

# OLD BUCKWELLIANS NEWS



May 2017

Number 36

# Passing the Buck

I am pleased to confirm that Article 50 has been signed, and a soft Grexit has been amicably arranged. Following a nice dinner with the new committee in very pleasant surroundings, I was delighted to learn that the Buck could be passed, and I can press on with some new projects.

It was amusing to learn that I have something in common with Mr Wenger, who admitted recently that he was frightened at the prospect of having to give up managing his team. We are

not exactly contemporaries – he is four days younger than me and he was appointed to the Arsenal job three years before I took on the Old Bucks. Editing *OB News* is, of course, nothing like managing a football team. Any Wenger-like fears have now been swept aside by the confidence in my eminently suitable successor. More about that on page 2.

You will find some bits of editorial self-indulgence in this edition, and one item (p.12) that is rather more than a bit.

Thanks as always to those who have contributed to my final effort. I was especially pleased to receive Derek Pembleton's posthumous account of his career (p.15), and sorry that I could not thank him personally. I also commend to you Roy Hart's excellent feature (p.16) about growing up in the 40s. You may see this as an appetizer before you download the main course – *My Dad's a Policeman* (p.9).

Graham Frankel



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## Old Buckwellians News

  
 "We do have this one vital thing in common: at some time (it matters not when) we all spent a few years at the School. We will all spend a great many years away from it. It is only through the Association that we have this last frail link."

Roding Magazine, 1956

Old Buckwellians News is published twice yearly in May and November by the Old Buckwellians Association. Join the Association to receive future editions. Contact the Editor (see below) for all subscription enquiries.

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### Back issues

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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 on request.

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

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### The Old Buckwellians Association

**Honorary Officers**  
 President: Trevor Lebentz  
 Vice Presidents: Stuart Low, Chris Waghorn, Alan Woods  
**Executive Committee**  
 Chairman: Crispin Reed  
 Treasurer: Peter Sharp  
 Secretary: Lindsay Martin  
 Dinner Secretary: Roger Dell

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## New Editor Appointed



**Lindsay Martin (BHCHS 1962-69)** was introduced to you in the May 2016 edition, after he kindly offered to take on the key committee positions of Secretary and Webmaster.

As we haven't been overwhelmed by the rush of candidates stepping up to take over the remaining job (OB News Editor), Lindsay has agreed to keep the show on the road. He welcomes offers of help or even to take over but will continue publishing the magazine twice yearly, subject to having enough news and information.

So please make sure he has plenty of material for the autumn edition. As well as sending your own news, why not do a bit of poking around to get updates and stories from others in your year who we haven't heard from?

Contact details for Lindsay are in column 1.

## Meet Crispin Reed...



I am delighted to be invited to Chair the OBA although obviously sad as it is under the circumstances of Dick's passing.

Even after removing my rose-tinted glasses, I can safely say I really enjoyed my time at BHCHS, in no small part because of the life-long friendships that were forged. My main ambition for the OBA is to encourage those in my year and others from the 70s/80s to fully participate and attend our Annual Dinner if possible.

After BHCHS I went to the University of Dundee. Apart from gaining a degree in Business Studies, my biggest university achievement was meeting my now wife. This year we celebrate 35 years of 'going out' ... and 13 years of marriage.

I then pursued a career in advertising and brand consultancy. Some career highlights: inflicting Danny Baker and the Daz Doorstep Challenge on the UK population, helping Perrier minimise the impact of their benzene crisis, getting a 'Degree in Hamburgerology' from McDonald's University in the USA, overseeing what was at the time the most expensive commercial in history - for DaimlerChrysler, co-authoring a book with a Cambridge academic on marketing to the 'experienced generations'... a case of 'physician, heal thyself'?

Now I am running my own consultancy and am a Director of the newly revived Taunton Cider Company.

**Crispin Reed (BHCHS 1973-80)**

## AGM and Annual Dinner

The committee would love to see you at one or both of our two regular events this year. The AGM will be held at Guru Gobind Singh Khalsa College on **Thursday 11th May** at 8pm. Any formal motions must be with me two weeks beforehand. The AGM will be a great opportunity to meet our new Chairman and Secretary in person.

As usual, the school welcomes Old Bucks who would like to take a nostalgic walk around the buildings before the AGM starts. Our Annual Dinner will be on **Friday 15th September** at the Theydon Bois Golf Club. A booking form should be included with this edition. If you don't have the form, or if you have

any questions about the Dinner, please contact **Roger Dell** via email:

[roger.dell@ntlworld.com](mailto:roger.dell@ntlworld.com)

On the afternoon of the Annual Dinner there is another golf

**competition** being organised by **Brian Jones**. For more information about the golf afternoon email Brian:

[brian@cooperpaul.co.uk](mailto:brian@cooperpaul.co.uk)

## OBA Financial Summary

In £ thousands	2016	2015	2014
<b>Income &amp; Expenditure</b>			
Revenue & Income	<b>7.2</b>	7.8	9.1
Costs & Expenses	<b>6.5</b>	7.8	9.1
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>0.7</b>	0.0	0.0
<b>Balance Sheet</b>			
Assets	<b>30.8</b>	27.5	29.6
Liabilities	<b>7.4</b>	4.8	6.9
<b>Net Worth</b>	<b>23.4</b>	22.7	22.7

# BUCKS FIZZ

News and notes about Old Bucks

## Inspiring Kids



**David Brown (BHCHS 1973-78)**

sets a fine example, plunging enthusiastically into something worthwhile rather than settling for an easy retirement. He works as a youth coach for *Kids Inspire*, an Essex charity that works with families to support them with mentoring and counselling. David first heard about *Kids Inspire* through his service as a school governor, and he joined them on a voluntary basis when he retired from the London Fire Brigade after 31 years' service. David works with teenagers and groups, delivering an early intervention programme to build resilience in vulnerable young people. David was recently selected as their Volunteer of the Month in recognition of his great contribution.

David is not to be confused with the other three David Browns in our network!

## Sports Flash



It was only the briefest of camera shots but **Martin Koch (BHCHS 1969-76)** received an acknowledgement for having directed the music in BBC's *Sports Personality of the Year* shown in December 2016.

Martin has won major awards, including a 'Tony', for his orchestration of *Billy Elliot the Musical*.

## Unlikely Meeting Over a Measuring Tool



Those Small World meetings just keep happening. **Hugh (Harry) Smith (BHCHS 1958-66)** and **Brian Holroyd (German, 1970-76)** were not at BHCHS at the same time but met up recently when Brian visited Hugh looking to buy some measuring tools - Hugh runs a specialist business supplying a vast range of industrial equipment. They got chatting and quickly arrived at the common ground. We hope to hear more about Brian's later teaching career in due course. He is number 413 in the 1972 school photo. Hugh reports that his machine business, which he started 10 years ago, has given him a new lease of life: [www.amadeal.co.uk](http://www.amadeal.co.uk)



## Spotted on Gardeners' World



I was very grateful to **Andy Sutton (BHCHS 1961-68)** for spotting a TV appearance by one of the last untraced members of my year group.

**John Edgeley** has made a fair number of TV appearances and is seen in the photo with the late Sir Terry Wogan during his final TV series filmed just a few months before his death in 2016. I had previously failed to add

John to the search list because he had spent only a couple of years at BHCHS. After leaving in the fifth form he went on to study Horticulture at Pershore College, Worcestershire and later spent 7 years as a crops lecturer at Writtle College, before returning to Pershore to become a Senior Lecturer and head of the HE development team. Since 2009 he has developed a horticultural consultancy, and has been involved in various forms of broadcast media since first appearing on *Countryfile* with John Craven, and subsequently on *Gardeners' World*, *Escape to the Country* and *Breakfast TV*, as well as national and local radio.

Andy Sutton also went into horticulture, running a successful landscaping business near Southampton. Just two left to find from YOS61!

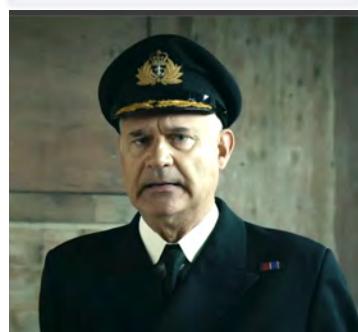
## Bruce Springsteen: In His Own Words



A new venture for **Nigel Cole (BHCHS 1968-75)** whose bio-documentary on the life and career of Bruce Springsteen was shown on Channel 4 just after Christmas.

I thought it was an excellent programme, building on the highly-acclaimed autobiography of the celebrated singer/songwriter.

## Women & Children First



Versatile actor **Greg Cox (BHCHS 1964-71)** appeared in November as the captain of the ill-fated *Britannic*, the lesser-known but equally tragic twin of the *Titanic*.

A spine-chilling dramatized documentary, shown on BBC in January, told the story of how Captain Bartlett's ship was sunk during the First World War after hitting a mine.

Captain Bartlett, along with many of his crew, survived the disaster, because the ship was close to the Greek shore when the incident happened. He was picked up from the sea in his pyjamas, but Greg was spared having to act that scene.

The documentary attempted to explain why the *Britannic* incident is almost unknown, in contrast to the story of her sister ship. But now that the story has been revealed we can perhaps look forward to seeing Greg on the big screen. Maybe one for Nigel Cole?

## 43 Years Later: The Class of '73



A reunion of some old friends who left BHCHS in 1973 provided an opportunity to reflect on the hairy crew they used to be part of. Fortified by a decent lunch, **Graham Tremain, Andy Barton, Michael Canby and Dave McCann** set about reminiscing with the help of the photo taken when they were all about to leave school.

### World Record.....nearly



I don't know how many Old Bucks have been involved in world record attempts but **Paul Charsley (BHCHS 1978-83)** has joined the list. Paul was at the Daytona International Speedway in December with an impressive clutch of Ferraris. Paul writes....

*I was given the job of designing and orchestrating a world record attempt of the largest Ferrari parade. We came a little short on numbers but we were able to get 850 Ferraris circulating around the 3.5 mile speedway. We had to help bring in all these cars from all over the country using over a hundred trucks, give about 40 drivers briefings (I'm sure some of my ex-teachers would have loved to give me some revenge heckling as I tried to enlighten the masses) to make sure they all knew the parameters to make it an official Guinness record. Then I was up in the crow's nest at the top of the stadium trying to direct this madness through*

*the PA and radio stations at the track. But for a few drivers who wouldn't adhere to the formula, we would have got it rolling smoothly first time, but I had to shut the whole thing down, regroup and rearrange with the Guinness official so that once restarted we would count for an official parade with no stopping, constant speeds and gaps, which we did. This went out live worldwide, so was quite an event. I think I should apply for the Guinness World Record for most drivers coached by a single instructor on any race track.*

I can't match Paul's 850 Ferraris but I did once have a moment of glory with my own.... in the playground at Churchfields.



As they were: taken outside the Three Colts, Buckhurst Hill in 1973

### Ping Partner



I am very pleased to be working closely with **Chris D'Aguiar (BHCHS 1978-84)** these days. We are both heavily involved in a busy table tennis club in Old Harlow. Chris, as well as being a keen player, recently qualified as a County Umpire and is seen here officiating at one of our recent tournaments. This is a bit of a change from schooldays where his main sport was badminton - he can be seen on p11 in the third year team photo from c.1981. For more about our ping venture see [www.batts.org.uk](http://www.batts.org.uk)

### Spurs Star: England Hope



Thanks to **Les Wilson (1963-70)** for alerting me to the news that 17-year-old Dylan Duncan, who is on the staff at Spurs, was selected to train with the England National Squad in November. Not only is Dylan a former pupil of GGSK College but he is also the grandson of Mr Toor, the headmaster.

Thanks to **Graham Gooch (BHCHS 1961-68)** for sending this from *The Spectator*.



'Very dull and uneventful school newsletter this year...absolutely none of my old pals have snuffed it.'

## Jivin' Miss Daisy



**Simon Thorpe (BHCHS 1973-80)** was one of many talented musicians emerging from BHCHS in the 70s, but he somehow managed to escape my attention until we met recently in London. Simon is a professional double bass player who leads an excellent swing jazz band called *Jivin' Miss Daisy*.

If you are thinking of hiring a jazz band for a special occasion, this would be an excellent choice - you can see videos of their performances on their website: [www.jivinmissdaisy.co.uk](http://www.jivinmissdaisy.co.uk)

Simon is on the front row left of the recent photo of his band.

## The French Revolution

### By Andrew Pallant (BHCHS 1944-49)

Here are a couple of amusing memories from the late 40s. Andrew was initially reluctant for me to name the master mentioned in the second incident but I persuaded him that the class was safe from retribution. Andrew's form master at this time was **DC Wren (English/RE, 1942-48)**, whose eccentric punishments were legendary.



