

# OLD BUCKWELLIANS NEWS



November 2016

Number 35

## The End of a Brave Struggle



Our Chairman, Dick Battersby, finally lost his battle with Parkinson's Disease in the early hours of 8th August. During the past two years he had faced the debilitating illness with courage and determination to continue with normal life as far as possible. But the onset was shockingly rapid, and the past few months had been extremely difficult for him and Linda.

We shall publish full tributes in the next edition but Richard was one of the best people I have ever worked with in any capacity. As Chairman of the Association for the past 8 years he understood the nature of the organisation and showed sound judgement at all times. He had no concern for status and was always happy to support the committee, not only by sharing his extensive knowledge and many skills but also rolling his sleeves up and getting stuck in to help on absolutely anything. He made important contributions to all our activities: the revamping of our website, organising successful quiz evenings, our annual dinners, and of course the major project of celebrating our school's 75th anniversary.

Richard himself deserved far more than his 65 years.

Graham Frankel



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...and mine was a Headmaster p10



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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

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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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# What next for OB News?

Although we have all heard quite enough about Brexit in recent months, I need to remind you about a matter of no national consequence, but relevant to the loyal readers of *Old Buckwellians News*. If we fail to appoint a new editor, the spring 2017 edition will be the last. Grexit means Grexit.

In our committee deliberations, and when the matter was discussed at the AGM this year, we wondered whether some potential candidates may be discouraged, believing that there is a requirement for the style or content to follow the pattern of the past 18 years. This is not the case. I am certain that the new editor would be given a relatively free rein. I am still open to discussing this informally, with absolutely no obligation.

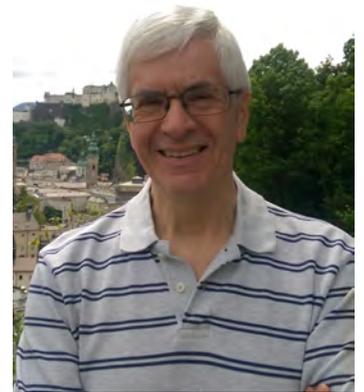
I am very grateful to the various contributors to this edition. It has been fascinating getting insights

into the early life of Jack Taylor (p10) - how many of you knew that our headmaster's first job was as a tea taster?

No less enlightening is the information we have uncovered about Fred Scott (p16). It is good to see the human side of the Deputy Head. I was not alone in remembering him as a rather fearsome presence.

I was delighted to have the opportunity to publish Robert Druce's remarkable account of his childhood and school life. This is not an *OB News* feature - I would need to postpone Grexit for a further 150 editions to manage that. But you can get the full story - see p8.

Andrew Howison's tale of a delinquent escapade will raise a few eyebrows, but it is good to get a different perspective on school life.



David Patrick concludes his three-part chronicle of 15 years in the English department at BHCHS. David's excellent contribution (p14) has received many favourable comments from readers.

And don't miss Mel Turland's amusing comparison (p6) of life at two contrasting grammar schools.

Graham Frankel

## PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY



This photo was sent to me by **Jim Appleby (BHCHS 1950-58)**, but I have not yet found out much about it. After leaving school, Jim trained as a teacher and had a short spell teaching at West Hatch. Then, after three years teaching in Bermuda, he spent the remainder of his career in Canada, working in Vancouver where he taught at University and as a Principal in the Vancouver School Board. Jim sent me a selection of photos - including this one - in 2013, accompanied by a brief note that said he was suffering from lung cancer and only had a few weeks to live. Jim died in November 2013.

I am almost certain that the members of this jolly group were the prefects in 1957-58. The only one I can identify with a degree of certainty is Peter Cowling, who was the Head Prefect that year and is carrying the Union Jacks. Sadly, although I traced Peter some years ago, we didn't keep connected and I hope that one of their number may tell us a bit more about the occasion.

# BUCKS FIZZ

News and notes about Old Bucks

## Gapes Bounces Back



It was good to see **Mike Gapes (BHCHS 1964-71)** bouncing back on the political scene after his serious health scare last year. Rushed into hospital after suffering a heart attack at a Jools Holland concert in the Albert Hall in November, Mike was out of action for several months.

Mike has acquired something of an elder statesman mantle in the

Labour Party, and was seen regularly on TV and radio during the post-Brexit turmoil that triggered the big shake up across the UK political scene. As well as commenting on national issues, Mike has kept his focus on local matters, and the media caught up with him and the newly elected Mayor of London responding to the chronic issue of the infamous Redbridge Roundabout.

## Terence notches up 40 Years

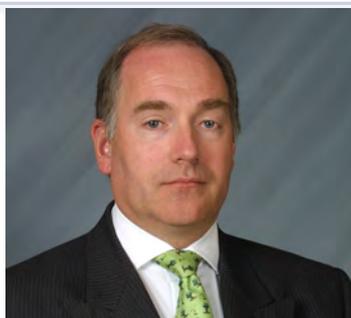


In January this year, **Terence Atkins (BHCHS 1959-65)** celebrated 40 years as organist of Barnet Parish Church. The occasion was marked with a special Evensong service attended by many former choristers. Distinguished

returners included the celebrated baritone Roderick Williams. During a time when church choirs have struggled to maintain numbers Terence has done well to maintain a choir of 16 trebles and 16 men.

## Cambridge Chairman

**Stephen Parker (BHCHS 1970-77)** added another role to his impressive list of non-executive positions in May 2016 when he was appointed Chairman of the specialist pharmaceutical company Sareum. Based in Cambridge, Sareum has a number of new drugs in development aimed mainly at cancer.



## Meanwhile, over in the Blue Corner.....



On the other side of the House, **David Evennett (BHCHS 1960-67)** is another Old Buck who could fairly claim elder statesman status. After the new Prime Minister had completed her reshuffling we learned that

David had been re-appointed to the position of Lord Commissioner to HM Treasury (Government Whip), the same job he had held in Mr Cameron's government.

## Extreme Resilience



This must be one of the most inspiring stories of determination and grit. In the spring of 2015, **Chris Dyason (BHCHS 1959-66)** was involved in a horrific accident while taking part in a cycle race in Norfolk. A collision with a camper van left him with a broken neck and various other fractures. While he was languishing in hospital immobile for 8 days he wondered if he would ever ride again, let alone race. By the end of the year he was training on his turbo trainer in the garage, and in March this

year had his first ride back on the road. There followed some tricky negotiations with his wife Paula, and a lot more training, but in April he started racing again. By June he had set a lifetime personal best for 10 miles. Chris was not much involved in sport at BHCHS, but took up cycling seriously in his 20s. His career has been in property development, and Chris has promised to write more about his sporting activities in the next edition of *OB News*.

## Sydney Reunion 2016

Stuart Low writes... As last year the reunion of those down under was held on the first Saturday in February but with a change of venue. As there were reduced numbers we returned to one of our early haunts - The Lord Nelson Hotel. This is the oldest continually licensed hotel in Australia and dates back to 1841 (not old in UK terms) and is also the home of the oldest pub brewery in Australia. An appropriate home for the "Old" Buckwellians.

Numbers were down this year as some members were on holiday and others had prior commitments, but a total of 14 of us met for lunch. Once again Phil Harper, less Sheilagh this year, came up from Tasmania, Stuart Evans, sans bagpipes, made it up from Melbourne and Grahame Clark came from the ACT.

It was great to see two new attendees this year. Firstly Chris Mobbs, who endured seven hours on a bus to make his way up from Canberra. Considering he was only at the school for a short while, his attendance was a reflection once again on how the school influenced old pupils. Hopefully Chris will be a regular face at our meetings.



Standing L-R: Chris Mobbs (1955), Paul Faithfull (1988), Emma Faithfull with Adam, Stuart Evans (1953), Les Bassett (1953), Grahame Clark (1953), Phil Harper (1957), Tony Brandon (1948), Guy Lee (1953). Sitting L-R: Stuart Low (1952), Sylvie Low, Ann Lee, Pat Brandon.

Our second new face was Adam Faithfull. It is very doubtful if he will remember his visit as he was only around five months old. He was probably the most well behaved of us all, despite being passed from hand to hand and being cooed at by the ladies.

Our next reunion will once again be on the first Saturday in February in 2017 - if we are spared!! - and hopefully we can get a full house of up to 30.



## Vinyl Revival for Rock Band



The revival of vinyl as a recording medium was a surprise to me, but the trend is beginning to look like more than a passing fad. **Stewart Mills (BHCHS 1960-67)** tells me that a limited edition of 500 copies of an LP featuring his old band *Hackensack* has been released recently. *Give it Some* includes rare studio tracks recorded between 1969 and 1971.

Stuart (he's the one on the left with his back to the wall) originally joined *Hackensack*

soon after leaving BHCHS. Having started out in a career with Lloyds Bank, Stewart negotiated a year's unpaid leave to join *Hackensack* when they were making the difficult transition to becoming fully professional. The band travelled widely, often supporting more established names such as *Free* and *Status Quo*.

Stewart did eventually return to Lloyds - but that was twenty years later. He is still performing regularly, now with *Jukebox Junkies* (see below)

*Give it Some* is available from: [www.discogs.com](http://www.discogs.com)



## Small World and the End of a Nightmare



Do you remember our former "Small World" column? I stopped it because somehow the coincidences just didn't seem newsworthy, but I couldn't resist this one. You'll see why. Since we moved to Hertford 25 years ago only one thing has made us unhappy - the central heating system we had put in has been a constant headache. Over 25 years we had worked our way round all the local plumbers - each in turn tried and failed to get to the root of the problem. We began to get

quotes to strip the whole system and start again. A neighbour recommended a firm in Buckhurst Hill - Academy Heating. The name sounded good anyway. It was clear from the outset that the man from Academy knew his stuff. "Nothing wrong with the original installation...your problems have been caused by everything else that has been done since...no need to start all over again."

I admitted that I wouldn't have thought of calling on a firm from Buckhurst Hill, but as it happened I did go to school there.

You know what is coming next. This turned out to be **John Austin (BHCHS 1980-85)**, who thus became the 88th person traced from the 1980 year group.

And our central heating system? Works like a dream.

[www.academyheating.com](http://www.academyheating.com)

# Pigs is Pegs and Pegs is Pigs

By Ivan Moss (BHCHS 1962-69)

In the last edition we read the entertaining account of Ivan and Valerie's extended trip to New Zealand. During his stay, he asked me if I could connect him with some of the Old Bucks living there. The result was a double bonus. The Moss family met up with some of our members from three generations. For the rest of us, an extra helping of Ivan's sparkling travelogue. Eat your heart out, Bill Bryson.....

AFTER some five months in New Zealand I like to think we were getting used to the language. A classic was a conversation with a kiwi who kept pegs. Now I knew Kiwis had all sorts of idiosyncrasies but keeping pegs as pets was a bit far-fetched. It was only when I realised pegs is pigs that I decided I was not talking to a lunatic. By the same token, if you want pegs from a hardware shop you must ask for pigs!

Having had a thorough grounding in the New Zealand way of life we set off on our travels. Going south first to the pristine forest on Stewart Island and the even more pristine forest on Ulva, all south of South Island. We travelled up the west coast of South Island, which is a different country from the east side. The sort of glacial features to have Tommy Leek drooling, including two real live glaciers.

We then proceeded to North Island



John and Margaret Dyke

with a chorus from our South Island friends "Why do you want to go there?!"

I had discovered that New Zealand was full of foreign invasive species which they are now trying to get rid of. Don't be an Australian Possum in New Zealand is my advice. What really interested me was how well that very rare migrant species The Old Buck had fared in this land. Your esteemed editor had given me contact details for four such of this species. Unfortunately, I was unable to meet one as our schedule precluded it. However, I was able to meet three.



Ivan with Ken Madgwick and Martin Williams at their meeting in Auckland

It was a fascinating experience as all three were complete strangers. We had not overlapped at Buckhurst Hill, and the only bond was that we had been at Buckhurst Hill sometime between 1947 and 1969.

Our first meeting was with John Dyke (1947-1952) and his wife, where we had a very enjoyable supper. They emigrated in 1964 and because of the requirements of emigration they came out as singles and married six weeks after arrival. They clearly have thrived here with no regrets. John managed to drag out some Old Bucks memorabilia. It was nice to see some things didn't change, such as the blue school report book carefully covered in brown paper as if it were pornographic material! He had an old school photo. What struck me was a large number of the boys were not in school uniform. Something to do with clothes rationing. I was also amused by the number of very youthful looking teachers who I was to encounter ten years later!

Then, after many adventures including wrestling with canoes, Martin Williams (1957-1962) and his wife Carol put up with us or should that be put us up for two days in their lovely house just north of Auckland. They were a sub species as they had not emigrated at the beginning of their working life but after they retired in 2007, to be with their children who had been in

New Zealand a long time. They had settled and seemed to be enjoying life. We had a lovely day out in Auckland, which sits on lots of extinct volcanos. Well not that extinct, the last one blew its top big time 600 years ago. However, the comforting Auckland Volcanic Field Contingency Plan says it doesn't know if and when life could get exciting again, but if the seismologists detect any activity the advice is leave fast!

On our very last day in New Zealand we met up with our third Old Buck, Ken Madgwick (1948-53). This was for morning coffee and cake on our way to Auckland Airport. Ken had emigrated in the 1960s and set up shop as a doctor, retiring many years later after a successful career.

