

OLD BUCKWELLIANS NEWS



Further Education

THIS SUMMER my wife and I were sitting among many other proud parents at our son's graduation ceremony. An unexpected bonus was an inspirational closing speech by Sir John Parker, the Chancellor of Southampton University. After shaking hands with 150 students and managing a brief conversation with each of them, the eminent industrialist who rose from apprentice to Chief Executive at Harland & Wolff appealed to the students to continue their education in their working lives and beyond. They could be proud of their success, but he added that success (quoting Ben Sweetman) was a journey not a destination. At a time when the world of work is full of uncertainty for new graduates and indeed many

others, he made a convincing case for continued learning to be a top priority.

In my own working life I have seen the truth of Sir John's message. I have witnessed many people whose ongoing thirst for knowledge and new experiences has led to great satisfaction. Sadly, I have also seen the opposite. People who fail to recognise when they need to take a new path or who feel their employer has sole responsibility for giving them a stimulating and successful career can become distressingly disillusioned.

Building the Old Buck network has given me some great learning opportunities, and it has definitely furthered my own education. Part of this is learning from

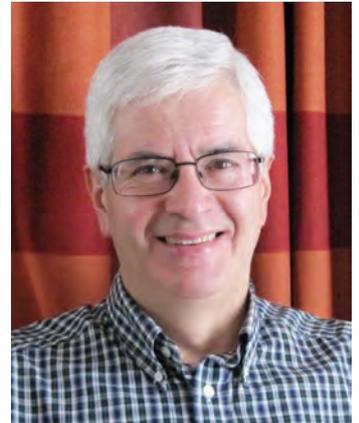
what other Old Bucks have achieved. In this edition we have, I think, another collection of features and news that give us some fascinating insights into the lives and careers of former students and teachers. Even if you were not part of the Ray Watkinson decade, I recommend reading his story. Steve Cladingboel's thoughtful and honest feature on bullying takes us into an area that has not received much attention in previous editions, but should not be ignored.

If you haven't yet sent us an update about yourself I hope perhaps you will be tempted to write in and tell us about your own experiences and contribute to our further education.

Graham Frankel

November 2011

Number 25



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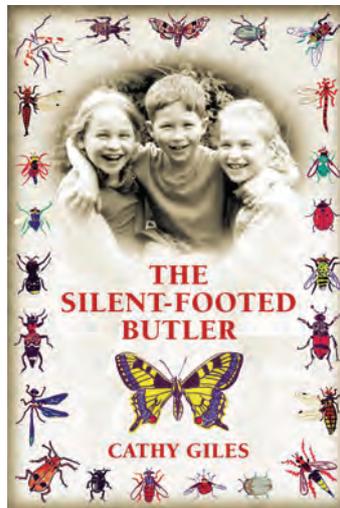
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Old Buckwellians News

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News

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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The Silent-footed Butler

Chris Giles died in 1975 at the age of 17, drowned in a canoeing accident while on holiday. He was a highly talented musician. In 2004, his sister **Cathy Giles** began writing the story of his life. This turned into a monumental project, resulting in a remarkable book that has just been published.



Cathy Giles

WHEN I first heard from Cathy Giles in 2006 that she was writing a book about Chris, I knew immediately that those who remembered him would be pleased to help her. Following a feature published in May 2006 she received a tremendous response. Many of the memories, stories and anecdotes about Chris and BHCHS have gone into the book.

The project to write Chris's story turned into something much larger than Cathy had originally envisaged, and while Chris's life was clearly the inspiration for the book, the final result is a wonderfully honest family story.

Cathy took the brave decision to publish the book herself. This was an entirely new venture for her.

The intriguing title is a quote from *The Martyrdom of Man* by William Winwood Reade:

Life is bottled sunshine and Death the silent-footed butler who draws out the cork.

Chris Giles was a pupil during a

period when there was an abundance of exceptionally talented musicians. Under the guidance of John Rippin and Michael Maxwell, music was flourishing. The sudden death of Chris, just after finishing his lower sixth year, was a great loss for the school, and a devastating tragedy for his family. Cathy describes movingly and courageously the aftermath of Chris's death on her parents and her twin sister Isabel.

The Silent-footed Butler is a wonderful achievement, running to 644 pages of which more than 100 are photographs, plus dozens of illustrations by Chris (his talents were not just in music), and tracing the history of Cathy's family. It will be of great interest, not only to those who remember Chris, but also to anyone who is familiar with the areas of NE London/Essex where the family was growing up in the late 50s to mid 70s.

Some comments taken from early reviews:

In this exploration of the life of her remarkable brother, Cathy Giles uncovers truths about her family that have lain hidden for generations. The Silent-footed Butler is a fascinating story that is both shocking and moving, written with precision and clarity. - Natalie Baron, copy editor, author.

This is a moving, deeply personal, exquisitely detailed biography/ autobiography, which captures the essence of the times and the emotion of the occasions. The prose is magical, and the memory



Chris Giles aged 11

of events, so many involving sadness and tragedy, impressive. The whole book is a work of beauty; it reads like a long, finely-crafted love story - Steve Cladingboel, social care trainer, writer (BHCHS 1969-76).

Cathy asked me to acknowledge the tremendous help given by Steve Cladingboel, and Martin Wheatley who read early drafts and contributed photos, memories and school information. Cathy also met with Cliff Oliver and Martin Koch who shared memories some of which were published. Others who offered memories and anecdotes included: David Long, David Gage, Simon Mansfield, Laurence Gold, Eddie Barnes, Trevor Taylor, Ross Pearlstone, John Rogers and John Rippin.

The Silent-footed Butler can be purchased directly (£40 plus p&p) from Cathy's web site:

www.t-gembooks.com

Phone 020 8558 4000



Taken in October 1974. 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.

BUCKS FIZZ

News and notes about Old Bucks

Meet Kevin, the Youngest Buck of all



I recently caught up with the Old Buck who has the distinction of being the youngest pupil to attend BHCHS. **Kevin Creswell** (first year photo on p 1) joined our school in its final year a few days after his 11th birthday, and is one of a diminishing number of former pupils who have not yet reached 40.

The school, of course, was in its final death throes in 1988, but Kevin told me he had good memories of BHCHS. His form master that year was a Mr Nelson, who had himself only begun teaching one year earlier, and Kevin remembers him as being highly respected because he was rumoured to be a black belt in

karate.

Kevin was keener on sport than other subjects in the classroom, and he took up golf in 1989, becoming a scratch player aged 22 and Essex Champion in April 2000. He didn't achieve his dream of playing professionally, but I suspect his achievements were unmatched by other Old Bucks, and would certainly command the respect of one particular former Headmaster.

Kevin's other main sporting interest was skiing and after qualifying as an instructor in Austria in 2001, he worked there, and also in Australia's Snowy Mountains. He then returned to England and decided to make a career using his practical skills, gaining NVQs at London's Carpenters College. He initially worked for building contractors, but now runs his own business as a carpenter and joiner from his base in Harlow. His work has kept him away from competitive golf for a few years, but he still enjoys other sport - especially cycling - and has recently learned scuba diving. Kevin will be happy to hear from anyone needing some top class carpentry or joinery work. Contact him on 07974 241212 or email:

creswells246@yahoo.co.uk

Having now met the youngest, in the next edition we'll meet the oldest Old Buck!

Hunn's White Hart Pain



Jon Hunn (1974) writes...- Twenty-five years after taking part in my first triathlon, I was looking forward to competing in my second this year on the Olympic course in Hyde Park. Training started in

January and was going spot-on until I was invited to play football in a Press event at White Hart Lane - home of my beloved Spurs - in May. Despite having played my 'retirement' match on my 45th birthday, this was an opportunity I couldn't turn down. What a mistake. Within 40 minutes I had re-torn the cruciate ligament I'd hurt 20 years before, was hobbling home on Gareth Bale's crutches and was out of the race. Surgery is due for October 4, so if I do make it to the Old Boys' dinner, please mind the leg!

The Prince and the Professor



In May, BBC4 broadcast a groundbreaking feature-length documentary, presented by HRH Prince Charles, on the neglected English composer Sir Hubert Parry, who is well known for writing the tunes of *Jerusalem* and the hymn *Dear Lord and Father of mankind* but nothing else. **Jeremy Dibble (1970)** is probably the country's leading authority on Parry, having written a book on the composer and been involved in many recordings and performances of his work. Dibble,

who is professor of Music at Durham University, took a major part in the excellent documentary, which was entitled *The Prince and the Composer*. I hope we can look forward to a follow up on Charles Villiers Stanford, another relatively unknown composer who was the subject of Jeremy Dibble's second book (2002). Since then he has published books on Stainer (2007) and Esposito (2010) and is now working on a book about Hamilton Harty which will probably be out in 2013.

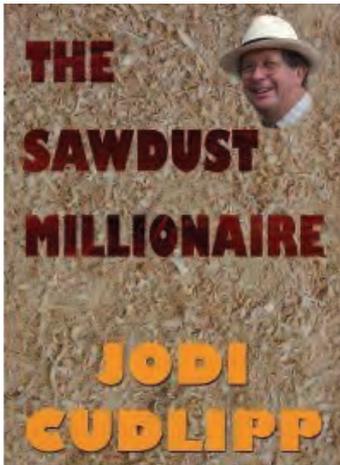
London Meeting for '57 Group



While **Phil Harper (1957)** and his wife Sheilagh were on a world tour from their home in New South Wales they took the opportunity to stop off in London in June and organise a reunion with some of Phil's friends from school. Shown here having a pre-lunch drink at the Albion, Ludgate Hill are (l to r) **Adrian Reynolds, Tony Smith, Phil Harper, Peter Jerram**. The latest any of the four had met was when Peter was best man at Phil and Sheilagh's wedding in February 1974. In the same year, Phil and Sheilagh left to live in Australia.

As well as being friends at BHCHS Phil, Adrian and Peter also attended Fairlop Primary School, so have known each other since the age of five. Phil and Sheilagh are seasoned world travellers - on this trip they took in France, Italy and Canada (visiting Sheilagh's sister) as well as several parts of England (two of their three daughters live in England) and Scotland. The Harpers are normally regulars at the Australian Old Buck reunions (see p. 5) but their world tour prevented them from participating this time.

From Apples to Riches



John Inkster (1952) is another BHCHS boy who did OK. John told me that when he left school he was unemployable. But that didn't stand in his way, and his biography has recently been published. According to Amazon:

As a schoolboy Johnny Inkster was told that money didn't grow on trees. But he knew that apples did, so he rented an orchard. Then he learnt that craftsmen who worked with wood - which also grew on trees - produced waste material that they would pay him to take away. Johnny Inkster was on the way to making his first million...

The Sawdust Millionaire is available on Amazon.

Equality Risk

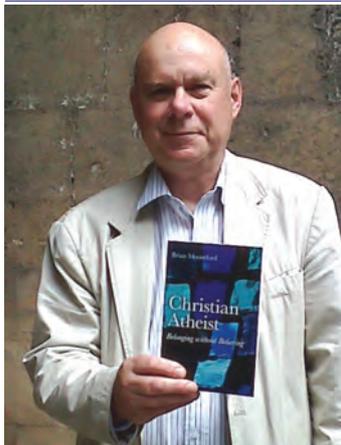


Anyone involved in employment in recent years will be aware of the importance of diversity and equality, as well as the risks of failing to follow the rapidly-changing legislation. **Tony Morden (1957)** has written a helpful guide. Tony was principal lecturer in management at Teesside University, and has published extensively on a wide variety of management topics.

A Short Guide to Equality Risk is published by Gower at £17.99 (discount for online purchases):

www.gowerpublishing.com

Christian Atheist



The latest book by **Canon Brian Mountford (1956)** sounds like an oxymoron. Brian explores, through a series of interviews, the grey area that exists between belief and non-belief. Canon Mountford has been Vicar of the University Church of St Mary the Virgin, Oxford for 25 years. St Mary's is the most visited parish church in England and is a centre for public theology. *Christian Atheist* is published at £9.99 and can be ordered via: www.o-books.com

Thanks to Alan Vickers (1957) for sending me a press cutting about this

Back on Track



John Batchelor (1952) is not someone to be deterred from racing, despite reaching the age of 70. After minor heart surgery in summer 2010 he was back to racing again by March this year, and by early July had competed in 16 races, including one in France and another in Sacramento. His recent successes including winning the 5000 metres (over 70) at the BMAF masters in Birmingham and breaking the course record for the Serpentine 5km event at Hyde Park. Between May and early July John finished six consecutive races in the top three places.

Thanks to Jeff Harvey for research.

Kian Reid



Proud first-time parents **Richard Reid (1979)** and Louise with Kian, who was born on 1st February and weighed in at 10lb 1oz..

Based in Florida, Richard originally moved to the USA in 1994 on a

soccer scholarship, and now works as a designer for a small manufacturing company. Richard is also working to build a web/graphic design business over the next few years. He can be contacted by email at: richardreid@hotmail.com

Peter's School Expands



St John's Primary School, in Buckhurst Hill made the news in March by becoming the first school in Essex to be given freedom to control how they spend a substantial grant. Headmaster **Peter Tidmarsh (1976)** was delighted to receive a grant of £2m to create additional buildings and expand facilities. He has seen a massive upsurge of new pupils as a result of the increased volume of new houses and flats in the area, and St John's has been the most oversubscribed in Essex for five con-

secutive years.

Peter has been headmaster of St John's since 2000. In 2004 we established a permanent link between BHCHS and St John's by donating our refurbished school sign for display in the library at St John's.

We cannot help speculating whether, if Hugh Colgate had been allowed to control the development of BHCHS without interference from Essex County Council, our school may have had a different destiny.

Escape from Libya



Martin Parrish (1961) is a geologist who had been working for many years on oil rigs in Libya. A tough enough job at the best of times, requiring him to work almost continuously for four weeks with no break followed by three weeks off. He would split this time mainly between homes in Malta and Woodford Green. The recent troubles ended all that. Martin writes.....

My final days in Libya were just a bit traumatic. I stayed far too long in our desert camp. At the camp the rebels were taking good care of our security, although it was

wild outside. The last British charter flights out of Tripoli ended suddenly and I missed the last one. A British Hercules was sent to our camp but it could not land as the runway was blocked and we could not get permission to clear it. I managed to get the last flight out of our camp into the very crowded Tripoli airport but then the Lufthansa flight I had booked was cancelled, and my company was not doing much to get me onto the few remaining Libyan airline flights. As I sat there wondering whether to make a break for the harbour and the last boats, I saw waving in front of me the Maltese flag. It was the remaining Maltese diplomats, who had unscrewed the pennant from their diplomatic car to gather up remaining Maltese in Libya. I went to them and (God bless them) they got me and three other Europeans onto their last flight to Malta – which for me is home-from-home anyway. It seemed miraculous.

Nuclear Meltdown in the Backyard



Peter Smith (1971) is a chemist specialising in paint, and has been working in the automotive industry based in Japan for 17 years. Here is his account of some worrying times in March following the calamitous earthquake.....

Tuesday 15th March 2011, just before lunch. A colleague rushed into our lab, telling us to stop what we were doing and to return home immediately. A few minutes earlier there had been yet another explosion at Fukushima, this time radiation was leaking out and was heading our way! Not knowing when or even if we would see each other again we all hurriedly went our separate ways. On the journey home I started to imagine just what might happen in the coming days and weeks.

Though we too had been rocked by the earthquake, the pictures of

total destruction that we could see on our TV screens somehow seemed to be from another planet. In Yokohama we had come through the earthquake pretty much unscathed and the tsunami amounted to only a few centimetres. But now it seemed that we were about to be sucked into the crisis. This was real danger! Was I scared? Anxious, concerned, worried, yes. But for some reason these feelings never developed into real fear. Instead I felt a mixture of curiosity about how everything would turn out coupled with a strange sense of excitement.

Some embassies started to recommend that their citizens flee to the west or better still escape Japan altogether. But the idea of running away was bizarre. Where to run? If something truly terrible was indeed coming it was not going to stop at Yokohama was it? My wife and I quickly came to the same conclusion: remain at home, seal all the windows and wait for whatever was to come. For the next couple of days the news coming out of Fukushima got worse with each new bulletin. First thing each morning, still half asleep, I opened up the Internet to see just what new calamities had occurred. The feeling of trepi-

Sydney Meeting #5



On a sunny day in July **Stuart Low (1952)** gathered the clans yet again for the annual meeting of antipodean Old Bucks.

