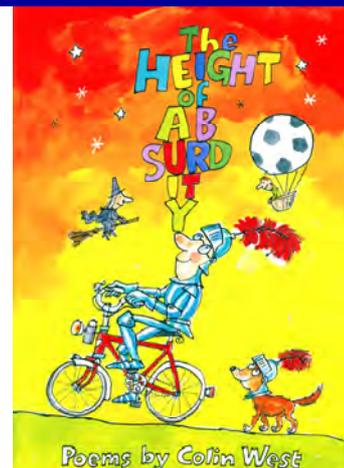


BHCHS boxing team 1951-52. Top row l to r: Terry Hooley, Dan Cooper. Middle row: Brian Hunter, Albert Scoones, John Ford, John Beard, Hugh Davidson. Front row: Neil Bett, Duke Maskell, Brian Saley, Trevor Pellen, Brian Perring.



BHCHS boxing team 1953-54. Top row l to r: David Morris, Mick Mullins, John Beard, Barry Webster. Middle row: Neil Bett, Tony Gold, Brian Hunter, Rowland Little, Roger Williams. Front row: Ian King, Alan Bett, Eugene Salter, Les Smith, Trevor Pellen.

# Poetry Challenge!



**COLIN WEST (BHCHS 1962-67)** is a children's author. The selection shown below is from his latest book *The Height of Absurdity* (published by Walker Books, £4.99).

Colin is convinced there's a vast amount of poetic talent coursing through the veins of many an Old Buck. To this purpose he's set a Humorous Verse Competition and will illustrate some of his favourite entries in the next edition of *OB News*.

To aid inspiration there is a **First Prize of £15** for the poem deemed the wittiest by our panel of judges, and £5 for two runners up.

Poems should be kept shortish (suggested maximum six 4-line verses or a limerick), and entries sent to The Editor to arrive by 30th June 2006.

To find out more about Colin West and his books see his website: [www.colinwest.com](http://www.colinwest.com)

## My Teacher

My teacher doesn't bellow,  
My teacher doesn't shout,  
She doesn't lose her temper  
Or wave her arms about.  
My teacher's always smiling,  
My teacher's always kind,  
And always in good humour,  
But only in my mind



## Bartholomew

The way in which Bartholomew  
Pranced with his croquet mallet  
Showed that he was a gentleman -  
And one who like the ballet.



These examples, from *The Height of Absurdity*, have been specially coloured for us by Colin (the illustrations in the book are not in colour)

# Birthday Celebration with a Difference

By Tony Ingall (BHCHS 1965-72)



LOOKING back it could have been a reality TV programme; Big Brother takes to the water. Eleven people, with little or no knowledge of each other, in very close proximity for thirteen days. Add to the mix a series of demanding physical tasks to be completed and ensure all are suffering from sleep deprivation. Potentially explosive, but a common goal, competitive spirit, teamwork and regular supplies of fresh coconut helped keep things together as we raced across the Atlantic from Gran Canaria to St Lucia on the ARC 2004.

The race was a far cry from the early beginnings with the BHCHS sailing club at Bournemouth where the abiding memories are of sailing 14ft Wayfarers round an old gravel pit on cold autumn evenings. For the race we were sailing Innovation K2, a 60ft Volvo Ocean Race yacht with over 4,400 square feet of downwind sail area.

We started on the 21<sup>st</sup> No-



School of celestial navigation

vember from Las Palmas on a beautiful sunny day with over 250 other boats. We got away cleanly in light winds and immediately demonstrated the independence of approach which characterised our trip for the rest of the race. Most of the fleet headed south along the coast, we went east looking for more wind only turning south 2 miles offshore. Four hours into the race the tactic was shown to have paid off as we were ahead of our main rival, Spirit. From this point on the fleet started to move out of sight of each other as we rounded the bottom of Gran Canaria. It was also the



1,000 miles to go

last chance to talk to the family as we were rapidly moving out of mobile phone range.

There are two main choices of route in this race. The direct route or rhumb line which follows the great circle, or the more southerly route down the coast of Africa until you meet the trade winds. The latter is longer, but you reach the trade winds earlier. Our nearest competitors both opted for the rhumb line, we went south. It was frustrating to see the other two boats extending their lead for the first few days, but we consoled ourselves with the weather chart which showed light airs with confused directions to the north and solid trade winds to the south. By day eight the tac-

tics were starting to pay off, Spirit was only 30 miles closer to St Lucia than us and we are one mile ahead of the only other Volvo 60 in the race, but the weather had pushed us much further south than we would have liked.

That day we saw a whale off of the starboard quarter which caused great excitement as it was the only thing we'd seen in 48 hours apart from water and each other. That night we had a much closer encounter when we hit another one. Innovation and crew were undamaged and the whale swam off. Appar-



My turn to play

Day nine and the wind started to rise in the late afternoon, Innovation picked up speed. There were big smiles all round as we reached 20 knots. This was what we had been expecting on the southerly route and we knew we were reeling in the leaders. It was my turn in the galley, sausage cassoulet for supper. Cheers from the deck as we reach 25 knots, only to be followed shortly after by the characteristic motion of the boat broaching (that's when the boat gets overpowered and ends up lying on its side). I was left standing on the side of the cooker holding a pan of hot onions while the boat banged on the water and shook in the wind. We were being held down by the sails dragging in the water. Eventually the spinnaker was released, the boat came back far enough to get the dinner back on the cooker and I

ently it was a big one but that's as close as identification got! There were long debates the following day on just what the probability of hitting a whale in mid-Atlantic was, no conclusion was reached.



"B watch" cleaned up

joined the recovery team pulling in the sails. Two hours later, we are sorted and back on course. Dinner was served, perhaps a little overdone but hot and apparently appreciated.

That night the wind continued to rise until it reached force 9. We steered through 270 degrees without gybing

then we saw them, a swift course change and we were over the line to be greeted by a couple in a rib with a case of beer. Sails down, engine on and we motored up the channel to the marina. Innovation draws 12 feet and we are told the channel had been dredged to 4 meters, so we should have had a few inches



Temporary mainsail

or tacking, just following the wind shifts round the storm. We lost the mainsail in the middle of the night; by the time we had got it down and made it secure the crew were exhausted. As the sun came up we took stock, the damage was such that we could not make running repairs to mainsail, so we improvised using a genoa in its place. This worked well and helped balance the steering but we were down on speed. After breakfasting on the flying fish which had landed on deck overnight, it was out with the fibreglass kit to repair the damage.

Day thirteen and dawn was magnificent, like so many of the previous ones, with the sun rising over the stern. Barring accidents we knew this would be our last day on board. The morning was spent cleaning the boat and in the afternoon it was our turn, showers and clean clothes all round. The finish line lay around Pigeon Island in Rodney Bay. There was supposed to be a committee boat there somewhere and a flashing light to mark the other end of the line, but as we rounded the point we couldn't see them. Hurried consultations ensued followed by frantic radio messages and

to spare. Well they must have used a short ruler on the dredger! Ran aground, refloated, moored up, photographs, hand shakes, hugs, rum punch and we headed for the bar at 02:30 to return at dawn.

We were 6<sup>th</sup> across the line and 4<sup>th</sup> in class taking 13 days 14 hours 19 minutes and 58 seconds.

Why did I do it you ask? Well, you have to do something to celebrate your 50<sup>th</sup> birthday!

Footnote: Innovation K2 sank on her return journey to the UK in March 2005 after she lost her mast during a storm. There were no injuries and the seven crew on board were rescued by a Portuguese Naval vessel.