DC Wren

DURING our one year with Mr Wren as form master our learning flourished. If he had remained for the ensuing years I am certain that our final exam results would have been much better than they were. On one occasion, we were at odds with our French master, Mr Govier, for banning the magazine called (I

think) *La France* for some misdemeanour or other. It so happened that the lesson preceding French was English with Mr Wren. At the start of his lesson we told him of our displeasure over what, in our eyes, was a trivial matter which caused the ban. Mr Wren put aside a set subject and spent the period telling us the history of industrial disputes together with ways of demonstrating one's feelings in a peaceful way. The lesson ended, and we awaited the arrival of our French teacher, who entered the room to be confronted with numerous posters outlining our grievances. We then spoke with passion on our views which ended with a compromise being agreed and the magazine restored!

Our history teacher during this year was Mr Wigley. If we were being noisy when he entered the classroom, he would go to his desk, dump his books down, sit down solidly in his chair and start giving

## Roding House Trumphant



Congratulations to the Roding team who won a close contest in the Inter-house competition played in glorious weather at Theydon Bois Golf Club on 23rd September.

The victorious quartet shown above were **Crispin Reed (BHCHS 1973-80)**, **Bob Barr (1967-72)**, **Peter Ivens (1961-68)** and **Fraser Donald (1961-68)**. The final scores: Roding 95, Hainault 93, Forest 90, Chigwell 87. The winner of the JH Putter was **Graham Wiskin (1973-80)**.

Another golf competition will be organised by **Brian Jones** on the date of our Annual Dinner - Friday 15th September. If you are a golfer and not on Brian's list of regulars, why not contact him? We are always pleased to see new faces.

Email Brian: [brian@cooperpaul.co.uk](mailto:brian@cooperpaul.co.uk)



Ernest Wigley

out lines to all and sundry. This, we felt, was a little over the top and that we should put an end to this trait. The next time he was due to appear we set the wheels in motion by carefully taking his chair apart and putting it back together – loosely.

As he entered the room, we made a

din and took no notice of his demands to quieten down. This triggered off his normal response but as he sat down, the chair gave way and he disappeared under the desk.

By this time, you could hear a pin drop in the room, and as he rose from the floor, he demanded to know who was responsible for "this act of vandalism". We, of course, denied all knowledge and suggested that, perhaps, it was the previous occupants of the room. Needless to say, the episode cured the problem and we, in turn, behaved ourselves in the future!

*This is the first time that the French teacher, Mr Govier, has been mentioned in these columns. He was appointed in 1944 and left two years later to teach at a school in Plaistow. Ernest Wigley, on the other hand, has been mentioned frequently. He was head of history for all but one of his 16 years at BHCHS before moving to Chigwell School in 1959. - Ed.*

# Speaking Out



Tony McMahon speaking out in 1979, supported by Clive Grant and Jon Hunn

PUBLIC SPEAKING, in its various forms, was one of the regular extra-curricular activities at BHCHS. Despite being a minority interest, it was one of the pursuits that continued to gain popularity during the post-comprehensive decade.

Prior to the arrival of **Hugh Colgate**, public speaking events were limited mainly to the confines of the school. Debating became one of the first societies at BHCHS in the early 40s. Then, in May 1945, with the war over and a handful of the original school entrants having reached the Upper Sixth, the first verse speaking competition was held. The school was divided into lower, middle and upper for the event.

We don't have photographic records of these competitions but they became a regular feature on the school calendar until 1977, although in the 1970s they were generally listed as "festival" rather than "competition" - perhaps a sign of the times.

Some of the earliest prize winners are still with us today, and it would be interesting to hear about their recollections.

In 1956, JHT established a new annual prize which was awarded "for the finest speaking of the year". It is not clear how this related to the verse-speaking competition but the first winner – **Terrence Hardiman (1948)** – went on to achieve greatness in the field of public speaking.

When the responsibility for organising the annual competition

passed to **Norman Beer** in 1959 it continued to flourish, and he added an innovative variation – verse speaking by groups.

During the 1950s the school had made its first tentative steps to engage in external speaking events. Joint debates with Woodford CHS, and later Loughton CHS, became a very popular annual feature. However, it was Norman Beer's influence that took the school into locally organised festivals, starting in 1963.

**Geoff Parker** continued Norman Beer's good work during his time as head of English (1963-67), and it was under his influence that we have the first recorded instance of an individual success in an external public speaking competition when **Michael Laver (1960)** won a competition organised by the Loughton Rotary Club with a talk on automation.

Geoff Parker's departure and handover to **Brian Rooney** did not stifle the enthusiasm for external speaking, and **Teifion Griffiths** established what would become a firm tradition – entering the national competitions organised by the English Speaking Union. This was fully supported and encouraged by the new Head, Hugh Colgate, who was keen to increase the school's involvement in external events. At the first attempt, one of the two teams from BHCHS (Bill Allan, John Ball and **Richard Needle**, all YOS 1961) reached the area final, while **Trevor Cook, Alan Haine** and **Lindsay Martin** (all YOS 1962)

won the Loughton Rotary Club shield.

The momentum was maintained during the early 1970s. When Teifion Griffiths left the staff in 1973 the role of organising and training the speakers was given to **Peter Downey**. His guidance and coaching were inspirational during the next decade. In 1976, as well as success in the local "Youth Speaks" competition and the English Speaking Union, three teams were entered into a United Nations competition. Even greater success followed in 1977, with the senior and junior teams from BHCHS both winning their sections in the

United Nations event. Then, for two years in succession, **Tony McMahon (1974)** won the English Speaking Union's prize for best speaker.

In his annual talk to parents in 1981 Hugh Colgate proudly announced the public speaking achievements of 1980/81 as "spectacular". These included a fourth form team (**David Raeburn, Richard Lawrence** and **Robert Gammon**, all YOS 1977) winning the final of the English Speaking Union competition. As a result of this, the team later appeared on TV. **Ian Astley** and **Paul Campbell** (also YOS 1977) joined David Raeburn for the "Youth Speaks" competition and won the all-London final.

These successes continued well into the school's final decade, at least up until the departures of Messrs Downey, Rooney and Colgate in 1985. Sadly, we have no archive records after 1985, but we'd be keen to hear from anyone who could fill the gaps in our knowledge.

There is no doubt that the experience of public speaking at school will have been a useful training for later life. I'd like to leave the last sentiment with Mike Moran, who told me that the experience was invaluable in his business career and gave him confidence to stand up unfazed before audiences of 1,000 people delivering major announcements and reports during company meetings.



• The winning boys' senior team Robin Graham, Michael Maran and John Hart from Buckhurst Hill County High School for Boys.

Robin Graham, Mike Maran and John Hart featured in the local Guardian after winning the Loughton Rotary Club 'Youth Speaks' competition in 1977

## A Stately Edifice: The Pavilion Then & Now



July 1955, as shown in the Roding magazine



July 1958. The school crest has been added to the tympanum



c. 2001

THE BHCHS CRICKET PAVILION will be remembered with mixed feelings by many. It was not one of the original school buildings, but it was an important item on Jack Taylor's shopping list of desired amenities. In a wartime school magazine, he mused:

*Next, perhaps, I visualise a pleasant and adequate pavilion, not by any means grandiose, but surely a pavilion and not a groundsman's shed.*

The disparaging reference to a groundsman's shed may have been based on an actual building that pre-dated the pleasant pavilion he envisaged. In the following year it was noted that the first cricket practice of 1942 had to be abandoned when "our admittedly small pavilion was blown off its base by the long-prevailing North-Easter".

As with many other significant building improvements at school, the permanent pavilion didn't arrive quickly. It was another 13 years before the dream turned to reality.

The Parents' Association, as usual, took responsibility for raising funds. In 1953, the pavilion fund was a beneficiary of the Coronation Fête. It was hoped that this might have generated enough to complete the project. The initial expected cost was £1,300. This would have been higher but for the generous offer of architect Joseph Taylor – the father of **John Taylor (1951)** – to do the design work for free. But by the time the design and tendering processes were completed in 1955, the building cost had risen by another £500. Two further generous offers of interest-free loans by parents enabled the resourceful and enthusiastic committee to press on with the building work, while organising a further bazaar to raise the remaining funds.

The Headmaster (who was not related to the architect by the way) was delighted with the result. **David Charlesworth (1949)**, who was a keen cricketer and editor of the school magazine, wrote:



July 2016

*It is not merely a useful addition to the school's premises, it is a monument, a memorial to two great events in the school's life in which parents, staff and boys have enthusiastically participated, the Fête and the Bazaar. Our individual recollections of these achievements will inevitably fade, but the stately red-bricked edifice looking out over the central cricket square towards the road will stand as a constant reminder of the toil and sacrifice which have made its erection possible, and will, it is to be hoped, inspire future members of the school to make similar efforts to obtain those amenities which have not yet been provided.*

During the late 1950s the "bulge" in the post-war birth rate, and perhaps also the school's reputation, was reflected in higher intakes.

Extension of the original sports area would have been well beyond the scope of the Parents' Association, and so the pavilion was put to use as an overspill changing area. Heating was never part of the original plans, and the building

soon began to rival the legendary "cow sheds" (aka air-raid shelters) in unpopularity as a place to change for games.

The pavilion received little attention during the next thirty years. The school crest was added in 1956, a clock in 1961 and heating was finally installed in 1968.

Described by one member of staff as a "dismal shack", by the time BHCHS closed the pavilion had slipped a long way from the pristine construction that had been the fulfilment of Spud's dream.

In more recent times the pavilion has had something of revival, as you can see from the most recent photo. It has been extended at the front, and there is some fitness equipment in the new extension. The roof and the basic shape of the original building is still recognisable, but the tower has now been removed.

Whatever it is now, the BHCHS pavilion is certainly not a groundsman's shed.

# BOOKSHELF



**The Independent Director by Gerry Brown (Economics/History BHCHS 1967-71)**

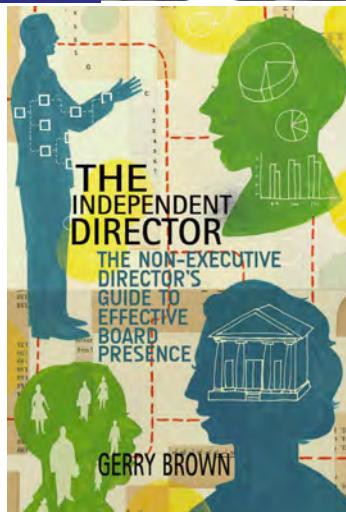
Considering his ground-breaking contribution at BHCHS during his four years on the staff, it is very satisfying to hear about this publication from Gerry Brown.

When he arrived at BHCHS the idea of a careers service was almost entirely new. During the first thirty years of the school's existence, the focus was firmly on academic achievement.

Hugh Colgate was keen to promote a culture change that would open up the possibility of giving advice to pupils about entering the world of business, and Gerry took the initiative to create a careers office in the school. This was featured in the cine films (see left) made by John Robins.

Another innovation was introducing the "Business Game" to his A Level Economics students. He also encouraged a comprehensive programme of careers talks and visits.

It was not long before Gerry Brown's own career took him outside the classroom. He moved into industry, initially working in supply chain and logistics in a number of different sectors, becoming Operations Director for Exel (now DHL) and Chairman of Europe for Tibbett & Britten plc.



From the mid 90s Gerry has served as an Independent Director for a number of major organisations, primarily in the transport and healthcare sectors.

Despite having had a successful



career, Gerry has not lost his keenness to educate. He is often called on as a speaker, and his book *The Independent Director*, published in 2015, gives sound advice to anyone thinking of working at Board level. For more information see: [www.theindependentdirector.co.uk](http://www.theindependentdirector.co.uk)

## IT SEEKS TO ME.....

**CHAS BROWN (BHCHS 1955-62) REFLECTS ON SCHOOLDAYS AND BEYOND**



### IT AIN'T WHAT YOU DO...

*You've either got, or you haven't got, style.* Sammy Cahn wrote that, thankfully before modern America could twist it into: *You eether gut, or you don't gut, style.* Ugh.

Anyway, it is rather a nebulous thing, and it's fun to watch the rich striving hard to acquire it, and, of course, flaunt it.

Thereby missing the point completely.

We have in this quadrant of the swamp, more black Range Rovers and, increasingly, white ones than you could shake a celebrity at. They invariably bear illegal number plates which try laboriously to say LISA or SOPHE, or some such and are driven by blond(ded), orange ladies who wear sunglasses all year round. They spend most of their time speaking loudly into mobile phones, and tend to address us all as Babe.

Stylish? Hmm.

I recall a camping trip made with several close chums to Provence way back in 1967. We made the obligatory visit to St Tropez to goggle, and some things have stuck in the mind. In "Trop" it is accepted practice to go astern into the harbour among the posing gin palaces, so that one can take the air and be seen. On one such device there were, at ease on the stern, two Americans of late middle age. They had grizzled grey crew cuts, and wore only aviator mirror shades, white shorts and rope-soled deck shoes. They were dyed dark mahog by the sun and were sipping something long and cool to balance their Churchillian havanas. So far, so clichéd. What stood out was that growing through the table at which they sat was a full sized palm tree, fronds, nuts and all. Presumably the tree was rooted in the bilges, but what happened in a blow one can only imagine.