I am not sure I can draw any significant conclusions from this small sample of migratory Old Bucks, suffice to say they had all taken to heart the school motto as they gave us a wonderful time.

We had a wonderful time in New Zealand or had we been in Aotearoa, which is the Maori name meaning 'The Land of the Long White Cloud'. A whole new area of Empire history to explore which Pete Sillis never touched upon. I discovered the French nearly got there first and the Russians put in an appearance late in the nineteenth century. However, the British established themselves and pulled a marvellous con trick on the Maori!

If you are a Maori your ancestors signed the Maori version of the Treaty of Waitangi, which is different from the English version signed by good Queen Victoria's representatives. I wonder if the combined brains of those who taught me Politics and English can tease out the difference in meaning between 'sovereignty' and 'governance'! It is a mess that the current governments are trying to resolve.

Leaving New Zealand we travelled across the Pacific, travelling through history as we visited the remnants of the French Empire in Polynesia. I must have known that six years of being taught French at the end of which I knew who 'je suis' was would be worthwhile. Then on again to Rapa Nui or to the English-speaking world Easter Island, part of Chile and therefore theoretically Spanish-speaking. So three 'great European powers' had poked their noses in to other people's business. What was really fascinating was that through all these trials and tribulations the people of the Pacific retained their culture and language across thousands of miles of ocean.

All in all, an amazing unforgettable journey.



On a less hospitable island... Ivan and his brother David as Samneric in "Lord of the Flies" at BHCHS, 1963

# Two Schools of Thought

By Mel Turland (BHCHS 1958-61)

Mel Turland started at BHCHS at the age of 11, but a family relocation to London meant a change of schools in the fourth form, and he joined Tottenham Grammar School in 1961. After leaving TGS, Mel studied English at Leeds University and obtained a PhD. He then trained as a teacher and taught English in grammar and comprehensive schools, including a brief spell at Woodford County High. Subsequently, he taught English as a foreign language in Sweden, and then worked at the City Lit Centre for the Deaf. He then became a Careers Advisor after qualifying in Careers Guidance at the Polytechnic of the South Bank. Mel has a strong interest in the Holocaust and his recent book on the subject is reviewed on p8.



THE SHORTCUT from my new home to my new school was a narrow footpath through the centre of a truly immense municipal cemetery. Cycling along the footpath (I know; sorry) between two vast swathes of the Tottenham dead, I was hoping for a bit more life at the school, but, emerging into White Hart Lane, first impressions were disappointing. The school looked like a Victorian workhouse, hemmed in by houses, with (unlike the ideal pastoral setting of Buckhurst Hill) neither a tree nor a blade of grass to be seen. Even worse, just inside the school gate, was a square space framed on three sides by high concrete walls. It looked like an execution yard. "So you're the new boy, are you?" was the inevitable and repeated comment from my new teachers. As if I didn't feel conspicuous enough as the new boy, I was still wearing my Buckhurst Hill blue blazer: I was like an ink-blob in a sea of black and red (the prefects were redcoats).

The sports field was a long way from the school on derelict wasteland surrounded by disused factories. Ignorant of the rules of rugby (with nobody offering to explain), I knew my first priority was to escape from this barbaric ritual acted out on an ocean of mud. I had always enjoyed the football

and cricket at BHCHS, but getting involved in this brutal anarchy was too much. A compensating factor was that there were no gruelling cross-country runs (there was no country). Offsetting this were the semi-sadistic blindfold boxing matches in the gym. If you didn't keep constantly on the move (or even if you did) you were very likely to receive a very nasty whack on the face from your opponent, deliberately chosen by the PT teacher to be twice your size and weight. I made strenuous efforts as an alternative to get into the execution courtyard, which turned out to be a Fives Court, 'fives' being a form of squash, but at an early evolutionary stage. Unlike the boxing, at least you could see when you were losing.

Another escape line was to volunteer for work in the School Library. Stamping books was not in the same league of exercise as rugby or blindfold boxing but was certainly safer. This is where I met the School Librarian, the Head of the English Department, the redoubtable Michael de Bock Porter, unavoidably of course nicknamed BOCKERS by the boys. Bockers had been an RAF pilot during the war, on Whitley bombers, and was usually attired in an airforce uniform for the Air Training Corps volunteers. It was somehow slightly anachronistic to be taught a love poem by WH Auden in English lessons by a man dressed as though he were about to take off to knock seven bells out of a German city or drop mines in the Heligoland Bight. He had a notice on his office door (office = walk-in cupboard) saying "The impossible we do at once; miracles take a little longer". Encouraging to know that this level of confidence reigned supreme in the school despite the humble adage. But it was a welcome break to escape the school and hurtle down the High Street in Bockers' Morris Minor to get some books from Tottenham Public Library for our own school library, though disconcerting that Bockers,

a steady and nerveless bomber pilot, drove the Morris like he was flying a Spitfire, darting through the busy traffic as though trying to break up a squadron of Heinkels intent on bombing the school to bits.

The Headmaster himself is difficult to describe without straining credibility. He was a truly eccentric Cambridge academic without any communication skills and like a fish out of water as a Head. He would have been more at home in ancient Greece or Egypt, his adopted areas of academic research. His constant and repetitive habit was touching the tips of his fingers together as though kneading a lump of dough, and when not kneading, the hands would join behind his back, but under his master's gown, billowing it out, giving him the appearance of a giant demented rook. He was the despair of both masters and boys, and especially of Mr. Topham ("Toby"), the Deputy Head, a down-to-earth, no-nonsense ex-Army Yorkshireman, to whom he delegated all his duties. His sole contribution to the life of the school was annually to wheel on an obscure bit-part actor (an Old Boy) who had once had a walk-on part in an old black-and-white film nobody had ever heard of, as an illustration of the sublime heights to which the present schoolboys could aspire. The only really memorable occasion on which he made any impression was when addressing the school during assembly about a window which had been broken by boys playing in the schoolyard with a full-size football. He said we could use tennis balls or anything slightly larger and lighter, culminating his address in a portentous crescendo, "BUT IF YOU HAVE BIG BALLS, KEEP THEM OFF THE YARD!" Toby's face was a picture; six hundred boys were stunned into silence. My own Form Master was a French teacher who wore a white jacket and red bow tie, and sandals, even in the depth of winter, rather resembling an ice-cream seller or



Mel Turland age 11

third-rate comedian at the end-of-the-pier show in a seaside town. I was never in his French class and all I remember was a little talk he gave the form which ended with the moral advice, "Never do anything on the cheap! Always buy the best you can afford!" He was standing beside my desk and when I looked down I noticed a big bare toe poking through a hole in his sock and, of course, the sandal on that foot. It had the effect of somewhat detracting from the high ethical tone of his peroration. Either that, or teachers weren't paid as much as I thought.

There were other interesting characters on the staff, particularly Tony Cash, the young Russian teacher who was also a brilliant jazz clarinet-player, about to leave the school to work at the BBC, who dressed, and had a hairstyle, like one of the Beatles. The boys admired and could relate to him. More difficult to relate to - understandably - was the German teacher, Herr Sklarz, who came from Breslau and sported an immense German moustache like the Kaiser. He would enter the classroom and cry out, "Öffnen Sie die Fenster, dummköpfer, es stinkt hier!" (or words to that effect). His way of correcting your grammar was to jam a sharp elbow on your shoulder and bear down with all his not inconsiderable weight every



time you made a mistake. Later, in the small German A-level class, he would often fall asleep as the boys in the class took turns to read Der Schimmelreiter and, on the opposite side of a small table to him, I would point with a pen to the place we had reached in the text, so he knew where we were when he woke up. I always hoped he thought the pen was for my own benefit. I remember fondly when encountering him in a school corridor, I would take my hands out of my pockets and say, "Guten Tag, Herr Sklarz!" Twenty yards further down the corridor he would turn round (when he had recalled my name) and return with "Ach! Guten Tag, Herr Toorland!"

There was a sizeable contingent of Jewish boys in the school (which Herr Sklarz would lead in a separate

assembly) and one of them told me that Herr Slarz had been held in a Nazi concentration camp and just managed to get out of Germany before the war started. This was serious stuff, and I guess now that a possibility might have been that he had been arrested during the Kristallnacht pogrom of November, 1938, and probably incarcerated in Dachau, Buchenwald or Sachsenhausen. Herr Sklarz passed away in the Stamford Hill Odeon during a screening of Peyton Place. Utterly bizarre, of course, but better than a sticky end in Dachau.

As an addition to this rather sad tale, I am still great friends with a Jewish boy I met at the school, who created problems by destroying the silence I tried to maintain in the School Library, not malevolently but out of high spirits. He was a

great help to me when we were both at Leeds University later, when I wasn't doing very well, and went on eventually to become Head of the English Department at the Royal Hospital School, Ipswich.

The atmosphere in the classrooms at Tottenham ranged from a sort of sullen complacency to outright mayhem, depending on the level of order the masters were able to maintain. Discipline reached rock-bottom in our French lessons when Nigel Gotteri and his cohorts would conduct an ongoing all-out war against the teacher, a rotund buffoon given to suggestive innuendo (thus playing into their hands) and with a peculiar high-pitched voice. Gotteri, the school organist and a classical singer with an unbelievably wide vocal range, could mimic any kind of animal noise, usually from the jungle, like a screeching parakeet, or produce an ear-piercing manic laugh at full volume, with the extraordinary ability to project these sounds anywhere in the room. Writing on the blackboard, the teacher would swing round and shout "WHO MADE THAT BLOODY NOISE?" to the loud merriment of the rest of the class. Little work got done, but it could be excruciatingly funny. The pinnacle of the Gotteri gang's disruptive achievements was to tie the end of a reel-to-reel language tape to the window latch and let the tape down into the playground two floors below. It was pathetic but

undeniably amusing to see the teacher trying to haul it back in again.

To compare and contrast BHCHS and TGS is not that easy. As a boy at Buckhurst and a teenager at Tottenham, I had literally two schools of thought. Both places followed the usual pattern of masters in gowns, the House system, morning assembly, sports activities and the curriculum. One was a country school, the other very much a town school, with more of a working-class catchment area, and with much less academic pressure to perform well. I'd say that TGS was more relaxed and laid-back (the dinner hall was self-service, there were no Saturday detentions, etc.) but that perception might have depended on age, especially from a sixth-form perspective.

Whatever may be said about the relative merits of comprehensive and grammar school education, there can be no doubt that BHCHS and TGS, as grammar schools, were memorable and worthwhile. In a way, I wouldn't have missed either of them. But I will leave the last word to Bockers. I went back to Tottenham Grammar after I had left and it had suddenly become the Somerset Comprehensive School (courtesy, I think, of Shirley Williams). I saw Bockers coming down the stairs from the staff room and asked him how it was going. "It's bloody terrible," he said. "I'm trying to wreck it!"

## PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY 2

This photo is one of an excellent set taken by **Steve Newberry (BHCHS 1958-65)** during the autumn term, 1963.

There is an interesting story behind the photos, reflecting on the nature of the educational system at the time.

Steve writes.....

*The school wouldn't let me do art A-level in addition to three science subjects because the timetable didn't allow it, so it was suggested that instead I could take arty photos of school events and the set of music pictures were the first.*

*I printed them up on nice atmospheric Bromesko paper and they were displayed (I understand) at an evening parents' event; I then got orders for prints from parents.*

*However, that was the end of it; no more photo commissions at school.*

*I continued taking photos but didn't get to study art until later in life via Winchester College of Art.*

*The attached photo makes the hair on the back of my neck stand on end. Spooky.*

*What's missing is the sound effects in that cavernous empty space, the unmistakable clatter of the chairs being pushed about on a rainy lunchtime or the silent hubbub of the hordes arriving for the daily assembly. Ooh! Not to mention the tuneful scratchings of the poor victim in the shot.*

The viola-playing subject here was **Jonathan Sutton (BHCHS 1962-69)**.

We may never discover why Steve failed to follow in the footsteps of his predecessors **Peter Hodder (BHCHS 1938-45)** and **Ken Bray (BHCHS 1940-45)** who had both been engaged to take photos at school events at various times.



# BOOKSHELF

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

This superbly written autobiography chronicles the childhood and teenage years growing up in Loughton before and during the War.

The author was one of the ablest, but also one of the most rebellious early pupils at BHCHS.

Druce recounts his young life in great detail. Former pupils of Staples Road and BHCHS will instantly recognise their old schools, and even some of the staff. Robert changed all the names of the characters, other than his own. You won't get far into the story before you see why he took the precaution of changing the names.

Central to the story is Robert's difficult relationship with his father, who was over-ambitious for his son's success. Early in his time at Buckhurst Hill, Walter May, the brilliant French teacher, recognised Druce's outstanding linguistic ability. As well as nurturing this, he became almost a substitute father, helping Robert to cope with other difficulties that were the inevitable result of rebelliousness.

The author explores many other relationships during his growing

## *My Dad's a Policeman*



**ROBERT DRUCE**

*The book cover shows Robert in the 1943 school photo*

up. His observation is consistently sharp, and he has the uncanny ability to pick out humour from the most difficult circumstances.

*My Dad's a Policeman* is also remarkable as a portrayal of life during the Blitz, which began exactly at the time when the author was entering his first year at BHCHS. Druce brilliantly conveys the terrifying threat of the air raids, as seen by an 11 year old. But then, as the war continued, he tells how he and some of his peers at school became fascinated by the effects of war which made such an impact on their teenage years.