## DATAFILE

Start Year *	Intake	Found	Deceased	% Found	Over-seas	Members	Members %
1938	92	32	36	74	2	20	63
1939	90	53	20	81	4	34	64
1940	83	53	13	80	3	38	72
1941	99	55	26	82	8	39	71
1942	93	56	22	84	8	41	71
1943	93	61	17	84	1	50	82
1944	92	57	22	86	7	33	58
1945	97	67	25	95	8	55	82
1946	104	70	19	86	7	48	69
1947	108	75	14	82	13	44	59
1948	100	59	15	74	8	41	69
1949	102	81	13	92	13	63	78
1950	100	72	8	80	8	47	65
1951	103	71	14	83	6	42	59
1952	100	72	9	81	9	45	63
1953	121	91	9	83	10	58	64
1954	112	88	5	83	12	56	64
1955	107	86	7	87	11	54	63
1956	100	86	6	92	11	51	59
1957	104	85	9	90	10	51	60
1958	130	113	7	92	8	70	62
1959	101	90	3	92	5	63	70
1960	99	81	6	88	9	42	52
1961	100	89	5	94	19	61	69
1962	97	87	3	93	11	59	68
1963	83	73	1	89	6	36	49
1964	77	68	4	94	7	39	57
1965	82	74	1	91	5	35	47
1966	86	75	3	91	10	42	56
1967	99	84	3	88	6	40	48
1968	83	75	2	92	4	43	59
1969	97	86	1	90	7	33	38
1970	90	89	0	99	11	42	47
1971	93	84	2	92	6	43	51
1972	89	79	0	89	5	33	42
1973	76	73	1	97	5	33	45
1974	77	68	0	88	8	19	28
1975	64	55	1	88	3	16	29
1976	132	101	3	79	7	31	31
1977	132	91	6	73	8	23	25
1978	123	98	1	80	10	33	34
1979	132	84	3	66	8	20	24
1980	120	71	2	61	4	8	11
1981	126	73	2	60	1	14	19
1982	113	76	0	67	5	17	23
1983	113	70	1	63	3	5	7
1984	123	67	1	55	0	5	7
1985	91	61	0	67	3	5	8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4828</b>	<b>3604</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>1820</b>	<b>51</b>

\* For anyone starting later than the first year, this is the start year for their peer group.

The total number of Old Bucks traced and living, including staff, is now 3,724 (an increase of 42 since the last edition). Among our numbers we have 133 with the title "Doctor", and 33 Professors (this is an increase of 17 and 6 respectively from when this information was last reported).

The number of Old Bucks traced overseas continues to rise steadily

and we are now in contact with 84 in Australia, 75 in the USA, 39 in Canada, 24 in France and 23 in New Zealand.

We have definitely not given up on reaching the magic 100% for one or more year groups. There are now sixteen year groups where we have traced 90% or more, so hopefully it is just a matter of time. As always, if you can help, please let me know.

## Physics versus Biology: The War Gets Hotter

By Alan Goswell (1954-59)



Alan Goswell (right) and his friend Jorunde Vedal with the world's first superpepper at McIlhenny's Tabasco factory at Avery Island, Louisiana

WITH regard to Frank Mattick's exothermic epistle 'shedding some light' (his words) on the merits of biology over physics and maths, and his wish not to 'generate more heat' (his words again). I am sorry to disappoint him by revealing the rest of my mug shot published with my original 'Secret War' article describing my low profile tussle with Ernie Turner and the Cambridge 'O' level examining board. As readers will now observe, the original picture was cropped from a snap of my Norwegian friend Jorunde (pronounced Urine) Vedal and I, on a visit to Mr McIlhenny's Tabasco factory. We were investigating disturbing rumours of a new 'Superpepper'. As you can see we found it, and it was red hot. Sorry Frank!

Jorunde, like me is an Engineer. Both of us were raised on a strict diet of rigorous maths and physics. We both know that in Great Britain at least, Engineers are often mistakenly viewed as mechanistic workmen or technicians, who do TV, PC or washing machine repairs. But that sort of misunderstanding does not bother us, it's just the same sort of conflation that Frank exhibits with respect to Physics and its practical application. Jorunde and I both have an innate sense of smugness engendered by a working life mastering complex machines and structures. Now in retirement we can both point to enduring examples of our skill and creativity that have made people's lives better.

For instance Frank, the next time

you, and millions of others, slip out to the kitchen to pop the kettle on during the adverts in Coronation Street, you can rest assured that the Alan Goswell designed 20 Megawatt start up and standby boiler feed pump at the local power station will swing smoothly into action, pumping thousands of gallons of feedwater into the boilers thus ensuring that enough steam is raised to satisfy the resulting load peak, guaranteeing a steaming hot cuppa! Or, when you are sitting down to Sunday dinner and contemplating your peas (per John Major), you can reflect on the fact that the Alan Goswell designed vibrating pea grader has eliminated all peas of the 'Cannonball' variety, thus ensuring that only small, uniform, sweet tasting peas are getting through to Waitrose.

Education is not an end in itself, it is a preparation for each individual to make a living and play a part in society. To me, dissecting a frog is just as pedestrian as any standard physics experiment. A career in Engineering can be deeply rewarding in terms of job satisfaction because of one's pride in conceiving a useful end product. But like any other career it can be pursued at technician level where the emphasis is on the 'appliance' of well known principles (as in TV's Hoovers and Hotpoints etc). I think Frank is a bit confused on this front, but I forgive him because he is by no means alone in Britain.

Had Jorunde and I been pants at Maths and Physics, but interested in Science, we could no doubt have followed an equally rewarding career in Biology, but as Frank says you do need an inspiring teacher to bring out the best in you. I'm truly sorry I was too early for you Frank, my earnest efforts at getting to grips with biology, (particularly during my teenage years), could have been so much more rewarding. For Jorunde and I, studying the natural world in our dotage (without seeking to denigrate the achievements of Biologists and Zoologists) is a fascinating hobby. Hence our quest and the discovery of the Superpepper! Even in the light of your somewhat disparaging interpretation of my original article Frank, I shall resist any temptation to tell you where to stick it.

*I feel we may not have heard the last of this. How about French versus German next.....? Ed*

# Gin

Tony Jolly's.....

## CORNER



IN THE media, as well as socially, we are continually experiencing people loudly pronouncing on one subject or another. Over the years I have found, rather than presuming that their verbal explosions are the result of a deep knowledge of the subject and personal reasoning, that such is seldom the case as, when questioned, they know less than one does oneself about the subject! Many aspects of life fall foul of these dogmatists' pronouncements; among these are religions, philosophical sects, social groups, innovators as well as the actions of people

in stressful circumstances.

One of the most frequent recipients of the "opinionists" is Freemasonry which, contrary to uninformed belief, Freemasonry is *not* a religion but a philosophy of "Brotherly love, relief and truth" which gives millions to charities, all the money coming out of the pockets of its members. Currently Islam is taking a bashing due to the activities of its extremists; true Muslims follow the Prophet Mohammed's teachings which are based on love and dictate that all pre-dating monotheistic religions should be respected. Pagans are ignorantly passed off as "weirdoes" and so on and so on. Even the laudable search for Old Bucks is often perceived solely as pressure to attend reunions and the like!

In these days of the ghastly "hidden agenda" mindset, anyone wishing to be "private" in the slightest degree is viewed as a concealer of some sinister practice.

Tony Jolly (1943-49)

## Caption Competition Result

I WOULD like to offer profuse apologies for having chosen such a difficult photo last time. My only excuse is that I felt it was high time one of the many archive photos of Pete Sillis appeared in these columns.

However, thanks to the entrants who struggled to find a caption, and I hope the new competition (see p 5) will prove a little easier.

Our winner, **Martin Smith (BHCHS 1970-77)**, has received his cash prize of £25 kindly donated by Malcolm Beard, Vice President of the OBA. Martin, who is an architect, was delighted with his win (see photo on p1) and has happy memories of the great teacher. Martin commented: *Peter Sillis was a giant amongst history teachers, who knew his subject intimately, and who, for those who had the passion and the interest, animated history in the style of AJP Taylor. I suppose that in today's soundbite age his style is out of date which I think is more the pity. How he would have fared in today's classroom,*



**A disappointed Mr Sillis fails to land the part of batman by casting the worst bat-like silhouette of the day, despite reading the part superbly.**

*with interactive whiteboards, target driven education and accountability can only be open to speculation.*

*Because of his legacy he, amongst others, always kept my interest in education alive and although I have not trained as a history teacher he showed me the value and interest and contentment one could get from education.*

# Where are they now?

## George Hassan (1938)

Whilst on a trip with my father to see some of his friends aboard a ship in the London docks, somebody gave me half a crown and I was taken to see the steam driven compressors used to refrigerate the cargo holds. They were in operation at the time and to me it was poetry in motion. Add in the characteristic smell of oily steam, an intriguing whiff of ammonia and the sunshine reflected in the gleaming metal and Hassan was hooked on becoming an engineer! Then BHCHS beckoned. I was content to languish in a '2B' stream and at the end of the year I finished 28<sup>th</sup> out of 32 pupils. Mr Taylor demoted me to 3C and I was not amused. Form 3C had 15 pupils and so we received twice the attention from the teachers than those in 3B and, wonder of wonders, at year end, I came second in class after Ivan Paternoster, (who got promoted to 4B). After such Herculean efforts on my part I felt that I should be 'reinstated', but to my surprise and annoyance, Mr Taylor would have none of it! A week passed and I was summoned to the Great Man's study and promoted to the elevated rank of Prefect. To be a prefect in a class graded 'C', was considered to be almost revolutionary and I quickly discovered that certain of my peers were trying to show me why this was so! I learnt a lot about human nature and became adept at sussing out when the 'vibes' were not good for any perceived course of action on my part. The point of this story is that by demoting and then promoting me, J H Taylor had galvanised me into action. He made me start working and I am pleased to affirm that the habit has persisted.