Numbers were down a bit from last year because of some date clashes and illness, but the party was delighted to welcome **Roger Landbeck (1946)** and his wife who travelled from Queensland, and also **Martin Williams (1957)** who

again travelled from New Zealand (a round trip of more than 2,500 miles) to join the group.

It has been suggested that a regular date may be established for future meetings to help planning, so watch the website for details if you are in the area or likely to be visiting nearby.

Thanks Stuart for your tireless organising!

Commodore



In November 2010 **Mark Inkster (1976)** became the youngest ever Commodore to be appointed to the position at the Royal Southern Yacht Club. Based at Southampton, the club is one of the oldest in the world and has had royal patronage since its foundation in 1837.

Mark is the son of John Inkster (see p 4) and worked in the family timber business, completing an MBA at Henley Management College. He has had a lifelong interest in sailing, and last year he took his grandfather's 1935 Dunkirk Little Ship back to Dunkirk for the 70th anniversary celebrations. Mark has also recently been appointed as a Director of the International Council of Yacht Clubs which represents the top 30 yacht clubs in the world.

dation as I waited for the news pages to load was identical to the one I had got used to when waiting for the latest football results (long-suffering West Ham fan, say no more). But, no matter how gloomy the news became I kept reminding myself *There is nothing to fear but fear itself*. All those around me must have felt the same way and stayed calm throughout. The most remarkable thing of all was the complete maintenance of law and order.

On Thursday (17th) we reached the lowest point. For the first time, I started to believe that we would soon be experiencing the same fate that had befallen those living in the direct vicinity of Fukushima. But then, quite unexpectedly, the news on the Friday morning was no worse than it had been the evening before. Then the same on Saturday, Sunday, Monday.... Although the situation remained critical and unstable, the feeling that we had come through the worst grew with each passing day. Despair was replaced by cautious optimism as the Japanese spring set in. Even the absence of the traditional "hanami" parties under the cherry blossoms could not dampen the euphoric feeling of having survived a multiple nuclear meltdown in our own backyards.

Hidden City

By David Long (BHCHS 1972-80)



SOMEWHERE BETWEEN Buckhurst Hill and Birmingham University, in what I recall as a parentally guided bid to broaden my experience of life, I spent six months clerking for a Japanese investment bank in Moorgate.

In those days – we're talking 30 years ago – I had a daily allowance of 75p in Luncheon Vouchers, and as often as not would set off to explore the City in the hope of finding a shady bench or leafy churchyard where I could enjoy my prawn sandwiches. I was, even then, enthralled at discovering a myriad of little corners and secret places that had somehow survived centuries of change, and acquired the habit of spending lunch hours walking what was essentially still the geography of a vibrant and successful medieval city.



Charterhouse Mews EC1

Years later, living in London, I formed a firm impression that these ancient thoroughfares were being systematically destroyed, or at least modified beyond recognition as the demands of international finance gained precedence over any sense of the past or its cultural importance. In fact I was only partly correct, which is perhaps the most important

discovery I made whilst researching my latest book on the capital, *Hidden City: The Secret Alleys, Courts and Yards of London's Square Mile*.

Setting out, somewhat self-importantly perhaps, to document in words and pictures the old City's passing before it was too late and they were wiped off the A-to-Z, I actually found plenty to celebrate. Not only had many of the places I remembered from my time among the brollies and bowlers survived, but many of the more enlightened develop-



Ely Court EC1

ers were seeking to preserve them or to incorporate these fragments of London's history into their new schemes with admirable tact and sensitivity.

Inevitably some have been lost, and a few have definitely changed for the worse. But even so among walled gardens, winding alleyways, tiny squares and ancient courtyards I found it was still possible to find stories of the old city and its characters, plenty of intriguing and unlikely architectural survivors, and a wealth of evidence demonstrating that the City – built, burned, bombed, rebuilt and rebuilt again – is still a uniquely fascinating, rich and engaging place to wander through.

Samuel Johnson famously told Boswell, 'Sir, if you wish to have a just notion of the magnitude of this city, you must not be satisfied with seeing its great streets and squares, but must survey its innumerable little lanes and courts' - and as many hundreds of visitors discover every weekend it is nowhere truer than here in the Square Mile.

The old gateways into the bustling medieval settlement may be long gone, the mighty Roman Wall which ringed it for centuries has almost (but not entirely) disappeared beneath offices and apartments, and towering new developments continue to be thrown up and torn down with bewildering rapidity.

Yet stepping behind the glass façades, or squeezing through narrow passes between the vast ziggurats of 21st century commerce in search of a favourite Wren church or just somewhere quiet to sit and think, one can still find what the current Lord Mayor of London describes in his foreword to my book as 'the London which existed before the Great Fire, before the Blitz, and long before Big Bang and all that

followed that more technological but equally seismic change'.

Examples include plague pits and medieval martyrs, the largely intact crypt of a 13th century Carmelite priory incorporated into the basement of a modern office block, the last surviving portion of London's infamous Newgate Gaol (along which the condemned were lead to their deaths), and an organ on which Purcell used to play. There's even a blue plaque to London's most celebrated accountant – no, really - and what is almost certainly its least-public public house.

Hidden City: The Secret Alleys, Courts and Yards of London's Square Mile is published by The History Press, and available on Amazon and in good bookshops.

Thirsty Work



DURING the mid 1970s the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme was an important part of the extra-curricular activities of BHCHS. The scheme flourished during the late 70s and early 80s with increasing numbers of pupils gaining awards.

Peter Dodkin (1978) has given us a set of photos he took during a trip to the Peak District in July 1983. This was a five day expedition that started at Windy Harbour, a campsite close to Glosop. The group undertook a formal hike but were given instruction and tests on mountain navigation skills together with a practice walk beforehand. The later part of the expedition took in

Jacob's Ladder and Upper Booth.

Peter remembers that the Silver Award was far from being a stroll in the park. Intense heat, plagues of midges and scarcity of water were among the challenges faced by Peter and his friends. The water problem led to desperate measures, as can be seen in the photo above. Others in the party included: Tony Beaumont, David Penn, Mark Hinds, Mike Newson, Tim Gibbard, Mark D Turner and Jonathan Jacques. Mick Conway was the teacher in charge of the group. In that year, pupils from BHCHS amassed a total of more than 50 Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Chess Masters

By Peter Johnson (French and German, 1974-79)



ALTHOUGH I was only at BHCHS for five years, and I left over 30 years ago, I still have some extremely vivid memories from my time there – more vivid I think than from any other time in my working life. Many of these memories are concerned with chess, as one of my first objectives at Buckhurst Hill was to try to revive and develop the chess club.

This was made easier by the fact that Paul Pritchard had been the joint winner of a tournament in London at the end of 1974 and had won a prize of £50. The story appeared in the local paper with Paul's photo under the immortal headline of "Half a Cheque, Mate." This was an impressive sum of money then, and brought us a few new recruits to the chess club.

But the people newly interested in chess did not only come from the boys. The staff room also caught the bug. For a short time my colleagues stopped discussing whether Chigwell was east or west of Loughton, and started playing chess instead.

Such was the enthusiasm that I organised what I think was a unique event in the school's history, a staff versus boys chess match. Although the staff team boasted such intellectual heavyweights as Bryan Rooney, Helen Price, Charlie Myers and Bob Sears, we were soundly defeated 6½ - 1½. Our only player to win his game was Lionel Marsh. We shouldn't be surprised that a competitive sportsman should also be an excellent chess player. Andrew Flintoff, everyone's idea of a competitive sportsman, represented Lancashire schools at chess. I managed to draw with Paul Pritchard to score the half point, but I think he was in a generous mood that evening.

We had good teams in both the senior and junior leagues. As well as Paul, Nigel Pepper, Shaun Humphreys, Adrian Iles, Tom Paisley, Stuart King, Paul Storrie, Ian Melbourne, Carl Greenaway, Julian Sinclair and John Waite were all strong players. We easily beat our local rivals Bancrofts, Chigwell, For-

est and West Hatch on several occasions. We were particularly severe on Chigwell, who could hardly ever take a single point from us. I remember a rousing 8 - 0 victory in 1977.

The power in the land, however, was Ilford CHS. They took us too lightly one evening in the junior league and didn't field their best team. They were amazed when we hammered them 5½ - ½. This meant that we won our section of the Essex league and qualified for the final stages.

All went well until the semi-finals, when we were pitted against a school from Southend. The match was drawn 3 - 3 and we lost on board count. This is the tiebreak system normally used in team chess matches. As a system, it's pretty random, but everyone knows the rules, so no complaints there. It's just a pity that we didn't take an extra half point on that night, because I'm sure that if we had, we would have become Essex and East London champions.

One final memory about chess concerns the production of *Smike* in 1976. *Smike*, in which Jeremy Hayes played the title role, had been an enormous success and extra performances were arranged on some afternoons for

the local junior schools. I watched the last bit of one of these shows, and was becoming a bit anxious as the production was overrunning and we had a chess match that evening away against City of London School. The reason for my anxiety was that one of the stars of the show was Paul Storrie, who sang probably the best song "Dotheboys Rock," was playing board three in the chess match. Finally the performance ended, and I had to prise Paul away from the rapturous acclaim. After the final final curtain call, I drove fairly swiftly into the City, where Paul beat a very strong opponent in a complicated variation of Alekhine's Defence. Dotheboys Rock and Alekhine's Defence certainly showed a fantastic versatility!

Editor's notes....

Peter Johnson left BHCHS in 1979 to take up an opportunity with Linguarama. He eventually had responsibility for sales in all 15 countries where the company operated. For the past ten years he has been working at a leading commercial residential language training centre based in Wales, and is responsible for marketing. We shall read more about Peter in the next edition.

Paul Pritchard (1969) started playing chess at BHCHS when the chess club was being run by **John Cartwright (History, 1966-89)** and remembers being helped in his early efforts by captain **David Bernheim (1966)**. Paul continued playing chess after BHCHS. He studied chemistry at Exeter University and played chess for Plymouth and for Devon. In 1985 he moved to Milton Keynes where he played club chess and also county chess for Bedfordshire.

Paul has not played any competitive chess since 1999 when he moved to Harrogate for his current job - running the Chemistry Department at Harrogate Ladies College.

Chess clubs were running at BHCHS for most of the school's life, and it would be good to have more memories and anecdotes. Stories and features about other "minority interests" will also be welcome.



Paul Pritchard in 1974, after his London tournament success

Into Calmer Seas: The OBA recovers

Researched and narrated by Peter Sharp - based on archive and contributed material

Jack's Downfall

By the mid 1970s, following the forced abandonment of sport at the OBA clubhouse in Roding Lane, the OBA main association was fairly inactive. In a letter written in May 1975 to former pupil **Brian Tarlton (1939)**, Fred Scott wrote :

Since the demise of the OB's association ... OB news tends to be somewhat fragmentary – which makes it all that much more welcome when it comes.

'Demi-se' was perhaps a bit of an overstatement, but it must have seemed that way to those who were not close to the (in)action.

During the mid-1970s, Jack Sutton, who had been Chairman of the OBA for eight difficult years, disappeared entirely from the OBA scene. Despite an uninspiring academic career, Sutton had



Jack Sutton

become a very successful businessman, no doubt due in no small measure to his impressive interpersonal skills. He became a high-flyer in the City and senior partner in a stock broking firm, eventually forming his own company. His personal wealth was apparently substantial, reflected in a lifestyle that included a superlative house, luxury cars, and



Malcolm Beard

a string of racehorses. He had done a lot for OBA, including personally financing several projects at the clubhouse.

Sutton's disappearance appears to have followed the seizure of his personal assets in order to pay off creditors. He apparently got involved in a deal involving a Russian bank that went sour. The big mistake was providing a personal guarantee, resulting in his bankruptcy. According to **Malcolm 'Mac' Beard (1941)**:

I believe the early years were very successful, but I always felt he found it difficult to say "no", even when he should have done.

A message published in the March 1979 OBA News said that Sutton was living in Thorpe Bay. He sent regards to all his friends, and hoped to see them again soon.

Brian Hand (1940) writes:

The last time I met Jack was in the late 1970s in the Foresters pub in Loughton, where I used to lunch. But I had little time to talk to him as he was in a rush clearing out his house in Albion Hill from which he was moving. He then seemed to disappear completely. It was only some years later I heard he had gone to

Hong Kong after successes and failures in London.

OBA's official papers, including financial records, had surprisingly all been kept at Sutton's home, where committee meetings were held. Unfortunately these all disappeared too, and despite considerable efforts by Trevor Lebentz they have never been recovered. This has of course hampered the ability to record the early days of OBA with accuracy and completeness.

OBA News reported in 1981:

How About That: Old Bucks can never be accused of doing things by halves. Members may have noticed in the papers a few months ago a photograph of former Association chairman Jack Sutton' alongside a story about his bankruptcy hearing, something about a little matter of five million quid. Apparently he even had to sell his racehorses!

In 1975 OBA had made a compassionate loan of £250 to the Sutton family who were literally destitute. This was considered appropriate in recognition of all that they had done for the Association. No thanks for this were ever forthcoming, and even when Sutton got back on his feet years later there was no repayment of the loan. This may partly explain why Sutton proved so elusive when efforts were made to trace him during the pupil search of the early 2000s. In 2005 OBA learned that Jack Sutton had died the previous year at Newmarket.

A Fresh Start

Following the end of the Sutton era, OBA finally managed to turn the corner and re-establish itself as a viable association with a long-term future.

The Roding Lane North clubhouse was sold to Wanstead Rugby Club in 1974/5. The lease was reassigned to them by Red-

bridge Council, which funded bringing the pitches up to National Playing Fields Association standards. This was something that they had not done for OBA. WRFC are still based there, but the wooden clubhouse burned down in 1987 and was replaced by a brick-built structure.

It is not unusual for former pupils' Associations to get into difficulties through trying to maintain their own premises. This is believed to have happened in the case of at least two other local schools over the years.

By April 1975, OBA was dependent on loans from members. But in the spring of 1975 the sum of £6,623 was received – a considerable amount then – being the net proceeds from the sale of



Trevor Lebentz the clubhouse. The money was put into safe investments.

Trevor Lebentz recalls:

As we had not been able to use the playing surfaces since the early 1970s I was asked to take the matter up with Redbridge Council. I had several meetings, and on each occasion they would not accept any liability. During this period we were able to use the clubhouse for social functions, including very popular 'dine-ins'. From this income we were just able to pay our way.

Maths & Economics

The basic **annual subscription** has changed only relatively infrequently over the years:

1945	~ 5 shillings (25p)
1958	~ 10 shillings
1961	~ £1
1967	~ £2.10 (equivalent of)
1975	~ £1.00
1976	~ £1.50
1984	~ £2.00
1986	~ £3.00
2011	~ £4.00

The Association appears to have been in serious financial difficulty only when it had the ill-fated Roding Lane North site on its hands.

The money obtained relating to the relinquishment of the clubhouse has remained invested safely ever since, and has earned a substantial amount of accumulated interest.

Annual dinners and other functions have generally been more or less self-financing, and the

cost of publishing newsletters and general administration were, until recently, covered by subscriptions.

However, by the late 2000s increasing costs had overtaken income, and a standard UK subscription of £4 was settled upon, effective from 2011. This maintains the long-held, prudent principle written into the constitution that subscriptions should cover running costs — no more no less.

Eventually having had little or no joy from Redbridge I decided to attack their conscience on a moral basis. Through a reporter friend at the Daily Express I had an article prepared exposing them. I told the council that the article was to appear in Friday's edition – at the time they were very wary of bad publicity. On the Thursday prior to publication I received a call asking me to attend a meeting that afternoon. It was at this meeting that they reluctantly agreed to pay compensation of, I think, £4,000.

Following these several years in the doldrums, a group of members, prominent in the football club, decided that this was an opportune time to get OBA back on its feet. An EGM was held in early 1975, followed by an AGM on April 16th. A new committee was elected, including Trevor Lebentz as Chairman, **Grahame Eales (1955)** as Secretary, and **Roger Toms (1959)** as Treasurer. This group re-established the OBA main Association virtually from scratch. According to Trevor Lebentz:

The Association had never folded and in fact right through the troubles it published newsletters and held an annual dinner. We did lose some members but only a small proportion. Following the demise of Jack Sutton I was asked to become Chairman. I said I would for a couple of years. 27 years on I found myself

still Chairman but had the satisfaction of OBA surviving and going from strength to strength.