As he grows into his middle teens, Druce describes amusingly and with great honesty, the awakening of adulthood, both sexually and emotionally. In the later chapters, we follow his journey through National Service, university and into working life. My own first contact with Robert Druce was early in 2000, when he became a welcome addition to the growing list of Old Bucks traced. He told me that he was then in the final stages of writing *My Dad's a Policeman* and sent me copies of the eight chapters which cover his time at BHCHS. At that stage he was confident of finding a publisher. We were still hopeful about this when, in the following year, after being

reunited with Walter May, he brought his former French teacher and mentor to our Annual Dinner.

Sadly, the book had not been published when Robert died suddenly in 2005. I remained in contact with Elizabeth, Robert's widow. She was, at first, hopeful of finding a publisher, but this proved impossible. Since Robert's death, the world of publishing has been blown apart by technological developments. Self-publishing, either in hard copy or digital, has swept away the earlier restrictions. Elizabeth readily agreed to allow *My Dad's a Policeman* to become my first project in book publishing.

The first reactions to the book have been very encouraging. It is sad that many of Robert's contemporaries are no longer able to share his work. But the book's appeal will extend far beyond those who were educated with him.

Perhaps, at some point, we may consider publishing a printed version. In the hands of a good script writer, it could be turned into an great film.

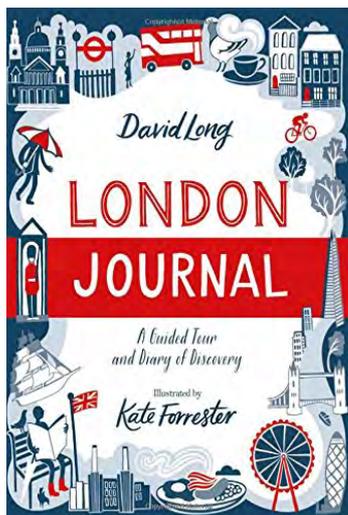
Meanwhile, it is available as an e-book on Amazon at £4.99 and can be downloaded from there into any type of e-reader, not just on Kindle.



*Robert's father - PC Druce*

## ***London Journal* by David Long (BHCHS 1972-80)**

For his latest book about London David Long had a neat idea. Brief introductions to a vast array of attractions and features, with the chance to add



in your own thoughts and observations.

Each double-page spread covers a theme, from great hilltop views and secret gardens to romantic ruins and graves and graveyards; from unspoilt streets to museums of the unexpected; and from ancient inns, palaces and pageants to spy sites and crime scenes.

Every page is beautifully illustrated and the book is the perfect companion for the London visitor, resident, or anyone wishing to explore the city that was so close to our school but largely undiscovered. *London Journal* contains handy recommendations on where to start your journeys.

Published by Michael O'Mara Books and available on Amazon at £7.99.

## ***The Holocaust Enigma: The Final Solution?* by Mel Turland (BHCHS 1958-61)**

Research into the Holocaust has generated a wide range of contributions from historians seeking to provide an explanation for what was

arguably the greatest crime in human history.

Mel Turland has written a worthy and unconventional approach to the subject, seeking to explore a theological explanation.

Academic historians have admitted in the past that the real dynamic of the Holocaust somehow eludes them. But can it be the case that the true motive of this crime is unknown and inexplicable?

Until now, there has been no satisfactory answer. And this lack of understanding, the book maintains, will persist until the Holocaust is placed within a theological framework.

*The Holocaust Enigma: The Final Solution?* is available as an e-book on Amazon at £7.99.

## **THE HOLOCAUST ENIGMA: THE FINAL SOLUTION?**

*A Theological Investigation*



**Mel Turland**

# They Were Only Supposed to Blow the Door Off

By Andrew Howison (BHCHS 1966-71)



I DIDN'T much like school. It wasn't particularly BHCHS, it would have been any school. I had previously gone to St. Marylebone Grammar and I didn't like that one much either, but at least it presented the opportunity to be as disruptive as possible. School was for swots and posh kids who toed the line, did what the parents told them, did what the masters told them. In other words, they were being educated and bettering themselves. Not for me – a rebel.

On one occasion we, the collective fourth year I think it was, were told by the Deputy Headmaster that we were the most badly behaved, disruptive year the school had ever had. It was probably the worst thing he could have said. This was music to our ears, what joy, what an achievement.

The disruptive "gang" was probably about a third of the year, quite a large number by any standards. For a period of time the worst of the worst, about eight of us, were made to take our lessons in the corridor outside the Headmaster's office. This perceived humiliation (if only the staff knew something about child psychology!) was again perfect for us. Our stock was now even higher – "The Corridor Eight".

The Godfather of the year was undoubtedly John van Put. The main gang also had its variable sub-groups and mine included Phil Knight, Martin Folkes and, sometimes, Bill Castle. Our smaller gang were big fans of fireworks (what boy fit to call himself a boy wasn't?) and I had learnt the skill, and effect, of tamping.

One of our first experiments during

a lunch break was to pack a banger (do these still exist?) tightly into a pencil case, place it in the desk of one of the enemy and light it. We just managed to get outside in time to peer through the window as it went off, the desk lid lifting itself open and a swirl of smoke emanating through the inkwell. We nearly wet ourselves laughing. I think this may have been the same poor soul in whose desk we had once placed two bulls' eyes, purloined from biology class, with the message "We're watching you Benson" (or whatever the kid's name was).

The next plan, sometime later, was to blow up the French Cupboard. This was basically a wardrobe-sized cupboard which stood against the wall at the end of one of the corridors and contained equipment and study aids for French lessons – a perfect target. Nobody liked French anyway.

It was a Friday, just after school. I had made the device by taping a few bangers together and using my new found tamping skills to pack them into a package which would certainly cause some damage when it went off – brilliant! Although the cupboard was always locked, there was a very convenient hole at the bottom of the left hand door, just about the right size. Martin was posted look-out.

I had made a longer fuse to the device. I carefully placed this in the hole... and lit it. Obviously we ran, straight to the bus stop and went home, expecting to hear news at Monday assembly of our latest daring success, the school's flummoxed staff being completely

dumbfounded, standing around scratching their heads. Who could have put together such a daring deed!?

The phone went on Saturday. It was Phil and Martin calling me from the baths at Loughton. "It didn't go off, it set fire to the cupboard instead. The kids there for after school football training put it out". Cries of "we're in the shit, they say they are going to call the police, what are we going to do?" wailed down the phone. We were indeed in the poo... possibly, but I suppose it would have been the case if the device had gone off anyway and that's what we had wanted wasn't it?

My plan to get us out of this was cunningly simple. "We say nothing, deny everything. Stick together. You know nothing about it. Admit to nothing. There is nothing they can do without proof. Just deny everything." A truly brilliant plan! I got the bus to Loughton and met up with my fellow felons and re-emphasised the plan. We all agreed.

A fraught and nervous weekend came and went.

Monday morning assembly. Colgate was in shock, or at least it seemed to us he was. "A deliberate act of arson" (no it wasn't, it was a deliberate act of trying to blow something up actually). "The perpetrators have the morning to come forward, if they do not we will be calling in the police. We will find the culprits." I can't say we weren't scared. *Just deny everything.*

The master at the start of that morning's classes asked the pupils if they had seen anything suspicious on Friday. Evidently some had, and they blabbed (swots probably) *Just deny everything.*

I was the first to be called into Colgate's study. "You were seen, Howison." I denied everything. The plan intact.

Phil was next in. "You were seen, Knight." He denied everything. The plan intact.

Martin was next in. "You were seen, Folkes."

"I was only the lookout," a scared Martin blabbed, thereby sealing our fate.

The great foolproof plan no longer intact, undone by timidity - and it

wasn't even 12 o'clock.

We were immediately suspended. My father went off much worse than the proverbial two-bob rocket and certainly far better than the French Cupboard device had. We waited expulsion and sweated it out. Parents were called into the school to have the Riot Act read to them. My father then read an enhanced version of the Act to me.

The school, worried about bad PR, relented. After a week we were allowed to return to school... conquering heroes – but not poor Martin, who was thereafter picked on mercilessly by the larger gang as a "grass".

I learned no lessons from this. I went on to bigger and better devices (outside school from then on, I hasten to add). Silly fireworks were set aside. Weed-killer and sugar were my new toys - tied first of all into newspaper making great smoke bombs. We progressed onto glass bottles, which always broke, filling the air with masses of sweet smelling smoke.

My biggest and most successful device was, thankfully, my last, as the school would have undoubtedly been back on my radar as a target and who knows where that would have ended up. I packed about half a pound of this mixture into a tin can. It was with a member of my outside school gang. Malcolm Pierce (not the sharpest knife in the box, shall we put it) was too impatient to wait until I had made the fuse... and put his cigarette to the top of the can.

I was told the explosion was heard seven miles away. It put us both in hospital. Malcolm had had just enough time to turn around, and had to sit on cushions for many weeks afterwards.

I had just enough time to step back but caught the brunt of the blast in my legs. I was in hospital for two-and-a-half weeks.

Finally, I had learnt my lesson... the hard way.

*Editorial Note - After reading Andrew's story, I was curious to know what happened to him. Did he ever discover an education establishment that worked for him? I still hope to find out, but for now I can only confirm he has avoided becoming a victim of a later plot that went pear-shaped.*

# From Reluctant Teaboy to the Classroom: The Making of a Dedicated Headmaster

The early pupils at BHCHS will have known very little about the personal lives of their teachers. Our first Headmaster, JH Taylor, was no exception in maintaining a traditional distance from both pupils and staff. I met JHT's son John for the first time this year, and he gave me a fascinating insight into the early life of the man who took on the job of creating a new grammar school.



JH ("JACK") TAYLOR was born on January 11, 1903, the elder son of the great golfer of the same name. He was one of a family of seven: two boys and five girls. His celebrated father had, at this time, won three of his five British Open golf championships. JHT Senior was a stocky, resolute self-made man who had risen from humble beginnings in the village of Northam, near Bideford, North Devon. His golfing career as one of England's first professionals had emerged from caddying for wealthy players at his local Westward Ho! course.

Jack junior was born in Richmond, Surrey. The family had moved there when "JH" was appointed as the resident professional at the Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club in 1899. As Jack grew up he was always in awe of his father. While at the County Secondary School in Richmond he developed considerable golfing prowess himself.

If young Jack Taylor had any thoughts about progressing through school into further education, they were not shared by his father. The expectations of the now celebrated golfer were for his son to start making a career at the earliest opportunity.

He complied with his father's wishes. Leaving school at 16, he donned a bowler hat and joined a firm of tea wholesalers, commuting to the City each day. His job was about as far from teaching as you could imagine: preparing tea samples for tasting, visiting

warehouses, attending auctions, occasionally deputising for sales reps. At the end of each day he would join the general stampede to Waterloo to catch the 6.20 back to Richmond.

For Jack Taylor, this was a stressful and uncongenial lifestyle. He soon began to regret his decision not to continue his education. One of his closest friends left behind at Richmond School, and who would progress immediately to university, was Ralph Steele. Much later, Ralph Steele would be appointed as one of Jack Taylor's first members of staff at BHCHS.

But in 1919, JHT was left to turn to golf and music for release and relief from the working life that held no appeal. He was a competent pianist, and retained a love of classical music for the rest of his life. When he had a chance, he would attend concerts at London's Wigmore Hall.

He tolerated this routine for five years. But in 1924, he could stand it no longer and resigned from the tea company. Nowadays this would have probably been recognised as a breakdown resulting from stress. But it was clear that he simply needed a complete change.

A period of convalescence in Dorset followed. He began to set his mind on resuming his studies and to aim for university. He had developed a strong love of literature at school and had a special affinity towards the novels of Thomas Hardy.

But having been away from education for five years, how could he achieve his ambition?

During the early 1920s JHT Senior had consolidated his outstanding reputation as a professional golfer. Now in his 50s, he was still achieving respectable tournament results and was much in demand both as a coach and a designer of courses. He could see that a commercial career had not been the right decision for young Jack. He agreed with his son that if Jack studied hard to make up for lost time he would use his influence to help him get to university.



Jack Taylor (3rd left) in a varsity golf match at Sandwich, March 1928

Jack wasted no time and began a year of intensive study in secluded corners of the golf course.

Among his father's various distinguished golfing pupils was a colourful and somewhat eccentric Dean of University College, Oxford, ASL Farquharson. JHT asked this eminent classicist for advice on what Jack should do. Within a short time, Farquharson had organised a place for him to read English at University College, starting in 1925.

Jack Taylor remained grateful to his father for his help, and he was never apologetic about the parental influence. He felt that he had repaid in later years any debt he owed for being thus privileged. Repaid fully, and joyfully. This connection with the eccentric academic was perpetuated into the school motto *Donata reponere laeti*, which translates as "Rejoicing to repay".

The remarkable career shift goes a long way in helping us understand his approach to running BHCHS. In particular, he held learning and commitment to the school as the top priorities. Hearing that an academically able pupil wanted to leave school and start work before entering the sixth form was one of the few things that made him angry.

His own university career was distinguished: he was awarded a "blue" for golf in each of his three years, elected a member of the

Oxford and Cambridge Golfing Society, and elected president of the College Junior Common Room by his fellow students. He studied hard, and ended his three years with a good degree.