Like many other of her pupils I always enjoyed the late Miss Crook's personality and the way in which she presented her English lessons. Her culinary skills however were less well known. It was during the second week of a school farm camp near Ardleigh in Suffolk, when volunteers were sought to help in the kitchen, that it became clear to me that helping Miss Crook in the kitchen (with no loss in pay), would be demonstrably less mind numbing and less back breaking than working in the fields. I instantly volunteered my services and became one of her kitchen helpers. For cooking we used the village baker's oven and, Miss Crook it was, who while negotiating the railway level crossing on her bike, inadvertently dropped one of several

trays of cottage pie onto the roadway. All was well until the new pebbly contents of said tray were duly sampled at the evening meal! The obvious initial distaste of the diners was then further compounded by Miss Crook 'confessing' to being the cause of their discomfort! At this stage Mr May who was the camp supremo, cleverly deflected the resentment of those with pebbles in their mouths by posing the philosophical question as to whether it would have been better for her to have ignored the incident? Pebbles were removed from mouths and a debate followed. Predictably the end vote was inconclusive, but the initial anger had been channelled in another direction!

In common with most other 'normal' ex pupils I am not ashamed to say that I hated cross country running. Being a 'podgy' boy meant that I quickly became out of breath and any diversion that would give respite from running became instantly attractive. A popular option (and there were others), was to lark about in the river, incidentally throwing enough mud at one another, to make it look as if we had indeed, come through hell and high water!

Here is a brief history of the way in which my time was spent post BHCHS. I took up a five year apprenticeship in Marine Engineering, followed by two years as a fitter and turner, carting a tool box around the London Docks. I thoroughly enjoyed the technicalities of the job but eventually decided that somehow I would have to ease myself out of what was a very rough environment, in which swear words were habitually and monotonously used. I persevered with education, eventually obtaining an HNC and a BSc in mechanical engineering, the latter from Woolwich Polytechnic. I took a job as a graduate trainee with Baker Perkins of Peterborough, in their experimental department, on testing and designing machines which processed bread dough. My next move was a complete change and it was to be the start of my professional life. I entered Local Government as a Senior Mechanical Engineering Assistant in the Borough Engineers Office at East Ham. I produced drawings and cost estimates for lighting schemes, rewiring schools, heating and domestic hot and cold water services in new and refurbished buildings. So steep were the learning curves that in self defence I developed nummular eczema! I

"Trafalgar" by Geoff Hunt



joined the Institute of Building Services Engineers and then followed a spell of part time teaching in various technical colleges, which gave me a taste for teaching. I then decamped back to Woolwich Poly as a full time lecturer in mechanical engineering, starting my Higher Degree part time and, after about eight years moved to Chelmsford Mid Essex Tech. as a senior lecturer, where I eventually finished my PhD (in solar energy), becoming a principal lecturer and then getting kicked out at 65 years young in 1992. I have written two books, one on Building Services (Macmillan) and, one entitled 'Walking with our Heritage in Essex'. In 1951 I happily got married and am pleased to record that this condition still obtains for both of us. We have a daughter and two grandchildren. Do not let anyone try to convince me that BHCHS was not a necessary evil, helping to promulgate a suitable educational trip for all those who sailed in her, or that existing Grammar schools should not also continue to play their part in the system for many years to come! PS. For those of you who are wondering, I am all English and I am not a Muslim. I could be described as more of a 'failed Methodist'. Who if I remember rightly were responsible for 'The Protestant Work Ethic.' Cheers chaps.

## Geoff Carver (1939)

Geoff tells me that age has necessitated him giving up mountain climbing – companions have said that he could be a liability. As a consolation he had his first flying lesson in September 05 in a Tiger Moth bi-plane. Shades of Biggles!

## Geoff Hunt (1944)

I have been meaning to write since featuring as he who played Mrs Hardcastle in the school play nearly 60 years ago (*OB News May 2004*). Briefly, my CV since then reads: 40

years in the Royal Navy (20 in General Service, 20 in the Fleet Air Arm); married and reared four children; superintended the Hong Kong Sea School; painted over 1000 pictures (but not to be confused with my eminent namesake who is President of the Royal Society of Marine Artists). Remarkably, in all this time I am not aware of having crossed tracks with any Old Boys, other than at one attendance at an annual dinner.

My purpose now is to record a few memories of years "by Roding Stream". I well remember the alluring Kate Coulson whose treatments for grazes, cuts and bruises I thoroughly appreciated. On one occasion, following an after school session in the gym, several lower 6<sup>th</sup> formers were showering (and behaving) when in walked Kate Coulson. Without blinking an eyelid, she summoned me to Spud's office where I was reprimanded for taking a short cut from classroom to bicycle shed, via a window.

I have fond memories of many of my teachers, some of whom I had portrayed with less than flattering papier maché puppets. Sammy Samways, for one, knew that something was going on but never discovered what. He responded by giving me a series of adverse reports which incurred the wrath of my father. I therefore determined to pay him out by winning the School Certificate Latin prize, and still have Arthur Mee's *London* to prove that I did. Sammy was easily recognised from afar by his RAF uniform, converted to lounge suit by the substitution of horn buttons for brass ones. He was poles apart in so many ways from his good friend Tommy Leek. Mr Leek was my hero, a handsome, charismatic man, an amateur international footballer and a first class teacher of geography to boot. A totally different character was Mr

Shillito, he whose "experiments" often went wrong and sometimes ended with spectacular explosions. I learned little of chemistry, mainly because I spent much time banished to the corridor where I missed the excitement but felt safer. We were vaguely aware that he had discovered a bug or something, somewhere in Africa, and concluded that his tetchiness was due to malaria. I was pleased to be better informed when I read his recent obituary and felt ashamed that I had not availed myself of the learning of such an eminent, and kindly scientist. Next I come to Monsieur May, always immaculately turned out and as enthusiastic a teacher as ever donned a gown. His so-called "craie magique", when in hand, enabled the holder to state any grievance or witticism in English, without penalty. I learned a lot of French from Monsieur May but not much history from Pete Sillis. This was, beyond doubt, my fault as I spent a lot of time sky-larking with my puppet (of him); worse, I flattered myself in the belief that my histrionics were more absorbing to my classmates than the most stirring accounts of the Civil War. In due course I was to play my part in *She Stoops to Conquer* where, under Pete Sillis's brilliant guidance as the producer, I was to perform better on stage than in the classroom.

I conclude with an anecdote displaying a lapse in long term memory, an admission of having not the vaguest notion of who it was that taught Divinity. Deeply imprinted on my mind, however, are the detentions liberally awarded by that forgotten Divine. "A copy of the Preface to the Little Bible, Hunt," countless pages of which contained details of all the Canons, Venerables, DDs and theologians in Christendom. In time and with practice I developed such speed at reproduction as enabled me to offer copies at the bargain price of one shilling apiece. There are those who would say I missed my calling. [I assume the forgotten Divine was Harry Graydon? – Ed]

#### Ron Piper (1944)

On leaving school I entered the insurance industry working in the City for a few years and eventually starting my own business as an Insurance Broker which I conducted from offices in South Woodford. In that time I was in touch with one or two old colleagues from school, particularly John Rendu who was also engaged in the insurance industry. Also Brian Trowbridge, an estate agent who sadly died at a very early age. On selling my broking business and property interests in 1984 I

thought I would retire to Guernsey. Retirement became a word that I deleted from my dictionary and I have subsequently established a new business in the yachting world - creating the business out of what was my hobby having owned a boat for many years. The yachting business has grown and is international with associated companies in Holland and Florida. We manufacture and supply very specialised equipment for Super Yachts ie stabilizers and bow-thrusters. We have taken advantage of being resident in the Channel Islands and the businesses are administered from here and I am pleased to say continuing to grow year on year.