Stylish? NO. Astonishing, but quite a stunt.

Just down the quayside was parked, top down, a vehicle we all would have loved to own: a Rolly Silver Cloud 3, with mallever Park Ward drophead coachwork. Colour: velvet green, interior green leather, condition: appalling. The car can only have been a year old and had apparently been driven at speed across every ploughed field in France, with chickens aboard. The bodywork was covered all over with scratched initials and other graffiti - accumulated probably in the way that Lord Day Vid of Leytonstone gathers tattoos. The individual who owned that beautiful artefact had quite clearly worked at destroying it just to show how unimaginably rich he was. Crass indeed. Knowing just a little about these machines and their legendary toughness, I am comforted by the thought that the car may well have survived its tormentor and now be in appreciative hands.

By contrast, perhaps you will allow me the indulgence of a

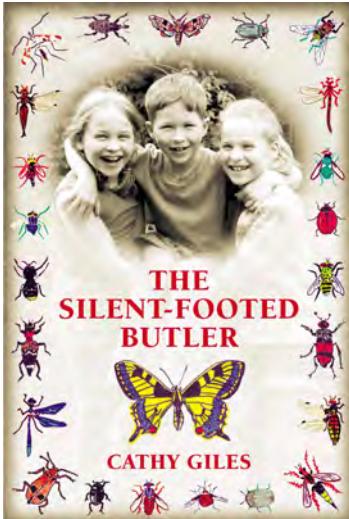
little masonic anecdote. As is well known, one of the great pleasures of freemasonry is visiting other lodges and inviting guests to your own. There are very senior masons called Visiting Grand Officers who do this on a regular, official basis. One of these worthies, whom I shall call Arthur, is a thoroughly amiable old lad, universally liked, and always welcome in our lodge. At one celebrated meeting some years ago, all the lodge business had been completed, and the lodge was closing. The reigning master invited Arthur, as guest of honour, to accompany him from the temple. As Arthur briskly levered himself up with his stick, he delivered, somewhat in the manner of a sonic boom, a sustained barrage of anal ordnance, quite staggering in its power and musicality. Chaps reeled, in awe and anticipation of the pong to come. Arthur, bless him, batted not an eyelid and, beaming beatifically, toddled off to his dinner.

Now that's style.

# BOOKSHELF

## Editor's Choice

For my final edition I have allowed myself to choose four outstanding books from among the many that have arrived in the OB News office. My criterion was simple: these are the books that have had the greatest impact on me personally in building the Old Bucks' network.



**The Silent-Footed Butler** by  
Cathy Giles

This monumental (600+ pages) family history was inspired by the life and tragic death of Chris Giles, the author's younger brother. Chris died in 1975 as a result of a boating accident just after the end of his lower sixth year at BHCHS.

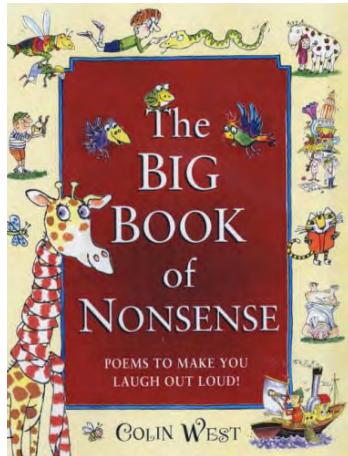
It is a beautifully-written account, and Chris himself was exceptional in many ways. Music is central to the story - Chris and his twin sisters were set on a musical path by their mother, a piano teacher.

I shall never forget the feeling of rigid shock after having read the final section in a single sitting - I just couldn't put it down.

While Chris was clearly the main focus, Cathy's story covers the whole of her family. It is highly detailed but never tiresome. The reader cannot avoid being drawn in to the complex relationships of an unconventional family.

In her extensive research, Cathy had help from many of her brother's contemporaries at BHCHS, and it was a great honour that our network was able to contribute in this way.

*The Silent-Footed Butler* is profusely illustrated with many family photos. It is available (hardback only) from Cathy's website at £20 plus postage: [www.t-gembooks.com](http://www.t-gembooks.com)

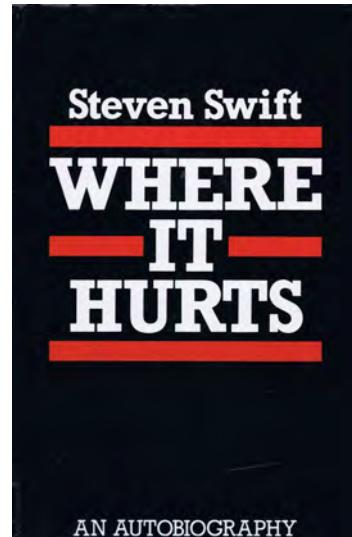
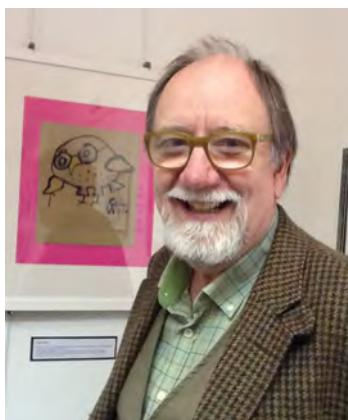


*The Big Book of Nonsense* by  
Colin West (BHCHS 1962-67)

This was an obvious choice. Packed with more than 250 pages of delightful sheer nonsense. If anyone believes that the education at BHCHS was narrowly academic, Colin's talent for both writing and illustration demonstrate that this was not the case. As with other great writers for children, Colin's humour can be appreciated by adults too.

Colin has also been a great supporter of the OBA in various ways. The amusing illustrations of life at BHCHS he kindly penned for our first quiz night have subsequently added a touch of humour to some of the features in OB News.

*The Big Book of Nonsense* is not currently in print but Colin has written over 60 books and many are available via Amazon or via his website: [www.colinwest.com](http://www.colinwest.com)



*Where it Hurts* by Steven Swift

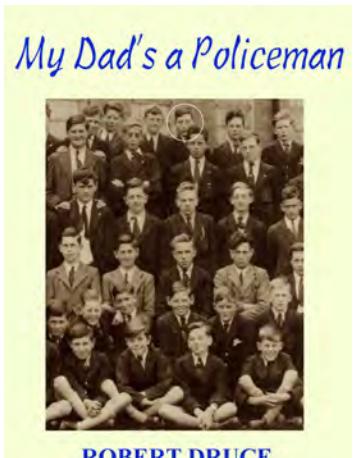
Here is a much less obvious choice for my selection. Although it was one of the first published autobiographies from an Old Buck to come to my attention, I have not previously mentioned it in OB News.

*Where it Hurts* was published in 1983 - that is the only clue I'm going to give you to the author's identity. His name is not Steven Swift, and it is easy to understand why he chose to shelter behind a pseudonym.

Swift's childhood and adolescence were blighted by a serious health problem that also made him the target for bullying at school. As with most bullying, the starting point was merely that the aggressors were able to identify the victim as being somehow different. The author managed to deal with the bullies but there were further challenges ahead.

I read this book at a time when I hadn't given a lot of thought to editorial policy, but it was a significant influence in my subsequent determination to keep a balanced view on our school.

Although it is out of print, *Where it Hurts* can be found via specialist outlets, and Amazon lists several sources of new and used copies.



*My Dad's a Policeman* by  
Robert Druce (BHCHS  
1940-47)

Although it was published and reviewed in OB News only last year, this has a rightful place here.

Bob Druce's autobiography defines, for me, the essence of my fascination with our school. My first reading of the chapters covering his time at BHCHS (he sent them to me in 2000) was quite a shock. The profound influence of the early teachers on a talented but rebellious pupil, and the detailed and amusing observation of life at school during the war years. If this was just a sample, how much more was available from the 5,000 or so pupils who spent time in Roding Lane? Plenty more, as it turned out.

Back in 2000, I fully expected *My Dad's a Policeman* to appear in print at some stage. The death of Bob Druce in 2005 prevented that, but I am grateful to his widow Elizabeth for giving me the opportunity to publish it as an e-book.

Early comments have been very favourable (see letters p.20) and it is especially pleasing to see that at least a few of Bob Druce's surviving contemporaries are not allowing the approach of their ninth decade to stop them joining the e-reading revolution.

Search for the title on Amazon.

# Badders at Buckers: One Glorious Decade



1954 Jonathan Jesty in action



photos Alan Waller

BADMINTON, for a large chunk of the school's history, was a sport that could be described as having marginal recognition. The space requirements could never have allowed large-scale participation. But, as with many other activities, it flourished at times when there was a member of staff willing to promote it and organise matches. The first badminton club at BHCHS was established in 1954 by **Edwin Still (German, 1951-59)**. I spoke with Edwin recently and he remembers organising the first friendly matches - always a popular attraction - with Woodford CHS.



1957/58 School team

**Brian Colgate (1949)** has the honour of being the first pupil recorded as a badminton team member - in the 'valete' section of the 1956 *Roding* magazine. He was the only player mentioned that year and Brian confirmed that it was a small team!

**Ted Moore** had started at BHCHS in 1954, and it was his enthusiasm, while still in the fourth form, that enabled badminton to achieve some kind of official status in the sporting curriculum. He published the first badminton report in 1958, stating that at the end of the first term there was a long list of boys waiting to play. The team photo appeared in the official sports album.

There were no further reports until the early 1960s when successive captains commented that, while there was plenty of interest, the size of the gym was a severe limitation

and participation was restricted to sixth formers.

Then, in 1964, **Dick Thomas (1958)** was supported by **Mike White (French, 1963-65)** in opening up the court to younger players. Dick reported two victories by the school team against Bancroft's that year.

Unfortunately, Mike White's departure left a gap that was not easily filled, but **Peter Moulton (1960)** and **Brian Jones (1962)** maintained the momentum and continued to encourage club membership from younger pupils. Brian's report in 1969 records that the team finished second in the West Essex Schools League.

1970 was a truly transformational year for badminton, thanks to the arrival of **Helen Price (née Boyd)** to teach Latin. After complying with HAC's initial plan for her to supervise hockey and football, Helen - who played for a badminton club - could see the potential interest in a sport that was physically demanding but without the dubious attractions of climate and crunching tackles. Helen soon began generating interest from both pupils and staff. By September she had formed four squads: beginners, juniors, intermediates and seniors. The foundation was laid for a highly successful decade for badminton. But there was an immediate problem. Until Helen's arrival, badminton had only been played in the gym. This was not a



1966/67 School team



Helen Price (née Boyd)

good location. Apart from the obstruction of the beams that hung from the ceiling, the gym was in constant demand, during and after the school day. Helen's first solution was to have the court marked up in the Dining Hall.

Despite being more readily available, it was far from ideal. The ceiling was not high enough and many tables and chairs had to be cleared each time before play could start. A second court was badly needed, and there was only one possible area: the Assembly Hall. Hugh Colgate initially resisted, but eventually, with the support of other staff, Helen persuaded him to allow it. Again, it was not ideal. No problem this time with the ceiling height, but the players had to contend with a slippery floor.

Now with two courts, often in use simultaneously, the badminton club soon began to flourish. Helen was particularly successful in creating interest among the staff, who played and helped with the supervision. For the first time, there was a full programme of matches against



1970/71 Junior team



1970/71 Senior team



1973/74 Senior team



1978/79 Second Year team



1973/74 Intermediate team

other schools and some additional coaching was provided initially by a parent, Ken Dyer, and later by **Lionel Marsh (PE, 1972-89)** and Joanne Dormer (the mother of **Jake Dormer (1970)** who was a keen player). Mrs Dormer eventually became the chair of governors in 1982, and her influence must have been very helpful in persuading HAC to support the growing interest.

Success in school matches soon began for the senior team. It was not so easy for the juniors to find schools to play against – many neighbouring schools still restricted

badminton to the sixth formers. But that didn't deter Helen's enthusiasm. She effectively built on the foundation in other ways. Trips were organised to see exhibition matches and to view the All-England Championships at the Albert Hall, and groups were taken to participate in outside competitions, and to receive extra coaching at various sports centres. Before long, some of the older pupils were also helping with the coaching of juniors.