During his time at Oxford, he had considered, but subsequently laid aside, the possibility of an ecclesiastical profession. He was of a pious and ruminative cast of mind; but he recognised that he lacked the essential spark of evangelism. "Have you thought of teaching?" asked Sir Michael Sadler, the Master of the College. He had not; but now he did.

He qualified as a teacher at the Institute of Education, London. He then taught English for four years in Stafford at King Edward VI Grammar School. For five years from 1933 he was senior English master at Christ's College, Finchley, in north London. After this honourable apprenticeship came a double reward in the annus mirabilis of 1938.

In August of that year he married Nancy. Several years earlier, he had noticed Nancy entering a shop in Braunton, near Barnstaple. It was love at first sight for Jack, who immediately made enquiries about the identity of the beautiful stranger. That was the beginning of a long courtship followed by 57 years of marriage.

In September 1938 he took up the



Possibly one of JHT's last appearances as an umpire c1960.

headship of BHCHS, having been chosen from 300 applicants.

Over these happy events, international storm clouds were casting a deepening shadow. Jack Taylor could not have possibly imagined the immensity of the challenges he was about to face. On the one hand, he was managing a school that was growing each year with a new intake of pupils – not reaching its expected capacity until 1945. At the same time, he had to cope with the many disruptions, restrictions and dangers. The war left many hardships and problems that continued well beyond the formal ending of hostilities.

While all this was going on Jack

own school, Bancrofts. Instruments left in the crush hall suggested to him a world of music that was missing at Bancrofts during that era. He would have wished to attend a school like Buckhurst Hill, but he and his father both recognised it would be a mistake for either of his sons to be pupils there. John's younger siblings both joined Wanstead CHS.

Eventually, all the hardships and deprivations of wartime were over, and Jack Taylor was able to start building BHCHS into a successful grammar school.

It would be inappropriate to try and cover in detail the period when the school was in its prime, but it is

a traditionalist who believed the school should concentrate on its core sports, which were mainly those that lent themselves to being practised by large groups, and mainly in teams. Despite taking a strong interest in the fortunes of the school teams, his own participation was limited after the 1940s. But he did make occasional appearances on the cricket field as an umpire in school matches during the 1950s.

By the mid 60s, a different type of storm cloud had appeared on the horizon. In 1965, the Education Secretary Anthony Crosland issued the circular that would bring about the demise of most grammar schools.

Jack Taylor was astute enough to foresee that the years ahead would be every bit as challenging as the war. With three years to his normal retirement age, he decided it was time to return to the west country. Nancy, while loyally supporting Jack during his Headship at BHCHS, had never been happy with life in suburbia, and had long yearned to return to Devon. While they had both originated from the north of the county, they decided to retire to South Milton near Kingsbridge, South Devon, where they had done much of their courting and where Nancy had taught for two years in a primary school.

For the Taylors, the return to the west country was a happy one and Jack Taylor began a retirement that ended up marginally longer than his

28 years as Headmaster.

Jack and Nancy soon became involved with the community, firstly at South Milton and subsequently at nearby Sherford, where they moved in 1972. Their community interest was centred on the church. The vicar at South Milton persuaded Jack to become a lay reader, thus returning to his long-buried inclination to serve the church. For more than twenty years he preached and officiated at services in a wide area of South Devon, taking great delight in illustrating his sermons from his theological research.

In my conversation with John Taylor about his father's later life, I was interested to know what he remembered about how JHT felt about the school's transition and subsequent demise. John answered that once his father had retired, he really put it all behind him and there was no outward sign that he had been greatly affected. In the light of what we now know, this seems like a very rational approach.

Jack Taylor died in 1995. At the age of 92, he had outlived his celebrated father by a few months. Many of his long-serving staff from BHCHS, and some of the original pupils, attended his funeral. His son's tribute highlighted JHT's appreciation of literature and music, his willingness to keep abreast of new thinking, and his undogmatic openness to a surprising range of opinion.

Nancy Taylor died in 2003, at the age of 87.

Looking back now, half a century since Jack Taylor's retirement, we can be grateful for the decision he took to become an educator rather than a tea merchant.

### John Taylor

*After an Oxford degree in German and French, John (photo p1) followed (he says) a very miscellaneous career path, which took in local journalism, social research for a PhD at Newcastle University, and five years with the Workers' Educational Association in the West Midlands. A middle age of travelling, writing and supply teaching followed, after which he settled down in the training division of the Refugee Council in Brixton. Latterly he put his community activism to use in Deptford as co-ordinator of the Creekside Forum. Originally part of a regeneration programme there, this sought to involve local people in issues of planning and redevelopment. He is now retired and lives in Rotherhithe.*



JHT and Nancy at a school fete 1966

and Nancy began their own family, with John born in 1940, Brian in 1943, and Gillian in 1946. During their childhood, the Taylor family were sometimes taken to Roding Lane on Sundays for a picnic in the school grounds. JHT would disappear into the office on school duties for part of the time. John Taylor had a lasting impression of a pleasant and civilised place, which he describes as much superior to his

interesting to reflect on his attitude to sport. We have previously seen his rejection of tennis as a "girls' game". It is something of an enigma that he never sought to encourage golf as a school activity. We know he had an interest in golf, remaining proud of his father's achievements. And he donated one of his father's putters to the Old Buckwellians in the early 1980s. The nearest I can get to an explanation is that he was

# Methodist Troubleshooter Looks Back

By Martin Turner (BHCHS 1959-66)



I AM one of those people who look back to my time at BHCHS with a certain ambivalence. Having passed the 11+ I discovered that bumping along at the bottom of a grammar school was not a great deal of fun. Certainly as I read the glowing obituary tributes to various teachers I hardly recognise many of them, perhaps their approach to 4C and 5B was a little different to that in the higher streams! Managing to pass 6 O levels (unusual from out of 4C) the sixth form was a different animal and I greatly enjoyed my last two years. In particular Derek Pembleton gave me a lasting love for hockey and playing for the school gave great pleasure. Mike Ellis, who taught economics, made a great impression as he was very up front about his Christian faith. Norman Buchanan was a man of huge integrity, although he surprised our A level RE group on one occasion when, during a thunderstorm, he went under the desk – I later discovered he had been a paratroop chaplain during WW2, this was the legacy.

Unlike my brother Barry (BHCHS 1949-54) I was no great sportsman, but alongside the hockey I managed to get into the school second eleven for cricket and remember great fun but few wins! I was quite musical but hated practising, an issue dealt with by John Rippin putting me on the timpani, too big to take home and practise on! Looking back, the orchestra was quite outstanding, with Christopher Rowland as leader and a number of others who went on to have distinguished careers as musicians.

When I left BHCHS I was amazed

to be awarded the TH Knight Staff Prize, I think for service to the school, but wondered if it was the creeps reward – though I hope I did not fall into that category!

During the Upper Sixth my father died very suddenly and I remember being grateful for Stephen Bazlinton (now my brother-in-law) coming straight round home to see me, and also for Derek Pembleton calling. When I returned to school JHT had a most helpful chat with me in his study, speaking about the support of the Christian faith in such situations. I had become a Christian some months earlier as the result of a “Tent Campaign” in a marquee set in a field by Broadmead Baptist Church in Woodford.

My impression was that that there seemed to be a strong Christian influence in the school, perhaps because of JHT’s strong Christian faith shaping it. The Christian Union was a good group and quite a number of BHCHS Old Boys went into full-time Christian ministry of some sort. Four of them became, like me, Methodist Ministers – Geoff Harris, Dave Cooper, Alan Haine and Nick Holt. Alan Seabrook, Brian Mountford (the prefect on my lunch table) and Stephen Bazlinton ended up as ordained Anglicans and a hockey team friend, Denis Brice, by means I am none too clear about, was ordained into the Church of Scotland – I am sure there must be others as well. One amusing incident was that a prefect in one of the years above me, also called Turner, became a Roman Catholic priest. When Biddy and I were on



Hockey 1965-66. Back Row from left: Richard Vickers, Michael Laver, Tom Barry, A. Gregory, John Mason, Dennis Brice. Front: Johan Siebols, Bob White, Jim Harding (capt), Michael Cox, Martin Turner

honeymoon we were staying near JHT’s retirement home so I rang and we called. He clearly had thought I was the other Turner - it took a while before I was able to clarify which Turner I was and how I had a wife!

My father’s death and then my mother becoming ill meant that I gave up my place at Chichester Teacher Training College and transferred to a day college at Brentwood. I hated it. Most of the folk were middle aged when I first went and I felt rather isolated. The second year, however, brought far more younger students and I was elected President of the Students Union, then also Chair of the area body, The Cambridge Colleges of Education Group. That was a great help in giving me experience both in public speaking and leading volunteers.

After College I went to teach in a Junior School in East Ham. I loved the work and especially looking after the football in the school, whilst playing hockey for the Old Bucks when not watching West Ham. After a while the call to become a minister and especially to preach became strong. I offered and was accepted to train for the Methodist Ministry. The three years at Wesley College Bristol, were a great time, followed by a post-graduate year at West Hill College, Birmingham, training for a Youth and Community Work certificate. During that year Biddy and I were married. Biddy is a Bazlinton – all four of her brothers were at BHCHS. She has worked as both a

hospice and practice nurse.

My first post was a chalk and cheese job! I was one of the ministers at Bradford Mission, serving as Chaplain to Bradford University and also for four nights a week ran an open youth centre which was entirely used by the traveller population; horses were often tied up outside the church!

I moved on from there to lead a large church in Halifax, also with an open youth centre. Our three children were all born in Yorkshire. Luke now runs “The Quietus” website and writes for the Guardian and various music publications, Rebecca is a Geography teacher at the Cotswold School (this year’s Times Comprehensive of the Year.) and Mary married a Kiwi and is on the staff of a large Anglican church in Auckland.

After six years we decided to come south to be closer to the family and moved to St Albans, where I looked after a church there and another five miles to the north in a village called Redbourn. These were eleven very happy years for us as a family and we saw a great deal of growth in both of the churches. My philosophy has always been that the church should serve the community and that the community are welcome to use our premises. Alongside that, an emphasis on a God who makes a real difference to life, a stress on the ministry of healing, and various outreach activities – including the well known Alpha course. This combination has meant that we have seen churches grow in most of



Presentation to Martin at his retirement service at Methodist Central Hall

the places we have been; not all churches are in decline!

The move from St. Albans to be the Superintendent Minister of the Hemel Hempstead area was a short one. The role was not easy, my three predecessors having lasted 2, 1 and 2 years respectively! In addition to the wider area leadership role, I had churches in Berkhamsted and Tring, the first time I had had all-white congregations and I missed the vitality of multiracial work in what I found to be a rather too conservative and respectable area! Prison chaplaincy was a positive part of my work, but don't ever believe that those who are sent to prison have a cushy number, they do not!

During my fourth year there I received a telephone call out of the blue telling me I was to be moved to lead the Methodist Central Hall

in Westminster, Methodism's largest church. Things had not been very easy there and by then I had somewhat of a reputation as being a troubleshooter, so I suppose that is why I was sent! Thus started fourteen years of fascinating work at the heart of the nation. The Church membership was not huge – on my first Sunday looking out at about 120 people in a 2300 seater building was none too encouraging. In time however, the congregation grew, both through immigration and through evangelism, and we ended our time there with 400+ members and were able to fill the 2000+ seats for the big occasions. A rainbow congregation of all ages, sexualities and nations, with more than half from West Africa and the Philippines with just about everywhere else thrown in. I was Chaplain to the Methodist Parliamentary Fellowship, sadly a

group in decline as more and more members either retired or lost their seats!

As one of the first two ecumenical members of the College of Westminster Abbey (rather like a Canon) fascinating doors were opened up, including leading worship in the Abbey, being at the service to welcome the Pope, welcoming various heads of state and attending the royal wedding of William and Kate.

The Central Hall was not just for worship however, and I had to learn quickly as I chaired the company we owned which ran the business side, turning over about £7 million a year by the time I retired. Hosting the world Sports Personality of the Year award on its first UK visit gave the opportunity for a twenty-minute chat to Sir Alex Ferguson – learning how he values his strong Boys' Brigade and Christian background.

The BBC use our Great Hall and roof for their live broadcasts on New Year's Eve – always great occasions. We hosted both London Mayoral hustings and TV debates before the last General Election, were often involved in religious broadcasting, and on two occasions I was able to greet the Queen and chat as I escorted her to the event she was attending. A great church, a great team I worked with, a great job!

Retirement has brought dealing with two different cancers and, in total contrast, taking over the part-time role as minister of a very small church on a large council housing estate in Cheltenham; time will tell where we go with it! For me, family has been a joy, work a challenge and blessing and my Christian faith central to all I am and all I have done. I look back and I am very thankful.



Biddy and Martin

# IT SEEMS TO ME.....

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



### CLIP, CLOP

It is axiomatic, as Ms Austen might have agreed, that when an East End crook has done enough of this, more than enough of that, and even some more of those, he may well have accumulated sufficient moolah to acquire a pad in Chigwell, or maybe in Hutton Slope ('Mount' is overdoing it).

Luxuriously ensconced in Dunblaggin he can develop the persona of a squire. There will inevitably be a Range Rover in gangsta white, probably breathed on by a specialist Company expert in the needs of

those for whom a hundred grand just isn't enough. There will also be a Bentley, or whatever else is judged to be the most impressive.