#### David Yeowell (1948)

David tells me he is still living near "Twin Peaks" in San Francisco, still running the development of three drugs in clinical trials for a small biotech company, FibroGen, still working 12-14 hours a day, still running two marathons a year, and still commuting to North Carolina where his wife is a professor at Duke University.

#### Krishna Persad (1953)



(attended BHCHS in the 6<sup>th</sup> form 1958-60) On completion of the sixth form I had a gap year. During that year I joined the Old Buckwellians Association and played cricket for them in the summer of '61. In September of '61 I went to Scotland to study medicine at the University of St Andrews. I qualified in 1966 and worked for a year as an Intern in Dundee. In 1967 I went to the Southern Caribbean (Trinidad being the land of my birth) and I worked in health service hospitals for three years. It was during that period that my thoughts turned to specialisation and in 1970 I went to Vancouver, Canada to specialise in General Surgery. In 1972 I returned to Scotland (Edinburgh) to complete my specialisation and in 1974 I obtained a Fellowship from the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. Soon

after that I came to London to do further specialisation in the field of obstetrical and gynaecological surgery. In 1978 I obtained membership from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. In 1979 I returned to Trinidad where I worked as a specialist and lecturer. In July 1985 I returned to Britain and worked as a specialist obstetrician gynaecologist in an NHS District General Hospital in West London until my very recent retirement. In my earlier years after leaving BHCHS I began to fully appreciate the very good foundation I received both in and out of science from my teachers there and I take this opportunity to say a very belated very special THANK YOU to all of them, especially JH Taylor (Spud), FA Scott, Ernie Turner, Harry Owen, Don Gillard, Peter Sillis, Derek Dutton and John Ingram. To the very many dear old friends I made at BHCHS especially Mick Claydon, John Hamshere, Bob Burr, Phil Shashall, Bruce Stuart and John Murrell I say that I deeply regret losing contact but I have thought of you all many times over the years. Lastly, unfortunately I never got around to marriage.

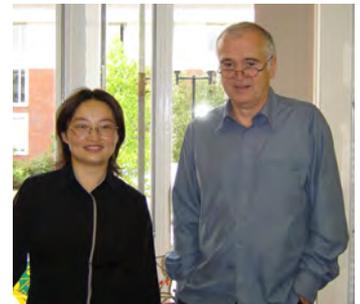
#### John Powell (1954)

I am afraid I did not take full advantage of the opportunity afforded me at school. My father was an oil representative for Duckhams Oil and because at that early age this seemed a good job I did not think a great education was such a big priority and took the easy route of messing around. I later passed insurance exams which were equivalent to A levels so I know I wasted my time at school. I worked in insurance until I was 21 then tried to be a rep. like my father but found I did not like it so went back to insurance. I went into the casino business in 1973 and from 1974 to 1998 I was working in the Bahamas. From 1998 I went to Bucharest in Romania and am now waiting to go on a ship out of Miami. I have two kids: one lives in the Bahamas one in London.

#### Jon Roberts (1956)

As far as I can remember, which isn't all that much these days, this is how it went. Messed up my degree, mainly because I'd won a scholarship that brought in £50 a term, and so of course I was drunk for the first year. Their taking the scholarship away didn't really make much difference. Stupid boy. I did no work at all but did do a bit of acting. I scraped the degree and took a PGCE to avoid working, followed by a year of flat cleaning, night security jobs and so on. I then fell into TEFL and at International House found an organi-

sation I could cope with, being a bit of a sociopath. It was a non-hierarchical, very jolly set-up, run by a near-genius in John Haycraft, who rewarded people for being original and encouraged risk. Imagine that. It was staffed by misfits, musicians, actors, linguists, a lot of very talented people. It was fun. Part of my time with them involved being in Libya for the Ghaddafi revolution, gunpoint dramas and so forth. Married at 28 (still am, two sons, wife with a continental background) and off to the *Instituto Anglo Mexicano* in Mexico City (1973-76). A fantastic place to be, again a very nice set-up to work in with Mexican and English teachers and really fun students, plus we had a car, lots of cash, and travelled all over central America. Plenty of rough things went on too, but it was a Technicolor time. In those days the only way forward in TEFL was to do the new MATEFL, so back to Reading University for a year (76-77). It was good, I actually worked and learned, and the staff there were top class. I was taught and supervised by David Crystal, Frank Palmer, Peter Trudgill, Paul Fletcher, David Wilkins etc etc. Then a job there at the new *Centre for Applied Language Studies* and it all went a bit quiet for about twenty years: kids, mortgage all that. The work had a fun side, because TEFLing in those days involved getting to know lots of overseas students and teachers, and doing British Council



Jon Roberts with one of his students  
tours all over the place peddling communicative teaching and teacher training. The highlights of those trips were, in no special order, Paraguay, Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico again, Egypt, China, India and above all the Himalayan foothills in Nepal visiting schools and getting around by bus and jeep. And getting paid for it. I wrote a book or two, which is what you have to do in the University line. There have been two big turning points. One was beating asthma. Mr Leek (Geography) had opposed my getting Hockey colours on the grounds, so Mick Horsnell told me, that I was "a physical wreck". He wasn't far wrong. I was nastily ill every Summer with asthma, and it seriously limited my life, until I was

taken in hand at about 55 when, after years of pressure from Carol, I went to see a specialist. Diet change, Becotide and Singulair now mean I haven't had an asthma attack (touch wood) since, and life is completely different. The other thing was doing my doctorate very late in life (completed in 2003) through a sometimes dark time in terms of bereavements and family illnesses. It's a professional "rite of passage", but more to the point a severe personal test and surviving is a real confidence-builder. You're out on your own when you do a PhD, at least in the Humanities you are. The people who got it right were like Keith Grant who did it early in life, and built a career from there. So now: early retirement two years ago, and trying to balance out different aspects of life: craft (I'm doing a sculpture course at Morley College); a bit of voluntary work; and going on with funded small-scale research, which I see as the fun part of academic life. Quite recently some of us have met up again (Roland, Keith, Mick, Ian, Ian, Harry, Paul, Peter, Howard and the rest): no-one had really changed that much from how they were at school, and it's amazing how you pick up again, including arguments over the bill. Not that much changes. So there you go. Check my website for the fictional version if you want:  
www.drjonroberts.com

#### Howard (Buck) White (1957)



I emerged from BHCHS with a wadge of detention slips, bruises, and a medal for javelin throwing. At South West Essex Technical College (1964 to 1970) I expanded my horizons. Principle interests were caving (SWETC Caving Club), and singing (FMS, then NELP Chorus) Still active in both because they require adequate lubrication. I qualified as a Chartered Building Surveyor in 1972 and have been in a variety of jobs since, being made redundant three times en-route. I joined Barnardo's in 1994 as Property Manager, and moved north (near Knaresborough)

with the job in 1996. I'm now looking forward to retiring.

I met my wife Kath in 1971 and we have three children - Alex, 30 (single - works for Leeds City Council), Chris, 29, (married to a French girl and now living in Normandy - looking for a property to do up,) and Helen, 27, (single and living in London - works for London School of Economics.)

#### Peter Gill (1961)

I studied Chemical Engineering at Leeds University- BSc and PhD – and spent the next eight years in the USA - chemicals & plastics and oil refining technology industries. I returned to UK in November 1982 with a new German wife. I have had various jobs, mostly with BP, travelling the world. I was based in Brussels from 1995 to 1999 working for BP and Concawe.

I took early retirement and bought an old farmhouse in Somerset as it is a nice place to bring up family. I have never looked back, don't miss the corporate life much, plenty of time to pursue lots of other interests.....

#### Nigel Parkes-Rolfe (1964)

I left Buckhurst Hill to go to Leicester University to study Biology...first time ever away from home. Over the next 3 years I gained an Honours degree and a wife! One turned out to be more rewarding in the longer term than the other...although I did 'inherit' an OB as a relation for a short while...my very best wishes to Graham Smith (1970). From university I got a paid job as a student Environmental Health Officer with Bolsover District Council in Derbyshire...best days of my working life really and even managed to acquire a social conscience as well. I qualified professionally and moved to my first real job as an EHO with Derby City Council in 1977. I worked my way through the ranks there, to attain the dizzy heights of a Team Leader, tasked with trying to protect the health and safety of the working population of Derby. In 2001 I had a kind of mid-life crisis and argued transferable skills to get a new job within the Council. I now lead their Occupational Health and Employee Welfare function.