In 1975, badminton received perhaps its most significant mark of being established at BHCHS, when



The new sports hall completed 1982



c.1981 Third Year team

it was allowed as a fifth form sports option. I haven't been able to verify if this was a factor in the arrival of **Ian Beckett** at BHCHS in 1976. Ian was playing badminton seriously while still at primary school and at county level by the time he was in his first year at BHCHS. He went on to play internationally, but was never part of the badminton scene at school. Nevertheless, Hugh Colgate's annual reports to parents began to include regular updates of the successes in badminton, and by 1977/78 the badminton achievements outweighed all the other sports in his summary. The interest in badminton would continue until the end of the decade. Although Helen had changed to working part-time during the late 70s, she carried on with the coaching and organising. But the fire that destroyed the Assembly Hall in 1979 was a serious blow, putting it out of action for more

than a year. Then, in 1982, Helen moved on to another school. Hugh Colgate was still able to report some successes in badminton, but mainly this was using the reflected glory of the achievements of Ian Beckett, his younger brother **Paul Beckett (1980)** and also **Neil Martin (1981)**, who all played at a high level outside school. Neil remembers being challenged to a game by Lionel Marsh, but the challenge was aborted with the 13 year old winning 9-1 and most of the class watching.

Even before Helen's departure, badminton suffered a further setback as a result of the sixth form's move to the 'Annex' in Loughton. We can assume that the new sports hall, completed in 1982, enabled play to continue, because it contained two marked out courts (photo left), but we have no further records of badminton being active at BHCHS beyond the mid 1980s.



superb marketing advice in the early days. But many others have helped the project thrive just by staying as regular subscribers. It doesn't matter if you are one of those who, despite my regular haranguing, have preferred to keep quiet. Your encouragement has given me the motivation I needed. I don't even have a big problem with those who failed to subscribe but who have kept in contact. More frustrating, of course, are the people I traced and who seemed interested but then vanished again. Moving a little further along the exasperation scale there is another category: individuals who have used the network without showing any sign of subscribing. Another category I need to mention are the ones who hated school so much they didn't want any part of this. Their responses came as a shock while I was on my cold-calling duties. My database records 68 marked as "leave alone". I never kept a record of these conversations but I have still got some of the hate mail. I thought you would like to see a couple of early samples – please don't ask me to tell you who wrote them...

*(December 2000) I suppose I should have expected this publication to be full of unbridled praise for the loathsome institution but I am sure I am not the only person who hated virtually every minute of my time there.... Needless to say nothing could induce me to get in touch with either ex-staff or ex-pupils again.*

*(January 2001) At the risk of shattering your rose-tinted glasses I feel obliged to explain why I have failed to reply to your correspondence before and why I am not interested in your newsletter. The five years I spent at that school were perhaps the unhappiest years of my life, with the*

*possible exception of my first marriage.*

That amusing conclusion reminded me of another curious letter from someone who did subscribe. This was in 2002. I had traced him through the electoral register, and he enclosed a cheque for 5 years' subscription in response to my speculative letter, adding at the end:

*PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT ME AT THIS ADDRESS.* My wife is passionately opposed to maintaining any link with the past so I fear I must remain a secret member. I hope in future to provide you with an accommodation address...

Sadly, he never contacted me again, and I felt obliged to obey his instruction with its underlined capital letters.

Those reactions are exceptional. For the most part, the partners and wives of Old Bucks have been very helpful and supportive, and they have often been responsible for ensuring that the subscription was paid!

## EVOLUTION OF SLEUTHING

In response to the many readers (actually, one) who have asked me to explain how I went about finding everyone, here is a bit of an explanation. Having established the database, and entered the details of the 300 or so existing Old Bucks received from Malcolm Beard, I set about adding the other 4,700 names.

The information came mainly from two sources: the admissions registers at the Essex Records Office in Chelmsford and the “blue books” or school rolls that were published from 1948 until the school’s closure. Having logged all the names, the search could gather momentum. In terms of my own time, the biggest chunk was definitely using electoral registers: helpfully on CDs during the period from 2001-2010 then via internet.

But the registers became less useful after electors were allowed to block the publication of their data. Later, I began to supplement the electoral register searching with the family history sites that were becoming popular. As some doors closed, others opened. Various web-based phone books became less reliable,

nagging regret is that some of the key staff (in particular Jack Taylor and Fred Scott) were not around to see it and participate. Hugh Colgate did see the start, and was very helpful until his death in 2000 – but our membership was then still comparatively small.

Finally, while on the regret list, I have to mention the absence of key archive material. Certainly the material we did find was sizeable, but there were significant gaps.

Broadly, there were three categories of missing information. The first is material that does exist but was not accessible. Mostly it sits in a locked cupboard at the Essex Records Office. The cupboard stays locked for reasons of "confidentiality". Should I have taken the advice of those who encouraged me to make a "Freedom of Information" request? In the end, I didn't because I was never really short of publication material. The second category is material that is unobtainable. It includes documents, photos and records that were sadly destroyed during the closure process. The third category is perhaps the most significant: material that never existed. If you are a regular reader of *OB News* you will perhaps recall my frequent complaint that the school magazines were scrapped after 1973. Hugh Colgate told me, back in 1999, that it was due to cost. With the benefit of further research and hindsight, I now believe it was partly a reflection of the turmoil that the school was suffering and which ultimately led to its untimely end.

But I refuse to end on such a dismal note. Revitalising the spirit of BHCHS has given me a vast amount of satisfaction and taught me many things. I hope perhaps other schools may be inspired to take on something similar. Hmm, perhaps a holiday project....

# By Roding, Streamed

A FEATURE about the form streaming at BHCHS? Is the retiring editor scraping the barrel? In one sense, the information could be seen as trivial and irrelevant, but actually I think it is rather interesting to see how the organisation of the forms reflected the broader changes that impacted the school while it evolved to ultimate extinction.

During the first few years of the school the form structure was very straightforward: A, B and C, based on performance in the 11+. **Bob Bracey (1938)** tells me that there was little or no movement between the streams. **Ron Colvin (1941)**

remembers that the main differences were in the foreign language teaching, with the A stream taking Latin/French, the B stream taking German/French and the C stream just French.

## Fast Tracking

The first significant change to this pattern was in 1945, when the school magazine announced:

*It has been decided to turn the 'A' Stream of the School into a four year course for the School*

*Certificate involving a change of nomenclature in the form title. The second, third and fourth years of this stream will be known as 2R, Remove and 4R. B and C streams will be promoted to dignity of their preceding letter.*

The 'Remove' Class was a very curious phenomenon. I turned to Google for enlightenment and was confronted with all sorts of computer jargon: javascript, bootstrap tables and jquery code snippets appeared in the first pages of the 25 million results.

Wikipedia provided a more sensible answer, but not much information: *A Remove Class in education was a group of students at an English Public School who were prevented from going up with their peers in order to receive extra tuition. In Frank Richards' Billy Bunter series the Remove Class are the focus for all the stories. In some public schools in more recent times, eg Shrewsbury School in the 1980s, The 'Remove' was the last year before the sixth form, in which students did their O level exams. It was the equivalent of the modern Year 11.*

Neither of the Wiki definitions matched the initial use of 'Remove' at BHCHS. The fast-tracking of



bright pupils continued for a while, until the School Certificate was replaced by GCE.

Fortunately for my research, I have got every edition of the school roll – from its first publication in 1948. This enabled me to track the organisation of forms during the rest of the school's existence. A summary was too complex and an inappropriate use of magazine space but if you want to see the full table you will have to visit our website ([bhchs.co.uk](http://bhchs.co.uk)) and then click on school... history... streaming.

By the late 1940s, while there was an 'A' stream in each year, other than the first form, other classes were generally designated by the first letter of the form teacher's surname.

## Thrice Removed

We haven't heard the last of the Remove Class. In 1951 it was back, but for an entirely different purpose – closer to the Billy Bunter definition. A group of 17 fifth formers were held back for an extra year, presumably retaking their O Levels. This happened only once. Perhaps the experiment was felt to be unsuccessful or maybe it wasn't needed in later years.

But in 1955 the Remove Class returned for yet another different use. It was the first '13+' entry. The form of 24 was kept as a separate class for two years: 3R and then 4R. After that, they were held back in the 4th year and spread across the other forms: five went to 4A, four to 4C, and the remainder to 4J. By 1959, just six of the original group entered the sixth form.

There was no large-scale 13+ entry in the following three years, but then a further group of 28 joined the existing third year in 1959. Again, in the following year, this group became 4R, and were held back for another year in the fourth form.

This time, none went to 4A but half the class joined 4alpha and the rest were placed in 4B or 4beta, apart

from two who left. At the end of the following year, 10 of the group entered the sixth form.

There was no repetition of a significant 13+ entry at BHCHS. Anyone who joined beyond the normal age 11 entry will have been assimilated into one of the existing forms.

During the 1950s and early 60s there were some surprising inconsistencies in the number of pupils in the different forms of the same year group. Sometimes the 'A' stream was smaller, and sometimes one or more of the other classes was smaller. I couldn't see any obvious pattern or explanation but perhaps different room sizes may have been a factor.

## All Change Ahead

Soon after his arrival, Hugh Colgate wasted no time in scrapping form streaming. In 1967, his second year as Head, he chose the fourth form to begin the transition. For the first time in the history of BHCHS (discounting the first three years of the school) there was no form 4A. In the next year all form streaming was abandoned, and by 1971 subject streaming had begun, initially in French and Maths and then in other subjects.

For the next few years, every pupil from the first to the fifth form was in X, Y or Z. The form names may have implied stability, but the prospect of the change to comprehensive was lurking constantly in the background. First year intakes were dropping steadily and, by the 1975/76 year, all forms apart from two started with less than 30 pupils.

The big change came in 1976, when the first comprehensive intake added a new form, with 1W added to X, Y and Z.

In the following year, there was another dramatic change, when BHCHS was required to absorb the whole of the fourth and fifth forms from the Brook Secondary Modern

which closed. The integration of this group was even less complete than the earlier 13+ experiments. The Brook pupils were never taught at Roding Lane but continued in their existing building two miles away. None entered the sixth form. However, the change resulted in an abnormally high number of fourth and fifth forms in the next two years. In the 1978/79 year, there were no fewer than eight fifth form classes. Then, just one year later the eight reduced to two: the former Brook pupils had all left, and the remaining fifth forms consisted entirely of the boys who had begun their secondary schooling at BHCHS in the year before the change to comprehensive. With hindsight, Hugh Colgate's description of amalgamation of Brook as 'absorption' looks euphemistic.

## Consistency

In 1979, the 'R' form took on yet another new guise. Not 'Remove' this time but 'Roding'. The house competitions had diminished dramatically during the school's period of intense reorganisation, but the decision was taken to bring back the house system and place the first year pupils in 1C, 1F, 1H or 1R. This system was introduced steadily, presumably because it was felt undesirable to impose a further change on those pupils who had become accustomed to W, X, Y or Z.

In 1983, the form structure of BHCHS finally reached a point of consistency, where each year had the same number of form groups (named C, F, H or R), and with approximately the same number in each form. Notably, this was 17 years after the start of planning to make the school Comprehensive, and seven years after the change began being implemented.

The consistency lasted only three years. By the end of the 1985/86 academic year, rumours of the school's closure were probably responsible for the drop in the first year intake, which was then back to three forms (Roding House being the unfortunate victim).

In 1987 a further form was lost from the first year intake (Hainault were the losers). Numbers throughout the rest of the school were seriously dropping – for the second time in the school's history, all except two forms began the year with fewer than 30 pupils.

# Derek Pembleton: Posthumous Farewell

In the obituary published in OB News, November 2016, I mentioned that Derek Pembleton had told me he would consider writing something about his time at BHCHS. It was only after his death that I received the following fascinating account, kindly supplied to me recently by his son-in-law, David Smyth.



I TAUGHT RE and Latin from 1960 to 1972. I was poorly qualified with A Level Latin and a one year course in Religious Education at King's College, London. I had gravitated towards teaching RE because no-one else wanted to teach it at my former school, a Secondary Modern. That course taught me to see the Old Testament as a historian would, rather than through the eyes of a believer; this led to tension with other staff who saw the Bible as literally true. I slowly became an atheist and, not wanting to upset those who could still believe, I sought a way out, as I shall describe.

I enjoyed my time at the school, especially a run of being form master of 4C and 5 beta. as I could understand how if they had failed the 11 plus they would have been at the top of their school, taking leading parts in the school plays and being captains of teams, instead of being regarded as failures. As their groups were small I got to know them well and, to some extent, kept them out of trouble with other teachers.

When I asked one teacher with a more automatic system of punishment to leave it to me and I would guarantee the result, I was not let down. I was, however, well aware of a hierarchy of respect for us teachers – “I couldn’t do that for you last night sir, - we had geography!” Good old Tom. The work came in next day.

It was a wonderful staff room to work in, full of people with good degrees in their own subjects and often with enthusiasms outside them. I would have missed it when I left had I not been going full tilt at a new project.