He will join, and then possibly own, a golf club, and regale his chums with tales of psychopathic East End morons, all of whom he knew personally and who relied on his nous and violence to achieve their evil ends. Several years of such mellowing and generally sanitizing his act will qualify him as a Diamond Geezer.

Sadly, even Diamond Geezers don't last for ever and, being a

DG, when the time comes, it will be de rigueur for him to be carried to disposal by horse and cart. Steroid-inflated, snivelling thugs in black suits, attended by their shy, retiring ladies, will invade the area in stretched black Mercedes limousines, which will formate on the horse and cart as it progresses to some pretty rural church, the poor little building seeming to cringe at the whole mawkish extravaganza.

And now the eulogies. There is of course no mention of armed robbery, extortion, witness intimidation, fraud, or any of the

other arcane skills concomitant with geezership, and certainly no mention of the victims.

Meanwhile, the limousines will be left across drives, up verges, and in all manner of unexpected places, rather like their King Tiger compatriots in wartime Normandy. Later they will reform to follow the cart to the crem and thence to the boozier. It is mandatory at some stage of the proceedings for the vile anthem of self-regard *My Way* to be intoned.

And that's why the traffic's impossible today.

# Buckhurst Hill: Over and Out

By David Patrick (English, 1973-88)

David Patrick concludes his review of his fifteen years in the English department at BHCHS.



If the 1970s were a time of increasing liberty and loosening up of entrenched attitudes (and the most memorable English Department trip of the time, to see the original production of *The Rocky Horror Show*, certainly suggested this), Buckhurst Hill may be counted as something of a social backwater in having more than its fair share of the prejudices of the day. I was unreliably informed by one of my pupils (let's call him Brian) that the reason he would be unable to gain the post his ability merited or a girl whose beauty matched his sexual magnetism was the influx of Pakistanis into that part of Essex. So the first black teacher appointed by HAC certainly had his work cut out. Fortunately, Dave A was not only as hard as nails but also (so rumour had it) he inaugurated his first lesson with a notoriously difficult class by walking in and placing a large machete on the table in front of him. He had no discipline problems thereafter - unlike the first two appointments from Asian backgrounds, whose lives were made an absolute misery. Perhaps surprisingly, there was less anti-Semitism than racism, possibly because of the large number of Jewish boys who commuted from Redbridge. Since they constituted a large part of the intellectual top echelon, it was a sad day when they were no longer allowed to come, as a result of the decision by Redbridge, and the queue at the 167 bus stop in that direction halved overnight. It may also have been the result of having great Jewish teachers on the staff, such as Frank

Silver and Jeremy Weil. Frank, whose son, gifted in my own subject, I was lucky enough to teach in my first year, was tremendously helpful to me, and on the occasions he played for the staff XI, you also got a glimpse of the talent and skill



Frank Silver (left) captain of the ex-Spurs All Stars 1974

that had been on display at White Hart Lane. Homophobia seemed fairly endemic in the school, and certainly the boys who were more or less overtly gay had a difficult time of it. However, there was a certain amount of ambivalence on this score: a popular teacher could get away with camping it up in class provided his sexuality



John Rippin and Michael Maxwell 1975

remained unnamed and therefore unthreatening.

In the 1970s at Buckhurst Hill, before the introduction of the National Curriculum and the teacher contract zapped free time to virtually zero, there was a thriving staff social life outside school hours, nowhere more apparent than in the field of music. John Rippin organised many musical activities that involved the staff, including some extraordinary and imaginative arrangements of pieces such as the 1812 Overture and the William Tell Overture for anyone who could play



BHCHS staff on their boozy Foreign Travel Day, February 1982

anything and some who couldn't. My own favourite moment was playing in Michael Maxwell's *Carnival of the Vegetables* - a marvellously witty piece that was at the same time, more than the Saint-Saëns model, intellectually and musically quite challenging (it included a twelve-tone Schoenberg parody for the pea section, for example). For some reason he would not let it be published - I have often wondered if the score still exists. It was a great loss to the school when John left to go to Forest, but as for all the teachers of minority subjects - Brian Boothroyd was another - the writing was on the wall as the school began to go comprehensive and numbers in O and A level sets plummeted. And HAC's greatest educational decision was to allow a Foreign Travel Day - the staff would pile onto a coach, head across the Channel to spend 5% of the time in the hypermarché and 95% in a Boulogne restaurant. That is how I spent my 32<sup>nd</sup> birthday, gloriously woozy along with, as the photograph shows, Jenny Whitten, Mary Ibbotson, John Drury, Jane Pattenden (a delightful young history teacher, on the BHCHS strength for all too short a time), Ruth Prior, Jenny Whitten, and John Loveridge, all at least as inebriated as me and some considerably more so. I do not think the lessons of the day after would have met Ofsted success criteria. So I look back on that period with nostalgia. Buckhurst Hill wasn't, even its heyday, the greatest school around, but it did pretty well, and trounced the local public schools academically - ironically, the abolition of selective education gave the likes of Chigwell and Bancrofts their biggest fillip ever. The end was messy - you were invited to apply for a job at the sixth form college, but with only a

certain number of posts, if you didn't get what you wanted, you went down to the next level of the carousel, and so on until those left became the shovel-carriers at the new comprehensive that took the place of the rather successful secondary modern in Loughton. I decided to jump ship. And then, only a matter of a few weeks after I had done so, John Kassman, the Head of English who had taken over from Bryan Rooney, died at a tragically young age with the son that he had wished for so ardently fated to grow up without him: he



John Kassman 1988

would have been a terrific dad. I wonder what would have happened if I had stayed; but then, so many ifs.

I can thank (if that's the right word) a pupil called Xavier York Zachary Cochrane-Andrew (a name that sticks with you even if it does not trip easily off the tongue) for my decision to go. I remember hearing him discussing with one of his friends a school trip they had been on. Instead of relishing the educational possibilities of this, the highlight of their visit had been a competition to achieve the longest and widest bowel motion. Xav was extremely proud of his achievement in this respect and elaborated in detail upon what to him was clearly a thing of beauty. But I decided that it was time to seek my fortune elsewhere.

## The Remarkable 49ers - Distance no Object

Organisers Tom Smith and Jim Faulkner have done a superb job in keeping up the regular reunions of 49ers. Twenty of them gathered at Godot's in Chingford - a new venue for them. It was a great evening (I know, because they kindly let me tag along). Most of the group had travelled a fair distance, the furthest being Peter Wilson, who lives in Barry, South Wales. The combined distance travelled was more than 2,500 miles.



Tom Smith



Jim Faulkner

### Why not start a reunion group for your own year?

Reunions don't interest everyone, but it is surprising how many year groups have not yet attempted a full gathering.

All you need is an organiser (or two) to get started. We can then kick off the project by emailing the full year group.

**Graham Frankel**



Robin Eves, John Greenwood, Roger Mason



Ian Liddell, Mick Jackson, Jeff Meddings



Hugh Davidson, Peter Wilson



Brian Richards, Terry Williams, Brian Page



Chris Waghorn, David Browning, John Drake



Michael Leveridge, Terry Newbold

## College Crests: A Good Home Needed

Do you remember the college and university crests that used to hang in our school hall? They are currently sitting in my office. 67 of them, all in reasonable condition and originating from a wide range of institutions, not only in the UK. We put them on display for our 75th Anniversary exhibition.

They were originally donated to the school by former BHCHS pupils, and we know who some of the benefactors were. If you were one of them and would like to recover the shield, please contact me.

Does anyone have any bright ideas about what we should do with the rest of the collection?



# Fred Scott 1909-1985: The Untold Story

Fred Scott will be remembered by many generations of former pupils and staff of BHCHS. In the days before schools acquired senior management teams he was the power behind the throne, taking the main responsibility for making the school run smoothly. I was grateful to **Geoff Scott (1952)** - Fred Scott's nephew - for putting me in contact with Fred's daughter **Christine Carter** who has kindly written this fascinating insight into her father's family life.



FRED SCOTT was born in East Ham, the son of Fred and Edith and younger brother of Ernie. His father came from a family of farm labourers in Rainham, Essex and had moved to East Ham to become a stoker at the local gas works at Beckton. His mother had been in domestic service before they married. Despite relative poverty the boys had a happy childhood and although their parents had received little formal education, they had many practical skills which they imparted to their sons. Fred also learned to play the violin.

At first Fred attended the local elementary school. He was a keen student and needed to pass a scholarship to get to the grammar school. His brother, who was four years older, knew the exam was extremely competitive and that no extra help was available at school, so he urged Fred to study at home in the evening and coached him in arithmetic, English, geography and history. Fred did his homework in the spare room with the light and heat of an oil lamp. He excelled in

chemistry at grammar school and in the sixth form was awarded a special prize for chemistry. A shed at the end of the garden was used for his chemistry experiments.

When Fred was 16 his parents had encouraged him to leave school and work in a local paint factory but his teachers persuaded them to let him stay on as he was doing well academically. He would have loved to study medicine but that was financially out of the question. However, financial assistance was available for students who would study to be teachers, so he went to King's College, London to study physics and then did a postgraduate course to qualify as a teacher.

Fred's brother, Ernie, also went on to higher education with financial assistance. He went to teacher training college and finally taught art and also English and religious studies at a secondary school in East Ham. During the war he ran a small school for evacuees in Norfolk, where he taught all the lessons.

Fred's first job was at Park High School, Birkenhead. In 1934 he married his childhood sweetheart, Nora, whom he first noticed when they were both 16. The grammar school had a girls' section and they were taught separately from the boys but the same classrooms were used. He identified her desk and put notes in it asking for a date! She discovered who this boy was and then began a relationship which lasted his lifetime. The marriage was delayed by some years because Nora was a teacher and at that time she was forced to leave the profession when she married.

In 1938 BHCHS opened and Fred became one of the first teachers there. It was not long before the start of the Second World War but Fred was not called up because it was deemed important to keep schools open. Nora used to tell of the perceived danger to the school from bombing due to the proximity of North Weald aerodrome, a likely enemy target. In fact the school was hit only once, when a bomb fell close to the caretaker's house. Part of the school building was damaged and the dining hall was showered with broken glass at a time when

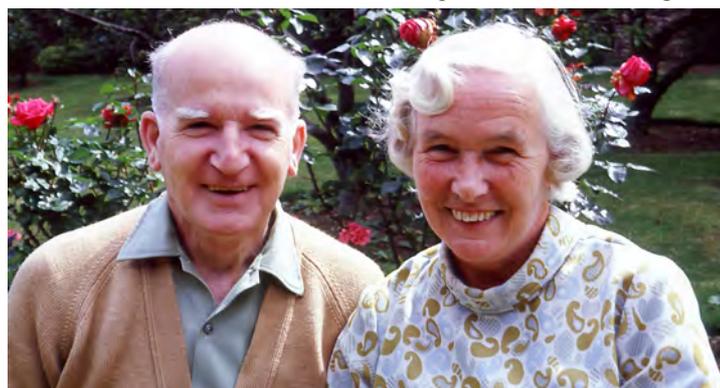
the boys would have been having lunch. Luckily the headmaster had decided to close the school early for the summer holidays so the building was empty, but unfortunately the caretaker was blinded and some of his family injured.

Fred and the family remained in Buckhurst Hill and he became a part-time air raid warden. Either during or shortly after the war Fred was offered a job in radar research which he turned down because he felt he should play a part in keeping the school going during difficult times and he remained there for over 20 years, eventually becoming deputy head.

During the late 1930s and 1940s Nora and Fred had three children. David went to Forest School, followed by Writtle Agricultural College and then worked for agricultural merchants in Essex. This partly involved buying crops from farmers and also selling them agricultural items and seed for sowing (for this he was a certified cereal seed crop inspector). Christine went to Woodford County High School and then studied Nutrition at London University. After a postgraduate course in

which began in the early 1950s when he bought a 35mm camera and carried out the developing, printing and enlarging in the blacked-out bathroom at home. He loved gardening and kept a productive allotment. Fred had an encyclopaedic knowledge of plants, including their Latin names, and in fact, as a young teacher in Birkenhead, had taken a university course in botany. He was meticulous with his DIY and turned his hand to carpentry and wood carving. Drawing and painting pictures became an important hobby. Evenings after work were often spent listening to music. He was a quiet man of few words but everything he said was worth listening to.

Fred retired in 1969. He and Nora went to live on Mersea Island, off the Essex coast, and here he indulged in many activities. He kept bees and had several hives in their large garden. Ernie and Fred had developed an interest in wildlife when they were both children and in retirement Fred spent much time birdwatching, especially at Fingringhoe Wildlife Centre. He liked painting using oils, acrylics and water colours and was an accomplished artist, exhibiting in



dietetics she spent her working life as a dietitian at Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital. Martin attended Forest School and then had a career in banking, eventually becoming a manager in the City. Fred spent much time and energy on his work at BHCHS and many hours were spent in the summer working on the next academic year's school timetable! However, he had many hobbies, including a life-long interest in photography

local art exhibitions. Fred was active in the local church and spent time as church warden. Fred and Nora enjoyed a happy social life together and in retirement loved spending time with their family: two sons and daughter, their partners and eight grandchildren. Fred died quite suddenly from a stroke in 1985 when he was 76. Nora went on to live in a sheltered flat on Mersea Island and died in 2002 at the age of 92.