For those of you that enjoy happy endings, in 1984 I married my present wife Sharon, a pre-school teacher for children with learning difficulties. We have 2 children, Daniel (18) and Timothy (15). Our eldest is soon off to University but dreams of being a rock star...so if you see any adverts for a band called Wind Up Mouse, please buy a ticket, they are really quite good. Tim plays badminton for Derbyshire and

is a worryingly good cook. As for me, I still try to play badminton regularly but vital body parts are prone to failure! I am heavily into my gardening and have become a horticultural groupie, chasing up and down the country looking for plants at various nurseries and shows. Contemporary music also still means a great deal to me...I think I may have Graham Weston and Max Edgar to thank for some of that...to have not known about Kevin Ayers, the Edgar Broughton Band, Captain Beefheart and John Peel's radio shows, would have indeed made life far less rich. I am still good friends with Steve SurrIDGE and although we live a fair distance apart, we see each other at least a couple of times a year. As I remember it, we both owe a debt of gratitude to 'Reggie' Sears, God rest him...we had to check his board-worked maths so often that we actually got quite good at it! I have many other debts to teachers at BHCHS, amongst whom were;

'Jumbo' Johnson, whose approach to Chemistry genuinely scared me but I still remember much of it to this day; John Drury for giving me confidence with Statistics and Neil Rumbol during A-Level Biology, for being a genuinely nice bloke...although he did draw the line at hand-assisted gerbil racing across the Biology Lab benches! If any of our 6<sup>th</sup> form Biology group, or anyone at all for that matter, wants to get in touch, then I would love to hear from them on [nigel.parkesrolfe@btinternet.com](mailto:nigel.parkesrolfe@btinternet.com)

#### Dean Ollenbuttel (1972)

is alive and well and living in Chelmsford, working for an engineering company in Harlow, married to Carolyn with one son.

#### Pierre Ketteridge (1972)

Having started off in Medical Art and Graphic Design, I sort of fell into the IT goldrush of the late seventies/early eighties. I am now a Communications Network Design Consultant. A peripatetic lifestyle, have lived in Scotland, Belgium, N Yorkshire, before returning to my roots. Now living in Loughton. Married to Claire (née Ely). 3 Boys - Alex (Dec' 2001), Ben (May 2003), James (July 2004). Elusive daughter not yet achieved.

#### Chris Gollin (1973)

I am nearly divorced now, have 2 lovely kids and work as a senior IT specialist for a Swiss company after a series of positions in industry. After school I joined the air force for officer training. Later I studied business management and have worked for the Ford Motor Company, Braun, EMI Music and METRO. I now live in West Germany but do a fair amount of travelling jobwise and privately.

My hobbies are photography, travelling, the Far East, cooking, chilling out on squeaky beaches, partying and not too much DIY again.

I'm not the same character that I was when I was young. I have become more go-getting - carpe diem! I am surprised at how my life is turning out. Change is nearly the only constant.

#### Warren Allden (1981)

I live In South Ockendon work and as an operations manager for a security firm based in the City. I am married to Karan and have twin sons Jack and Henry.

#### Jason Wright (1982)

Since leaving BHCHS and then the annexed 6th form (which, may I add I enjoyed to the max, probably to the detriment of my a-level grades) I undertook a working life rather than a 3 year jaunt to University. A big mistake I later found out on visiting friends around the country for week-ends of debauchery!

The career I chose was insolvency and I am, this year, completing the final of my professional qualifications to become an insolvency practitioner. Following this, I hope that a number of doors will open to further my own development. Should anyone be in need of some free insolvency advice please contact me at [jwright@kingstonsmith.co.uk](mailto:jwright@kingstonsmith.co.uk), although I hope you are all doing better than that!

On a more personal note I remain in touch with a number of old boys such as 'Jabba' Osborne and his younger brother 'Peanut' Nick, 'Bomber' Bentley, 'Wingnut' Orton, Jan French (now in France), Nick Pullen, 'Caveman' Marshall (and brother 'Eggy') whom all remain great mates.

I am also lucky enough to have a girlfriend who puts up with me and we live together in East London and are very much looking forward to the Olympics and a long life together! Best memory of BHCHS was skiing holidays with the always hilarious Mr Conway, corridor tunnels, Hoss and Miss Glynn.

### COMING UP.....

Features planned for our next edition include:

▲ Young Buckwellians News - early publishing efforts

▲ Old Bucks at the O's

▲ All the World's a Stage - resuming our drama series

▲ Record Breakers - Athletic heroes at School Sports Days

# Over and Out!

By Barry Nickels (BHCHS 1959-63)

Barry Nickels (front row second from right) recalls an incident from his two years of playing for the BHCHS 2nd XI. Also in this photo (back row right) is Jon Roberts - see p.18)



IN 1963 we played an away match at Chelmsford, and surprisingly we had to make our own way there (coaches? Never). Somehow I ended up travelling on the back of Mick Logan's scooter (having probably told my parents I was going on the bus). Now, I used to bowl very acceptable leg breaks in the back garden, but had never been able to persuade anyone to let me bowl in a match. This time, however, things weren't going too well in the field and the captain let me bowl. The first two balls went for singles, the third was hit high to square leg, where the fielder not only dropped the catch but allowed the ball to cross the boundary. Ball four I can't remember, but ball five was hit straight back over my head for a big six, which caused a ten minute delay while we searched for the ball in the bushes. Eventu-

ally I bowled the last ball, the batsman tried to repeat the shot, was beaten by the turn and our wicket keeper missed the easiest stumping imaginable. At this point the captain informed me that he was taking me off because I had been hit for six! So ended my only over in school cricket. And these days people ask why we don't have any decent wrist spinners in English cricket. Funnily enough, I can still remember the names of that captain and that wicketkeeper! On a happier note, in the next season at University I had a more sympathetic captain and took quite a few wickets. Nowadays, I umpire every weekend in our local league and am Chairman of my village cricket club, so my experiences of school cricket didn't do too much harm (I even survived the journey home on Hank's scooter).

## Name that Teacher

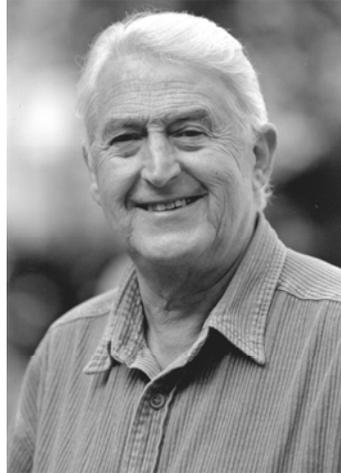
**JOHN RIPPIN (Head of Music 1961-78) writes.....**The juxtaposition of pictures of Alan Anthony and John Ingram in your last issue reminded me of a small incident during my early days at BHCHS. Staff, and possibly pupils too, were aware that JHT was likely to get in a muddle with peoples' names. On this occasion Andy Salisbury came into the staff room in great glee to say that he and Alan Anthony and John Ingram had been talking in a group outside the main hall when JHT approached and announced to them "I'm looking for Mr Ingram". John Ingram, somewhat surprised, re-

plied, "Well, I'm Mr Ingram" (JHT hardly ever used first names with his staff). As JHT then drew John aside he turned to Alan Anthony and said "Excuse me, Mr Armstrong" and then continued on his way. When I began at BH, succeeding Donald Ray, the fact that both our names began with an R seemed to flay JHT, and from time to time he would greet either of us as "Mr ER-ER-ER" before homing in on, generally, the correct surname. Indeed, to this day, Don and I frequently greet each other in exactly the same way, a quaint reminder of JHT's confusion.

# Life Begins at 41

By David Rolfe (BHCHS 1942-47)

David Rolfe had always wanted to be an actor from the time when, in his final year at BHCHS, he appeared as the Archangel Gabriel in "The Zeal of thy House" (... "the nearest I shall ever come to angel status"). But when his father died soon after leaving school he decided to stay at the GPO, where he eventually became Deputy Publicity Manager for the Postal Business following the BT privatisation. David tells us how he then launched a new career.



BY THE TIME I had reached the age of forty I was getting a little fed up with the Post Office and when I saw a modelling course advertised, I took it - two nights a week for six weeks - and so enjoyed it, I decided that was what I wanted to do. I did several modelling jobs while still at the Post Office. But then I managed to get three months' sabbatical leave without pay. I enjoyed myself so much that I resigned from the Post Office, put three months money in the bank, froze my pension (for the next 19 years!) and set out to prove that life begins at 41!