I often wish I had been sent to a grammar school like my father and uncles had, but I was sent to Rugby

and I discovered why after my mother died. She had been in service as a child, as was normal for Warwickshire village girls, and had acquired an upper-class London accent and respect for her employers and wanted me to grow up to be like them. Public schools were designed to prepare pupils for service in the Empire or the City, but in 1951, after National Service and a law degree (and a wife) from Oxford, the Empire had gone or was going, and I tried the City but couldn't stand the smell of exhaust when I emerged from the tube each morning. That was the time of the great smogs. During the late sixties at Buckhurst Hill I had started taking a small group to a newly established Essex Education Authority Sailing Centre and when the job came up I grabbed it - I was for once that most hated thing - the inside candidate. Then followed the most wonderful twenty years of my life, building the operation up from twelve sailing boats and a small hut on the site of a sailing club to bigger premises with 25 sailing boats from 8 to 25 feet and the same number of canoes and kayaks. I had taught myself to handle boats on the Thames at

Surbiton during the war when the river was a busy commercial waterway. The man who hired me out the boats would not dare to do that today with concern about safety - coal lighters being towed up and down the river and no lifejackets, but then not even the Navy provided them for boats' crews, as I experienced it from 1945 to 1947. I believe that the kids who benefited most from the activity were those born in the Summer and so were often overlooked because of their smaller size, but they were the ones who listened most carefully to instructions to avoid getting it wrong and being teased. The bullies born in the Autumn who knew it all were often the ones who had to be towed in or fished out of the water. This produced new respect for the younger ones which I, born in July, could relish.

I have had prostate cancer for fifteen years and the hormone treatment for it has neutered me so that my wife and I live like brother and sister rather than man and wife. The last possible treatment is losing its effect now, but I expect another two years of good life before the disease finishes its course.

## College Crests: Open to Offers

In the last edition we published a request for ideas to find good homes for the collection of university and college shields that used to be displayed in our Assembly Hall. No ideas emerged that would involve keeping the collection together, but a few people have asked if they can recover the shields that they had donated, or expressed interest in acquiring the shield from their old university/college.

Our website now has a complete list of the shields in the collection. From the home page, click on [School/University Shields](#).

After a committee discussion we have decided the following. We will return any shields to their original donor subject to payment of postage & packing (£3.50 UK). If the shield was jointly donated, this would also be subject to the co-donors' agreement (assuming it is practicable to check). Anyone else may submit a bid for one of the shields. This will be via a closed auction. Bids to be sent to Graham Frankel (email [grahamf49@gmail.com](mailto:grahamf49@gmail.com)) by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017. After the closing date you will be notified if you were successful and the shield will be sent to you on receipt of the payment plus postage & packing (£3.50 UK).

All proceeds from the sale of these shields will be donated to the St Clare Hospice.



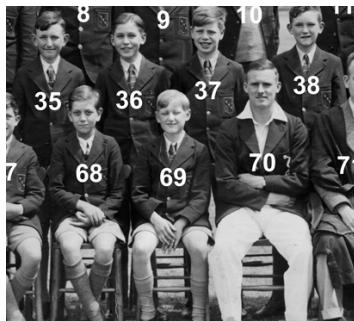
# Growing up in the Forties

**By Roy Hart (BHCHS 1938-45)**

Roy wrote this article at the request of one of his Royal Artillery colleagues – it was intended for a British Legion publication. Roy had a 40-year career in estate agency/surveying, mainly in the Thames Valley area, initially employed but later self-employed. He now lives in Suffolk.



AT THE outset of 1940 I was just 12 years old, living with my parents and elder sister in a comfortable outer-suburban house in Woodford. My father, a veteran of the Somme and one of ten children, as was mother, had worked hard without ‘advantages’ to become a well-known landscape architect and along the way was a founder-



1939 Roy number 69

member of what is now the Landscape Institute. When the second war came, father’s business collapsed overnight and he had to go on the dole for a while; I remember that he used to walk (our 1928 car was ‘off-road’ for the duration) to the Labour Exchange with the father of a girl I knew. There was no money for anything beyond essentials and my mother became very skilful at making ‘something out of nothing’ on rationed food, as well as cooking on



1939 Roy (2nd left) in the Boy Scouts

an upturned electric fire when the gas main was blown up.

After attending several different elementary schools and passing the eleven plus, I joined a boys’ high school some two miles’ bike ride away, sternly administered by the son of the famous golfer JH Taylor. The standard of teaching was exemplary, discipline was firm



1940 Family home

though fair, albeit with an element of corporal punishment, but sadly we did not learn any golf or swimming. Emphasis was upon team sports, rather than recreational which would have necessitated other venues. A major interruption to our educational timetable was caused when the Army requisitioned our new school building for a time, as a result of which our teachers adopted peripatetic mode and gave their lessons at selected homes, of which mine was one, where pupils could be grouped.

1940 was a year noted for some of the heaviest German bombing raids. The summer was fine with blue skies and the waves of enemy planes could be seen clearly overhead, intermingled with the bursts of anti-aircraft shells, dangerous to observers because of the fragments of shrapnel raining down. During night raids our searchlights would illuminate the sky and might show up a descending parachute mine, though it was assumed that most of the explosives were intended for London, some eight miles away. Aside from the guns, London was ringed by barrage balloons with dangling cables to ensnare enemy planes. We were fortunate that only one small bomb fell in our road, though there were many incendiaries, a lot of which did not explode and were taken to the ARP Warden’s post nearby. My father had his own ideas about defence, born of WW1 experience. He insisted that, to be effective, the steel Anderson shelter provided to all suitable households by the government had to be sunk fully

underground at the bottom of the garden - not the usual practice. This meant that he and I had to dig a huge hole to accommodate it, lay a waterproof concrete floor, make shuttered concrete steps down to it, then pile the ‘spoil’ (diggings) back on top to a depth of about 18/24” surrounded by a stone wall. Special wooden bedframes were made at a local joinery shop and that is where we all spent many nights over the following years. Also, all the windows of the house were protected internally at night by specially cut sheets of plywood, both to guard against flying glass in the event of a near explosion and to prevent leakage of light which might help the enemy.

Later that year my brother was born. Domestic life settled down to some sort of routine as we became accustomed to the new order of things. Being exhorted by government to ‘Dig for Victory’ and with his love of horticulture, father decided to take on an allotment, where we grew most of the vegetables we needed; he also cultivated the garden of the next-door empty house for a time, causing some conflict between my labours and school homework, as

shelters in people’s houses. In 1942 my sister married a sergeant armourer in the RAF who, until he was posted overseas, was mainly engaged in defusing unexploded bombs, giving us constant anxiety for his safety. Gradually the air raids became less intense as the RAF grew even stronger, and happily the noise from the emplacement of anti-aircraft guns adjacent to our school got less. In 1943 I took the GSC/O-level exam. In July 1944 the school was hit by a flying bomb at a time when, luckily, the pupils were away. Older boys had been encouraged to join a nightly fire watching rota to guard the school against incendiary bombs. My little brother had contracted a then incurable disease, which necessitated frequent and difficult cross country journeys to see him at the evacuated GOS Children’s Hospital and, in December 1944, he died. My hopes for our growing up together were dashed.

The end of the war soon afterwards brought great celebrations, notably a bonfire and fireworks upon abandoned building plots in our road and orchestrated by me and some pals. On the home front it had



1942 BHCHS Cross Country - Roy 3rd left

we worked sometimes to 10pm in double summer time. There were no family holidays, although I did manage to visit friends in the country occasionally, otherwise treats consisted mainly of Sunday afternoon tea with either of my grandparents in the next town. My father had managed to get a job with the local council, whereby he visited all the freshly bombed properties in the borough to make an assessment of damage and the needs of the occupiers. A by-product of this was that I was able to earn some pocket money helping to erect Morrison indoor ‘table’

been a terrible time for parents and others with responsibility, yet for youngsters it was different. Aside from personal tragedies - and there were many - we got used to the food shortages, the wailing of the sirens, diving for cover and other discomforts and experienced a certain excitement with all that was happening. As children, we did not sense the dangers as adults do, we were confident that the enemy would be beaten by our great forces in the end and were largely unaware of the true horrors, except when directly affected. Moreover, whingeing was not encouraged,



1946 Royal Artillery

duties rather than rights were the order of the day. The spirit of comradeship and singleness of purpose existing everywhere surely fostered these attitudes. And so we got on with our studies, our games, fishing, cycle rides or whatever and the new game of collecting souvenirs - incendiaries, bits of doodlebugs and shrapnel. On one occasion I shocked my mother when I came home with a German rifle and live ammunition that an American soldier had given me - no Health & Safety then.

Knowing that it would not be long before I would be called up for National Service, I now had to decide how best to spend the remaining time available. I left school in the summer of 1945 after taking HSC/A-levels, but obtained deferment of call-up for a few months to enable me to retake one subject. At the same time I went to work for an uncle in North London doing metalwork and travelled on from there each evening to study at the London Polytechnic, thence train back home. Later I started my

Palestine, which proved to be a great experience, albeit not one to be repeated. I doubt whether any of us had even crossed the Channel before, let alone visited the Middle East. Hostilities between Arabs and Jews were escalating in advance of the imminent ending of the Mandate and I was glad that we were not involved in policing or similar duties as we had had only minimal infantry training. After assembling at Woolwich Barracks we sailed to Port Said via Malta, about a ten-day voyage with all the pleasures of swinging hammocks and leaning over the side. Soon after arrival there I received a haircut from a large Egyptian wearing a fez and wielding a cut-throat razor, a minor culture shock. We next travelled by a train packed with Egyptian families to Base Transit Camp near Suez, catching



1948 Haifa Docks

glimpses of ships on the Suez Canal, also of the Sweetwater irrigation canal. From there back northwards again, across the Sinai Desert and to our first 'proper' camp in the Gaza area of Palestine, where we spent our first night in the open, as there were none of the usual tents or huts available. We continued to be attached to the Royal Artillery, but carrying out only guard duties to relieve men who had already been serving for some time and due for leave or release. These duties were on a '24 on/24 off' basis and the 24 hours off was still in camp. Around this time I decided I needed a camera, so I saved my pay more carefully and continued to sell my free issue tin of 50 cigarettes per week (I never smoked) until I had enough piastres. Unfortunately, my last reel of exposed film was in the camera when it was stolen at one of the transit camps.

We changed camps many times. In October 1947 we moved to Latrun, known for its monastery, where we manned roadblocks. We were stationed there for several months, including over Christmas, and were able to visit the old city of



1948 Palestine

own metalwork business and was doing quite well, but had to give it up and join the Army in September 1946. After six weeks' primary training I was sent to a Royal Artillery Regt. on Salisbury Plain learning 25pdr gun calibration. We were there for the whole of the severe 1947 winter, when the temperature in our billets was below zero for many days and road conditions made it difficult to get home to Essex on leave.

In September 1947 we, the Calibration Troop, were posted to

### Giddy & Giddy

(Giddy)

COMDR. O. C. H. GIDDY, R.N. (RET'D.) D.S.C., F.R.S., L.L.B.(CANTAB.)  
OSCAR J. LOVEGOVE, F.A.F.P.A.  
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G/L.  
Enc.

Station Approach,  
Maidenhead.  
  
17th June, 1948.

Mr. R. V. Hart,  
46, Malvern Drive,  
Woodford Green,  
Essex.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for sending us your Army Release Book which we return herewith and now confirm that we can offer you a position as Junior Clerk at our Slough Office at a salary of £2.15.-0/- per week, to commence on 12th July next. Our office hours are from 9 to 6 except on Saturdays, when they are 9 - 1. I shall be glad to hear from you in confirmation that you can commence your duties on 12th July.

Yours faithfully,

*O. H. Sidney*

### 1948 Roy's first job

Jerusalem on one occasion. In January 1948 we returned to Isdud for a short time, where I was given a driving test on a 3-ton lorry, got my licence and was subsequently given charge of a 15cwt truck, which I drove in convoy later to our next camp at Acre, on the coast. In March we moved from Acre to Allenby Barracks, HQ British Troops in Palestine, Jerusalem, where we were again on roadblock and other guard duties and experienced a surprising amount of snow, no doubt due to the elevated position. Proximity to the city made some sightseeing possible, though mobility in civilian areas was always restricted and we had to go in armed groups. We had been told that Arabs were very clever at stealing army weapons and therefore we had to have our rifles chained to us at night when we slept. It seems they were getting desperate enough to do this because of the prospect of being overwhelmed by an enemy that was being constantly strengthened by the regular arrival of illegal Jewish immigrant ships and possibly by arms supplies from USA.

In April 1948 we were given the opportunity of a course on a chosen subject at the Middle East College in the Canal Zone, to help prepare us for demobilization. I made a random choice of French language, which I had enjoyed at school, though without any idea of future usefulness. In what might have been a PoW camp near the college, though so long after the war ended, were a number of German ex-servicemen who were skilled at making metal artefacts for sale; I bought a cigarette case from them for Dad. I visited Suez once and on another day explored some barren hills close to the college and overlooking the Great Bitter Lake, getting caught in a sandstorm on the way back. At the end of the course we headed north again by train to a camp at Mt. Carmel, overlooking the harbour at Haifa. The British

mandate for Palestine was to end within a few days and we now caught ship for Southampton and home via Aldershot, where we were issued with a civilian demob. suit, plus our Army greatcoat (I later had it dyed) and £9 to start life's next phase.