Dick Thomas was asked to resurrect OBA News, and wrote in the October 1975 edition:

The clubhouse and ground at Roding Lane that swallowed up members' money and energy like hungry beasts have been sold. After paying off loans there is enough in the kitty to get the Association on the road again. For the first time in its life the newsletter has the funds behind it to ensure a continued existence. It would have been so easy to have let the Old Bucks slide into oblivion.

The clubhouse saga has been described as 'a debacle', but Trevor Lebentz says:

I do not think the project was too optimistic. It certainly would have been a success had the playing surface been up to standard.

The one good thing that did come out of it was the money that was recovered. The clubhouse sale provided a sizeable nest-egg which has prevented the Association from having to worry unduly about money since.

A loan of £600 was made by OBA to the OB football club as compensation for it having to find new grounds and equipment. The OBA AGM authorized writing off that loan in 1982.

Steve Woolley: BHCHS and Beyond

Steve Woolley joined the physics department in 1978 from Davenant and stayed until the closure of BHCHS. He is currently Head of Technology at Bancrofts and is author and co-author of many textbooks and student guides. His most recent publication is a student guide for the IGCSE Double Science Award (Edexcel). Steve has also published many articles on technology and electronics.



Steve Woolley (centre, seated) in 1986

WHEN REORGANISATION hit BHCHS in 1989 not one of the physics teachers in BHCHS or LCHS remained to teach at Roding Valley High - all of us had either got jobs in the college or out of the West Essex area. I had a job lined up in the Engineering Department at what was to become Epping Forest College, having a year earlier turned down a job offer at the college in order to apply for John Lakeman's job as Head of Sixth Form (when he ascended to deputy head after Ian Nicholson moved to Sandon School and John Whaler became Headmaster). I got John's job. Before taking up post at Epping Forest College I saw a position advertised at Bancrofts for someone to teach A level physics and be in charge of electronics. I interviewed, was offered the job and resigned from the college! The electronics content has expanded and I now teach GCSE, AS and A level electronics. I still teach a little A level physics from time to time, when the need arises.

In my time at BHCHS the science department was pretty strong I would say, maybe the pupils I taught would think differently. Certainly Bob Graves was enthusiastic, John and Rich-

ards Luker and Price knew their stuff (Dr Luker went on to work at other schools and ultimately for Edexcel). Mike Reilly was a good replacement for Richard L and Ms Gannon was a pretty replacement for Mike Reilly in the last year before closure. We had some great technicians, too, who spoilt us and made the working environment more pleasant. John Lakeman always showed a genuine passion for his subject (though he probably wouldn't use that word) and I think that really makes a difference.

In my time I have been an HMC (not the same as HMI) inspector for Technology, a member of the IEE Micromouse committee, Director of NELEX SATRO, and Chief Examiner for Systems and Control at A level for Edexcel. I picked up teacher awards from the IEE and the Worshipful Company of Engineers along the way, which was nice. So, finally, I have a fair CV but I am not looking for another job, so it doesn't matter. I hope the royalties will trickle in from my books (physics textbooks don't seem to sell quite as well as Harry Potter for some reason) to augment my pension in the future - especially as I have two more children to pass through university.

English & Current Affairs

The first OBA **newsletter** was published in 1951 —unfortunately no known copy survives.

A regular newsletter has been a vital feature of OBA throughout its history. Originally it comprised just a few typewritten sheets. But from about 1968 it became a professionally printed affair, called 'OBA News', under the editorship of **Dick Thomas (1958)**. The typewritten format was reverted to in 1979, presumably for cost reasons, but the newsletter continued to keep members abreast of OBA affairs, meetings, dinners, and events.

The varying fortunes of the sporting divisions were invariably covered in some depth. But most importantly there was news of Old Bucks who had written to OBA, or to the school, outlining where they were and what they were doing. This helped to maintain the network. Frequency of publication

was sometimes spasmodic but it always continued, and eventually caught up with news.

From time to time there were messages from the former headmasters. In one such letter JHT made the immortal remark: *I am still hoping to read an obituary in the Times with the words "educated at BHCHS".*

After many years as editor, in 1983 Dick Thomas handed over to **Mike Carter (1953)** and **John Berrett (1955)**, and they in turn in October 1990 to **Brian Hughes (1962)**. Brian kept publication going during a quiet period for OBA, after the school had closed.

Graham Frankel (1961) took over producing the newsletter in 1999, renamed it *Old Buckwellians News*, and developed it into today's comprehensive, full colour, high quality, professionally printed magazine, with a readership of over 1,700.

Football at BHCHS: Part 1 The pioneers

Prompted by Bob Munday's amusing contribution to the last edition I feel it is time for yet another major series, reviewing the story of football at BHCHS. Which were the most (and least) successful teams? Who were the greatest captains?



Participants in the first Staff v Boys match 18th March 1940. Front row (L to R): Dickie Barham, Bill Riddell, ?, ?, Ron Bates, Peter Holgate. Back: ?, ?, MH Romans, ?, Roy Partridge, Tony Chapman, Sid Bryett, ?, Cyril Walker, ?, ?, FA Scott, JH Taylor.

Beginnings

IN SEPTEMBER 1938, the young pioneers of BHCHS prepared to forge a reputation amongst the competition from their better-established neighbouring schools. Their initial efforts were not helped by the condition of the playing fields when the first cohort of enthusiastic hopefuls arrived at Roding Lane. According to the first captain, Ben McCartney, there was hardly any grass to be seen among the weeds, and so the decision was taken to completely re-lay the field, making it unusable for the first winter. An alternative field was eventually secured, close to the school. But the problems delayed their start, and only two matches were played before the end of term. After an inauspicious opening, losing 6 - 0 to Chigwell Elementary school, the BHCHS team won their second fixture 8 - 1 against Cranbrook College, with the first ever goal scored for the school by Alan Cruchley.

It may come as something of a surprise, to those who remember JH Taylor and FA Scott from their later years, that both took a strong interest in football during the school's first decade. Records reveal that they both participated in the first Staff v Boys fixture in 1940. Mr Taylor also wrote a full and motivational report on the season in the first five school magazines.

Wartime

By now, of course, the war had cast its shadow over all aspects of school life. Whether it was the absence of male staff on war service, or an attempt to balance out the age differences, this was a somewhat lop-sided affair, with seven staff, plus a goalkeeper (Bill Riddell) taken from the ranks of the pupils, against the school first team of 12 and 13 year olds. Despite their numerical disadvantage the staff won the match 4 - 1. According to the report in the school magazine, the staff team had not expected their success, and were *modest to the point of defeatism concerning*

their chances.

The war created severe restrictions on all aspects of school life, including sport. During the first three war years there were relatively few matches, and the school had limited success. However, by the 1941/42 season the team started to notch up significant victories, under the consistent leadership of captain Ben McCartney, described by JH Taylor as *the lynchpin of defence and attack*. McCartney would have had the unique distinction of captaining the first team for seven successive years, but suffered an injury in 1943 that prevented him from playing and was forced to make way for Sid Bryett who took the helm for the remaining war years.

The fixture list in those days, possibly another effect of the disruptions of wartime, was not well-established. Opponents during the successful 1941/42 season (in which our team won 70% of its matches) included "St. John's Club, Epping" and "Mr

included a double win against Forest but, aside this, results were mixed. Captain Sid Bryett put this down to the fact that BHCHS had, for the first time, lost some of its key players. JHT's end of season analysis included some gems. On Brian Tarlton: *...he looked slow, but the length of his leg was deceptive and was most effective in sweeping the ball through a tackle*. On Des Slade: *...his kicking, too, had a wild 'circumbendibus' about it that not only surprised the enemy but also deceived his own side from time to time*. A precursor to Beckham perhaps, but it makes an amusing contrast with the pronouncements of Paul Merson on Sky TV.

The following season saw a further slump, with the 1st XI winning only five out of 15 matches. Not a happy final chapter for the football career of Sid Bryett who had been in the school team for seven consecutive seasons. By now, the school had a junior (U15) side, and this team gave



First XI 1943-44. Front row (L to R): Don Hines, Roy Webb, Sid Bryett, John Baggott, Dickie Wheatley. Back: Bill Taylor, Brian Tarlton, Ron Bates, Tony Flower, Des Slade, ?

Boyden's XI". But the senior boys of BHCHS, who would by then have been aged 14 or 15, were not only picking easy targets. Having defeated the Ilford CHS U15 team 8 - 1 they then entertained the Ilford CHS 2nd XI (presumably a year older) and lost 3 - 0.

After two successful seasons (in which our team won an impressive 20 matches while losing only eight) there was something of a decline. The 1943/44 season

some hope for the future, scoring 70 goals and winning nine out of 13 matches under the captaincy of John Read.

Star on the Staff

The 1945/46 season saw some overdue success for the school. Perhaps a milestone of maturity had been reached now that one complete generation of pupils had passed through the school, and perhaps it was something to do with the imminent arrival of



First XI 1940-41. Front row (L to R): Doug Clarke, Bill Riddell, Dickie Wheatley, Derek Wilson, Dickie Barham, Ron Bates. Back: ?, Tony Chapman, Cyril Walker, Sid Bryett, Roy Partridge, ?

Tom Leek, whose reputation as an England amateur international was known in the school well before he set foot in the geography room. The school's four teams scored 194 goals and all teams won well over half their matches. The first team, coached by George Lees and captained by Ron Bates, achieved impressive results including double wins against Forest (7 - 1 and 8 - 3) and Leyton CHS (3 - 2 and 4 - 1). Ron Bates chose Tom Fogg for a special mention describing him as *the constructive player of the team....his long sweeping ground passes were irreproachable, and certainly the dream of any forward.* For the first time, the school established an U14 team with a full fixture list and they won 11 of their 16 matches. But the post-war success was not maintained. The famous winter

amateur sides in an age when the difference between professional and amateur was far more subtle. He did, however appear in the two matches played by the Staff team against the school's 1st XI. In the first of these matches was one of the highlights of the season, with the school winning 8 - 2. Captain Maurice Gray commented:

....the School defence were right on top of the Staff attack, which never caused much trouble to Knott, mainly due to the effective marking of Mr Leek, the staff centre forward, by centre half Gray, J.

Later in the same season, however, the staff got their revenge in a return fixture, winning 5 - 1.

For the second successive year, the 2nd XI, captained this time by Ernie Blackwell, achieved some-



First XI 1949-50 Front row (L to R): Bert Hearn, Peter Hills, Roy Penny, Mick Cooper, Ken Bales. Back: Derek Chapman, Richard Oliver, Ken Chambers, George Kirman, Brian Brown, Ted Green (?)

Before Bob Munday starts getting excited I can confirm that this was slightly better than his team that featured in *Dreams of Glory* (OB News, May 2011)

Hope for the Future

In the final season of the decade, there was a distinct improvement in the fortunes of the school teams. Perhaps this was due largely to the influence of Tom

winning 12 of their 15 matches. We don't have details of their results, but in his end of season report, captain Les Hawkes commented that one of the losses - against Barking Abbey - was against an under 15½ team. One of the most prolific goal scorers was Eddie Cook, who told me that he remembered scoring a staggering 12 goals (surely a record?) against Chigwell in a



First XI 1946-47. Front row (L to R): John Gray, Maurice Gray, David Noble, John Tilly, Derek Boone. Back: ?, John Woolner, ?, Roy Penny, Jamie Gilbert

of 1947 put paid to many matches in the following season. David Noble, the 1st XI captain, began his report thus:

The record of the School football makes a melancholy tale....during the bitterness of the winter a resigned pessimism made its mark on the faces of all the School's keen footballers.

George Lees, still the 1st XI coach, put in some kind words praising the efforts of David Noble, whose *scheming and finishing was an inspiration to the team.*

The following season may have seen an improvement in the weather, but not in the school teams' results. We may assume that Tom Leek's football activities were still focussed on Barnet FC who were enjoying great success as one of the leading

what better results than the 1st XI, winning half their matches. The U14 team, however, managed only two wins during the season.

The 1948/49 school year saw some significant changes in the staff room. George Lees left and he was replaced by Tom Leek as the 1st XI coach. This did not bring an immediate improvement in results- the team won a mediocre nine of its 21 matches, but this was not the full story. Among the defeats were an embarrassing 11 - 1 drubbing at the hands of Dagenham CHS, and losses of 8 - 3 against Monoux, and 10 - 1 against Romford Royal Liberty to name but three. Meanwhile, the 2nd XI also slipped badly, winning only five out of 17 matches, and the U14 only three out of 10 matches.



U14 1949-50. Front row (L to R): Alan Evans, Alec McIntyre, Les Hawkes, Bruce Aves, unknown. Back: Mick Wooler, Alan Webb, Bert Burns, Eddie Cook, Vic Marshall

Leek's coaching, but for the first season since 1945/46 both the 1st and 2nd XI managed to win half their matches. The 1st XI team's results were much improved in the second half of the season, with wins against tough rivals Monoux, Forest, Leyton, and Ilford. Captain Roy Penny was congratulated in the *Roding* magazine for his *consistent and virile displays.*

The junior teams perhaps may have lacked virility but they managed even better results than their elders. The U14 achieved the best record of any of our football teams during the decade,

single match where the final score was 16 - 1. BHCHS also had an U15 side that season (containing many who were in the U14 squad) and although they played only four matches were unbeaten, despite only playing four matches, including two victories against Chigwell and one against Forest.

The next part will cover the 1950s. If you have any photos or memories that you would like to contribute please contact the editor. I am especially interested to find informal photos - other than standard team shots.

Continental Cycling: A 60 year retrospective

By Les Tucker (BHCHS 1947-54)



I READ Roland Buggy's article on Eric McCollin (*OB News, May 2011*) and the school trips which he organised with great interest. It awakened a range of long forgotten fragmented memories, particularly of the school cycling trips on the Continent undertaken in 1952 and 1953, the first in Belgium and Holland and the second through Holland to Heidelberg in Germany. Also, coincidentally, this will serve as a reply to Geoff Scott's and David Cox's requests for more biking anecdotes.

The Continental cycling expeditions: who were we and what did we look like? A motley crew of lads of around 17 or 18, some likely, some fairly likely and some unlikely. In short a fair cross section of the School.

What did we wear? Standard gear for any overseas expedition undertaken by the British – open neck shirt, shorts, wrinkly socks and ordinary shoes, some of the more prosperous with cycling shoes, with a rudimentary cy-

cling jacket of some kind completing the ensemble. One individual even wore a conventional sports jacket throughout. Had we been including a walking tour of the Swiss Alps we would probably have added a home knitted woolly pullover. Weather protection was provided by a leaky cycling cape.

What was our mechanical equipment like? Often fairly worn, reflecting the range of now long-buried names of the once flourishing multi-firm British cycle industry - Norman, Elswick, Rudge, BSA etc, as it entered its death throes. No Lycra clad visions on £500 plus cycles here. Money in most families was still fairly tight and the best many junior members of a family could expect was a second hand example, sometimes of doubtful quality.

Gears were almost all the hub *Sturmey Archer* variety – alright if kept adjusted, but otherwise liable to slipping and not capable of spanning a wide gear range. The derailleur gear, now almost universal, had hardly made an appearance in Britain. Brakes were a particularly vulnerable area – with end fixings flimsy and liable to pull out when subjected to strain.

The idea of wearing a cycling crash helmet would have been greeted with extreme derision. Was insurance even mentioned?

The expeditions therefore set off following time hallowed British custom – fairly poor equipment and in rudimentary clothing. But

vitality, with a strong leader.

What were the first impressions? In 1952 on arrival in Ostend it was undoubtedly the fact that Belgian urban streets were still cobbled. This had a bone shaking effect on relatively light weight British cycles. Every possible nut was loosened, with dire results.

On passing into Holland, the first discovery of a countrywide system of off road cycle paths. The second discovery was that our bikes might be falling to bits but they were light with drop handlebars and together with the advantage of slipstreaming they enabled speeds considerably in excess of lumbering Dutch cycles. What we had hitherto regarded as fairly low grade technology was seen in Holland as impressive - almost *Tour de France* stuff which actually attracted onlookers when we arrived in a town. We basked in our new found technological superiority.

The third discovery was that the cycle paths were populated by numbers of unaccompanied groups of young Dutch females also cycle touring/youth hostelting, some destined for the same hostel as us. Amongst the bolder elements the mood changed from fairly cheerful to euphoric.