# Summer with the Girls

When **Eddie Cook (BHCHS 1946-52)** called me to say he had an interesting photo of a school trip, my first assumption was that this was one of the various cycling and walking holidays organised by Eric McCollin during the 1950s. But I was in for a surprise. This particular six-week holiday – to Kiel, Germany - had been organised and led by **Mr AM Bandey**, who taught modern languages at BHCHS from 1947 to 1951. Further surprises were in store. Firstly, the trip was undertaken jointly with girls from Loughton CHS. I had no idea that such activities happened as early as 1950. I began to wonder if this was some kind of leg pull. Eddie’s humour has entertained me greatly over the years and I was on my guard. But no, he duly sent me the photographic evidence, and I don’t think it has been photoshopped. Then there was a further surprise. I was confident that, on dipping into the old copies of the *Roding* magazine, I would find a report about this trip that had previously been overlooked. The school magazines in the early 1950s were impressively comprehensive and the 1950 edition ran to more than 70 pages.



My search revealed only this brief retrospective in the 1951 *Roding*, mentioned only as part of a rather brief farewell tribute to Mr Bandey (middle row left in the photo) who had departed from BHCHS at the end of the spring term and had been appointed subsequently to teach in a

school in Manchester. The leaving report on Mr Bandey concluded with these words:

*“...certain members of the present Fifth Form wish to take this opportunity to express to him their appreciation for escorting them to Germany last summer.”*

We have not yet discovered much about Mr Bandey but I believe he died in 1990. The older lady in the photo is Mrs Bandey, who was occasionally seen at BHCHS standing in for absent teachers and judging competitions.

Does anyone else remember that

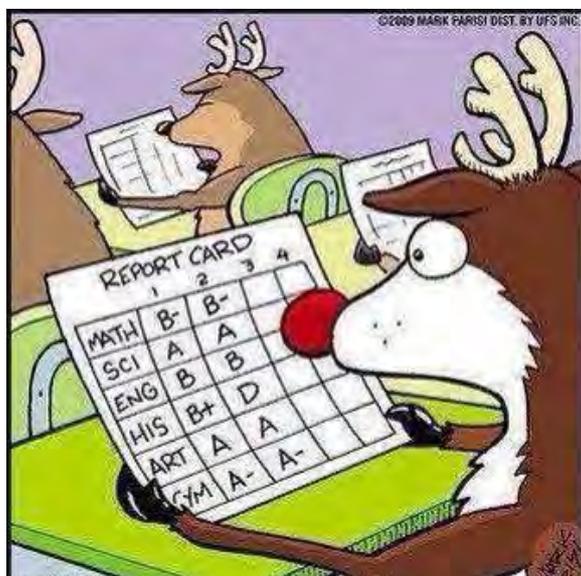
1950 trip? We shouldn’t jump to any conclusions about why the six-week holiday wasn’t reported – it will have missed the publication deadline for the 1950 *Roding*, and perhaps was seen as old news by the following year.

Eddie told me that he believed the trip was one of various initiatives to rebuild relations between Britain and Germany. His six-week stay in the house of a former Luftwaffe pilot helped his command of the language.

Eddie said that the holiday had also been a success socially, and he was interested to know what had happened to Brenda Peachy (front row left). The pair had struck up a friendship but had lost contact many years ago.

Knowing that the Loughton CHS network had now become firmly established, I decided to try posting a message on their Facebook page. The response was rapid and positive: Tessa Bryan, an Old Loughtonian of a later generation, contacted me to say she was Brenda’s great niece. I hope it may be possible for Brenda, and perhaps others in the party, to see the photo.

## PRIZE COMPETITION - RESULT



Congratulations to **Stewart Mills (1960)** who was quick to spot that Rudolph, one of the highest academic achievers of form 1Z at BHCHS, was shocked to find he had gone down in history. Stewart was the winner of a smart OBA tie.

An honourable mention to **Richard Smith (1951)** whose email with the correct answer was only five minutes behind Stewart’s. And a couple of our overseas readers who may have missed out unfairly but inevitably due to postal delays - **Steve Newberry (1958)** who gave the first correct answer from overseas and **Chris Mobbs (1955)** who was the first from the Antipodes.

# Crimes and Punishments - Part Two

FOR THE second part of our review of punishments at BHCHS we move to the Hugh Colgate era. Like his predecessor, and despite his naval background, Hugh Colgate was a man who did not enjoy punishing and our research revealed a number of examples where he avoided corporal punishment, even where it would have been expected. Hugh Colgate's tolerant policy took a while to filter down to some of his colleagues. **Andrew Howison (1966)** remembers being punched to the ground outside the staff room and in clear view of at least a dozen other pupils.



Hugh Colgate

The throwing of blackboard rubbers continued well into the 1970s, and **Simon Muth (1967)** told me he remembers a far more dangerous missile being thrown, but I don't want to risk a libel suit by reporting more information about that.

Another incident of teacher aggression was recalled by **Paul Dulwich (1973)**, who remembered the class being made to run round the teacher in the gym while footballs were kicked at maximum velocity.

**Bob Sears (Maths, 1966-78)** is remembered for various unusual punishments, including press ups and – perhaps the most bizarre of all – making the miscreant stand with his tongue on the blackboard for the rest of the period. Can anyone remember trying this?

Almost as strange, and perhaps even more tiresome, was the task given by **Tony Brock (PE, 1969-72)** to **Fred Pentecost (1970)** – cutting the grass on a volleyball pitch using nail scissors.

Surreal essay topics also continued during the later years of the school. **Dave Hayter (1965)** was given 200 lines by **Philip Epps (Physics, 1966-68)**: *Tolerance is a virtue of mediocrity.* **Pete Sears (1968)** was tasked by a sixth former – I hope not me – to write 500 words on what it was like living inside a ping pong ball.

My favourite among the stories gathered in researching this feature comes from **Richard Horton (1969)**. It gives us a great insight into the HAC approach to discipline. Richard writes...

*My kids still chuckle with delight at the thought of their dad being whacked in what to them is antediluvian barbarism, and*

*regrettably the distributed administration model allowed for this to occur all too frequently. And Lord knows, I was hardly the naughtiest kid in 2Z. Might it have been something to do with a Fenian disrespect of authority?*

*There was not just one time that I was sent to stand outside HAC's office awaiting his displeasure. Mostly I can't recall why, but one that springs to mind vividly is the caning I didn't receive. The occasion was in 1970 or thereabouts. The location: the steps to the junior end of the school. A playground fight. Not of my making, but thankfully one I finished, if a little emphatically. I was a total mess, blood and a black eye. The poor other chappie was not in such good shape.*

*So what happened? After the blood was cleaned, the investigation. It was serious stuff so no mucking about with the playground or form teachers. It was straight to the headmaster and to my recollection, no seemingly endless theatrical wait outside Miss Coulson's office either. I told him my story. The other chap had been bullying another kid, one with a far more gentle demeanour than his four tormentors. Randomly passing, for some reason I decided to intervene. The wimpy kid had been to my primary school. He had been wimpy there too. I told them to stop. Such is the nature of playground teasing and bullying that they didn't of course. Who was I anyway? A spokesperson was pushed forward, this was not my business ... and, off it went.*

*The loser never returned to school. His outraged mother took him out that afternoon (well, actually to*



Bob Sears

*hospital first), never to return. This is what happens when your precious child mixes with state school ruffians. He went public. (And thankfully, no long term damage done; my recollection was that he ended up at Cambridge.)*

*Over the next few days several out-of-classroom sessions were spent with HAC as he pieced together the whole story. There were many witnesses who upheld my version of events. It had certainly got out of hand, but it became clear: I hadn't started it and the other kids had certainly been bullying.*

*The final outcome: I recall it so well across the years. Called, yet again, to the big office. A firm but thoughtful admonishment from the headmaster. His summary never forgotten: "Next time, don't get on your white horse and charge across the playground to the rescue. Go and get a teacher!" Phew.*

*I reflect that there are perhaps few wiser and as measured men as was HAC, a role model I have carried with me, for this and yes, even for the times when events failed to exonerate me.*

We cannot complete the punishment review without looking at smoking. Various punishments were awarded for those caught behind the bike sheds. Some have reported that our lenient headmasters would, for a first offence, sit the reprobate in his study and make him read a leaflet on the health dangers – leaving caning for a second offence. **David Smith (1962)** recalls that FAS made him promise to tell him if he ever smoked again after his little talk. David saw that as a get out of jail card. If he had been caught again he would have claimed he was coming to see him once he'd finished his



Caught Smoking - by Colin West (1962)

cigarette. Astute readers may remember I published the excellent cartoon by **Colin West (1962)** recently, but I make no apologies for repeating it here.

We don't have many reports about more serious substance abuse. But **Steve Driver (1970)** remembers being warned by HAC to keep off the grass. Failing to recognize the Headmaster's subtle message, Steve asked him if he meant the grass by the swimming pool.

The period spanning Hugh Colgate's term of office (1966-1985) was a time of significant cultural change, both within the school and more widely. The abolition of the prefect system – initiated just before the arrival of HAC – left all sixth formers with the power to punish. Unsurprisingly, there were problems. Eventually, Hugh Colgate withdrew the sixth formers' right to give impositions, but they continued to award detentions. I assume that the practice of pupils punishing other pupils finally ceased when the sixth form moved to the Loughton "annexe" in the late 1970s.

This was also the beginning of what we now recognise as the "compensation culture". Hugh Colgate's report to parents in 1978 reflects how pupils and their parents were no longer prepared to passively accept the school's attempts to modify wayward behaviour:

*Standards of honesty and good behaviour are fine until the enforcement of them requires punishment of wrong-doers. Then it is frequently other people's children who should be punished. Too many parents take the view "My boy is always in the right".*

# The Last Day of BHCHS



Thanks to **Jamie Dalton (BHCHS 1985-90)** we have these further photos taken on the very last day of school before closure.

In his feature published in May 2015 **Richard Davy** explained that the school remained open for a full year after its formal closure in 1989 to allow the fifth formers to complete their GCSE year without transferring to Roding Valley High.

Jamie tells me that the school uniform policy was greatly relaxed during that year, but many of the pupils wore their BHCHS uniforms on the last day out of respect to the old school, despite the fact that by then it was technically part of RVHS.



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

## A Good Read

*Martin Gorham (1958-65)*

I have just finished reading *My Dad's a Policeman* - what an interesting and enjoyable book. I am surprised that Robert Druce was unable to find a conventional publisher, so many thanks for letting us have access to it. I attended Staples Road before going on to BHCHS (18 years behind Robert Druce) so there were familiar things; and I lived in The Drive in Loughton (presumably "The Village" in the book, and still known as that when I lived there by the residents up Church Hill and around St John's, but not by us townies).

However, the book stands up perfectly well without any need for local nostalgia and draws a fascinating picture of growing up in West Essex either side of and during the war.

*See p.8 for more about the book - Ed*

## Research Enquiry

*Nigel Grizzard (1963-70)*

Does anyone have any memories of St John's Open Air School which was in Turpins Lane in Woodford Bridge during the years 1940-1943? I am doing some research about one of the pupils, Otto Szpiro, who came from Germany on the Kindertransport - the Jewish Childrens' Transport in 1939. Any information would be gratefully appreciated.

I would also be interested to know whether BHCHS took any refugee Jewish or other children during the period 1938-1950 and whether there were any refugees who became teachers at the school?

If you have any information please contact me: [ngrizzard@aol.com](mailto:ngrizzard@aol.com)

*Editor's note: I didn't have a lot of information from the records I hold, but I know there were two German teachers who could possibly have been refugees: Miss U Gottschalk taught German 1942-44 and Mr M Genser (I believe he may have been Austrian) taught German 1944-47.*

## Early Computers at BHCHS

*Luke Argent (1971-78)*

I must have been one of the first to use computers at the school in 1976. When I was in the sixth form, we encountered them remotely. We

were given a pile of cards and a punch machine. On the blackboard at the front was a conversion table from letters and numbers to their equivalent binary codes. We wrote simple BASIC computer programs on paper and then punched holes to represent the binary code for each character on the cards. These were taken by car to (I think) the technical college in Chelmsford where they were fed into a card reader. The computer printed a copy of the program, ran it and printed the results. Note: it had no permanent memory. We looked forward to seeing the printout in next week's lesson.

I remember it took several weeks to get a simple program to run, for example, to produce the squares of the numbers between one and ten. If we made a mistake when converting the characters to binary or pressed the wrong button on the punch machine, the program didn't run. The computer was so slow that we were told to limit our programs to run only a few lines. What a far cry from the machine I am writing this letter on. I appreciate being involved with computers so early on because I now understand how they work, whilst most people don't have a clue.

Does anyone have earlier memories of computing at Buckhurst Hill? I would be interested to find out how things developed since I left.



## Len's Lines

*Ray Orpin (1957-64)*

The article about punishments reminded me of a physics teacher we had (in about 1960) by the name of Len Halberstad. His first name wasn't actually Len but we couldn't pronounce his real name. He had a great German accent and would give out lines a dozen at a time. The miscreants used to complete them during the lesson and hand them in at the end. Can anyone back up my memory?

He might have been a supply teacher or on some sort of temporary exchange, but definitely not a student. He was about 55 and looked a bit like Norman Buchanan.