It took me a little while to get going, but eventually I managed to obtain a provisional Equity ticket through a commercial, and then did 'extra' and 'walk-on' work in TV to get my full ticket. I graduated to small parts in many TV shows including *Dixon of Dock Green*, *Rumpole of the Bailey*, *Yes*, *Prime Minister*, *Waste* (Play of the Month), *Northanger Abbey*, *The Two Ronnies*, *Jeeves and Wooster*, and in several films, working with among others Jack Warner, Richard Murdoch (boyhood idols from war-time radio programmes), Leo McKern, Paul Eddington, Nigel Hawthorn, Bruce Forsyth, Paul Dane-man, Hannah Gordon, Ronnie Barker, Ronnie Corbett, Tommy Cooper, Frankie Howard, Stephen Fry, Hugh Lawrie and Geraldine James.

I even met Terrence Hardiman once at an audition, but we didn't get much time to talk about BHCHS! I also met Peter Porteous several

times, and while talking to him during a casting for a TV commercial, we discovered we had both been at BHCHS at the same time. I was sorry to learn he died recently.

I am still modelling in photographic advertisements. Over nearly 33 years I have advertised everything from luxury cruises to incontinence pads, from pensions to piles! Currently, in supermarkets, you will find my bowler hated face splattered with Walls Banoffee Pie! (see picture).

It's a mad life - feast or famine - but you never know what will happen next. It could be a job in Barcelona or Battersea - or nothing - but it beats working for the Post Office!

Fourteen years ago I started to receive my PO pension, and then nine years ago the old age pension, which together gives me a nice cushion, and I regard myself as semi-retired. But when the phone rings I'm happy to work and earn a bit more jam! I've had a lot of fun over these past 33 years.

I married my wife Penelope in 1954 and we had four children. Pen still has two part-time secretarial jobs, and so when I'm not working I am a sort of poor woman's house husband. We're both aged 74 but on a Saturday night we usually go our separate ways and act as a 'Caller' for a Barn Dance. We both sing in the South West Essex Choir and are involved in the work of St Anne's Church in Chingford. I now give talks to Women's and Probus Clubs etc about my rather strange job - entitled *Life begins at 41!*

Fortunately we both enjoy good health and will go on as long as we can to finance our cruises and other holidays, and to help to support our seven grandchildren.



One of David Rolfe's recent appearances

# From the Editor's Postbag.....

## Deplorable

Ivan Moss (1962-69)

Whilst one does not wish to be a wet blanket I must draw to your attention the following resolution passed at the last meeting of OBIK (Old Bucks in Kenilworth) which in the interests of fairness and balance I trust you will give due prominence in the next edition of OBN.

“OBIK deplore the lowering of journalistic and moral standards in the first colour edition of Old Buckwellians News and whilst not yet requiring the head of the editor on a silver platter would draw to his attention to following disgraceful contents

- 1) There is a photograph of a girl on the front cover.
- 2) To make the revered Pete Sillis the subject of the caption competition is unpardonable.
- 3) To refer to Miss Blomfield as Beryl shows you are sliding towards the standards of the gutter press!

OBIK demand the editor publishes a full, grovelling, abject apology”

Please note it is possible that one half of the membership of OBIK may seek to question the validity of the resolution as he was at the bar at the time buying the next round. However since 50 per cent of the members were present, the meeting was quorate when the vote was taken.

[I fear an apology may not be enough, and that OBIK may have further complaints on reading the contents of this edition - Ed]

## Mixed Blessings

Geoff Scott (1952-59)

I was impressed with *OB News* and the articles within; I am sending my subscription today.

Thanks also for the 1952 year group list (sad to learn of the deaths of some). The only person I've really kept in touch with (spasmodically) has been Basil Dimitriou. Your recent endeavours prompted Basil to phone me, and we have resolved to meet up again.

I was surprised to see so much in the *News Magazine* which rang bells with me - even a photo of my old class, 2A (I'm third on the right, front line).

That particular article was very interesting: I remember the school tower incident very well, especially as Spud had cancelled all end of term activities. One of these was a production by the sixth form of a play - “The Caine Mutiny Court-martial”. I was learning my part as the Judge, and because we were not allowed to perform the play, will never know if I had any latent thespian talents! I remember being miffed about this, but never really blamed the miscreants for not owning up at the time. I think some of us had a pretty good idea who they were, though.

I was also pleased to hear that Donald Ray is still musically active. Music, as an amateur, has been important to me all my life and my school experiences were particularly enjoyable (the Madrigal Group, led by Mr Mead, School Choir and Orchestras, plus an ‘O’ level in music!).

Because Fred Scott was my uncle, I was often called Faz or Faz Junior by my peers. Being a nephew of the Deputy Head had mixed blessings (I was proud of him) and I believe some of the discipline I received from the other masters was a little harsh in their attempts not to show any favouritism!

## Connections

Terry Bayford (1953-58)

*OB News* is an excellent read for those who like to reminisce about the old days. I am never quite sure whether that includes me because whilst I am interested to hear what has become of people from all those years ago, I am also keen to get on with life as it is today. However, perhaps the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Over the years I have had quite a lot of contact with various Old Boys, mainly through cricket, soccer and golf and, to some extent, through my work with Essex local education authority. In the latter connection I met HAC fairly frequently at school, but also at Highbury as we were both ardent Arsenal fans. I remember one occasion when he left a Governors’ meeting to use the toilet and, on his return, discreetly slipped me a piece of paper with the latest score in the Arsenal match being played that evening. Hugh always had a good sense of priorities.

*OB News* is sometimes useful in providing information of which one might previously have been unaware. For example, it was only through one of the editions that I discovered for the first time that a person I had played alongside in a football team for several years in the 1960s was an Old Buck. It is strange that it did not come out at the time, although he was probably some ten years older than me.

I have contemplated a personal contribution to the *Where Are They Now* column, but my modest lifetime achievements compared with some other contributors have so far deterred me. I did, by chance, almost make edition no.11 of the magazine which included a photograph of the front row of the under 15 cricket team, but unfortunately I was in the back row, which was not shown. I recognised the photograph instantly as it had pride of place on my mother’s mantelpiece from 1957 until she

died in 2003.

Finally, I would like to comment on an item which has appeared in *OB News* regarding School League Tables. Although successive Governments are, and have been, obsessed with league tables on all kinds of matters, these should be treated with some caution as they do not always tell the whole story. This is particularly true of School League Tables, which are regularly criticised by education professionals from schools across the board, including high achieving institutions. However, that aside, I can see absolutely no connection at all between the former BHCHS and the GCSE results of Guru Gobind Singh Khalsa College, other than the fact that they have both occupied the same premises. The pupils at the two schools were/are chosen through an entirely different selection process and, therefore, any comparison is entirely meaningless. To suggest that GGSKC is, in some way, the modern day equivalent of BHCHS is, if I may say so, quite illogical. We have to face the fact that BHCHS as a school no longer exists.

The other aspect which concerns me is the publication of the results of other local schools as if we are trying to demonstrate that the reincarnated BHCHS i.e.GGSKC, is superior. I guess we could have a long debate about the validity of performance league tables, but I can say that as a past parent of a school at the foot of your table I do not consider it the role of *OB News* to publicise such information about other schools. In my opinion, it is inappropriate and unhelpful and could be regarded as unprofessional. I am sorry if I am being over-sensitive and hope you will understand my views. I am sure these reflect those of other Old Boys who are, or have been, parents of the school in question, which has been going through a difficult time and which can do without unnecessary negative publicity. I accept that the information is already in the public domain, but I do not think it is the place of *OB News* to reinforce it.

## Crossword Solution



**Cowsheds defence***John Fricker (1939-46)*

I fear John Webster's poor opinion of the brick air raid shelters around the playground was a bit hard (*OB News May 2005*). They were of a type erected widely as street shelters in areas of terraced housing with no gardens. They wouldn't stand a direct hit (nothing less than about 20 ft down would) but would stand up to a near miss far better than a building with windows and wood framed floors and ceilings. The Germans didn't seem particularly interested in schools, and BHCHS was probably too new to be on their maps, but the school was possibly in some danger from bombs meant for the RAF camp. In fact within a few months of the erection of those shelters daylight raids were over.