Overall the cycling was a joy. The weather was mostly fine and, particularly in Holland, the cycle paths meant that the group could bowl along at a fair pace but at the same time enjoy the passing scenery. There was always another town or village

ahead with opportunity for a break. Dutch town centres seemed to have a vaguely luxurious ambience. This came from the aroma of cigars as cheroots were universally smoked, doubtless arising from the old Dutch East Indies trade. We also discovered the civilising nature of Dutch eating places open all day for coffee and snacks or alcohol. Particularly in rural areas they seemed to strike a nice balance between pub and café. The Dutch had a particularly tasty snack called *uitsmijter*, ham on bread with egg on top. It was in these bars that we first encountered the Dutch friendship for Britain which prevailed at that time, possibly arising from the Army's liberation of Holland.

Two elements began to break up the group in terms of cycling. One, mechanical difficulty, two, choice. Some of the less robust cycles began to show signs of wear and on occasion suffer breakdown of one sort or another. Mac had been quite clear. The whole group could not be expected to stop for one individual. This could lead to a somewhat daunting situation – stranded immobile by the side of the road in the middle of the countryside in a foreign country with an impenetrable language. Two things came to the rescue. One was one of life's lessons – always have close friends. These will be the ones who stop after the others move on. The other was the unfailing friendship of the Dutch people for anything British at that time. If you could struggle to the nearest village



This photo was taken at Tintern Abbey on a 1950 trip to Wales—at least some of the participants were also on the later excursions to Holland and Belgium



On Snowdon: another photo from the 1950 cycling trip to Wales. Shocking to see only one boy wearing his cap

garage or cycle shop, someone there would unflinchingly stop work to make some kind of repair, whether able to speak English or not, without ever any suggestion of charge.

As confidence increased some enthusiasts would elect to buy a map from a garage and find their own way to the next hostel. This meant that there were several sub groups and at some hostels arrival would consist of groups appearing separately, each with its own story to tell.

The sub groups tended to contain those who could sustain similar speeds and part of the fun in the faster groups was to slipstream in close order, building up considerable speeds. Wheels were within inches of each other and disaster was literally around the corner. There was a certain amount of jockeying for position, à la *Tour de France* and this led to the great Arnhem National Park pile up. Who was actually responsible led to a certain amount of acrimonious debate. I can still hear the cry of despair of the middle leader as he realised (a) he wasn't going to stop in time (b) the ones behind him weren't going to stop either.

Apart from the cycling what fragments of memory stand out? I wish I could say it was learning about other cultures or the church architecture but what was predominant was food.

The easy availability of exciting food treats was a revelation – sweets and chocolate, including liqueurs, everywhere and the Dutch had the devastating habit of topping ice cream with whipped cream, *met slagroom* and in the Rhine Valley every village bakery offered the most delicious fruit tarts based on abundant local fruit. This all sounds very trite but it must be

remembered that we had been and still were to some extent on a very bland wartime diet, with food rationing just ended and a Lyons fruit tart at Saturday tea-time regarded as haute cuisine.

Other fragments.

The sobering Parachute Regiment graves in the cemetery at Oesterboek, near Arnhem, reminding us of the price which was paid for us to wander around Europe.

The conversation with French Army National Servicemen at Koblenz Castle telling us about the rigours of French Army basic training – what was good enough for Napoleon is good enough for us, seemingly forgetting that they had actually lost at Waterloo. Some of us were soon to discover uncomfortably that exactly the same sentiments about training methods were entertained in the British Army for Wellington.

The day spent cycling across the top of the Zuider Zee dam against a ferocious unrelenting head wind from the sea.

The amazingly fast recuperative effects of a Mars bar or equivalent when you felt you couldn't go another inch.

The Munchen Gladbach car accident – it could have been serious, but luckily wasn't.

The glorious sunshine and scenery in the Rhine Valley, with vines growing in slate soil on impossibly steep terraces. Marvelling at the easy availability of ridiculously cheap local wine in grocers' shops in the area when wine drinking was still regarded as a fairly exotic occupation in Britain. What could be finer than cruising down the Rhine Valley with grape ripening sunshine on your back, the bike going well and wine in your water bottle?

The amount of building work

going on in Germany. This gave rise to some massively politically incorrect thoughts on the lines of – if 'we' won the war, well fathers, elder brothers, uncles anyway, how come 'they' seemed to have better buildings and food than us. Doubtless Mac could have put us straight on the economic and political benefits to Europe of the Marshall Plan when Britain was still desperately trying to pay off the debts incurred in fighting a World War, possibly still including some from the First never mind the Second.

A few names come to mind. I am still in contact with Reg West and Brian Neilson. Some claimed that Brian's tactics were to blame for the National Park disaster – a claim he vigorously disputes. Others are Conrad Edwards – a principal victim of the mechanical carnage, Colin Banfield – who had the unenviable distinction of having his bike stolen and Paul Smith.

What of our leader?

Mac must have been a man with a strong social conscience – lay Methodist preacher, leading youth groups. A friend's mother who was a swimming instructor remembers his bringing groups of children to the swimming baths she taught at. And of course his willingness to lead school groups on what in the case of these Continental trips could have been quite risky enterprises. In fact some of the more sceptical probably regarded it as madness.

In retrospect there was something of the military in Mac's manner. In wartime conditions he had risen to the not inconsiderable rank of major and he brought back with him in his manner and way of handling the pupils a trace of the better kind

of British officer. Did we adhere to Mac's resounding Order of the Day described by Roland Buggey? On the whole, reasonably well. However it might be best regarded as a Declaration of Intent, subject to modification rather than a reflection of actuality.

Overall these trips were a resounding success. Cycling struck just the right balance between covering a lot of ground but still enabling a comprehensive view of the country. I can't imagine anyone looks back on them without the happiest memory. They had a picaresque quality which couldn't be repeated. Britain was on the edge of prosperity and later school trips were even more extensive and parents could afford to support more conventional modes of travel.

So, sixty years too late, thank you Mac, what a pity you had to go so early.

Other cycling memories:

It is probably assumed that everyone cycled to school via Roding Lane. However I and Kenneth Sears, who sadly died in an accident while in the Forces, came from Loughton over the Roding Valley fields and up the path behind RAF Chigwell - no mountain bikes then. I think in winter we went by road. I can remember providing much amusement to walkers by coming off on ice on the slope down to the bridge.

Mac used to cut an impressive sight as he stormed up to the school bent over handlebars. One or two other masters also cycled. Do I remember FAS? And was it Mr. Irving, French, who came wearing a trilby on a bike fitted with one of those in wheel power units? The brim of his hat used to blow up and back, imparting a slightly Wild West appearance.

Finally, all this has prompted me to go into the garage and take down from the wall my hand built tall frame lightweight touring bike bought from Frank Lipscombe, Walthamstow, in 1960, price £21, unassembled to avoid Purchase Tax, tyres kept pumped up and contemplate taking to the road again. Why does my son insist on coming with me in case I fall off?

Like Geoff and David, I would be glad to see other cycling anecdotes. Distance cycling was a marvellous activity, rather overshadowed by the team games.

Personal Reflections

By Des Slade (BHCHS 1940-44)

I NEVER cease to wonder at the dizzy heights to which many of our members have risen. I am not one of them (apart from being 6ft 2ins) but it's about time I put pen to paper before 'tis too late and either I or my memory go completely!

I was due to start at BHCHS in September 1939 but I was evacuated to Stowmarket where I attended their only Secondary School. As nothing happened raid-wise in the first six months of the war I, like many others, returned home just in time for the first air-raids of the blitz. As I had a bike I was asked to be a message runner for the "fire fighters" in our street - dads who dealt with minor problems such as incendiary bombs. One exciting time I recall was upstairs in a neighbour's house, standing on a man's shoulders pointing the hose at a burning incendiary in the loft while another man was rapidly working the stirrup pump on the landing below.

So I did not join the school until April 1940 and I still have the postcard that 'Spud' sent to my parents telling them that I should attend with my health certificate and gas mask. If I intended to have hot lunches I should also take two shillings for the week.



Age 15

I was not an academic at school - probably just above average. My favourite subjects were maths and French. From the second year I opted for German, but unfortunately our teacher was a German lady called Miss Gottschalk, and here we were at war with them! It did not sit well with us and I confess that we gave her a rough time and often Spud would come to tell us not



Des and Mavis

to be so cruel and to give her a chance.

I enjoyed football and most athletics, especially high jump. Because my memory is getting bad (I tell people that in each room at home I have a piece of paper with my wife's name on in case I need to call her, and when I call her I've forgotten what I wanted) I have found it necessary to refer back to the early school mags which tell me that (1) I was a member of the school debating society, (2) the land at the northern end of the school was turned into allotments. I was Secretary of this "dig for victory" scheme but I can't remember what we did with the produce! (3) I starred in a play called *The Crimson Coconut* and my co-star was my old friend Alan Willingale.

The play was a great success and was talked about for ages but has not been featured in OB News (4) I was the first 4th year boy to win an event against a 5th year opponent (Don Hines). My high jump set a school record which was equalled once but never beaten. And would you believe that the boy who equalled it - George Asser (1960) - did so on the very day that I was invited back to present the Sports Day prizes! (5) in the inter house games, the mags tell me that I won the high and long jumps and putting the shot, but as I am

dows we cleaned were blown out within days. At the end of that summer Ron returned to join the 6th form and I looked for a proper job!

I joined Henry Hughes (engineering) at Hainault as a trainee. They specialised in nautical instruments such as compasses, sextants, and ultrasonic flaw detectors and were part of the Smiths Group. I passed various exams and was selected to go on a special course at Smiths' own college at Cheltenham, but whilst waiting for this, fate stepped in. In January 1946 six ex-army men who had been invalided out and I took an afternoon off, without permission, to go to a West Ham mid-week cup-tie and next morning we were all sacked! By now I was nearing 18 and becoming due for national service call-up and was unemployed so I rashly went and volunteered for seven years active plus five years reserve in the secretariat branch of the Royal Navy. While awaiting joining instructions I managed to get a temporary job repairing bomb damage to roofs in my own road. Meanwhile the engineering union were fighting the case for the ex-servicemen and included me in the court case. Hughes had to take us back and pay lost wages. The one good thing that came out of this shambles was that on returning to Hughes I had to report to the employment office where I met this beautiful young secretary called Mavis.

During the time between leaving school and joining the Navy I spent a lot of time trying to build

missing the 1944 copy I cannot say whether I achieved anything in my last year.

Looking back at what I've said it is becoming obvious that I was not too bad for brawn but I was a bit short on brains although in passing the GSC exams Geoff Hill and I were told that we were the only two boys in the London area who got distinctions in both the French and German Orals, in my case never to be used again! We took the exams in the gym and several times we had to get under the desks because of approaching buzz bombs.

During the summer of 1944 Ron Bates and I acquired a ladder and some scrim and we started a window cleaning "business" in Barkingside. Many of the win-



Representing the Med Fleet 1949

up the membership of the recently formed Old Buckwellians Association. It must be remembered that contact was by letter, telephone where one existed and in many cases cold calling - visiting such addresses as we had and hoping to see the school leaver. But the work paid off and I see that in the 1946 issue of the Roding dear old Fred Scott paid tribute by saying that I had been the greatest pillar of strength in the Association during the past year (hurrah!) It is also only fair to say that Fred Scott was also a pillar of strength without whom I doubt that we would have survived. Many committee meetings were held at his home in Forest Edge.

In Peter Sharp's excellent history of the OBA (*OB News, November, 2010*) he referred to the athletics meeting at Bancrofts School in July 1945 when the name of Old Buckhurstians was

summed between the UK and the Far East. I spent two years on *HMS Anson*, a 35,000 ton battleship in home waters and over two years on *HMS Triumph*, an aircraft carrier which started its commission in the Med but most of the time in the Far East where we finished up as the first ship in the Korean war soon to be joined by *HMS Belfast*. We were there for only a few months before limping back to the UK with a broken prop shaft. Whilst in the navy I kept up my high jumping and was chosen to represent the Med fleet at a meeting in Malta and the far East Fleet at a meeting in Tokyo. I was also a member of a concert party which used to go ashore and perform in Army and RAF sergeants' and officers' messes. Those of you who know me will not be surprised when I say that I was a stand-up comedian and, in fact, I had a five minute slot on Radio



Presenting prizes at the BHCHS Sports Day 1964

hastily decided upon. As I hold a certificate in that name I claim to be the first member of the "named" OBA despite the fact that "Old Buckwellians" was eventually determined as the organisation's name. Our team won several other events that day, but we cannot find any mention of this in the Roding.

My service with the Royal Navy came to an end after five and a half years when I was invalided out with duodenal ulcers, no doubt partly caused by some of the alcoholic beverages I con-

Hong Kong and another on Radio Japan.

The ship returned at the end of 1950, finished up at Rosyth to close down and in early 1951 I returned to Chatham barracks, married Mavis in April, returned from honeymoon to spend 10 weeks in RN Hospital, Chatham and invalided out officially in June. I hasten to add that this was nothing to do with the honeymoon.

After my discharge we managed to get a flat in Catford where we lived for three years, spending



Visiting Jack Taylor 1995

many weekends back in Barking-side so that I could pick up where I left off with the Old Bucks. Some of what follows has also been covered in Peter Sharp's articles. John Read had done well in building up the Dances and on his retirement I took over the organising and acting as MC. The sports sections were progressing quite well and membership was slowly increasing. Mavis and I moved back to Ilford in July 1954 and in October we had Beverley, the first of our quartet. The activities of the association continued satisfactorily and they obviously did in Ilford for our second child, Martin, was born in July 1957.

For some unknown reason interest in the Old Bucks started to wane during the second half of 1956 and in the following February I wrote to every member calling for support at a special AGM. The response was amazing - I received letters from many members who were unable to attend, several of them from chaps in Services abroad, and the attendance at the meeting was very pleasing. As Peter reported, a new committee was formed and the Association had an aim in life! We started to raise money by various means and in February 1960 I called another well supported meeting to consider the possibility of accepting the offer of a ground in Roding Lane and having our own pavilion. I cannot remember now at which point Trevor Lebenz became involved but what a blessing it was. He has spent the rest of his life working for the Association in various ways and has become known to all Old Bucks as a most deserving President.

Looking back over those early years the Association had its ups and downs but it was kept on course by a comparatively few dedicated people. Malcolm Beard is another who has been there doing his bit, year in and year out.

A bit more of my personal life. Our third child, Timothy, was born in July 1961 and the fourth and last, Sarah, in May 1966. Thanks to the four of them we now have 12 grandchildren. Careerwise, on leaving the Navy I worked for Kodak for a short while, then eight years for the Metal Box Company followed by four years for the Reed Paper Group, before becoming a shopkeeper in North Chingford in January 1964. I loved the life in retail, dealing with different people all of the time. For the first 17 years I had a partner and for a few years Jimmy Tredinnick (BHCHS 1939-44) worked for us.

Then, as I had a heart attack my two sons Martin and Tim came into the business which gradually led to expansion. Unfortunately the heart attack was the start of other heart problems and perhaps I can set an Old Bucks record! I have also had a triple by-pass, a loo brush shoved up my carotid artery as it was blocked giving me some mini strokes and I recently had a further three by-passes and my 9th stent inserted. But I'm still here. In April we celebrated our Diamond Anniversary and I hope to attend the Annual Dinner as usual to see many of my old friends.

Finally I am delighted to see that the Association is very healthy due to having a continuous good committee.

Cork to Killarney: Adventures with Rosemary

By Roy Oliver (BHCHS 1952-59)



Roy Oliver and Rosemary

FIFTY THREE YEARS ago the overnight ferry from Fishguard sailed into the calm of Cork harbour. On the lower deck a thin, white faced youth, head caked in dried sick, vowed never to leave Ireland.

As the City of Cork Steam Packet (£1.10s each) ploughed into the Irish Sea, Alan Moore, Robin Ronan, Don Shephard and myself, all '52 vintage, had headed to the bar which quickly degenerated into a scene from hell reeking of diesel fumes, Guinness ('a pint of Guinness' as Alan recalled), whiskey, cigarette smoke and sick. Alan slept on the bar floor while Robin was entertained by an unintelligible Irishman. I had retreated to the deck and draped myself over the rail. Don recalls a little old lady dressed in black hurrying up the stairs from the bar and transferring her dentures into her handbag before puking over the rail. I sometimes wonder.