In August 1947, whilst I was on embarkation leave, my mother had died after a long battle with cancer. When I arrived home in May 1948 I had to consider my future and what I was going to do for a living, having surprisingly reached the great age of 20 years. My first intention naturally was to revive the metalwork business, for which I had good contacts, but the Labour Government of the day, Board of Trade or whatever, knocked me back by refusing to grant me a licence to purchase raw materials - so much for serving my country. As my father intended to remarry that summer, I felt it was a signal for me to leave home and I was happy to accept an offer from my friend's mother to live with them and possibly take up a career in the estate business. In those days I think it was always possible to find a job if one was willing to take a low enough wage and so I started work with a reputable firm of estate agents at £2.15.0d a week (£2.75 in new money), quite a step up from the 35s/£1.75 from the WD, though they did provide a uniform and victuals. In order to reach my next job, in about 1950, I found I needed a car, so bought an old banger, only made affordable by the availability of petrol at 4s/20p per gallon. Thus ended the 1940s.



1950 Roy's first car

# Where are they now?

## Phil Grimson (1942)



Phil with his daughter

This isn't a post from a ghost as I'm still alive and kicking. As I attended BHCHS so long ago I figured old bones would have been turned to dust by now and I didn't think there would be many of my peers still strolling around. Most of my old classmates I never met again after leaving school, but duty called and I had to earn my bread, so I took the Civil Service Open Competitive Examination in late '47 and took up an appointment in the Tithe Redemption Commission where I spent the most boring year of my life and then, one day, I discussed it with my father and he agreed to allow me to join the Royal Navy. So I became a member of His Majesty's Grey Funnel Line for the next seven years. After a year's training and drilling I was drafted to *HMS St Kitts*, a Battle Class Destroyer, Half Leader of the 5th Destroyer Flotilla, Home Fleet. I spent a year with her, visiting Wales, Northern Ireland, Norway, Holland, France, Gibraltar, Spain, Portugal, Algeria. Then on to Morocco, Agadir, just in time to witness the rebellion against the French Government, and a lot of sea-time patrolling the North Atlantic and North Sea, for this was during the Cold War. I spent some time in the Reserve Fleet at Harwich and then was launched onto *HMS Superb*, Flagship of the American and West Indies Station. Our base was Ireland Island, Bermuda, and I spent two-and-a-half years with her, including a year's refit at Chatham. My first voyage was through the Caribbean Islands, the US from Boston to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and a visit to New York on our return

journey. On a subsequent trip we circumnavigated South America: Peru, Chile, the Falklands, Uruguay, Brazil, Trinidad and Jamaica and again through the Caribbean including Antigua, where Nelson had his headquarters when he commanded the Fleet in the Caribbean. His little office had a chair and a wardrobe, and for a few seconds I managed to slip under the rope barrier and sit in his chair!

I decided against signing on for a further spell as I was married by this time and had a four-year-old daughter. I spent another miserable three years working in an office and then trained as a driving instructor. For the next 50 years I had a job I felt happy in and finally hung up my dual controls at the age of 78. I miss working, but retirement isn't so bad and I have a bouquet of memories to fall back on.

In 1985 my wife and I and our 15-year-old son took a trip to Australia to see my brother, whom I hadn't seen since he emigrated 26 years before. After a stay of 10 weeks I decided to have a little look around, so my nephew lent us a car and off we went. Our little look around developed into an 11,782 mile journey from Melbourne through South Australia and the Northern Territory up to Darwin via Ayers Rock, Alice Springs and the famous Daly Waters Pub in the Northern Territory, and an arcing return through Queensland and New South Wales, stopping wherever it took our fancy, back to Victoria and Melbourne. While passing through Canberra I tried to get in touch with 'Jimmy' Fogg but had no luck.

I've been back twice to Australia since, and am currently planning another trip.

I'd be interested to know if any others from my class are still around: the only other old classmate I came into brief contact with was David Wilson. I met him at Chatham in '49. For anyone who's interested there is a website entitled *HMS Superb Association* to which I have contributed from time to time, expanding on our little adventures in the Caribbean.

## Terry Killick (1944)



Terry and his wife Margaret

After leaving BHCHS in 1949, I had a couple of years' practical experience in arable and dairy farming before National Service. This was followed by a year at Writtle Institute of Agriculture, then a post in Spillers, the animal feed company, as a junior sales rep. I gradually moved up to be a poultry sale specialist in Bucks and Berks. After eight years I jumped ship and joined Rank Hovis McDougall as a sales manager based in Bedfordshire and then a company move to Clare in Suffolk to cover sales of feed, fertilizer, seed and chemicals across East Anglia.

In 1984 Ranks were bought out by Dalgety Agriculture, who also acquired Spillers Agriculture, so I was back where I began back in 1956!

The most interesting development started here. Out of the blue, Dalgety decided to go into the racing pigeon feed market. In the mid 80s this was a huge market, reported to be over 50 thousand tonnes sold in the UK annually. The Belgians had 50% of this market, as pigeon racing was virtually their national sport and the imports of racing birds and feed were huge. This made a national company such as Dalgety/ Spillers an attractive target.

With my previous experience in the poultry trade I was invited to be Sales Manager UK on a non-existent product and to sell through the current team of horse feed specialists. This was a challenge, but at the same time a weird market. The pigeon fancier rears his birds from hatching to racing and has aims no different from those of horse breeders, ie rearing, training and racing both short and long

distances; so the team were set to go.

Feed formulations were produced by the nutrition team, and a set of 8 diets produced. We then set our stall out at the Birmingham Exhibition Centre's annual pigeon fair, with a fantastic response. The Belgian traders said we wouldn't last the pace, and the UK fanciers said it was good to have a home-produced range of diets.

Sales grew slowly at first, but as we gained some race winners, recognition grew, and with advertising their names, more sales followed. The next step was to sponsor races with cash prizes to the winner of selected races, and this again proved a positive move.

The next venture was to the annual Blackpool Show, the mecca for pigeon racing. Up to 15,000 attendances over two days, with trade stands of all types, selling breeding birds, equipment and feed. The champion bird is announced by the judges, and if offered for sale will go for thousands of pounds.

The sponsorship tactic worked so well that the wife and I were invited to the annual presentation dinners during the winter break, and each weekend we were either in Brighton, Torquay, Walsall, Newcastle, Durham or Cardiff. It was after our day in Cardiff, the prizes had been handed out, the champion announced, when with coats on ready to go home, an announcement was made that the doors had been locked and nobody to leave as the champion bird was missing. An agonising 30 minutes passed until it was found, on a search, in the thief's pocket.

It is amazing the celebrities that take up pigeon racing. The Queen has a team based at Sandringham and it was our pleasure to be invited by the National Flying Club to attend their prestige dinner with the Royal Loft Manager and special guest Denise Williams, the Olympic Gold Medalist.

I retired at the end of 10 years, but the brand is still sold and now covers other countries such as Malta, Norway and the Middle East.

**Andrew Pallant (1944)**

was married in 1966 to a nurse who he met in Aberdeen. Shortly after his marriage Angus was transferred to Dundee and subsequently to Kirkcaldy. The next transfer in 1976 for Anne, Angus and 4 young children saw Angus promoted to Manager of the Bank of Scotland in Dyce.



Angus McVey in 1955

These were exciting times for Dyce, which was seeing exponential growth in the oil industry, and Angus's branch was at the centre of it, providing loans to fledgling oil and helicopter companies, many of which are still going strong today, indeed many of these are now multi-million pound multinational companies. He was not a conventional bank manager and did business in a way that more traditional bankers did not. This was exactly what the oil industry needed, allowing it to grow and turn Aberdeen into the oil capital of Europe. The Dyce branch was, for many years, one of the most profitable banks in the country. Angus during this time co-founded Dyce Rugby Club which is still going strong today, albeit under a different guise of WestDyce. Angus retired at 55 before leaving Dyce for a more sedate life with Anne in Peebles, where he still welcomes his 4 children and 9 grandchildren.

**David Reeves (1958)**

I expect a lot of us are, like me, just about to turn 70 and still working, not to keep the wolf from the door but to keep the grey cells alive! Looking back, I cannot think of a better balanced educational establishment than BHCHS, I suppose the only thing missing was the girls! Like many, I was able to combine the sport and the academic side and with the help of mainly the science and

language teachers was able to travel and work in many countries including the USA, South Africa, Japan, Switzerland and Germany. In that time, I dabbled in Astrophysics, International Marketing and for the last 20 years video games, as President of PlayStation for 6 years in Europe and elsewhere, video games.

It was quite timely that you managed to find Ray Gibbins as whilst captain of the cricket team, I encouraged Ray to tear in as the opening bowler with Martin Gorham (two left handed opening bowlers) and ensure that Barry Wynn behind the stumps was catching the ball as it was still rising. In that fifth form season, we lost just one match.



I still have my own consultancy with clients all over the world ([david-reeves-consulting.com](http://david-reeves-consulting.com)) and am also a Trustee for St John Ambulance, 'Sense' and the National Autistic Society. Getting into less trouble these days (Ian Impey and I used to share the task of retrieving the ball in the playground football games from the school roof; '....what are you doing there boys!'... I think it was Mr. Johnson in his Chemistry Lab. who caught us on the roof). Life has been like a video game, the more you put in the more you get out. As said, for the moment though, even with two new hips (I had to bowl sometimes as well!) : 'Game Not Over'.

**Andrew Howison (1966)**

After BHCHS I studied art at what was then Loughton College. (Pete Hodges also went – Business Studies.) I entered the printing industry, initially running machinery. By my late twenties I was part owner of a printing business. From there I worked in a number of business sectors, usually



financial, but all with a print interest of some kind. The last 25 years have seen me being firstly Procurement Manager for a French owned pan-European stationery business, then, for twelve years, the Purchasing Director of one of Europe's largest communications businesses.

Since becoming semi-retired I have set up a business consultancy business and a photographic company.

*Andrew achieved a certain notoriety at BHCHS, as described in OB News, November 2016: They Were Only Supposed to Blow the Door Off. - Ed.*

**Lee Blissett (1978)**

I have worked in financial services for 28 years since leaving BHCHS, with a brief stint in estate agency.

I joined Lloyds Bank in 1983 and began providing financial planning and wealth advice with Lloyds TSB before moving to Coutts & Co in 2008.

I am currently planning to launch my own business and to be appointed as a Partner Practice of St James's Place Wealth Management. Outside work I am a dedicated family man and share many interests with my wife and son, from music and history to motoring and travel. I am a classic car and motorcycle enthusiast and in 2015 I rode my Harley to Slovenia with my 9-year-old son.

It is 16 years since I appeared here and much has happened. This month I celebrated my 10th wedding anniversary with a retired headteacher who my late wife and I both knew. We also knew her late husband, so out of death came life!

Looking through the latest issue of OB News, I read with interest the article about Martin Turner. He and his parents, together with his brother Barry, lived opposite me in Habgood Road, Loughton. His mother was quite an accomplished artist, and her portrait of my sister Fiona – now a retired Church of England priest – has pride of place in her Norfolk home. Other Old Bucks living nearby were Alan Wright with Ken Bray and Roy Low living in The Drive. Pete Sillis also lived in our road, giving it a degree of respectability.

Reading the article on JH Taylor reminded me of the occasion when, during my last days at school, he caught me and my pals "Beany" Powell and "Sos" Sorrell, building a dam in the Roding. Whether he believed my excuse of "collecting samples for our biology teacher, Joe Shillito" I don't know, but it was a prophetic undertaking because on leaving school I joined W&C French, the local contractors – now Keir Group – and spent the next 50 years in construction, both in the UK and abroad.

**Angus McVey (1954)**

Angus's son Andy has sent the following update, and he would be grateful for any news or photos of any of Angus's friends from school.

Angus left BHCHS for Aberdeen in 1956 where he attended Robert Gordon's School before opting to leave to take his banking exams. He continued to live in Aberdeen, working his way up through the bank and

# From the Editor's Postbag

## Earlier Computers at BHCHS

*William Saywell (1964-71)*

Luke Argent, in his letter *Early Computers at BHCHS (OB News, November 2016)*, asks if anyone has memories of computing at Buckhurst Hill earlier than 1976. I can top this by seven years! In my year, the X stream took O-level English and Maths early, so the 5th form summer term had two fewer subjects to fit in. This left a couple of terms with no curriculum work in those subjects. In maths we indulged in extra-curricular interests including set theory, statistics and computing.