I don't remember anyone riding around blowing a whistle; the air raid signal was a series of short rings on the bells used for start and finish of lessons etc. This led to one memorable incident in, I think, the spring/summer of 1943. 5C were waiting outside the Physics lab for the first lesson of the afternoon, when an exceptionally tall member of the class found that by intermittently inserting the tip of his ruler under the clapper of the bell, he could convert the signal for lessons to start into an air raid warning. With gleeful shouts of "Air raid!" (air raids were less to be feared than afternoon lessons) the population of the South wing dashed for the shelters, and the teachers leaving the staff room were just in time to see the backs of the tail-enders. Sadly our escape was short-lived, but it was fun while it lasted.

A year or so later, there was an occasion when we did not go to the shelters. It was doodle-bug time (ie V1s), and school was closed except for those of us in the fifth year taking School Certificate, who sat exams spread throughout the school. One lunchtime, however, we were all in the playground waiting for the afternoon exam, when we heard and saw a doodle-

bug coming. It didn't look to be coming straight for us, so we stood and watched it as it flew past a bit to the north, and then we rushed to the north end of the playground when it went out of sight behind the school. Next morning Spud did his nut! "You should have gone to the shelters. You could all have been killed." Was he kidding? We'd all heard doodle-bugs before, but seeing one was something special.

**No dress rehearsal***Brian Clements (1952-57)*

I read with interest David Sewell's comments (*OB News May 2005*) about the standard of education we received at BHCHS and agree that students received the education they deserved. His comments were spot on, speaking as one of those who chose to play around for most of the year only to try to become involved at the end when the exams were looming. I can remember being quite amazed when the teachers showed no interest in me. It is no wonder that most of the comments on my report were "could do better" and I still remember the comment by Mr. Scott on my final report "a curious boy to the end." If only we had our time over again but, as they say - life is not a dress rehearsal - this is it!

**'Normal?' or 'Genius?'***Identity withheld*

I received your magazine but unfortunately found it to be one of the most boring pieces of literature I have ever tried to read. You have written about a bunch of people who are doing no more than bragging about whatever achievements they think are interesting. I have no wish to be involved in your scheme and no wish to receive further issues. I apologise if this appears to be rude but being at BHCHS was one of the most unpleasant times of my life and in fact none of the people in your magazine mean anything to me at all. Perhaps you should be writing about 'normal' people instead of all those 'geniuses'. Please - no further communication, and perhaps you would be so kind as to remove me and my details from your database.

**Memories in aspic***Malcolm Taylor (1946-53)*

Many thanks for sending me the May 2005 edition of *OB News*. I am still recovering from the shock of your initial telephone contact but I am delighted to see from the 1946 year group listing you attached that I have been 'found' some 50+ years after my time 'above Roding stream.'

For some inexplicable reason I opted to go to BHCHS when my parents lived no more than 15 minutes walking distance from Ilford Grammar School. For some years I had to walk to Hainault station and catch a steam train to Chigwell and then walk the rest. On foggy days the steam trains could be most unreliable. Later, of course, we enjoyed the 167 bus and I remember as a prefect trying to control an unruly mob at the bus stop.

The newsletter brought many happy memories flooding back. I well remember Eddie Cook because he was such an outstanding sprinter - much to my annoyance because he always beat me by yards in the 100 and 200 yard sprints. He made it look as if the rest of us were going backwards. He was a good anchor man for the school relay team and no matter how the first three runners performed Eddie could always be relied on to bring the school squad home in first position.

Hockey (anyone remember Mr Wilson who taught woodwork but was a first class hockey player?) was my main sporting love at school and before leaving in 1953 to go to Southampton University I played a few games for the Old Bucks hockey team under the guidance of Tony Jolly - so it was great to read news from him.

Roger Landbeck I knew well. We shared digs at Southampton and we both turned out for the University athletics team.

On the downside I am saddened to read of some who are no longer with us. Tony Bambridge always had a mischievous look on his face. I met him a few years ago at a family event when he was a

deputy editor on some prestigious newspaper produced down in Wapping.

Mike King I remember as an outstanding hockey player and a tough scrapper in the school yard when the occasion warranted. Ralph Mayo was the bright one who went up to Cambridge. Brian Saley was selected to play in goal for Essex schoolboys at football. George Savill was always known as "Eggie" - must have been something to do with the content of his lunch pack.

Eddie Sear is best remembered for playing leading female roles in the school drama productions.

At the end of all this reminiscing, my final sentiments are rather in keeping with those expressed by the anonymous contributor under the heading "Pandora's Box" in the May 2005 edition. I am particularly grateful to Eddie Dolman for guiding me towards university and opening up learning and opportunities which would only be appraised some years down the line. I have such fond memories of those years 'twixt Essex lanes and trees' and my contemporaries which I feel might be shattered by further contacts, updating and looking at obituary columns. I am going to leave things as they are, with those precious memories from 50 years ago set in aspic.

**A very good woman***Robert Hiscott (1943-48)*

I don't think the following will win the caption competition.

Peter Sillis was my history teacher for five years. I have never been interested in history and this fact, coupled with a hole where my memory should be, made it all hard going. On one occasion he made a profound impression for the first time when, at Parents' Day, he was talking about me, just within earshot.

"Hiscott has never been interested in history, and he is not interested in my dramatic society either, which is a pity because he would make a very good woman."

# Obituary

## Ernest Clark      Derek Auger



I RECENTLY heard from Mrs Rosemary Clark that her husband Ernest had died on 11th July 2005.

**Ernest Clark** taught physics at BHCHS from 1958-60.

Mrs Clark tells me that although he only taught at the school for a short time, his memories of it were inspirational and indelible and he remembered with great admiration and clarity the headmaster under whom he worked, and the legendary FAS. He had been especially pleased to discover, just a few years ago, that his village postmaster (Colin Ashman) had also been a pupil at BHCHS.

## Douglas Clarke

WITH the passing of **Douglas Clarke** (BHCHS 1938-43) we have sadly lost another of the original entrants to BHCHS. Doug suffered a stroke on 14th September 2005. A full obituary will appear in the next edition.

## Peter Catmur

**PETER CATMUR** (BHCHS 1947-52) died on 5th December 2005 following a stroke. Peter was a very long standing member of the OBA, and had attended last year's Dinner. He was also well known in many other circles. I hope to publish an obituary in the next edition.

*I received the following message from **Mike Hare** (1950) in September.*

It is with great sadness that I e-mail you this time to tell you of the death of my school friend of more than 50 years - **Derek Auger** (BHCHS 1950-55).

I had contacted him in the early summer to arrange a day out with our respective wives but he had come back to me to say he just wasn't up to it. He was waiting to see a specialist and have some tests carried out. I last spoke to him in July on his birthday and he was still awaiting the results.

I was absolutely stunned when his daughter rang me last night to say he had passed away last Sunday. When you are suddenly hit with things like this it makes you realise how fragile our very existence can be.

## Hugh Evans

**HUGH EVANS** (BHCHS 1960-67) worked as a Technical Author in various European countries including Holland, Germany and Austria where he worked in Vienna for a number of years.

He spoke fluent High German and in his spare time he wrote short stories which he read on the Austrian World Service Radio. He returned to England in 1992, and lived in Harlow, working for Reuters.

Hugh died in December 2004. He had been suffering from cancer. Our condolences go to his partner Valerie, to his twin brother Howard, who also attended BHCHS, and to his mother.

## Steve Dyer

WE were shocked to hear of the sudden death of **Steve Dyer** (BHCHS 1968-75) on 28th January 2006. Steve collapsed and died while out jogging. More information about Steve will be published in the next edition.

# Peter Porteous



**PETER PORTEOUS** (BHCHS 1941-47) died on 12th August 2005. We are grateful to his partner June Lewis for this tribute:

Peter was born 75 years ago in London to Margaret Grace Porteous and was given up for adoption. His adoptive parents – Ernest and Roseanna Warren – changed his name to Kenneth and so as 'Kenneth Warren' he went through school and indeed many of his family and old friends still know him as 'Ken'.

He returned to his birth name of Peter Porteous after training as an actor at the prestigious Central School which, when he was there in 1950, occupied premises in the Royal Albert Hall. He had to change from Kenneth Warren when he joined Equity, the actor's union, as someone had already registered that name. So throughout his professional career of half a century, he has been known and loved as Peter Porteous.