On arrival from the Cobh, we roamed around Cork and, for reasons of economy, bought some chewing tobacco. This was swiftly offered to a local dog before we purchased our staple of 'Sweet Afton' cigarettes. After a bed-bugged night sharing two double beds in an otherwise unmemorable hotel we proceeded to the Cork Horse Drawn Caravan Company where we were introduced to our horse and travellers' caravan, named Rosemary and Romany respectively. By default Don was appointed our horseman. We were given a map, a list of farms where caravans could park overnight, a

bucket of oats and taken to the edge of town. We were on our own. Four seventeen year old Essex lads clueless about horses and Rosemary - a large, wall-eyed (one white, one blue) chestnut mare.

On the first day, at each junction Rosemary chose our route. In this way we passed Blarney Castle then headed west through rich farmland. By the roadside we were slightly perturbed to see the occasional stone memorial dedicated to a patriot killed in the apparently continuing Irish War of Independence 1919 -

Having parked for the night outside a village we walked in to find the local shop and were told that there was to be a film show that evening in the village hall. After eating in the caravan we debated whether it was worth going back as the film show would already have begun. Eventually we wandered in and found



The Gap of Dunloe, Killarney, Ireland.

the whole village in the hall waiting patiently for our arrival before starting the show.

As we continued west the landscape became wilder. Passing by a lake, with just a low wall separating the road from a steep drop, we saw a magnificent black stallion silhouetted on a hillside. In admiration then alarm, we watched him descend to the road and then trot with flared nostrils and shaking mane up to our Rosemary, turn, and proceed to kick nine bells out of her. The caravan was shuddering towards the drop into the lake before we drove it off with shouts, sticks and stones.

Beyond Macroom, on Rose-

mary's and therefore our way to Killarney, we passed through a farmyard. While Rosemary plodded on, Don and I jumped off to return running up the road with Don's jumper bulging in various directions. Rosemary was exhorted to gallop as the chicken was beheaded, gutted and plucked inside the caravan.

As we cooked it that evening over a fire fuelled with wood from an adjacent barn, the farmer suddenly appeared out of the darkness for a chat. He eventually asked us where we had got the chicken from. As we all looked at the mutilated corpse on the fire, he was assured that it had been bought from a butcher's shop. Although late, we walked into town only to find the local pub closed and in darkness. While wondering what to do next, a member of the Garda approached and asked if he could help. We explained we fancied a drink but, since it was after

remained based there until the morning a young girl armed with a bowl of oats managed to jump up and pull Rosemary's head down, put on her bridle and lead her to the caravan. In our two week holiday we never once managed to catch and harness her. On one occasion two farmer's sons unravelled the rope Don and I had used to fasten her head to a rail (she was the other side from us) and wondered whether she was 'hungry for water'. As it was Sunday they waited to return the next day to connect her to the caravan, but in the meantime sold us bread and butter for 2/6d. They also took us to a ceilidh held in a field with a concrete square for dancing (and not for playing Gaelic football on as previously explained by Alan, an expert in all things Irish on the strength of a visit to Dublin). Indeed when he asked a girl for the last dance he was surprised when she said it was the Irish National Anthem.

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to Fossett's Circus (founded in Ireland in 1852), attracted in part by billboards describing the various exotic acts to be performed by artistes from all over Europe. We quickly realised that all the acts were performed by the same four people. While our loud Essex cynicism may have destroyed some of the magic for the more gullible in the audience, even we appreciated the skill with which a performer balanced himself upside down on a single finger placed on top of a ball. Watching him insert his hand into an iron glove and then his finger into a hole in the ball did not detract from the general excitement. Especially as the circus strong man had been sent to stand by us.

West of the Killarney lakes we hired ponies to trek up the magnificent Gap of Dunloe. Robin still remembers the joy he experienced when, on the return leg, the movements of his backside started to coincide with that of the saddle.

Our journey then took us south to Kenmare where at a ceilidh we encountered the phenomenon of colleens with their amazing white skin, raven black hair and green eyes. Somewhere in Bantry Bay we hired a rowing boat

10pm, the pub was closed. He smiled and said 'that's why you have to knock on the door'. We heard approaching footsteps, then the unbolting of the door and were led down a dark passage. A final door was opened and there they were, a cosy bar full of well-oiled locals who introduced us to the joys of Irish whiskey. Returning to the caravan we found that our tub of ice cream had mysteriously vanished.

Arriving at the outskirts of Killarney, and thus 16 miles from where my mother was born in Tralee, we parked by the Race Course. That night there was a tremendous thunderstorm. We

and Don caught a mackerel which was partially cooked before being hungrily consumed. Beyond Glengariff we took a turn left and headed north east up little more than a track and at times had to assist Rosemary by pushing the caravan. Releasing her into a field as night fell - disaster. She escaped and trotted away uphill into the darkness. Did we really stumble into remote farmyards and enquire whether they had seen a brown mare answering to the name of Rosemary? All must have turned out well as we eventually regained the Cork road and by dint of Don riding us through the night returned Rosemary safely and on time in Cork. On a small wander I came across and entered an art gallery adjacent to the burnt out shell of Cork Opera House. All I recall was a series of pristine white casts of Greco-Roman statues. Pristine white except for the breasts and crutch region on Venus de Milo which had been blackened by grubby hands in what I could only interpret as a kind of rough practice foreplay by some of the locals. Look out colleens, I thought.

Throughout our journey we had seen virtually no traffic. Indeed Alan recalls a day when we did not see a single car. Some Americans took a photo thinking we were genuine travellers. A Scottish lady tourist who had insisted on looking into the used-for- two- weeks caravan could only gasp and say 'Yer no verra hoose prood'.

It was a rough return to Fishguard. I borrowed Alan's paperback on the Irish revolution, wedged myself under a light on the foredeck and never took my eyes off the print. When we landed I was pleased to hear that the others had been fairly ill. We eventually arrived home safely. Tired, hungry, and broke but armed with a few Irish memories



Roy leading with Don on board

and yarns that seem to have blossomed over the years.

Addendum

Whilst edited by Don, I gathered the reminiscences and constructed the story. Alan, who had organized the trip, wrote an article for the school magazine but it was not published. Probably before its time.

During the Irish War of Independence, 1919-1922, the British Army in County Cork was represented by the Essex Regiment. A group led by the Regimental Intelligence officer became known by republicans as the 'Essex Torture Squad'.

The Crawford Art Gallery in Cork houses the Sculpture Galleries, a collection of snow-white plaster casts including Venus de Milo (original 100 BCE). Donated by the Pope to King George IV in 1822, he so disliked them they were stored in a basement until someone suggested that they might be appreciated in Cork.

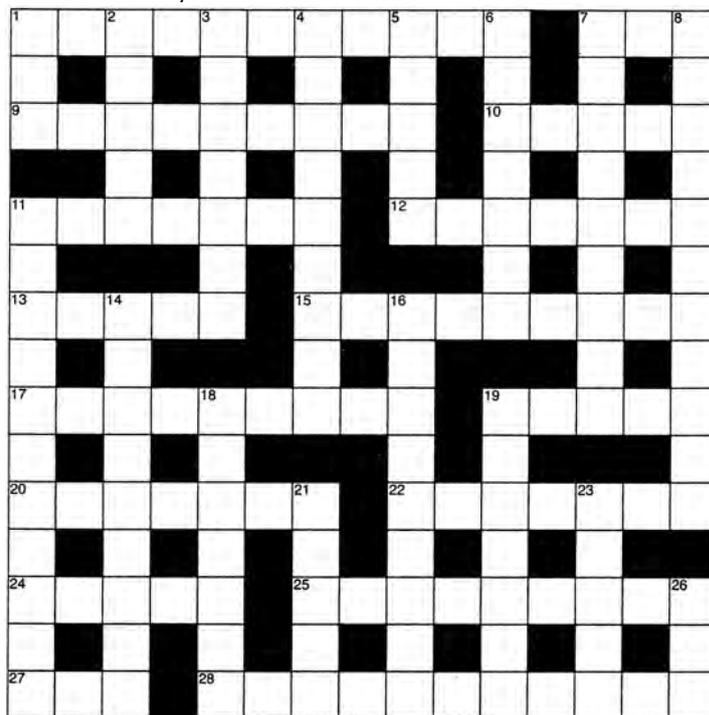


As they are now: L to R Don Shephard, Alan Moore, Roy Oliver and Robin Ronan (inset)

OB NEWS CROSSWORD

No.18 "The Light Fantastic" By Mike Ling

Asterisked clues yield answers which relate to the title.



ACROSS

DOWN

- 1 Illegally dealing (as transport supremo?) (11)
- 7* A type of artificial bait in fishing (3)
- 9* Spanish two-step? (4,5)
- 10* Distort like Chubby? (5)
- 11 Pip's amour in *Great Expectations* (7)
- 12 Such an inquisition is unexpected! (7)
- 13* Representation of the letter T (5)
- 15 Way out in the field (2,3,4)
- 17 Adds explanation or comment to a text (9)
- 19 Town in Uttar Pradesh, 100 miles east of Lucknow (5)
- 20 aka Springsteen (3,4)
- 22* Representation of the letter F (7)
- 24* Scottish king of the ballroom? (5)
- 25 The 11th November (9)
- 27 A long time in the only shop? (3)
- 28 Inseparable moggies? (7,4)
- 1* Bugging device (3)
- 2 Item of value (5)
- 3 Beethoven's only opera (7)
- 4 A follower of esoteric doctrine (9)
- 5 Is this man the brains of the operation? (5)
- 6 Having drops or drop-like markings (7)
- 7 Succulence (9)
- 8 Understand the argument (3,3,5)
- 11 Removable (11)
- 14 A one-way valve (3-6)
- 16 Special operations group (4,5)
- 18 Cup games can be played in this way (3,4)
- 19 Storage system (3,4)
- 21* Nifty Brazilian footwork (5)
- 23* Steps taken by the odd graduate? (5)
- 26 Cry for help, whichever way you look at it! (3)

Solution on page 19

Panoramic Progress - Help needed!

In the last edition I reported that we had started identifying names on two of the early BHCHS panoramic photos. This project has now advanced considerably. Thanks to everyone who has helped. Special thanks to **Mike Walker (1967)** who has found an improved method of creating the numbered grid and has set up several more photos. We now have the following panoramas on the website with grids: **1939, 1943, 1947, 1969, 1972, 1988.**

If you were at BHCHS during the summer term of any of the above mentioned years you may be able to help us complete the naming. You need to get to our website to do this. If you don't have internet access why not ask a relative or friend to help you?

Optical Generation Game



Graham Frankel learns about his imminent macular degeneration from Simon Rose

MY LATEST trip to the opticians started as a bit of a nostalgic kick. Almost exactly fifty years earlier, prompted by the increasing blurriness of the writing on BHCHS blackboards, I first set foot in the opticians in Salway Hill, Woodford Green owned by Stuart Rose. Maybe it was something I said to him – his son Simon was not scheduled to be born for another five years - but Stuart must have got a good impression of the school. Now that Simon, who attended BHCHS 1977-84, runs a successful chain of opticians I couldn't resist the urge to compare, and booked in for a test.

I was in for a surprise. No, it wasn't the appearance of Stuart Rose to perform my eye test (but I was delighted to learn from

Simon that he is still around, though now long since retired). The shock was the technology. I have registered with various opticians over the years, and the changes had been rather slow. Those infuriating circles on red and green that seem to have lasted as long as "TOO MUCH SEX etc....".

But Simon's practice in Gants Hill is definitely a step into a highly sophisticated world of optical measuring. We started

with some of the traditional tests, perhaps for old times sake, but soon Simon put his foot on the technology accelerator pedal and introduced me to his new toy. The Ocular Coherence Topographer is a very impressive piece of kit. Using it is a whole lot easier than the agony of deciding which of the circles are clearer. You simply rest your chin on the pad and stare at a little blue moon inside the box. Within a few seconds, the machine has cap-

tured detailed images from inside your eye. These pictures can reveal whether there are any danger signs of future problems like macular degeneration, as well as providing other information about retinal health and measurements that are accurate to 5 millionths of a metre (5microns). No waiting around for the results. Simon was able to show me the images within a few seconds and I was relieved to hear his confirmation that my own vision should allow me to continue hunting Old Bucks for a good few years yet.

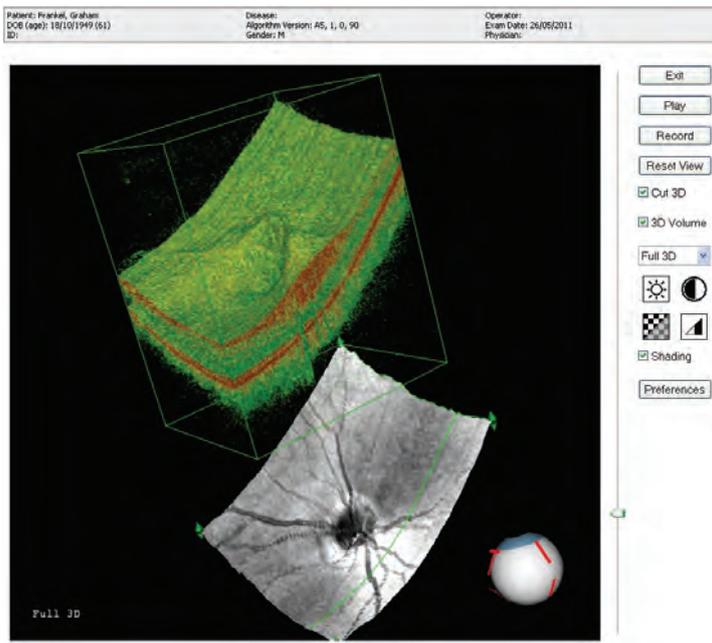
The final stage of my visit was in the dispensing department, where I was confronted by a vast array of high tech frames to consider. I had another twinge of nostalgia. I remembered the rather more straightforward choice of three frames offered to me by Stuart in 1962: the options then were: NHS (free), NHS (bog standard) or NHS (super deluxe). Now we had such features as carbon fibre, memory titanium, screwless rimless mounts and individually customised bespoke progressive lenses - to name but a few.

It was an enjoyable visit. Simon's relaxed and helpful manner gave me as much reassurance as my nervous first encounter with his father, and even enabled me to chat with one of the other patients that day who turned out to be the son-in-law of an Old Buck.

I shall definitely take another trip to Simon's optical wonderland. The big challenge for me now is whether I can hang around long enough to have my eyes tested by the next generation of Roses. Who knows what kind of tests will be administered by Finlay (born 2010).....



GF with his 1962 NHS designer frames



A glimpse into the editor's eyeball - courtesy of the Ocular Coherence Topographer



Finlay Rose - the next generation

Bullying

By Steve Cladingboel (BHCHS 1969-76)



IT IS A SUBJECT often discussed but never successfully dealt with. It's also a subject that has been with us for a long time. Today schools have 'anti-bullying policies' which, in many cases, have little value other than ticking an Ofsted box. Schools might be able to do something about playground fights, but they can have little effect on Facebook, Twitter and texting.

Back in my BHCHS days, there were of course no such things as mobile phones and the internet, so the very idea of 'cyber-bullying' was as far in the realm of science fiction as it is possible to be. But what about other types of bullying? How did BHCHS fare when it came to dealing with bullying back in the 1970's?

I have a very distinctive surname, a three-syllable, clumsy surname that no one can spell – even when I stand there and spell it out, people still write 'bole' at the end rather than 'boel'. I'm used to it now, and rather like my surname. But back in the dim distant past, when I was a kid, I hated it. I was embarrassed about it because I really didn't like the curiosity it attracted. In my penultimate year of junior school, there were three older kids (in their last year) who taunted me constantly on the bus journey home from school by calling out my name in exaggerated, howling tones.

I hated it. I used to hide under the seats in the hope that they wouldn't see me and would therefore be distracted by something – or even someone – else.

Imagine the horror when I discovered that they were in BHCHS when I arrived as a timid 1st year in September 1969. However, something had changed. Although there was some repetition of the school bus howling cries when they first saw me, after that there was next to nothing. In fact a very strange thing happened one playtime.

I don't who it was, I don't know why it was, but some kid was shouting at me and threatening to get physical with me and I was, as ever, backing away. Out of nowhere two of the school bus kids jumped onto my aggressor causing him to fall to the ground. "Don't you hurt our friend Cladingboel!" one of them said. And he didn't – ever again.