Computing was run by Bob Sears and my 1969 experience doesn't seem too much different from Luke's in 1976. We too used punched cards but rather than using BASIC, we used what was described to us as a City & Guilds machine code. Some googling suggests this was City and Guilds Mnemonic Code for Computer Instruction and would have run on an Elliott 803 or 903 which were in use with councils in the late 1960s. These used paper tape input so our punch cards will have been converted at County Hall prior to

```
start 100 Start assembling code at location 100
rnt 899 Read a Number from the input paper Tape into location 899
    This will tell us how many characters follow on
lda 899 Load it into the accumulator
rct 899,1 Read a Character into 899 + value in accumulator
subn 1 Reduce count by 1
jnz 102 Loop if count is non-zero
```

running them. Interestingly, these were a development of the computer that ran in the Mark 1 RAF Nimrod.

Programming it required reading data and specifying memory address locations. An example of some code is shown below. It was a much lower level language than BASIC. I suspect we got many more 'error at line xyz' errors because of it. It was a real achievement to get a program to run straight through and deliver a result!

Mr Sears once arranged a trip for some of us to County Hall, to see the great machine in action. We went in his green Morris 1000 traveller, a journey that has always stuck in my mind as he whizzed obliviously past a cyclist, who wobbled off into the ditch! I have no memory of the computer itself. These experiences instilled in me an interest in computing which I picked up later when the Sinclair ZX81 came out, through the BBC model B, Amstrad 1512 and into Windows and Linux machines.

## Even Earlier Computers at BHCHS

*Trevor Cook (1962-69)*

I am putting my hand up to reply to the question that Luke Argent posed. It would have been in my 5th form or lower 6th, so several years before he did so in 1976, that we in the maths class under Mr Franklin got the opportunity to program, using an assembler language called City & Guilds 319, an English Electric computer that Essex County Council had fitted into the back of a large lorry that was parked one day in front of the school. We fed it with paper tape rather than punched cards, and I well remember my delight at getting it to calculate pi to several significant figures.

I also have a less clear recollection that some of the more enthusiastic among us then got the opportunity to write programs in Algol 60 for an ICL computer at an East London College. This all stood me in good stead, when, having failed my

Cambridge entrance, I spent nine months in France in an office job in a semiconductor fabrication plant that had remote access to an IBM 360: as one of the only people there with such a skill, learnt at BHCHS, I was able to write, in Fortran, a program that enabled the factory to match anticipated demand and production for a range of products over a twelve month period. That skill also helped me get my chemistry degree at Southampton, as it enabled me to choose a final year project based on a computer simulation, considerably reducing the time that I had to spend in the labs, which was very useful for a non-sabbatical Student Union Treasurer, which post in turn led to my becoming a lawyer, but that is another story. So, in a way, and in retrospect, computer programming was one of the most important skills that I learnt at BHCHS.

## My Dad's a Policeman 1

*Ron Clements (1940-45)*

I have enjoyed Bob Druce's book immensely. I certainly would not want to have missed it and it was quite an emotional journey for me. Since we shared the fact that we both had fathers 'in the force' we had many features in common. Surprisingly also, we suffered severe bomb damage to our homes in 1940 in very similar fashion. The big difference was that Bob stayed on in the sixth form Arts in 1945. I left then and joined Barclays Bank - briefly at Leyton and then in Shoreditch until National Service and afterwards. This was quite a cycle ride from Woodford, but good exercise. I regretted leaving school and parting with so many friends, but after reading Bob's recollections I realise that I would have been lost in the sixth Arts, with no prospects of going anywhere other than teaching. I had a very enjoyable time in my National Service - interesting work, well located at Uxbridge RAF (near to Lord's and Oval cricket and plenty of free time - Uxbridge was the Olympic Village of 1948). Although my switch to theological study and training for the Baptist ministry was an unexpected change of direction, I soon found that Religious Studies generally covered a wide range of philosophical and social issues and it opened a path to Cambridge, which was beyond my wildest fantasies in 1945.

Bob's book is beautifully written. A remarkably detailed recall of boyish hopes, dreams and fears and a very relevant portrayal of the difficult and disillusioning social world of 1945. I simply could not put down some passages remembering the clash between the high hopes of schooldays and the reality of a world that was itself in transition after the war. It has taken me some years to discard the brainwashing of the war years - all that stuff about heroes, medals and a brave new world. I wasted so much time playing 'war games' and a close friend signed on to the Territorial SAS after his National Service, with fatal consequences. I cannot watch *The Guns of Navarone* now without thinking that this is not the real world. John Le Carré seems closer to the mark. I felt from reading Bob's experiences that sometimes the ball bounces in a favourable

direction and sometimes it goes the wrong way. I got my share of the favourable bounces and certainly I share with Bob the belief that Walter May was a very inspiring teacher. Very many thanks to you for giving the book a well-deserved second innings. I am pressing my daughters to read it asap.

## My Dad's a Policeman 2

*Ron Colvin (1941-46)*

I have just read *My Dad's a Policeman*. Thank you for the recommendation. I guess it contains many new experiences for some readers, particularly those who attended BHCHS outside the war years.

My own eye opener was the "scholarship class" referred to by Bob in his final year at primary school: apparently 10-year-olds at Staples Road who showed promise were selected for this to boost their chances in the 11 Plus. Do you know if this was common practice elsewhere?

Because of wartime conditions in Forest Gate where we lived, I had no schooling at all from September 1939 to October 1940. That changed when we moved into Ilford, where there was a ready-made school available in the grounds of the empty Barnardo's Home. Somehow the local education committee heard of my arrival on their patch. Fortunately, I got a few months of schooling before attempting the 11 Plus in March 1941.

*See Bookshelf section p.9 for more information about My Dad's a Policeman - Ed.*

## Prostate Warning

*Barry Waud (1950-58)*

This message is prompted by two words that crop up in obituaries with too much regularity, "Prostate Cancer".

It is generally acknowledged that men are more reluctant than women to take their health issues to the doctor. This reluctance is increased if the problem may involve intrusive examinations.

Twelve years ago, in a conversation with my doctor, I happened to mention I had not had a prostate examination since retiring eleven years earlier. "We do this now with a blood test" was the reply. Within days I had my first PSA (Prostate-

# More Letters

Specific Antigen) test. The result led to a series of examinations and more tests and finally the diagnosis that I had prostate cancer. One year after that initial PSA test I was admitted for surgery. Surgery took the form of brachytherapy, the insertion of radioactive seeds in the prostate. The result was nothing short of miraculous. The PSA measurement dropped significantly and, twelve years on, my surgeon, my family, and I are all delighted.

The PSA test is not a test for cancer. However, it is a prostate test and indicates whether or not further investigation is required. Early diagnosis of any prostate problem is important and all men over the age of fifty are strongly advised to have a regular PSA blood test. It is also worth noting the claim that most men die with prostate cancer but not necessarily because of it.

## We Want Sex

*Kevin Carter (1966-73)*

Like many others, I am sure, I was saddened to read of the passing of Derek Pembleton. I can remember his liberal and tolerant views on life permeating through his lessons. He was known to the class of '66 – and perhaps other years – as 'Sexy Sam'. He got this nickname because, when prompted, he would offer sex education some time/years before it was scheduled in Biology classes. I recall that a note was left on his desk by George Tarbuck (where is he now?) on behalf of class 1X stating "we want sex". A great distraction from the usual RE lesson, the whole class of eleven-year-olds unusually sitting there with rapt attention.

On another topic, my favourite punishment meted out by Bob Sears – known to us as Reggie Sears – to someone who rather foolishly carved their initials onto the blackboard; there was only one PL in the class. The miscreant was made to remove his sock and hold it against the blackboard with his nose for the whole period. A variation on some of his other punishments detailed in your article.

*I cannot currently answer Kevin's question regarding George Tarbuck. We did manage to find him but never discovered if the advice from Mr Pembleton ever helped him in his quest. - Ed.*

## Miscellaneous Memories

*Eric Crook (1946-54)*

Thanks for a most interesting edition of OB News with articles on JHT, FAS and Derek Pembleton, who I met when I took the West Hatch sailing club to Nazeing. We both attended a senior instructors' course in Cowes, but while I went by train and ferry, he drove to Lymington, left his car on the beach, and paddled his canoe across the Solent! A panic ensued in the morning when the staff found an ownerless canoe on their waterfront. If you are in touch with Derek's family, please give them my condolences.

Your smoking cartoon reminded me that for one term in the fourth form, two of us were tea boys for the staff. Just before morning break we collected the tea trolley from the kitchen, delivered it to the staff room, and collected up the empties at the end of break. I suspect that our clothes smelled strongly of smoke when we got back to lesson three.

After our O-levels, before the days when pupils left once exams had finished, we had a week of visits. I suspect that Eric McCollin had a hand in the planning, in view of the imagination. One day to Cadbury's in Bournville (lots of samples to eat!); a trip around a liner in Tilbury docks; a visit to Fleet Street, where we each came away with our name cast on a linotype machine; a visit to the Festival of Britain exhibition on the South Bank, and a trip to the Kent coalfield, going down to the workings. We went no further once it meant crawling, rather than just crouching. No wonder that the whole field was closed down a few years later. At the surface we all showered together, and I have a memory of Ed Still in nothing but his socks, strapping on his watch. What would Safeguarding have to say nowadays?

It was very interesting, in 1951, after Ralph Steele moved on, how Fred Scott and Bern Samways vied with each other to be the strictest master on duty at assembly time. Fred inspired me to go on to study physics, and helped me to gain my place in Oxford.

Letters for the next edition should be sent to Lindsay Martin, preferably by email:

[lindsay@lindsaycmartin.co.uk](mailto:lindsay@lindsaycmartin.co.uk)

# Obituary

## Don Coates

(BHCHS 1953-60)



1960 1st XI Cricket

Don Coates was an exceptionally keen all-round sportsman throughout the whole of his school career. In football he played at every position, including

goalkeeper, over the course of his progress from the U13s to the 1st XI.

In cricket, he was in the 1st XI

by the fifth form and then captained the team during his final year.

Don continued playing football for the Old Bucks until the 1970s and also cricket until the Old Bucks cricket team folded. Subsequently he began playing for various local clubs, including Woodford Green. After he had retired from playing he concentrated on umpiring and was highly appreciated as an umpire on the local circuit and in the Essex League.

He worked in the Civil Service for the whole of his professional career, spanning 38 years. Starting in the Ministry of Aviation and moving through different ministries before taking early retirement from the Ministry of Defence in 1998. His versatility as a Civil Servant

matched that of his earlier football career, with spells in Policy, Finance, Contracts, Personnel, Document Security and Building Management.

Don Coates died on 3rd April 2016 following a long period of ill health.

**Roger White**, a contemporary of Don Coates, writes...

*I was sad to learn that Don had died. In the 57/58 year Don and I were in 5B with form master Mr Tilley. We lesser mortals were only allowed to take a maximum of 8 O level GCSEs, whereas those in the heady heights of forms 5A and 5alpha took up to 12 subjects. Don got 8 subjects, beating me by 1! Mr Tilley had nicknames for everyone in his form. I was Blanco, Don was probably Overcoat!*

*He was a School Prefect, Hainault House Captain, achieved Football Colours and was in the Basketball Team. Don was a good all-rounder with whom I was privileged to be associated.*



1959-60 1st XI Football. Don Coates is front row, 4th from the left

## John Stephenson

(Economics, 1967-69)



John Stephenson was appointed to the staff as Head of Economics in 1967, having previously taught at Harold Hill Grammar School. After only two years, however, he left BHCHS to forge a successful career in tertiary education, beginning at the North East London Polytechnic where he became Lecturer in Environmental Studies.

He obtained his first professorship at NELP, becoming Head of the School for Independent Study and completing a DPhil in 1990.

While he was at NELP he also stood for Parliament as a Labour candidate three times during the 1970s. He was unsuccessful each time, but this did not deter him from promoting his progressive ideas in education, firstly becoming Director of Higher Education for Capability at Leeds University and latterly as Director of the International Centre for Learner-Managed Learning at Middlesex University.

At the same time, he played a key role in the UNESCO-linked World

Education Fellowship which gave him a platform to inspire creativity in teachers and learners in many other countries, especially India, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand. He continued to pursue freelance international projects after his formal retirement from the university sector.

The advent of electronic distance learning provided a new base for innovating approaches to work-based learning. John convened an International Conference in London in 2000 on Teaching and Learning Online, which led to him editing one of the first influential books on this subject. At Middlesex University, John was a driving force in the development of the Professional Doctorate, built on his ever strong advocacy of students managing their own learning in ways relevant to their work and life. John applied the concept of independent study to his own interests – for instance, to learn about wine and plant a small vineyard. Both this venture and his attempts to master the piano keyboard had mixed results. For John, however, the learning process was just as satisfying as the outcome. In later years, he ran the Bath Half-Marathon twice, latterly at the age of 70. He was still attending the YMCA gym regularly until February 2016 when his resistance to prostate cancer, and subsequently dementia, finally started to crumble.