He made his London theatre debut in 1960 at the Aldwych Theatre in *Brouhaha*, playing opposite Peter Sellers, Lionel Jeffries and Leo McKern. He played a pygmy, blacked up and wearing a kilt! Numerous other roles included Antony in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Claudius in *Hamlet* and Baptista in *The Taming of the Shrew*. He had West End roles in Agatha Christie's *A Murder is Announced* at the Vaudeville Theatre and in *And Then There Were None* at the Duke of Yorks. He also played major roles in works by Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Albert Camus, Harold Pinter and Tom Murphy.

His professional film life started when he worked for the great German film director, Otto Preminger, in the film *St Joan* (Jean Seberg). Other films included *Brannigan* with

John Wayne, a couple of Bond films, *Octopussy* and *The Living Daylights*, several *Carry On* films, *I'm Alright Jack* with Peter Sellers and, *The Navy Lark* with Leslie Phillips.

His TV work included the series *Spycatcher* and *Space 1999*, the BBC production of *Macbeth* where he played MacDuff, the series *Expert Witness* and the film *Year of the French*.

Throughout his life, Peter had a keen interest in politics and was very politically aware. His favourite television programmes (after Test Match cricket) were *The News* and *Prime Ministers Questions*. He even went on the march to demonstrate against the Iraq war only a couple of years ago. He was a prolific letter writer – *The Guardian's* letters page through the years being proof of that.

Peter spent many happy years in the Chichester area. He had always loved the sea from his early days as a child in Cornwall. He then did service in the Royal Navy (*HMS Superb*). He took great pleasure walking around Chichester Harbour with his black Labrador. He loved the area between Chidham and Prinsted and for many years he did his morning exercises on the bench on the point near Prinsted – a sight to behold!

It is with great pleasure that we are able to say that Chichester Harbour Conservancy, through the Friends of Chichester Harbour, have agreed to place a bench on the shore line at Nutbourne dedicated to Peter's memory.

This was a man who was fortunate in life. He always lived with people who loved him and he had three wonderful children and seven grandchildren.

# Peter Newnham



Pete the Mongrel

*In Memoriam – Peter Newnham 1953-2005 (BHCHS 1964-71):*

I FIRST became aware of Pete "Noon" in 1969 while I was attempting to keep order in the dinner queue. I was a hirsute Upper Sixth form prefect with sideburns and a full upper lip of hair, but I found his publicly-aired view that I was hairy totally unacceptable.

As he was a fifth-former, I immediately imposed an 'impot' on a subject of my choosing – 'The Advantages of Long Hair'. Pete responded half-heartedly with some scribble which started well ('it makes you look beautiful' etc.) but which degenerated into insinuations that long hair made you look like a girl, and you might go all weedy if you had it cut, like Samson. Unimpressed, I gave him another impot on The Advantages of Keeping One's Mouth Shut, to which Pete produced 'a fairy story, by Pete the Mongrel' involving eating sausages through your nose, playing Monopoly in pink braces and Spiro Agnew (the then US vice-president).

Neither of us could let this creativity go to waste, and throughout the next decade we spent many occasions creating silly conversations or situations inspired by Milligan and Python but usually entirely Pete's own branch of original thinking. He would produce the occasional marvel, including 'The Disadvantages of Growing Sandwiches' (from the point of view of the sandwich), and a play involving Wedlock Tomes and his sidekick Dr. Wotsup, the plot of which revolved around Wotsup feeding Tomes lines like '... he's due for a long spell in jail. Tomes: Penitentiary, my dear Weston' etc.

Pete was very bright – he was tipped for Cambridge, and read law at Newcastle. His way became more

anarchic after University, however. He worked mostly in the betting industry, but his real purpose was to enjoy life – pleasure in his friends, in his family and in having a good time. A career was unimportant to him – or rather, he didn't take such things seriously. I think he liked to think of himself, if not a dissenter to the 'system', then perhaps a conscientious objector.

Pete's wit, intelligence, imagination and playfulness were always his strengths. They characterised his life; for his funeral his daughter Ella movingly wrote that she remembered his stories, his smiles and his laughs more than anything else. Typically, he was into *Lord of the Rings*, his guitar, Alan Coren, *Private Eye* and those great lolloping lurchers. Despite sending me a letter which was Sealed With A Loving Kick, Pete has taught me that everything revolves, or should revolve, around love and play. He was a prankster – in those pre-PC times we had many loud conversations in public while thumping our chests, pretending to be deaf people whose hearing aid batteries had gone.

I was Pete's best man when he married Pauline in 1982 – he'd be pleased that I still have the Order of Service that says 'Do Not Remove' – but then our ways diverged. He and Pauline divorced some years later, but not until they had made Ella; now a charming seventeen year-old with her mother's sense and her father's gentleness.

Pete was ill for several of his last years, but his intention to play to the last continued, right up to his sudden death from a heart attack last October. He was 52. Sadly, Pete's mother died just a few days after him. He leaves a brother Richard (BHCHS 1957-62) and a sister, Janet.

If Pete was a mongrel, he was the type that everyone loves – the small, friendly, intelligent, cheeky one that appears muddily in front of you one day, who goes for a long and companionable walk round the forest with you, and then disappears without warning. You always miss those when they've gone. I shall certainly miss Pete.

Mac

Ian Macdonald (BHCHS 1962-69)

# Professor John W Robinson

*The search for John Robinson (BHCHS 1945-51) began when I noticed a reference in The Roding magazine of 1962 that he was teaching at the University of Nebraska. An initial email to the University was unanswered, but more recently I followed up with a further internet search and discovered a reference to an annual prize awarded by the English Department – the Robinson Prize. On finding this I made a more determined approach directly to the English Department and it was soon confirmed that the prize was, indeed, in memory of John W Robinson who attended BHCHS. I was then grateful to receive the following information from Joy S. Ritchie, who is Professor and Chair of the English Department.*

I am writing to you in response to a query you sent to the University of Nebraska Alumni Association about Professor John W. Robinson. Professor Robinson died on February 25, 1986 at the age of 51. He had been a member of the UNL faculty since 1961 and served as chairman of the English Department from 1972-1981. He was Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences from 1969-72. During his career at UNL, he was active in campus affairs serving as vice president and president of the UNL chapter of the American Association of University Professors and on the UNL Faculty Senate. In 1970-71, he was special representative of the chancellor on racial issues and also served in 1971 as chairman of the Committee on Needs of Foreign Students. At the time of his death, he was a member of the advisory board of the University of Nebraska Press. Professor Robinson had bachelor's and master's degrees from Oxford Uni-

versity and his doctorate from Glasgow University. His scholarly interest was in early drama. A bibliography he co-authored on "English Theatrical Literature 1559-1900" was awarded the first annual Besterman Medal by the Library Association (England). At the time of his death he was finishing a book on late medieval drama and was re-editing his English Theatre Bibliography. He was survived by a wife and four children.

I hope this information is helpful to you. I was not on the faculty during Professor Robinson's time there, but I know that he was considered an outstanding leader and scholar.

Earlier this year we were very sorry to learn of the death of the wives of two former members of staff.

**May Samways** will be remembered by many Old Bucks as a very popular teacher at Manford Way Primary School and also Princes Road Primary School, Buckhurst Hill.

**Barbara Ray** was known to many Old Bucks as a loyal supporter of Don Ray at musical events both during and after his time on the staff of BHCHS. Barbara Ray died on 18th September 2005 following a long illness. Several Old Bucks attended her memorial service held at Chingford in October.

Our condolences and good wishes go to Bernard Samways and Don Ray.

## *We have also learned of the following deaths....*

**Raymond Hardy (1939).** I heard from Ray's daughter that he died on 26th May 2005 after a short illness. He lived in Tonbridge.

**Ron HT Bates (1939)** died in April, 1995. He lived in Surrey.

**Dennis Vines (1939)** died in December 2005. Reported by Malcolm Beard (1941).

**Howard Bennett (1941)** died on 27th September 2005. Information from daughter Sue Appleton.

**Terry Kibblewhite (1941)** died in October 2005.

**John R Wooldridge (1943)** died in March 1994. He lived in Brent.

**Brian L Giles (1944)** died on 23rd

November 2005. Information from his wife Susan. Brian was a long standing member of the Old Bucks and lived in Bury St Edmunds.

**Michael Milbank (1944)** died on 20th December 2005. He lived in Rayleigh.

**Peter D Ryan (1950).** I was told by Brian Winstone (1950) that Peter may have been killed in a road accident in Australia shortly after leaving school. This information has not been verified.

**Dave Missin (1952)** died on 26th June 2005. He had been suffering from cancer for many years. Information from Brian Clements (1952).