What does this illustrate? Okay, it wasn't the most heinous form of bullying ever recorded, in truth it was mere taunting: "sticks and stones may break my bones..." and all that. But my experience, the experience of the bullee, is what really counts. My self esteem was shattered; I hated my name and just wanted to hide away and be left alone, in silence, in solitude. How odd then that the very same people who had caused my self-loathing were also responsible for my salvation. It isn't always thus.

I can't say that I experienced a lot of real bullying during my time at BHCHS. As time went on, I learned to keep myself out of the limelight for the most part and was spared any significant harm (apart from one occasion late in my school career when a newbie to our year – 5th, lower 6th? – clumped me one in the eye which, much to the disappointment of his hangers-on, didn't bruise). But that doesn't mean that bullying was absent.

Bullying tended to be focussed on kids who, for whatever reason, stood out. Not the obvious targets like fat kids, or spotty kids, or smelly kids – and in my day there were quite a few of them; but kids who might in today's world have a 'diagnosis'. I can think of at least two kids

who, looking back, might very easily be awarded a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome, but who, in the early 1970s, were left to fend for themselves in the middle of an education battleground in which the very obviously timid, vulnerable or just plain 'odd' stood little chance.

My professional world is all about disability – especially learning and cognitive disability – and I am a part-time carer to a learning disabled adult on top of that, so looking back I can see things which would be regarded very differently today. We were not taught about 'difference' back then, so anyone who stood out in a non-threatening way was frankly just fair game.

When bullying did happen, it was rarely the all-out physical 'bashing-up' of someone and leaving him as a quivering, bleeding heap; but more constant name-calling, barging-into, gobbing-on, bag (or satchel) snatching. What might be called an ongoing, eroding type of bullying which is always far harder to manage as there is never one big isolated incident on which to focus or to punish. If it's harder to manage, it's easier to dismiss and thus easier to ignore.

Bag-snatching in particular was very popular for a while – a group of kids would grab the bag in a lightning assault, and the contents would be thrown onto the flat roofs or into the bushes along Roding Lane, or defaced or torn to shreds.

Bullying wasn't just something that belonged to pupils though. There were some teachers who could be unfortunate in their management of children.

I am reminded here of a teacher of German who, though generally good humoured, could be really quite vicious in how he spoke and responded to pupils. On one particular day this teacher was extremely verbally brutal towards a pupil who was actually a very good student of German. I can't remember what provoked the onslaught, but we all knew that the teacher was well over-the-top.

To give him his due, the teacher did apologise quietly and quickly to the student at the end of the lesson, but wow was he fierce!

I am lucky: I can look back on my BHCHS days and genuinely regard them with affection and fondness. I had some good friends, enjoyed most of the lessons, learned a lot which I still value. However I know that this was not the experience for some. I remember that there was a boy, a year or two below mine, who had such a hard time that he was moved to another school. Whether or not this move – or its reason - was actually the case, I don't know; I can only go by the gossip that did the rounds at the time. If it is true, then I know that a proportion of the bullying came from people with whom I associated: he was a child who often had his bag snatched and then flung from the high windows of the Art Room, or balanced precariously on a fully tilted pane. It was hilarious! But not for him, and not for any number of other kids who found themselves on the receiving end of this kind of thing.

Bullying is never, ever acceptable. Unfortunately today, nearly 40 years on from my years at BHCHS, it's still with us.

Editor's note - I am very grateful to Steve for writing about this difficult but important topic, which has not yet had a lot of coverage in OB News. I hope Steve's excellent article will generate further discussion and contributions.

Steve is a social care co-ordinator/trainer in the field of severe and profound disability.

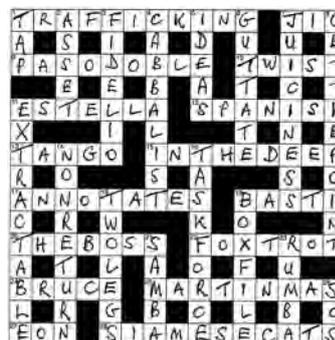
Crossword solution

The title comes from *L'Allegro* by John Milton (1608-74): "Come and trip it as ye go, on the light fantastic toe"

10 across - Chubby is Chubby Checker, an American singer who had a hit with "The Twist" in 1960, and started a dance craze.

24 across - the Bruce in question is of course Bruce Forsyth, compere of *Strictly Come Dancing*.

25 across - also of course, Armistice Day.



Where are they now?

Alan Cruchley (1938)



At BHCHS I was a late developer and not exactly a shining pupil, my reports all saying "could do better" and "too frivolous", but I do have a couple of claims to fame. I scored the first ever goal against another school, and, dubiously, during that first year, I was guilty of anointing our headmaster, Mr Taylor, with the nickname "Spud". To the boys I was known as "Crutch".

In those days the primary key to further education was Matriculation, (without going into the 6th form), and this could be achieved by earning a sufficient number of credits in the General School Certificate examination. I passed the latter but did not achieve the former. I had a vague idea of doing something in engineering and enrolled at the South East Essex Technical College and was wisely counselled into taking their catch-up matriculation course. I had little parental advice at that time since in 1943 my Dad was away in the army. However, I met Roy Ileson (also 1938) one day, who was a BSc student apprentice at Siemens, and he took me home and showed me all the neat stuff that he was doing. This resulted in my joining Siemens as a student apprentice in their telecommunications division. A five year apprenticeship and a one day plus one evening per week course for seven years led to BSc Engineering. I learnt one invaluable fact, i.e. I did not want to be an electrical engineer. Academic specialisation occurred after five years so I switched to mechanical engineer-

ing and left Siemens. Later in my career I had the opportunity to go to Cranfield to obtain my M.Sc. in aeronautical engineering. It normally took two years (which I could not manage), and luckily I qualified for the one year accelerated course. I had never worked so hard in my life, nor enjoyed it so much. Total immersion in aviation.

On leaving Siemens I obtained a permanent (established) post within the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research and migrated into a design department. This involved designing any special equipment or test rigs required, and supervising their manufacture and operational testing. After some nine years at DSIR the cold war was at its peak and I transferred to AWRE Aldermaston as a project engineer. This involved analysing the data from missile test flights to determine the launch, manoeuvre and, (if applicable), re-entry environments experienced by various warheads, especially the vibration aspects.



Rockets produce very large vibration forces in addition to thrust. Then test rigs had to be designed to simulate and reproduce flight profiles in the laboratory. You can't poop off an inert nuclear missile every time that internal warhead force data is needed. The project engineer is then responsible for the test runs and data analysis.

At this time I was married and we had designed our house and had it built in Camberley. An income supplement seemed a good idea, and the Royal Aircraft Establishment Farnborough was less than ten minutes away, so I thought that I could do a bit of evening class teaching at the RAE Technical College. They cobbled to-

gether an interview panel and it all went very well and then the chairman apologised that they had no position available! Before I could say something regrettable he went on to ask if I would consider taking a full time appointment in their Department of Advanced Technology. As it happened, our politicians kept cancelling rockets and stuff and I was getting a bit frustrated with all that work going to waste. So, after a couple of weeks thought, I had a job where I could come home for lunch. Some five years later I took a two year secondment to Ryerson University to help redesign their Aerospace Engineering course. So the family, two children now, moved to Canada. We decided to stay. That was forty three years ago.

Eric Cross (1940)

I can't help wondering what would have happened to me if I hadn't been wrenched away after one term. I was good at French and English, and might well have flourished under the tutelage of Walter May. On the other hand I was not a hard worker and might have been left behind by others. In the event, I was lucky to get into Cambridge to read English, subsequently becoming Head of English at Christchurch Grammar School.

I remember Mr Taylor, though I don't recall hearing him referred to as Spud. The music teacher had long flowing hair – like a composer, I thought. The art master sported a beard (not common in those days) – like a painter. What strange things impress a little boy and stick in the memory! Mr Johnson (History) lived close to me in Marjorams Avenue, Loughton. He told me to report to him 'first thing tomorrow morning' for some petty misdemeanour, the nature of which I have forgotten. That night his bungalow received a direct hit from a bomb and he was killed.

I was delighted to have traced Eric after having been given his name by Robert Druce. However, I then discovered that he had only stayed at BHCHS for a single term before his family moved to Northants.

Peter Cooper (1941)

Early on in my working career, I moved from commercial working for a timber importers, into hospital management, then local government, banking, and stockbroking, having risen to General Manager and coping with 23 partners. In 1974, the first big bang, before redundancy, I was on the street. At least I would have been but was fortunate to move immediately and join the Lonrho export subsidiary. This then joined forces with Balfour Williamson & Co in the same line of work. Finally in 1980 Lonrho acquired the freehold of Cheapside House as headquarters, and I was called in to manage the building, covering everything from administration, to security, maintenance, office and shop tenants. With 8 directors and Tiny Rowlands life was not dull. Fortunately I had a good support team. I stayed there until my retirement in 1994.

I started married life in a flat in Seven Kings, where daughter Sally was born, moved to a flat in Ilford, where Mandy was born. We then moved to Ingrave, Brentwood, and then to Billericay. From there we then moved to West Sussex: Haywards Heath, then Cuckfield and finally Hurstpierpoint.

I have five grandchildren and one great granddaughter.

Having moved to Ingrave, Brentwood it was no longer possible to play cricket for the Old Buckwellians so I played for a couple of years for the village team.

I took up golf in 1960 but did not play seriously until around 1970 when I joined Haywards Heath Golf Club. When I retired I joined Lindfield Golf Club and became Vets Captain in 1998.

In 1995 after my wife died, I had a knee replacement, so I switched to bowls and joined Hurstpierpoint Bowls Club. I am glad to say I have had some success. I also joined the Preston Park Indoor Bowls Club where I play in the winter.

I also have many interests which I will not list other than say I research family trees during the winter months.

Health wise I cannot be too bad - I do get to the gym twice a week. I keep being asked for my birth certificate.

Andrew Pallant (1944)

After having been a widower for several years, Andrew has now married an old family friend whose husband had also died of cancer. So his second married life started at the age of 73.

Alan Goswell (1954)

Alan tells me he is continuing to enjoy retirement. His recent projects include: landscaping his garden, tinkering with his Triumph Stag, sailing to the Scillies, a 500 mile tour of Brittany by bike, a visit to Egypt and Namibia. He is also doing 30 hours a month as bus manager for a local charity in Reading. But with all that he still has plenty of time to relax!

Ron Davis (1958)



My wife Jackie and I moved to Sawbridgeworth 38 years ago. We live close to Steve Hyam who is married to Jackie's sister. We regularly see Barry Wynn and John Bernard and their wives for a meal and generally agreeing how the world should be run. We see as much as we can of brother Pete and his wife Irene and strangely enough discuss how the world should be run. Jackie and I have two daughters and three grandchildren who all live in the village. I am a Chartered Surveyor and worked for three or four companies before setting up on my own some 20 years ago. I am now a sole trader, a strange expression which I always think sounds like a lonely wet fish salesman! I kept playing club cricket for 40 years and managed a few seasons with Hertfordshire over 50s but found in the end that too much hurt and it took far too long to recover, so I hung up my bat. We are all involved and enjoy village life ranging from Brownies to me serving with other old men on the local Sports Association. So life carries on.

George Dyson (1959)



I came to Canada in 1970 after leaving Exeter University with a degree in Chemistry and after a year as a materials chemist at what was then Westland helicopters. A bit of a dead end job - so I happened across a chance to do a PhD at the University of Saskatchewan, fully paid. Not the greatest University in the world but it was a great experience - full of graduate students from all over the world surprisingly - a friendly small city in the middle of the Prairies - very cold in winter!

I graduated in 1975 with both an MSc and a PhD and moved to University of Calgary firstly as a post doctoral fellow then as a sessional instructor for 3 years.

I then took a position as a manager of an oil and gas service laboratory in Calgary, which led to an opportunity as a research scientist with Nova Corporation, which was setting up a new research facility for oil and gas/ gas transmission research. Being in at the ground floor was very advantageous. I soon became Manager of Research Services comprising the Analytical Chemistry group, Information Technology group, Electronic Instrumentation group and Biostratigraphy group as the facility rapidly expanded.

After 13 years I left Nova and set up my own consultancy providing systems integration services to Industrial Plants integrating Plant Control systems, Plant Historians with Laboratory Information Systems - mostly working for companies such as Honeywell world-wide. Interesting times in interesting places - projects in the Middle East, Asia including China and South Korea, Europe and North America. I was in China soon after Tiananmen Square several times for a month at a time. I worked all through Northern, Western and Southern China when it was far

from being easy to get around. Today there are huge highways but not back then.

It was really great finally being able to control what and where I worked with every project being something different and a new challenge. No two industrial plants are the same - in layout, work performed, culture, language and complexity. So I have worked in one of the only isotopically pure Boron manufacturers in the world - to Oil and Gas refineries - to chemical plants - to pulp and paper plants - to household window fabrication plants - you name it!

The travel became a bit too much though - it seemed as though I lived on an aircraft - so I decided to retire and move to the East Coast of Canada in 2001 to be closer to my wife's aging parents - bought a nice acreage and settled down to grow plants, landscape and pursue my woodworking hobby. Not exactly work free though as looking after 6 acres of gardens takes a lot of upkeep!

Phil Shannon (1961)



I came to BHCHS late, having passed my 13+. I came from St Barnabas, a bustling noisy mixed secondary modern. The catchment area was the local council estate as well as the private semi detached so it had a mixture of cultures and characters. It was a shock to come to the all-boys BHCHS. I really could not believe that boys actually acted like those characterised in the *Beano*. It was not uncommon for waste buckets to be put above doors, matches in blackboard rubbers, ink pellets flicked, glue on seats, none of which happened at St Barnabas. I was a little older than the rest of the class, having dropped a year because the "teaching at the grammar school was so more advanced." Which it probably was. Unfortunately it passed me by. I always felt there was something

else happening about which I had no knowledge. There always seemed to be people enjoying themselves and I had no idea why, or indeed, how. As there was no "national curriculum" the rest of the class had a level of knowledge of subjects that I did not. And I felt I was just dumped in a class and left to catch up. I believe I have also read other 13+'ers having the same experiences.

I made few friends over those school years and finished in 5C. Career guidance was never mentioned and as few in 5C were university candidates we were just let go. There were few memorable events in those years. Some I remember are:

- being called "Del" by Mr Clapton who made some witty comment about being "Swiss Maid" (for those who don't remember this is a reference to Del Shannon, a 60's singer who had a hit with a song of the same name). How we laughed.

- the deputy head coming in to the classroom, writing things on the board and exiting again without saying anything - obviously 5C were not worth the effort.

- trying to swim in the outside pool when it was so cold. I never learnt to swim.

- someone tipping paint and the archery targets into the pool.

- the trip on the Devonian to Sardinia and Corsica, finishing in Genoa, and having classes on board whilst the other schools were looking at the coastline of Gibraltar and Africa. Fortunately I stayed on deck and missed the class until one of the teachers came and got me. He understood why I wanted to stay on deck and apologised for making us attend class. I say us, because it was me and Bev Miller, who is now taking care of pigs in Bristol. We were also the ones who sneaked up on deck to have a crafty ciggie in the evenings.

Anyway I left with few O levels and joined Western Union as a telegraphist and then a customer services clerk where I worked for 3 years until 1970 when I moved to a stockbrokers as a Data Controller, helping to manage a computer terminal installation. I stayed there for 7 years and then moved to Centre-file, managing the installation of the terminals around numerous other stock broking firms, training staff, writing procedure manuals. Whilst on a trip to

Toronto investigating other systems, I discovered that a colleague, John Cavill, was also a BHCHS man.

This also lasted 7 years until it was closed by its owner, Natwest Bank. I moved to another Natwest subsidiary, "County Bank", as the financial whirlwind of Big Bang was approaching, and helped Arthur Andersen, that now defunct management consultancy, install a number of stockbroker trading systems there.

I moved on to the London Stock Exchange, winding up in 1995 at a fledgling new stock exchange Tradepoint. This, in turn, was eventually bought by the Swiss Stock Exchange. So eventually I learnt enough German to hold basic conversations with my Swiss colleagues. The old *Der Die* and *Das* came to the fore at last! Perhaps Mr Clapton did teach me something after all. This all finished in 2009 when the Swiss took their London based exchange back to Zurich. Since then I've been semi job hunting, doing unpaid voluntary work, and paid Census work. It's coming to summer again so the work desire is growing weaker although the desire for money is growing stronger!