John Stephenson died on 18th August 2016.

*I am grateful to John's wife Lynne Cunningham for her help with this - Ed.*

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

**Colin Bradley (1939)** died in August 2016. He was the first Old Buck to be appointed as a school governor and served from 1961 to 82. He was also a founder member of the OBA and treasurer for a number of years. He lived in Ilford, and had been suffering from Alzheimer's Disease.

**Brian Bradstock (1942)** died in 2012. I had not traced Brian, but after finding a likely looking listing in Fountain Valley CA, I was able to contact his daughter-in-law via Facebook in December 2016. He had worked as a chemist for the whole of his career with the Californian-based company Sherwin Williams.

**Brian Page (1949)** died in November 2016 following a long struggle with cancer.

**Stephen Sutton (1963)** died in August 2016. He had been suffering from many years of ill health, including a stroke in 2015. He was the brother of Andrew Sutton (1961).

**Darren Russell (1981)** died during the 1990s. He had been a schoolboy boxing champion while still at BHCHS.

## Peter Jay

(BHCHS 1940-45)



After leaving school Peter Jay started working for British Rail as an engineering apprentice at Stratford. At the end of his training he joined the Merchant Navy as an electrician with the Orient Line to Australia. Returning from Australia he married Joan in 1953 and rejoined British Rail, testing substations and overhead lines in Yorkshire, and then moving to Ingatstone, where he joined Crompton Parkinson in Chelmsford, working in drawing and design

## Phil Chesterton

(BHCHS 1957-62)



With his son Richard in 2014

Although he didn't enter the sixth form at BHCHS, Phil Chesterton left school with two skills that would provide the foundation of a fascinating and successful life. Ultimately, it was baseball, which he began playing at school, that would become his over-riding interest and passion, but his earlier career was as a professional musician.

He began playing drums at an early age, and by the time he was 16 he was already taking professional engagements. Despite joining a firm of solicitors as an articled clerk, he was quick to realise that he was earning more from his drumming as well as getting far more satisfaction. Within a year he had left clerical work and began making a living as a drummer. He played professionally for more than 20 years with a number of bands, including some time with Love Affair in the 1970s. He also set up a music and dance recording studio in

Chelmsford. His next move was to sales for various companies involved in electrical/mechanical heavy industry. The final chapter of his career, as he approached 60, was with the Aylesbury Health Authority as an electrician, where he enjoyed the regular hours and working as part of a team again.

Peter had varied interests, including a lifelong involvement in scouting. He was always willing to offer his practical skills to the rest of his family as well as local projects in the village near Aylesbury where he lived.

Peter Jay died, following a stroke, on 19th November 2016. He and Joan had a son and two daughters.

*I am grateful to Peter's son Neil for providing me with information, and I was interested to learn that Neil's headmaster at his school in St Albans was Tony Flower, one of the original entrants at BHCHS and one of our first Head Prefects. - Ed.*

Chelmsford.

In 1984, he met up with his old school friend Martin Williams, who had been one of the active baseball contingent at BHCHS. Martin had found a newly-formed baseball club operating in Waltham Abbey, and Phil decided to introduce his son to play the sport.



Phil (front) with Love Affair in 1974

This was the start of a whole new chapter for Phil. He was instrumental in building the Waltham Abbey Arrows into a national force in baseball, winning many national honours at all levels, including the National Baseball Championship in 2014. The club produced several players, including Phil's son Richard, who went on to represent Great Britain in baseball. Phil died suddenly on 3rd August 2016, following a heart attack. He leaves three children, including two from his first marriage, and Richard from his second marriage.

**Joe Dever**

(BHCHS 1967-74)

Joe Dever, creator of the celebrated Lone Wolf fantasy books and games, died on 29th November 2016. His vast output in the Lone Wolf series attracted a huge and loyal following, especially in Europe, with sales exceeding 12 million copies. Joe had renewed contact with Pete Downey, one of the teachers who had inspired him at BHCHS, and visited Pete in France in 2013 (see photo right).

I have reproduced below the interview with Joe Dever previously published in May 2010. He was busy adding to the Lone Wolf collection at the time of his final illness and his family plan to publish his recent output. Joe had suffered ill health for many years, and was admitted to hospital for bile duct surgery during the summer of 2016.

**A Fantasy Career - Interview with Joe Dever (BHCHS 1967-74)**

JOE DEVER is one of the most prolific published authors to have emerged from BHCHS. Anyone who has ventured into the world of computer role-playing games is likely to have encountered the *Lone Wolf* adventure gamebooks which

have sold over 10.2 million copies worldwide since 1984. His output has been prodigious – 65 books published to date, and he has just finished the newest in the *Lone Wolf* series, which is to be published later this year. When I spoke to Joe recently he had no hesitation in revealing the origin of his success. The biggest influence was the enlightened teaching of Pete Downey and Pete Sillis. Being introduced to The Hobbit and subsequently The Lord of the Rings at the age of 14, Joe began to form his own ideas for a fantasy world he called *Magnamund*. Joe tells me he owes a huge debt of gratitude to Pete Downey in particular for inspiring him and encouraging him to develop his dramatic writing style.

After leaving school, Joe went into music publishing, initially for Pye Records and subsequently as a Recording Engineer for a small start-up West London record company called Virgin Records (whatever did become of them I wonder?). All the while his passion continued for developing *Magnamund* into a very detailed world creation, with thousands of years of myths and mythos. The depth of this detail is what, he feels, keeps his readers coming back for more. Joe credits Pete Sillis for inspiring him in this regard.

“History was my favourite subject. It was full of interesting stories. I think Mr Sillis had a gift for mixing anecdote and analysis in the right proportion which, for me at least, made his lessons memorable.”

In 1981, he decided to leave Virgin and join Games Workshop as part of its editorial team. It was a bold career change, but Joe said he felt certain that the time was right for him to get into games professionally. Role-playing games like *Dungeons & Dragons* were becoming hugely popular, and with their success came a wave of new interest in fantasy fiction, particularly the works of Michael Moorcock and JRR Tolkein. In the summer of 1982 he established his games credentials by becoming the first British winner of the Advanced *Dungeons & Dragons* World Championship, which was staged in Baltimore.

Joe left Games Workshop in 1983 to write his first *Lone Wolf* gamebook, *Flight from the Dark*. It is set in the world of Magnamund and puts the reader in the lead role of a gifted young hero called Lone Wolf, a Sommlending Kai Lord. On its release, the book became a bestseller worldwide and created a

demand for the rest of the books that were to follow regularly over the next 12 years.

From 1996 onwards, Joe shifted his creative focus away from gamebooks and novels and more towards designing computer games. He told me that he was lucky to be in at the start of the tremendously successful Sony Playstation 1, writing games that sold millions of copies worldwide. The results far exceeded Sony’s most optimistic of expectations.

In 2005, Joe underwent extensive surgery for kidney cancer. It was successful and he made a good and rapid recovery and was soon back at work. Although the market for adventure gamebooks faded in the late 1990s, there has since been a strong resurgence of interest in several European countries – France and Italy in particular. So he continues to be busy both as a writer and a games designer.

Joe has two children – his son Ben was born in 1981 and his daughter Sophie in 1987. Ben teaches English in London, and Sophie works for a fine arts company in Dublin. These days Joe divides his time between the UK, Belgium and Italy. He says he likes to spend his winters in England because of the weather. “Cold and damp. It’s the perfect weather for staying indoors and writing!”

For more information and a complete list of his publications, see Joe Dever’s entry on [Wikipedia](#).

**Jonathan Sutton**

(BHCHS 1962-69)



Jonathan Sutton died following a long battle with inoperable cancer, on 17th September 2016. Hearing this was a double shock. The news arrived on the same day that the autumn edition of *OB News* had gone to press - carrying the photo of Jonathan during a viola lesson

when he was in the first year at BHCHS. The second shock was that this was the third death reported from the 1962 year group within a few months.

Jonathan admitted to me when I first traced him that he had very mixed feelings about BHCHS. In particular he disliked the compulsory sporting programme. While still at school his ambition was to become a pilot, but he was unable to achieve this because of the very strict eyesight requirements. He was, however, successful in working in aviation for the whole of his career. He was involved in aircraft operations and roster scheduling for a number of different airlines.

Jonathan lived in Germany for many years and subsequently in Hungary until his final illness necessitated a return home.



# Richard Battersby

(BHCHS 1962-69, OBA Chairman 2009-16)



Richard handing our cheque to St Clare Hospice after our quiz in 2009

AS YOU may know, Dick Battersby, the OBA Chairman, lost his fight with Parkinson's Disease last August. Dick was a very special friend and member of our group.

Dick was born in 1950 into a family with three older sisters who all played a part in his early life. This influenced his character which, while quiet almost to the point of shyness, was something that drove him to do things properly and well. My early memories are of cycling to school from Loughton together. We ran a gauntlet of kids from the secondary modern school in Loughton who had given Dick a hard time in the past. This was resolved very quickly with a bike pump weighted with a couple of lead toy soldiers wielded like a mace. He was horrified when he found out what I had done and made me leave it at home after the first week, under threat of me cycling alone. This was the first evidence that he was a nicer person than me - not difficult.

One notable morning, as we turned into Roding Lane, there was black ice on the adverse camber, which resulted in us both coming off and sliding across the road into cars waiting to pull out. As soon as we knew the other was not hurt we realigned the handlebars and, waving to the drivers looking at their dented cars, went on our way - youth and flexibility.

John Haberfield reminded me about times when they would rock the 25-foot-high tower around the hall while setting up the spotlights for school plays. This was achieved by not putting on the brakes and

swinging from side to side while standing on the top - Health & Safety? There are other stories from the plays which involve the space under the stage and which are still not for publication.

Then there was the time he and John were bump starting Dick's Hillman. When the engine started they both fell over, leaving the car to progress towards things of much greater value. Although Dick later denied it, he could run quite quickly.

Dick Nichols confirmed the enduring power of bus spotting as they continued corresponding when either of them saw a rare London Bus. This went back to school days when they would travel all over London clutching their Allen directories. They once got chucked out of East Ham Bus Station when they were caught autographing the third-ever production Routemaster.

Although not brilliant academically at school, Dick left to work at Roneo in Romford where, through day release he got his HNC in Engineering which was then followed by an MA in Industrial Psychology at Hatfield Polytechnic. Later, he went on to teach the MA course at Hatfield.

Dick married Jane Wells (Wells of Woodford) in 1975 and they had a son Nick and daughter Suzanna in 1979 and 1981. In 1987 his marriage failed and Dick set up a new home in Epping with Linda. This became a family home that many would envy.

After a short spell at Chubb, he went to work at Delta Nicotech in Kings Langley as Production



With his son Nick c.1982

Manager, and in a few years joined the board and later was appointed Managing Director, a post he held until he sold the company in 2009. He then started his own consultancy, Carter Wells Ltd advising companies at board level on strategic staffing and production issues.

His interests endured all his life. Bus and train spotting (he was a member of the Ongar railway group); aircraft spotting (his last trip was to the Fairford International show) and his impersonation of a Spitfire flypast was very realistic; music (while confined to bed during his final illness he reorganised his huge library of music kept on line); IT (he made the keyboard of my Surface tablet work again in his last few weeks).

Notably, his funeral concluded with the Bonzo Dog Do Da Band's, *Kill all the Beautiful People*, (have a listen if you don't know it).

Typically, he had thought of us and as a last request made us smile.

In conclusion, my thoughts of him are of a person who was always looking for how he could help others through his skills and expertise. Never critical and with an enormous capacity to listen to those who needed his time. He was a personally private and gentle person who was never outspoken or judgemental and always there to help his family and friends.

One who will be truly missed.

**Howard Smith**  
(BHCHS 1962-69)

I don't remember speaking with Richard at school, although we were only one year apart. But during our early email exchanges and phone conversations it became obvious that he possessed qualities and skills that would be valuable in building our network. Fundamentally, he understood the nature of what we were doing. Almost as important, he had a great wealth of technical and computing skills which he was always happy to share.

My first attempt to engineer him onto the committee failed. At the time he was very preoccupied with running Delta. When a further opportunity arose several years later, I tried again. By now he was in the process of launching a new career as a freelance consultant, but my persistence paid off.

As he began to take on the chairman's job I began to discover even more qualities in Richard. He showed superb judgement and managed to combine no-nonsense pragmatism with quiet diplomacy. Always quick to respond to issues where the rest of the committee needed to consult him.

He was great fun to work with, and had no hesitation at pitching in with all sorts of help when we were organising events. During his eight years as chairman, the Old Bucks became stronger despite the inevitable decline in numbers.

It is a great privilege to have been his colleague.

**Graham Frankel**