## Even More Knickers

*Derrick Lello (1950-57)*

I read David Foster's letter (*Knickers, November 2015*) with some amusement. Although unable to assist on the particular occasion he describes, it reminded me of a similar incident but with rather more repercussions around 1955/56.

JHT must have decided that his boys needed greater exposure to the fairer sex so he invited, via the headmistress, the girls of Loughton County High School for a joint sports day. Assembled at the bottom of the field, between the track and the river, the dignitaries had a clear view of the weather vane atop the school with each point of the compass adorned with items of ladies' underwear.

While Spud and presumably the visiting staff from Loughton were not at all amused, many of us were and additionally full of admiration for the climbing skills of the perpetrators, whose identity was to my knowledge never established. It was a jolly day but unfortunately the experiment wasn't repeated during my time.

## 167 Woes

*Norman Flack (1954-59)*

My first day at school was over and I took my place outside the gates to catch the 167 to Gants Hill. The queue was small and orderly. I was near enough the front to feel assured of being on the first bus. Until it came into sight. At this point a large number of large boys were manifested, apparently from thin air, and took their/our places at the front of the queue! We smaller boys took up various positions - mine was peering out from the hedge! - and the bus duly departed, full, without us. This process was repeated until all the older boys were all safely on their way and we shrimps could embark unmolested!

When I eventually arrived home my parents were all for complaining to Spud. Fortunately, I had a rather clearer idea of potential repercussions than they did and the matter was never taken up!

I rather imagine many of my fellow pupils must have had a similar experience. Fortunately, by the time I was big enough to reverse the process my family had moved to South Woodford and I was walking

up to the station to catch the tube and I seem to remember the bus stops had become supervised. Happy days!

## Still Remembered

*Owen Easteal (1951-58)*

Reading the article about Edwin Still (*Bucks Fizz, May 2016*) made me think back to form 1A at BHCHS. Ed was our French teacher - I think it may have been his first job. I have never forgotten the dreaded Whitmarsh text book. Imagine our surprise when he arrived for the lesson complete with his flute and said we were going to sing - never a strength of school assemblies.

He taught us the song *Chevaliers de la Table Ronde*, which we finally did sing with some gusto. I never really thought about this again until coming to live permanently in France five years ago. We were invited to join a social club for oldies (of which I am now vice-president). Apart from eating and drinking, dancing (mostly ladies dancing with ladies) and singing also plays a part. Imagine the astonishment when I was able to strike up with *Chevaliers de la Table Ronde* (some 60 years after learning it). Now I often have to start the singing with this song - I feel like a local curio!

Later at school Ed was invited by Mac to accompany school trips as interpreter, as I think that German was his first language, and I came to know him better. On one trip we were staying in the youth hostel high above Koblenz on the Rhine and we decided to travel to Marburg by train as we had had a German assistant, Dr Ehrig, from the university there. Unfortunately, on our return, and having raced up the hill to the hostel, we arrived three minutes after closing time and being Germany we were not let in. We went back down the hill and found a guest house with an enormous room which we all shared. As we were in the Sixth Form no one was concerned that we only showed up at the hostel for breakfast the next morning - today almost certainly a national alarm would be raised. It was at this stage that my lifelong interest in German was awakened - in the Upper Sixth, despite the best efforts of Ed to teach us German to O level in just three months, I think we all failed.

# More Letters

## Ouch

*Terry Ingles (1959-64)*

“Just stay there, Ingles and don’t move,” said Spud, as I tried to get up and go home!

I normally rode my bike, but today I had used the train and walked from the station.

After school, we had crossed the road outside to try and get on the bus, but it was full before we got there. We decided to walk up Roding Lane to the station for the train. They had run out in front of the bus to cross the road and I took their cue and ran out from behind the back of the bus – only to be hit by the car that they had passed behind.

The biggest bang I had ever heard; then dark and light as I was propelled off the windscreen of the car and rolled over and over onto the road – or so I was told by boys who had witnessed the accident. All I wanted to do after I had woken was to get up, brush myself down and walk on up the lane, but my injuries prevented me and by that time Mr Taylor had appeared.

I lay in the road for seemingly ages, during which time I contemplated my predicament in not being able to move my left leg, watching the fracture in my right arm with wonderment and curiosity as to how it could be in the shape that I could see. Feeling the blood oozing down the back of my head and all in focus as somehow my glasses had remained on my face – or had somebody found them and put them back in place?

The ambulance arrived and I was whisked off to Wanstead Hospital where I was X-rayed, cleaned up and finally my fractures and broken arm manipulated back into shape and plastered after my mother had arrived to sign the anaesthetic forms. Nobody from the school had contacted her at home and about 6.00 pm when she was getting really worried, a call from the police shook her by announcing “about your son’s accident...”, it was the first she had heard of it!

Three weeks later I was out of hospital after a not very pleasant stay, all of it bedridden flat on my back in the adult male fracture ward – hopefully that situation would not be permitted today, as I lay next to the bed of a police ambulance man

for the duration, during which he regaled me with tales of blood and gore and the road accidents he had attended to scoop the bodies to the mortuary!

I spent a long while recuperating before returning to school the next term and trying to catch up with the work that I had missed, but never really recovered the lost time.

After that I rarely bothered with the bus, either walking to the station or continuing to ride my bike – often in the company of Graham Hannah, until he joined the scooter set. My father gave me sixpence a day in case I needed to get the train home and I could keep it to go with my Saturday pocket money, which motivated me to keep on cycling.

## Age no Barrier

*John Harnden (1938-45)*  
(Locker number 15)

I am sorry to be rather slow in renewing my subscription, which makes me think that I might be getting old. However, I am still going to work five days a week, quite often by bicycle if the weather permits, so it would appear that it is just a rumour.

I am rather edgy about renewing for a further five years as by that time I shall be, or might be, or would have been, about 93, which is a bit iffy.

But, seeing that I am reasonably fit, drink wine every day, smoke, and chase women (but never catch them), I will defy the odds and go the whole hog.

## Year Group Meetings

*Stuart Jones (1957-64)*

I travel a lot each year to different locations all over the world and wonder if there’s a way of catching up with some people from my year. Maybe a noticeboard or something that we could use to publicise our locations and catch up informally with people if they happened to be around.

I see pictures in the magazine all the time of people I’ve forgotten about and it will just be nice occasionally to have a beer with somebody in some remote location.

*I think the answer is to start a Facebook Group for your year. Here is an example:*

*[www.facebook.com/groups/744435648938908/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/744435648938908/) or search on Class of 85 BHCHS - Ed*



The BHCHS School Magazines gave budding writers and artists a chance to display their talent. Each of this pair of poems, appearing at either end of the lifespan of the magazine, reflects a topical issue of the time.

## 1942...

**Searchlight**  
Hugh Everitt, 5<sup>th</sup> Form

Houses and trees were a black silhouette.  
Up from the darkness below,  
Vivid and bright shot a silvery sword  
Eagerly seeking the foe.

Grim, unrelenting, it followed its course,  
Searching the overcast sky,  
Probing and finding its secrets out  
With cold, staring, challenging eye.

Ranging the stars in the dazzled sky,  
With power expressed in each ray,  
Silently, softly it disappeared,  
Leaving the moon to its sway.

**Hugh Everitt** started at BHCHS in 1941 (entering the 4<sup>th</sup> form after moving to the area).

*Searchlight* was the first original poem by a pupil to appear in the school magazine.

Sadly, although I traced Hugh Everitt, we didn’t hear from him again so I don’t know anything about his later life.



Kevin Fox

## 1972...

**Life’s a Gas** Kevin Fox, 3Y

What type of world  
Is disclosed to our senses,  
Exposed unconfined  
But has hidden fences?

The world of an era  
Different from ours  
Was quizzically perfect,  
Has birds bees and flowers.

When you tasted the water  
It was crystal like wine:  
Taste it today  
And drink chemical slime.

Don’t pollute our world!  
People will say,  
As their cars spew out gas  
And sustain the decay.

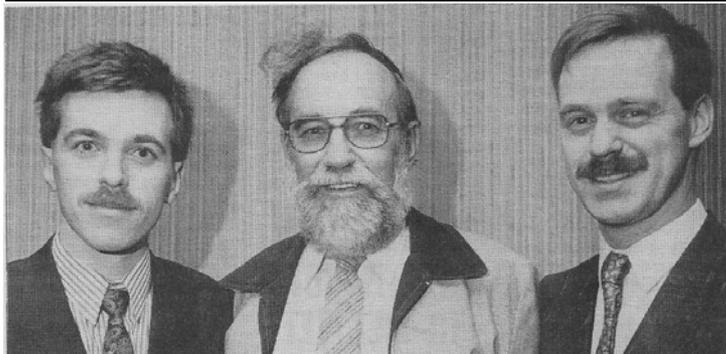
A small ball of fire  
Held by a thread  
Burns itself out, till  
It’s barren, cold, dead.

But that’s just fantasy  
A myth in my mind  
The material world is  
The problem I find.

Vile, vulgar pollution  
In your head, in your hair  
We’ve perfected our death  
By polluting the air.

Life’s really great  
If you look on the good side,  
Life is a gas  
Mainly CARBON MONOXIDE.....

**Kevin Fox** (photo left) is Professor of Neuroscience at Cardiff University. He is a specialist in memory, researching into how particular enzymes affect the ability of the cerebral cortex to process information.

**Roland Buggey****(BHCHS 1942-50)**

Simon, Roland and Andrew Buggey, 1989

Roland was born in Barking in 1931, but when he was still very young his parents bought a newly built house in Forest Edge, Buckhurst Hill, and in 1942 Roland became the first of four Buggeys to attend BHCHS. He was followed by his brother Colin (1946) and his sons, Andrew (1970) and Simon (1975).

Roland's time at BHCHS was extended by a year, following a bout of rheumatic fever. This illness meant he failed his medical for National Service and went straight into teacher training at the College of St Mark & St John, Chelsea. Then followed 20 years of teaching in East Ham. Roland also managed to fit in part-time study at LSE, graduating with an Honours degree in Geography in 1958. Somehow, he also found time to join the City of London Special Constabulary, spending at least one evening a week for the next 33 years patrolling the City and also policing ceremonial events (service that was to see him become a Freeman of the City of London).

In 1956 Roland had been introduced to another teacher, Edna Frost, by Eric McCollin (Geography 1949-58); Edna and Eric ran a church youth group together. Two years later, Roland and Edna married and settled in Woodford Green, raising four children – two boys educated at BHCHS and two girls at Woodford CHS.

In 1972 Roland left the state school system and joined the civilian teaching staff at the Metropolitan Police Cadet School, Hendon, where he taught Geography and London Studies. There he remained until offered early retirement in 1989. During his time at Hendon he became the first member of the academic staff to have a child become an officer in the Met. Retirement from teaching was soon followed by retirement from the

City Specials, although Roland continued to work part time for Stainer & Bell music publishers until he was 65. Meanwhile, Edna had also moved on from teaching, becoming a Methodist minister in 1983. Postings to churches in East Finchley and Marlborough meant a peripatetic lifestyle for a few years, although they kept their house in Woodford until 1995, when they moved to Diss in Norfolk. An active working life was succeeded by an active retirement, temporarily interrupted by a spell in Papworth Hospital, where a heart valve damaged by the rheumatic fever 60 years earlier was replaced.

Even 26 years after Roland left Hendon, he was remembered fondly by many of his ex-pupils. Their reactions to the news of his sudden death show the high regard in which he was held:

*'He helped forge me into who I am today.'*

*'He was respected and liked by all who came in contact with him, his enthusiasm especially on trips was infectious.'*

*'A lovely man with a passion for teaching.'*

*'People like him made it the special place it was.'*

*'An absolute gentleman. He gave me a great foundation for a full police career.'*

*'He had an infectious enthusiasm for London history and I loved his lessons.'*

*'A kind, caring man who so obviously loved his job and took pride and pleasure in seeing cadets go through the system and pass out better people at the end.'*

*'His patience with the less academically inclined youth of their generation was invariably remarkable.'*

Roland is survived by Edna, his four children, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren (the youngest of whom was born only a few days before Roland died).

**Obituary****John Delfgou****(BHCHS 1946-52)**

John Delfgou had a remarkably varied career and broad interests. After leaving BHCHS he joined the RAF as a fighter pilot stationed in the Middle East, and was involved in the Battle of Suez. He then spent three years as a civil airline pilot before changing careers to Personnel Management for the next twenty years. His career then took three further twists, when he had spells as a TV film editor and then a computer lecturer before he finally settled into life in the Church of England, becoming the Vicar of Trinity and St Nicholas Churches in Debden. After officially retiring, he continued serving at churches in the Loughton area when they needed help, and he organised and counselled at the Loughton Bereavement Service.

While he was busy changing careers, John also found time to write a crime thriller, *Jackpot*, which is still available on Amazon.

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

**Rex Sparling (1941)** died in February 2016 following a stroke. He lived in Grays, Essex.

**Gale Salmon (1942)** died in April 2016 following a short acute illness. He lived in Buckhurst Hill.

**John Kenneth Wilson (1943)** died in March 2016 having battled illness for many years. He was a Chartered Accountant and lived in Gravesend.