In 1972 I married a girl from Loughton CHS, Gillian, and we have lived in Hoddesdon since 1985. We have two children and now two grandchildren. Our best man was Alan (or was it Dick) Dodson, twins and two more BHCHS students.

I shall continue to read about old boys and their activities and to wonder whether BHCHS really made any noticeable difference to my working life. I guess I'll never know.

Alan Dodson (1962)

The Editor recently came across my title (Professor of Geodesy) and immediately asked the question "What is Geodesy?" He also suggested some of you might be interested to hear what I've been doing for the past 40 years! I hope he was right.

Over the years I've become accustomed to trying to answer the question "What is Geodesy", as I always get it when formally introduced, along with "Did you say Geology?". The OED definition (modern use) is "That branch of applied mathematics which determines the figures and areas of

large portions of the earth's surface, and the figure of the earth as a whole." However, in practice it involves (very) precise measurement of land, oceans, large constructions (eg dams, bridges) etc. This means I get involved in projects which include determining sea-level rise, plate tectonics and earthquake/volcano movements, as well as major international



construction works. Nowadays much of our work uses satellite technology, especially GPS – from which we can make millimetre accuracy measurements, and my research into atmospheric effects on the GPS signals has even led to the UK Met Office now using GPS derived estimates of atmospheric water vapour in their weather forecasts! But that's enough of the science!

So how, after school, did I get into that? Well I did a Civil Engineering degree at Nottingham, where I developed an interest in Land Surveying. I stayed on to do a PhD in Engineering Surveying, and then after a brief spell in research took up an academic Lecturer appointment at Nottingham in 1976. I've been here ever since, moving through roles as Reader in Geodesy, Professor of Geodesy (in 1990), Head of Civil Engineering Department, Dean of Engineering and now Pro-Vice-Chancellor responsible for Infrastructure, Environment and Information Services. The University has changed enormously since I joined, going from about 7,500 students then to 35,000+ now, with a £500m turnover (and we have 10,000 students at our campuses in China and Malaysia!) And as everyone will have noticed, we're going through considerable uncertainty in the sector at present – an interesting time to be on the Executive!

In 1982 I met my wife Heather at the University – marrying in 1984,

and our son Edward was born in 1990. He's now at Leeds University, although this year in Montreal on a Study Abroad year, reading English (with an aptitude he certainly didn't get from me)! It's really interesting seeing the University sector from the "consumer" perspective though!

As those who knew me at school might remember I was involved particularly in cricket and bridge. The bridge only continued (although reasonably successfully) whilst I was an undergraduate, and unfortunately I've not played since. I continued to play cricket regularly for many years, until too much bowling led to me needing an early hip replacement! That put an end to badminton and skiing as well! I always knew sport wasn't good for you! Nowadays walking around the beautiful countryside in the Vale of Belvoir where I live is my main exercise, with wine and (recently) modern art my main "hobbies". I've never managed to make any school reunion meetings so far. Living out of the south-east makes it more problematic, but maybe I will when I've retired.

Steve Lodge (1967)

I was pleased to hear from Steve in February. He confessed that reading the list of countries where Old Bucks resided (*OB News, November 2010*), reminded him to tell me about his move from Thailand to the United Arab Emirates. He also confirmed that he has been through the desert on a horse with no name.

Nick Patience (1975)

In my last year at BHCHS I was Secretary of the Sixth Form and School Council and Simon Buggie was the Chair. I failed my A levels. We both ended up working for a year or so in the same branch of Sainsbury's. I'd intended to join the RAF but didn't get in (they said try again when I had had a years experience of a responsible job) – I had no plan B. A friend from Loughton County High suggested that I do the same as her and become a nurse. Well, after six months of unsuccessful applications for other jobs I took her advice and after a number of further failed applications I got a place as a student nurse at East Roding School of Nursing (Barking and King Georges Hospitals). I qualified in 1986 and worked in Accident and Emergency, Occupa-

tional Health, Intensive Care and was eventually a Charge Nurse in Trauma Intensive Care (Helicopter Emergency Service) at The Royal London Hospital Whitechapel. I met my wife, Sara, through mutual friends in 1986, we married in 1989, we have 2 children now aged 18 and 13.

I will always remember that when I was studying for A level Biology my teacher, Mr Price, told me "Patience, in practical lessons I can tell who will become a surgeon or a vet – you won't even make a good carpenter." I used to think about that when suturing wounds in A&E. In 1990 I decided to study for a degree and I enrolled on a part-time course while working full time and graduated in Life Science (applied biology).

I left nursing in 1995 to start a career in health and safety (or preventative medicine as I like to think of it). I have been one of HM Inspectors of Health and Safety with the Health and Safety Executive for nearly 16 years and have a post graduate diploma from Aston University.

Andy Goodwin (1976)



I divorced in 2002 and spent the next 4 years enjoying the easy life of Washington DC. A great city to just hide, party and be outdoors. I worked for a dot com from inception to closure, became a bike messenger (the best job ever) before travelling the country in an RV, returning to Washington to meet my new wife Rain and came back to the UK to marry and have two gorgeous daughters Willow (3) and Autumn (1). We've moved to the quiet village of Eynsham outside Oxford and bought ourselves an Old Coach House that needs a lot of love and attention. Ready to mature in old age (not). Any old boys in the area do catch up.

From the Editor's Postbag.....

Reluctant Dragon?

Alan Boyce (1943-50)

DC Wren was a short, portly middle-aged man who wore black-rimmed glasses and walked with an odd plantigrade step. He had a somewhat aloof and remote manner, strongly-held views and pontificated rather than taught. One had the feeling he was not totally comfortable in the teaching profession. We had him for RI at least into the second form, which indicates he left late 1944 or early 1945.

'Oftener' [a word used by Mr Wren] is interesting, suggesting that there was a shy, witty man inside trying to get out, but totally out of tune with his audience. It is oddly interesting too that the *Little Bible*, which I also remember and which was the backbone of one of his subjects, was employed as a vehicle of punishment. A singularity, but one whose impact still lingers.

John Martin (1940-45)

Mr DC Wren took our form for Religious Instruction in 1944-45. This was quite different from RI in previous years. We talked freely about ethics and morality. On some questions, divorce for example, his views were liberal for that period. I remember there was a time once when he played an upright piano in assembly, possibly when they were short of a teacher to play. He arrived at school on a bicycle with a heavily padded saddle.

Alan and John's observations are in response to a request from David Foster for more information about Mr Wren (Letters, May 2011).

Mead Cup Mystery

Terry Joyes

There is no memory of the *Mead Cup* (OB News, November 2010) amongst former Wanstead CHS athletes, although they were its winners on four occasions. Perhaps (and don't take this wrongly) it was not a Competition considered of great significance, so that a 'second/third/young' team was sent to compete to gain experience.

Terry is founder of the Old Hero-nians Newsletter.

Ghosts at BHCHS?

Michael Turner (1981-86)

Did you ever try to find any information on the school ghosts? I remember an art teacher (I think it was Mr Prentice) saying he saw one coming through a wall, and the school cleaners at the time said they used to see one walking about the school. Was this true or not? We will probably never know, but a feature on the different ghost stories would be quite funny. There must be quite a few stories given the number of pupils at the school over the years. A prize for the most far fetched one!

Nice idea, Mick. Are you offering the prize? This is the first time I have heard anyone suggest we had ghosts at BHCHS and look forward to hearing more.

Quicker by Bike

John Pattenden (1939-44)

I remember cycling from my home near Gants Hill to BHCHS. In 1939 I started travelling to school by steam train between Newbury Park and Chigwell Station. I had a walk of about one mile at each end, so I had to leave at 7.20am each morning.

In early 1940 my father went each day to work at the Balloon Centre next door to the school; this was for a short while. I was able to cycle with him and was impressed that we could start at 8am. This was a great improvement. I could easily do this journey on my bike as there were very few vehicles on the roads. During the war cars were generally laid up and buses were few and far between. The road outside the school was a quiet country lane and I enjoyed the ride in comparative safety.

When the V1 missiles came over in summer 1944 I remember stopping at the top of the Bald Hind Hill overlooking north London and watched the explosions that appeared as a rapidly expanding hemispherical shock wave; then hearing the explosion seconds later.

Dark days indeed.

I have enjoyed cycling to work throughout my working life.

More tales from the bike sheds will be very welcome - Ed.

Who Lived Closest?

Tony Nicholls (1956-63)

You made a comment (OB News November 2010) about finding out who lived closest to BHCHS. I think I could lay claim to being one of the closest. We lived in Boxted Close which is just across the river from the school, behind the field which held the Old Bucks pavilion. In winter I could look straight across at BHCHS from my bedroom window. Conversely, during last period on Day 3 on a gloomy January day, when my attention wandered from Johnno's chemistry lesson, I could glimpse, across the darkening fields, the beckoning lights of home.



Crow flies or walking distance? I should have been more specific!

Musical Connection

Trevor Ireland (1956-61)

Come with me on a ramble through one of life's wonderful coincidences. Kay and I run a parish lunch club at our church, St. Albright's Stanway (near Colchester). Once, a year or so back, one of the guests was talking of school in Ilford and I mentioned that I was an Essex boy, born in Ongar and schooled at Buckhurst Hill County High.

Another guest, Grace, heard me and said "Well you must have known my brother-in-law". Wondering how this dear lady, a little older than me, could have a brother-in-law who was a contemporary of mine, I asked the name and she said Don. The only Don I knew was Don Groombridge, who sported a pocket watch in his blazer pocket and would proudly announce that it was accurate to GMT - Groombridge Mean Time.

"He taught music" she went on to say. I have written before of the importance of Don Ray in my school life - He gave me something I was good at, not brilliant like the noted BHCHS musicians, just something I could feel

good about. This, with the Christian ethic of the School under Spud shaped my life, not to conquer the world but to have contentment with the world.

Grace is a lovely lady, who walks in the way of the Lord, was in the Daily Mail recently as having a ground breaking heart operation, and who lives in our Almshouses opposite the Church. She recently lent me two books by Don's wife which are a joy. The connection is a joy. Grace clapped her hands with joy at the sight of Don the choirboy in the last edition.

A Good Deal

Peter Aston (1956-63)

I noticed with sadness the pseudo erudite diatribe of Ian Head (BHCHS R.I.P., November 2010), to whom I express my greatest sympathy. Whilst we are all entitled to our opinions, I do feel that he got a very bad deal mainly because he chose to give the school his own "bad deal" from the start. Schoolteachers are all human beings, and react to how others approach them. So we have a situation for school as in the rest of life, that "as ye sow, so shall ye reap". And I suspect that Mr. Head did not sow enough to ensure a good harvest for himself. My own experience was that enthusiasm and effort from the pupil was without exception greeted with enthusiasm and effort by the staff, irrespective of the academic or other result in view. Where else could you have, in a state school, the opportunity of "a good set of O and A levels" (sic) and the opportunity to participate in extra curricular tennis, toxophily, athletics, soccer, cricket, swimming, basketball, weight-training, cross country, baseball, model making and use, metalwork, and much more, for which the only price to be paid was the enthusiasm to show interest and participate? The soul of the school was in all of those things provided by the staff on a voluntary basis, and was there to be shared at the time. I am sure that Mr. Head has, does or will, pay through the honourable schnozzle for his children to have such wide ranging education opportunities. We were, without doubt, the lucky generation, and it is a shame that it is not more widely recognised.

More Letters.....

Lessons from History

David Long (1972-80)

I must leap to the defence of Peter Sillis, for if I have one regret about my time at school it is that I didn't listen more to him whose only mistake was to treat us as adults who wanted to learn.

The books he recommended at A-Level went largely unread until I was in my 20s, whereupon I realised just how good they were. And whilst it is true that his lessons occasionally seemed to wander off topic it was only ever in a bid to get us to think around a subject rather than just swot up for exams.

In the end I took a degree in Psychology, which I enjoyed, but 50 this year I still wish I'd stuck to his guns and read History.

OBA Origins

John Gray (1941-48)

It was particularly interesting to read of the origin of the Old Buckwellians (*OB News, November 2010*). I well recall the meeting at the Buckhurst Hill cricket pavilion in Roding Lane at which the name was changed to its current form. The prime reason, put forward by Tony Jolly, was that the hockey club had already had its stationery printed with the proposed name in its letterhead. I was not greatly impressed, and felt like moving the adoption of 'fait accompli' as the Association's motto.

You refer to the financial problems of the OBA in its early days. When Pete Aldridge, a classmate and good friend, was treasurer, he persuaded me to buy a life membership as the

Association was in need of immediate funds. I asked him about the long-term implications of this mortgaging of the future income, but he overrode my objections. Naturally, I make no claims on this obligation undertaken by the Association in time past (at the cost to me of £2), but I should like it to be recorded that I have had continuous membership since the early '50s.

School Friend Remembered

John Willett (1948-53)

Unfortunately I have to take this opportunity to inform you of the death of John Hobbs (1948-53) who passed away suddenly in August 2009. John and I were close friends during our time at BHCHS and remained in touch thereafter. I was best man at his wedding and usually saw him and his wife once a year during our regular visits to Essex from our home in Devon. After attending his funeral it seemed appropriate to visit the school – over the years I had driven past several times but except for the 50th anniversary dinner, hadn't actually entered the grounds. I parked in front of the school and as no-one enquired of my intentions I walked onto the playing field, which hadn't altered much, and experienced some of the emotions I felt all those years ago. My achievements at BHCHS were gained more outside than inside! John Hobbs was also an enthusiastic sportsman but unfortunately for him – and the school – he suffered a severe knee injury during an U13 football match. This prevented him representing BHCHS again and ended his significant potential.

PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES

Two interesting photos from the ever-growing archive.



This was taken at the top of the Jenner mountain in Bavaria, during a tour of the Rhinelands, Bavarian Alps and Salzburg in August 1961. The trip was undertaken jointly with Chingford CHS.

Perilously perched at 6,150' are (l to r) Dick Greening, Roy Tindle, Steve Machin and Bill Martin all from YOS 1954. Thanks to **Dick Greening** for the photo.



Here is a photo that may dispel any notion that intelligent grammar school boys in the 1950s were always sensible and well-behaved.

This group, believe it or not, were the school prefects from 1955/56. The photo was taken in July 1956, I suspect at the end of term.

Front row (L to R): Brian Richards, Michael Mullins, Terrence Hardiman, Brian Hunter, John Drake. Middle row: David Cockburn, Chris Aplin, John Loader, Michael Stewardson, David Browning. Back row: Alan Perkins, Alan Wilson, Peter Bolding, Tony Owen, Roger Williams.

Thanks to **David Cockburn** for sending this - and also the "serious" version.

Coming Up.....

Features planned for our next edition include:

- ◆ Review of Football at BHCHS: the 1950s
- ◆ All the World's a Stage - the final act: drama at BHCHS in the 1980s
- ◆ Passionate about bikes - with and without motors
- ◆ The story of the OBA - final part
- ◆ How we took on West Ham United - at cricket!
- ◆ YOU - if you haven't yet told us what you have done since school

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Ray Watkinson: A Remarkable Career



Photo by David Charlesworth. Probably about 1952

THERE ARE certain teachers among our ex-staff whose colourful personalities cause them to be lodged permanently in the memories of their pupils. Raymond Watkinson, who taught maths from 1946 to 1956, is among them. We have published many stories about him – ranging from his accuracy with chalk missiles to his excellent singing voice, occasionally used to punctuate maths lessons. Apart from all that, he was clearly a very fine teacher.

Arnold Smethurst, who was the source of so much information about his ex-colleagues, could not help me with any news of Ray Watkinson and told me he would love to find out what had happened to him since 1956. While trawling through electoral registers during the early part of the last decade, I found a record of someone with the name Raymond A Watkinson living in Aberystwyth. No phone number was listed, but I was able to find a phone number of a near neighbour. There was good and bad news. The neighbour was helpful and clearly knew Mr Watkinson quite well. It was also clear from the description that he was indeed the former teacher at BHCHS. Then the bad news: he had died just a few years earlier.

I thought no more about this for several years. Such disappointments were inevitable from time to time. Then, last year, I had an interesting message from Graham Smith (1963). He had recently discovered that a friend of his, Sheila Hufford, was the sister of Ray Watkinson. Graham

put me in contact with Sheila who has since introduced me to Juliet Wooldridge, Ray's daughter. Between them they have provided a fascinating insight into the career and life of an exceptional teacher.

It is curious that there is no mention of Ray Watkinson's arrival at BHCHS in the school notes. The autumn term of 1946 was a time of many changes in the staff room. The end of the war marked the return of men teachers who had been serving, and the departure of several women teachers. One possibility is that his appointment was made too late for inclusion. By the time he left BHCHS, however, he had clearly made his mark, as shown by this comment from the 1956 *Rodrig*:

The English Department has not been the only one to lose much of its operational strength. Mr. R. A. Watkinson is the first member of the Mathematics Department to leave us for some years, and we venture to suggest that Mathematics at the Walthamstow High School will be all the better for his direction. His versatile services to the School will be greatly missed; Mathematics and Music share a very ancient educational discipline and the vocal and instrumental activities of our music-making will greatly miss his wholehearted gifts. However, we have every hope of seeing him in his usual places in the foreground and background on the occasion of the annual School Concert, "basso profundo emeritus."

It would be inappropriate to try and recycle the many earlier

recollections of Ray Watkinson's teaching at BHCHS. But in a recent communication, Brian Peck (1949) described him as "my saviour at BHCHS", giving him individual tutoring during the entire fifth form. This enabled Brian, who was in the bottom stream, to achieve a very creditable pass in GCE maths. He concluded that "Wocco" was a "no-nonsense educator, fully involved in his mission."

Raymond Watkinson was born in Ilford in 1926. During the war he was evacuated to South Wales. His love of Wales never left him and indeed some of his former pupils may have believed that he originated from Wales. During his evacuation he ran away from the house where he was staying and tried to get a job at the local pit as a miner. Eventually, however, he obtained a scholarship to St Catherine's College, Cambridge where he read mathematics. From an early age he had a great love of music, and while at Cambridge he sang in the choir, and met his future wife, Kathleen, a singing and piano teacher. Juliet, who was their only child, was born in 1953, and one of her early memories is being taken to Walthamstow High School and having a great fuss of her made by the girl pupils there.

He stayed at Walthamstow High for just a few years. In an age when many teachers, like most other professionals, tended to put

down roots, Ray Watkinson's exceptionally varied career took him not just to many countries but also an amazing range of experiences within the world of education.

He moved from Walthamstow to Devon, where he designed and built his own house, while taking a post as mathematics lecturer at Rolle College, Exmouth a teacher training college. Juliet remembers this as an exciting and stimulating time for him, and that he had a great rapport with his colleagues and students. She remembers happily being used as a subject for various innovative mathematical projects that he would try out with his students – it was a long way from "sums" and the established methods of learning by rote. He would travel all over Devon and Cornwall, supervising and assessing students on teaching practice. He made a series of progressive maths programmes for schools in the South West region – giving Juliet the great thrill of seeing him on TV.

During this period he set up and ran the Exmouth male voice choir, also taking part in and directing many drama productions at the college. One of the plays was *Under Milk Wood* – Ray's pupils at BHCHS will remember his skilful reciting of Dylan Thomas (even in maths

(Continued on page 26)



With daughter Juliet in 1957



With Kathleen and Juliet (bridesmaid at a friend's wedding) in 1987

(Continued from page 25) classes).

In 1965 the Watsons returned to Ilford, when Ray took up a post as an Education Officer. But in his mid-40s his love of adventure and travel took a firm hold on his career. He took a job in Cairo working as an Education Officer for the British Council. He was supporting teachers sent out to Egypt, and the job included negotiating contracts to get schools equipped. During this period, Juliet had started studying at Aberystwyth University. Just as she was finishing her English and Drama degree, the family decided to return to the UK. But they also sold their house in Ilford and moved to Aberystwyth. Ray Watkinson had left Cairo with no clear plan for the next part of his career. While looking around, he took on a temporary job surveying picnic sites in remote areas for the Tourist Board. Apart from involving a certain amount of mathematical analysis of the sites, there were very few similarities to his earlier jobs. But after a few months, he spotted an intriguing looking advertisement that appeared in the *Times Educational Supplement*. An aristocratic Italian family were looking for a governess to deal with a ten year old child who had completely failed to fit into normal education. On reading this, Ray decided that what the boy really needed was a tutor, and he went to meet the family. The rebellious young viscount was no match for Ray. After four months in Florence and four months in England he had won over his young charge, and the boy was successfully re-integrated into a secondary school.

For his next position, the much-travelled Watkinson went even further afield. This time it was Kenya, where he spent three years as advisor and lecturer,

initially at a training college in a remote town called Embu and subsequently closer to Nairobi. He enjoyed being back in teacher training, and made a lot of new friends there.

The final chapter of his varied career was spent in Nottingham, where for four years he worked in a special unit that developed programmes, resources and training for teaching mathematically gifted children. He found this a very stimulating place to work and developed strong relationships with his colleagues inspiring teachers to work effectively.

The unit where he worked was yet another victim of political interference in education, and closure necessitated early retirement. During the early years of his retirement Ray was heavily preoccupied with the care of his



In 1990 with Carlos

wife during a long illness. But he had health problems himself, and died in 1995 at the age of 68, seven years before his wife.

Ray Watkinson was a man who would always seize opportunities with both hands. He used to say that if you couldn't remember anything significant that has happened to you recently it's time to ask yourself whether you are making the most of your life.

Obituary

David Cracknell

(BHCHS 1945-50)



David felt that he had not done justice to his Grammar School education, possibly because he suffered from dyslexia, which was not recognised at the time. In his fifties he took an Open University degree in maths and physics and was proud of this success.

He attributed his lifelong love of mechanics to a period in his life when he would spend time in Falmouth with an uncle who took him to the dockside to watch the ships, cranes and trains. He always enjoyed DIY and tinkering with his car.

David was someone who always had to be kept busy, and as retirement approached he was reluctant to accept idleness. When the Marconi group collapsed he was only too pleased to become a consultant to the company that picked up the Marconi contracts.

When he eventually retired he filled his time with photography, cake making and church activities. Though ill-health made walking difficult, he continued to swim regularly for many years.

David died in May 2011 from pulmonary fibrosis and leaves his widow, three children and four grandchildren with whom he had a close and loving relationship.

Brian Burchell (1951)

David Cracknell is not the person with the same name who attended BHCHS from 1953-58 - Ed.



At Marconi in the 1980s

Doug Gower

(BHCHS 1951-56)



WHEN Doug Gower was awarded the "Sargent" Cup for the best sportsman of the year in 1956 he became the first of only two pupils in the school's history to win the trophy without having entered the sixth form.

Doug excelled at sport throughout his school years and broke the junior javelin record while in the fourth form, winning a total of six events at sports days in the early 1950s.

He was also (exceptionally for someone below 16) awarded colours in football and played in the 1st XI cricket team.

On leaving school he became a messenger for a firm of coffee buyers in the City.

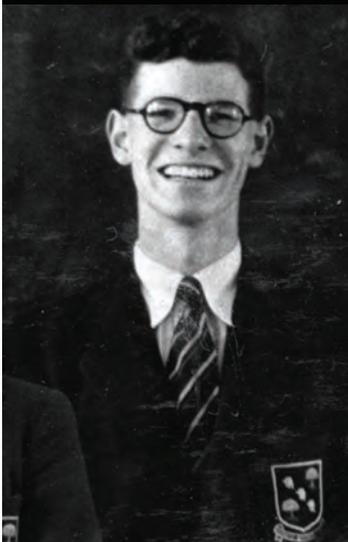
In the same year, he met his wife Valerie. Fatherhood at the age of 17 put paid to any thoughts of a career in football, despite trials with QPR and Leyton Orient. Doug and Val went on to have five children and Doug spent 17 years as a milkman before joining Val at the Bank of England printing works, where he stayed until retirement. During his time there he took over running the football teams and cricket teams and raised many thousands of pounds for local hospices.

So he exceeded the expectations of one of his teachers who once told him he would end up being a barrow boy!

Doug Gower died on 15th January 2011 after a long battle with prostate cancer.

David Charlesworth

(BHCHS 1949-57)



AFTER LEAVING school David Charlesworth went to Corpus Christi, Cambridge, where he was a choral scholar and read English. After graduating with an MA, David qualified as a teacher and began his teaching career at Kineton High School in South Warwickshire in the English Department. In 1968 he moved to Leamington College and later, 1976, to The John Taylor High school, Barton Under Needwood, where he stayed until retirement.

Over the years David developed his great love of music through composing, singing (tenor), and playing both clarinet and latterly bassoon. He was also an accomplished organist which benefited a number of churches. Sadly his strong tenor voice was much reduced by a throat cancer in 2000 but he was able to continue choir 'work' through Philomusica which he and Mary joined on moving to Kempsey, near Worcester in 2002, giving performances both in this country and abroad. On their website Philo describe David as a skilled conductor and composer who had a real feel for music and how it should go, as well as an excellent understanding of voices.

David died in Worcester Royal Hospital, following surgery, on 9th April 2011. He leaves Mary, whom he married in 1964, son Peter, daughter Hilary and grandchildren Robert, Matthew, Stephen, Katie, Jamie and a host of friends.

I am grateful to John Greenwood (1949) for obtaining this obituary, taken from an address given at David's memorial service.

Tony Crapnell

(BHCHS 1948-55)



Tony Crapnell competing in the long jump at the Sports Day in 1955

TONY CRAPNELL was one of the outstanding all-rounders of his generation at BHCHS. In athletics he was an important member of the highly successful team that won most of the inter-school trophies in 1954/55. Tony

was prominent in both jumping and running, equalling the 100 yard record in the Russell Cup in 1955.

In his final year at BHCHS he was appointed as a prefect and won a County Major Scholarship to Cambridge, becoming the first boy from BHCHS to attend Trinity College.

At Cambridge he took a first in Maths. This led to a long career with Ferranti, working on the development of real time computer systems. He was initially based at Bracknell and subsequently at Cwmbran, where he helped to set up and manage a new R&D facility.

Tony remained at Ferranti for 35 years, until the company was split up, and the part he worked in was taken over by GEC. He then continued to work for several years on a self-employed basis.

Tony Crapnell died suddenly in June 2011. He leaves his wife Valerie and one daughter.

Alan Willingale

(BHCHS 1939-46)



ONE OF THE earliest "rebels" at BHCHS, Alan Willingale was a talented pupil but definitely not one to fit into the disciplined life of a freshly built grammar school modelled on public school principles. He disliked sports and was known to avoid cross country by tucking a book into his shorts and finding a quiet bush to read, rejoining the other runners on their final return to the school grounds.

Various other pranks involving Alan have been published in earlier editions, but not the time when he threw a dead rat onto the desk of a female history teacher, causing a hysterical reaction. He refused to become a prefect when in the upper sixth.

He was the first boy from BHCHS to win an open scholarship - to QMC (to read English) but later also got first class honours in a BD by studying in his spare time.

He became a tax inspector after leaving university but spent most of his career working for BP, where he headed their tax department. Outside work he was a fine poet, and his wife Betty tells me that she has discovered many poems that had never seen the light of day.

Alan Willingale had suffered from Parkinson's Disease for several years and died on 1st January 2011.



Ralph Steele (English). One of a set of drawings by Alan Willingale c 1945

Colin Meagan

(BHCHS 1973-80)



Colin Meagan (left) and Geoff Ansell in 1979

Photo Crispin Reed

COLIN MEAGAN died earlier this year. In the absence of a full obituary I received the following from Steve Grundy (1973) in response to a request for memories of Colin.

I spent a lot of time with Colin in our A-Level years and to think he died at the age of 48 is very sad.

Colin played a very significant part in my life, just before my 18th birthday, when we were in his car with me riding shotgun with Chris Brooks in the back. Colin managed to drive into the wheel of a parked articulated lorry and onwards into the side of the lorry. None of us were watching the road as we were messing around with friends in another car.

I had ignored Jimmy Savile's clunk click warning and managed to smash the windscreen of Colin's car with my fist and the broken glass lacerated my neck (it wasn't Colin's nose that broke the windscreen as he claimed later). I lost a lot of blood and

ended up in Whipps Cross.

A few days later, still on the ward, a nurse came to tell me that my wife and son had come to visit. This left me a little bemused as I was a meek little virgin. So I was pleased to see Colin and his mother.

I was discharged on my 18th birthday and allowed a half of lager by the doctors. Colin came out with me and others for the great booze up that ensued.

I never blamed Colin for causing the accident - it was everyone's fault. I am actually glad it happened as my birthday was just before we sat our A-Levels and I would probably have failed them all if I'd been left to my own resources.

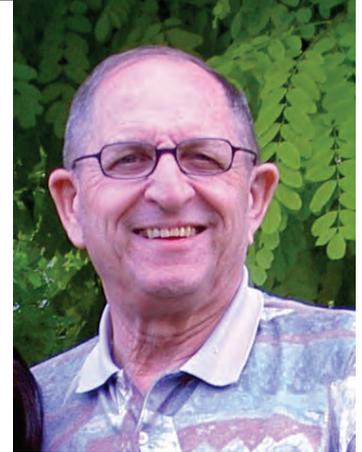
As I said, I am very sad to hear the news. Colin has touched my life. That accident left me scarred slightly but I also think it was a sliding doors moment for me. Maybe I would have failed my A-Levels, not done my degree, not met my wife, who knows.

and a member of the school hockey team. He gained a masters degree in mathematics at the University of Exeter and went on to work as an actuary. Following his move to York with the Yorkshire General Life Assurance Company, however, his interests gradually switched to his true metier, computing. Terry was a devout Christian all his life and developed a website for his church which included not only the usual information, but whole services to download. He leaves a wife and daughter.

Michael Hammond (1956)

Bill Waller

(BHCHS 1945-50)



BILL WALLER died following a heart attack on 17th May 2011. He had been living for many years in Bandung which is relatively near to Jakarta, Indonesia. At the time of his death he was teaching English as a foreign language to local students. He came home from the school having been staging a school play and during the evening he suffered chest pains and died in hospital during the night. He was aged 77 years. His local friend says that he admired his energy and his wisdom and all are saddened by the news but buoyed by the fact that he led as full a life as possible.

Bill was one of the immediate post war entrants. He served his National Service in Singapore, and considered that this was a major factor in his love of Asia. It led to many moves in his working life to Zambia, Malaya, Singapore, Hong Kong, Bombay and Indonesia where he finally settled down. By his own admission he led a hedonistic life but was deeply attached to the UK with its values and in his final years missed the old country and very much welcomed any communication with his old school friends.

Despite residing so far away he was the motivator in arranging a reunion of his classmates in 2005 and called on as many as he could during his rare visits to the UK. He worked in the financial sector with Standard Chartered Bank and other firms including Stock Dealers in Hong Kong, before his retirement when he

took up teaching languages. He was fluent in several including Cantonese. He collected a considerable library, was a prolific reader and also enjoyed painting.

Some may remember him as one of the group of outstanding athletes of his year and whilst others excelled at running in its various forms his speciality was throwing things! Some of his peers may remember his usefulness in finishing off any unwanted parts of packed lunches and he even welcomed an extra bottle of school milk! His year was the last one to take the old School Certificate exam. before the introduction of "O" levels.

He once wrote with commendable candour "I am very happy that you do not remember me as some insufferable lout, always moaning but after stumbling on to the BHCHS website, I began to realise just what the happiest days of our lives can mean".

He leaves a wife Betty and young daughter Tasya.

We have also learned of the following deaths...

Ron W Jones (1940) died in January 2011 following a stroke. Information from his son Simon. Ron lived in Sevenoaks.

Ken Bales (1942) died in January 2011. He lived in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. An obituary will be published in the next edition.

Harold Knott (1943) died in November 2007. Information from his son. Harold lived in Hornchurch.

John A Taylor (1946) died in May 2011 after a long battle with cancer. Information from his brother Bill Taylor (1942)

Barry Hiscott (1948) died in April 2009. Barry lived in Maldon and was the brother of Robert Hiscott

(1943). Robert told me that Barry died just a few days after learning he was suffering from cancer.

John Hobbs (1948) died in August 2009. He lived in Loughton. I was informed by John Willett (1948), who was a close friend at school and had kept in contact.

Brian Tidiman (1950) died in June 2011 after a long illness. He lived in France.

Alan Dear (1957) died in 2008 from brain cancer. He had lived in Germany, with his second wife, since 1988.

Paul Morrison (1958) died in July 2010 from cancer. An obituary will be published in the next edition.

Terry Hammond

(BHCHS 1954-61)



I AM SAD to report the sudden death in March of my brother, Terry Hammond. Terry will be remembered above all for his academic abilities, though he was also a decent discus-thrower