**Quentin Fuller (1947)** died in March 2016 following a long illness. He lived in Fordingbridge, Hampshire.

**David Game (1948)** died in August 2015. He lived in Seaton, Devon.

**Brian Davey (1949)** died in June 2015. He had been suffering from prostate cancer. He lived in West Sussex.

**Don Coates (1953)** died in April 2016. He lived in Loughton and was well known locally as an enthusiastic and dedicated cricket umpire.

**Brian Graves (1956)** died in February 2016. He lived in Hemel Hempstead.

**Phil Chesterton (1957)** died in August 2016. He lived in Braintree.

**Chris Deboos (1962)** died in August 2016. He lived in Ilford.

He met his wife Marian at St Michael's Youth Club when they were both 14, and they were married for 57 years. They had a daughter Lallie and a son Jo (who attended BHCHS 1975-82 and is now also a Vicar). John's younger brother Peter also attended BHCHS (1951-56).

John kept in contact with his old school friends, and was always happy to help them in an official capacity – we previously recorded him officiating at the marriage services of the daughters of Ian Cathcart in 2000 and Peter Dalton in 2003. The photo shows John (left) and Marian on a trip to London organised by Stephen Wright in 2005 when Stephen invited a group of his classmates to celebrate his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Following a brain tumour, John Delfgou died on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016 at the age of 80.

**Geoff Gosford**

(BHCHS 1947-53)



Geoff Gosford with "Old Buck". Date unknown c60s

Born in Forest Gate, Geoff was the younger of two boys. The family moved to Buckhurst Hill soon after Geoff was born. As children during the war years, they were joined by a boy from France whose mother was a leading light in the French Resistance and needed a safe place for her little boy.

At school, Geoff fell into the "could try harder" bracket, or, in the case of History, didn't try at all. He excelled at most sports, including hockey which played a large role in his life, but also javelin chucking. Geoff was challenged by his school master to throw the javelin as far as he could across the sports field. To his credit he pointed out that the master's car was parked in the way, to which the master scoffed and said he had no chance of chucking it that far. One flat tyre later he had changed his mind.

He studied Mechanical Engineering at evening classes and started his working life as an apprentice in the Welsh valleys. This in time led him to become both a chartered mechanical engineer and a Doctor of Engineering, working for Ford mainly in lorry design and servicing where he had patents in his name for an engine air cleaner and a suspension system. He played his hockey with the Old Buckwellians which morphed into the Farmers touring team. He married his childhood sweetheart Marion, and Caroline appeared soon after, followed by Owen five years later.

In his mid-forties, the bar bill was growing, so he had the bright idea that buying a boozier would be a nice little retirement project. Little did he know that it would be the

hardest work of his life, but the most fun you can have with your clothes on.... Ten years on he sold up having made his fortune and became a gentleman of leisure, doing up several houses and supporting local hostelrys. When Marion died, Geoff was left alone, which was never his preferred state, and he married Josie, previously the landlady of the infamous Blazing Donkey in Ramsgate, scene of much legendary Farmers hockey mischief. They split their time between Hawkinge and Andalucia, finally moving to Spain full time. They both took up bowls and were both over-competitive in their normal way. Geoff took great enjoyment in the Spanish way of life, the tapas and the lovely weather – as a sun worshipper he was in his heaven, speaking mangled Spanglish but somehow making himself understood. Sadly Josie died, then Rubi the dog died, leading into a downward health spiral, three strokes, two years in a nursing home and here we all are.

Geoff was fun to be with and made people laugh. He was an all-round nice bloke, a giving person with so much fun in him that he shared with all. A strong gentle caring man, a true gentleman in every sense of the word and a fantastic friend. Geoff was always the one to volunteer to help or lead or do, whether mending a mate's car or leading the singing of rugby songs. His glass was always half full – a true optimist typified by his unfailing conviction that somewhere on the telly there would be women wrestling in mud. We will all miss him in our own way. His stint at the helm of the Lifeboat Inn in Folkestone was legendary. Pubs are only bricks and mortar and they come alive through the people running them. Geoff was mine host with the mostest, a dedicated tester of the goods on sale and with a bevy of lovely barmaids, a good time was had by all. He enjoyed his beer to the bitter end (literally) and we reckon that some poor funeral director has had to beat his liver to death with a shovel...

Hockey was a lifelong constant, from the Old Buckwellians, where he was instrumental in fixing up the clubhouse and pitches only for them to be blown up when a gas main let go, to touring in Europe with the team mascot, "Old Buck",

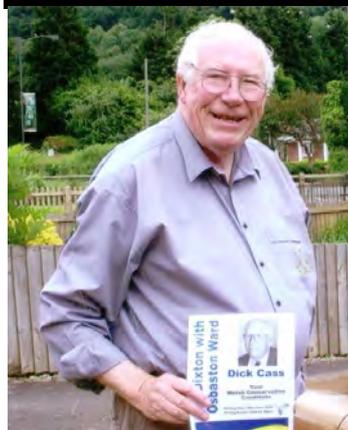
a deer's head with full antlers. The triumph as social secretary of Old Bucks managing to get the Professor of Nonsense, Stanley Unwin, as after-dinner speaker for the end-of-season dinner, then, when challenged to top that the next year, he was copping a lot of abuse right up to the moment he introduced Sir Winston Churchill. The Farmers touring side that grew out of the Old Bucks, making the annual pilgrimage to Thanet Hockey Festival and the windswept shit-strewn paradise that is Jackey Bakers playing field in Ramsgate, famed for their pink shirts and drinking prowess and sometimes even for the hockey. Geoff was a founder member and held the only official position of President. He managed a run of nearly 60 years of Farmers Thanet Festivals with bat and later whistle, continuing long after the Thanet Festival had bitten the dust.

Later he played for Crostyx Hockey Club, and when he moved to Folkestone, he played for Folkestone Optimists beyond his 50th birthday then took up the whistle, all the while leading the singing, running the bars, and generally leading people astray on a regular basis. All of us, and hockey, are poorer for his passing.

**Paul Harris**

*We are grateful to Owen Gosford for some of the information in this tribute - ed.*

**Dick Cass**  
(BHCHS 1941-46)



Dick Cass died in Tewkesbury on 10th January 2016. His widow Pauline writes...

When Dick left school he went into Local Government in Ilford, then into National Service where he served in Germany. He then joined a construction company and became

a quantity surveyor. We moved to Monmouth, South Wales, where he joined Kier Group. When he retired, he became a Conservative Councillor until he became ill, and we moved to Cheltenham to be near our daughter who helped me to look after him.

He was a lovely, kind, gentle and honest man and he is greatly missed. When he went to his funeral, he had his original old school tie tucked into his pocket.

**Bernard Hickman**  
(BHCHS 1941-46)



Bernard Hickman, back row centre, in the 1943 school photo. His friend Phil Carter is on his right.

Bernard Hickman died in Princess Alexandra Hospital, Harlow, on 21st March, 2016, after several years of ill health. Born in Loughton, he was the son and grandson of printers who published a local newspaper. After obtaining his school certificate and matriculation, Bernard trained for three years at the London College of Printing. He pursued a career in the family printing business and, subsequently, with Winston G Ramsay.

He married Anne Dockrielle, also from Loughton, and they had two sons, to whom he was devoted, and lived in North Weald for 56 years, until his death.

In his younger days Bernard was a keen motorcyclist. He had a deep love of the English, Welsh and Scottish countryside and once climbed Ben Nevis. He loved Cornwall, sailed on the Norfolk Broads, and made canal tours in a hired narrowboat. Railways, photography, classical music, and making wine and beer were among his other interests.

At school, Bernard's closest friend was his classmate Philip Carter, who died in 2014. They and their families shared many interests and remained friends throughout their lives.

Bernard is survived by his wife, Anne, and their two sons.

**Stan Newens**

# Derek Pembleton: The Perfect Teacher



Derek Pembleton and Colin Woodfine - taken during Derek's first year at BHCHS when he was form master of 3Y  
Photo Graham Forbes

DEREK PEMBLETON was one of those teachers whose contribution to BHCHS merited far greater appreciation than it received. His unconventional approach to teaching and discipline, while popular with pupils, did not sit well with JHT. It was clear, from the few conversations I had with Derek, that he was not happy in the traditional culture that Jack Taylor sought to maintain.

JHT did, however, recognise Derek's skill in motivating those pupils who struggled with the elitist approach to streaming. The system of form streaming alienated a significant proportion of the school's population until it was abolished by Hugh Colgate soon after his arrival. But during the JHT era, while most teachers would be moved to different years and streams, Derek was form master of the lowest stream of fifth formers for five of his first six years on the staff.

As well as his teaching of RE, Latin, and managing school hockey teams, he will be remembered for his love of sailing and canoeing which he successfully introduced at BHCHS. The John Robins cine film contains a delightful sequence of Derek demonstrating, in the school swimming pool, the art of rolling a canoe.

He was essentially a man of the outdoors, and he was happy, in 1972, to escape from classroom teaching to concentrate fully on sailing, becoming Warden at the Essex Sailing Centre at Nazeing. He retained his connection with the school, thanks to Hugh Colgate's liberal outlook in encouraging

outdoor pursuits, not confined to Roding Lane.

Derek Pembleton was born on 8th July 1927 in Golders Green and brought up in Surbiton, Surrey. He was the son of a business man who, at one time had been the partner of Jesse Boot, the founder of Boots of Nottingham. Derek attended Rugby School, but was not happy there. He developed a dislike of the rules governing social class. Before university he did his National Service as a naval rating on an aircraft carrier, turning down the Navy's offer of officer training. Then he took up a place to read Law at Lincoln College, Oxford. It was at Oxford that he met Paula, who, having already graduated, was working as a librarian at the university. They married in Leytonstone in 1953 and would stay together for 63 years.

A short spell of working in London led him to the realisation that he did not want to spend his career commuting, nor did he want to pursue a career in the legal profession. After deciding to become a teacher, his first teaching job was at BHCHS.

In common with many of the best teachers, Derek had broad interests. He was an avid reader, particularly reference books. He was quietly knowledgeable across a range of subjects. His love of the outdoors led him to know a great deal about the natural world. He could identify most birds by their song and he had an encyclopaedic knowledge of trees.

His knowledge and understanding of history extended from the classical world, through the

medieval period to late-modern history, including naval history and accounts of the great explorers.

Despite all that, he was essentially a very practical man, as comfortable building sea kayaks and canoes from obscure Eskimo designs as he was designing and building furniture.

He was also a man of great fortitude and courage. He fought prostate cancer for twenty years, determined not to be defeated by it. He had been given eighteen months to live when he and Paula decided to move from Epping to Preston to be near their daughter, a professional flautist, and son-in-law, who is a teacher. He took every treatment offered and simply got on with life. He continued canoeing for several years, but after coming to the conclusion that he needed to find a new activity he donated his canoes and tools to others and took up swimming.

I had first spoken with Derek when he was still in Epping. I had been given his address by HAC, but it took around four years, and a bit of persistence, to get to speak with him. Derek said to me he would consider writing something about his time at BHCHS, but I only spoke to him once more, by which time he was in Preston. By then, I didn't hold out much hope of hearing. Indeed, my next news was on 9th May this year when his son-in-law emailed me to say that Derek had died that morning at the age of 88.

After publishing the news of his death on Facebook, there was an immediate response. This selection of the tributes reflects his patience and non-judgemental character, showing a particular aptitude for guiding and supporting those who struggled with the academic rigours of the grammar school curriculum.

#### John Andrews (1958-64)

He was the only teacher who believed in me, offered encouragement and help and was truly an inspiration. He was the one ray of light in an otherwise six miserable, unhappy years. He was a great teacher.

#### David Faulkner (1959-66)

Derek was the perfect teacher. He had the great knack of being calm and authoritative at the same time as talking to us all as equals and never being patronising. Always ready to go off-topic to discuss

issues of the day with knowledge and humour. I even got O-level R.I. A sad loss.

#### Richard Nichols (1962-69)

What a lovely guy and a great teacher with, sometimes, unconventional techniques.

#### Chris Bangs (1964-71)

A lovely man whose enthusiasm for his subjects left a lasting impression on me.

#### Stephen Parker (1970-77)

Great teacher, sailor and kayaker. I owe my O-level Latin to him (against the odds!)

And two comments from former staff, not contemporaries at BHCHS:

#### Peter Graves (Geography, 1984-89)

He was a wonderful man. I got to know Derek very well during his years running the Nazeing Sailing Centre. His dedication to encouraging young talent and his skills at maintaining the boats were admirable. The last time I saw Derek was when I bumped into him at Heybridge where he would often go canoeing. Opportunities like those that Derek provided have disappeared from school life now due to the changes in funding and regulations for trips.

#### Roger Lowry (Geography, 1979-82)

I knew Derek when he ran the Essex sailing base. For about three years I took a minibus full of students there once a week. Derek was almost completely unflappable, and not obsessed unduly by Health & Safety. On one occasion a boom swung across and thumped a lad firmly on the head, he checked the guy was conscious then muttered to me: "...one way to learn a lesson"; another time there was a firm onshore wind and some novices were sailing rapidly straight at the side - Derek yelled: "please hit something cheap!" He kept that place going single-handedly, and when he retired it dwindled away and shut within a few years. I recall tales of him working at the Bradwell Centre and after the students had finished he would kayak out to the island in the estuary and camp overnight to get some solitude. I kept in touch with him afterwards, and he (and Paula) were always most kind and friendly. *I am grateful to David and Jane Smyth for their help in providing material for this article - Ed.*