

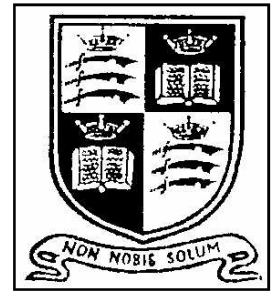


# ECSOSA

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2004

Published by the Edmonton County School  
Old Scholars Association



## EDITORIAL

Well, my desperate plea in the last issue for copy certainly did not fall on deaf ears, I am very relieved to say. Several of you have written in with interesting stories and photos of life after ECS. I cannot, of course, publish all of them in one issue, but they will all appear in time. Please keep them coming, already there have been contacts between some old scholars involved and I am sure there could be more.

Thank you so much to those who have written and let's hope there will be lots more now that the ball has started rolling!

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### NORMAN ALBON writes

I see in the summer newsletter that Olive Hedley-Smith joined the school when I was 1 year old but is still active. As Solly Galen's physics were of great value to me, I was pleased to see the photograph of him demonstrating surface tension.

A very recent book on Robert Hooke led me to find the book awarded as Chemistry prize for 1938-9 which denigrates Hooke for a disagreement with Newton, contrary to the account now given. Both books published by Oxford University Press.

**Norman Albon**

**E mail: [normanandjoan.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:normanandjoan.fsnet.co.uk)**

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Any ideas on who's who in this photo?



SPEECH DAY DRAMA

Eric Wilkinson standing 4<sup>th</sup> from right, he may know date.

## FROM JOAN YOUNG

(nee BEVIS)

I was saddened to read the news of the death of Betty Frazer (nee Lewis) in your recent Summer Newsletter.

Betty, (a former classmate), Margaret Gattung and myself were the first exchange students to Autun, France in 1949.

Whilst there, I was presented with a bouquet by the local Resistance leader who seemed to think I should personally know Churchill. I still visit my French friends and five years ago, I was re-introduced to Betty's exchange friend.

In 1957, Betty hosted a class re-union at her home for the girls. That was the last time I saw many of them.

It would be wonderful to meet these same friends again or have news of them. They included Carole Goss, Jessie Fouracres, Frances Lorkins, Doreen Wallace, Marie Mercer, Pamela Moran and many others.

Several years ago, I attended one of the ECSOSA dinners but was disappointed to see no one I recognised.

I have personally been married for nearly fifty years, have one son and two daughters, also six lovely grandchildren.

Hoping there is someone out there who remembers me.

**Joan Young (nee Bevis)**

**High Trees, 4(B) Firway Close,  
Welwyn, Herts. AL6 6RE**

**Tel: 01438 714647**

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## WORDS OF WISDOM?

A gossip is one who talks to you about others; a bore is one who talks to you about himself; and a brilliant conversationalist is one who talks to you about yourself!

## OBITUARY

Ronald Mackinnon Denny

I am writing to let you know my father died on June 14th 2004. He was a pupil at the school from 1932-39 (I think).

Ron was born the son of Frank and Gladys Denny and elder brother of Douglas. Shortly after his birth, the family moved to Enfield where he lived until joining the RAF aged 19.

In 1931 he went to Edmonton County School where he excelled academically but especially athletically. He was Senior Prefect there for 2 years and recalled recently how, at a school dance, they were playing musical chairs. In racing to beat a girl to a chair they collided. Pupils gathered round to assist the girl and then his girlfriend turned to him and asked if he was OK, whereupon he showed her his hand flopping from his broken wrist and she fainted! A good illustration of his highly competitive spirit. At this time he was also selected as a team member for athletics to go to the 1940 Tokyo Olympics, in the 110 hurdles and relay, which, of course, never took place. He remained very fit and active until the last few months, a friend recently recalled how he leapt over a park rail and he was 72!

In June 1939 he came top in his Civil Service entrance exam despite crashing his father's car on the way there! He joined the RAF the same day. From his accounts he had an enjoyable war, making considerable sums of money gambling with fellow airmen and doing up cars, another passion of his, often, one suspects, with parts destined for repairing aircraft! He achieved the rank of Flight Lieutenant in 1943.

In 1946 he re-joined the Civil Service, where he remained in various and many posts including 5 years with NATO in France, until 1981, mainly with the Ministry of Transport. Whilst with NATO he travelled throughout Europe extensively with the family and I recall staying at the first hotel to open in Sitges, Costa Brava, awaking to find the local children gathered round the window to view these strange inhabitants.

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Further news on the Reunion front. The Head has confirmed her agreement in principal to 2005, however with more maintenance planned for the long term and to avoid further potential problems, she has agreed to hold it during the Autumn half-term break. Not only does this give us time to liaise with the school and to plan and prepare thoroughly for a first class event but also to arrange publicity to attract greater numbers.

I was delighted to attend Huw Prosser's retirement celebration after 37 years, 18 as Deputy Head, at the end of term and even more delighted to be sitting next to Jack Long who was in fine, if frail form. Several other ex-staff were there including Ian Woolstemholme as well as current staff and all of Huw's family. We were entertained by a group of very attractive young ladies (Huw's Harem?) singing a specially written version of "You're just too good to be true". We were told they were his colleagues in the lower school but they all looked like sixth-formers to me. There were tributes from Martin Rainsford, who commented that the Head my be figurehead but it is the Deputy who sets the tone of the school – and Linda Robinson; John Hulley sent his best wishes and apologies from Devon. As the first part of a set of retirement gifts, Linda presented Huw with a golf trolley, which he promised would be put to good use provided it wasn't stolen like the last one! In his thank you speech Huw told us how his career was influenced and shaped by Jack, Doris Staples and "Kev" (fellow Welshman D.C. Keville)

Best wishes to Huw and good luck to Erin! See you at the reunion?

Finally, although I am always delighted to hear from any of you when it concerns something in my remit, I am still getting letters with enclosures which I have to forward to other officers. Before you send something to the first name you think of, it would help us if you refer to the listing in the newsletter to check who deals with what and save our volunteers valuable time. No suggestions have come forward for the AGM, so it looks like they are all prepared to carry on.

**Frank Wallder**

Ron was never daunted by new experiences and in his travels seemed able to overcome any difficulties he came across, be they car breakdowns, language or accommodation problems. (Mind you, we have as a family slept in some pretty strange places!)

In 1945 he married Gwen, my mother, at Lewes on St. Valentines Day a marriage that lasted 59 years. They set up house in Orpington where I was born in 1948 and Sally in 1953. Ron built two of the houses we lived in and designed many others in the area. Recently a man tracked him down about his house which Ron had designed in 1953, tentatively asking if by any chance Ron still had the plans as he wanted to extend it. "Of course," was the response from the man who never threw anything away!

In 1961 he suffered a Pituitary adenoma, a benign tumour in the brain. This was pressing on his optic nerve and the surgeons gave him very little chance of surviving the operation with his sight, and in those days, even the operation itself was dangerous. I remember his bravery around that frightening time. He not only survived it with his sight, but returned to work in a record 8 weeks.

Eternally grateful to the National Hospital where he had the operation, it was there in 1976, having some 24 hour blood tests as part of some research for his condition, he drew up the plans for the conversion of the Oast House.

Ron saw the Oast House in ruins and when I and his then son-in-law drove past it his comment was "even your Dad is not mad enough to take that on!" But he was and converted it over several years, largely in his spare time and with assorted help. A magnificent achievement and a lasting testimony to his determination, practical abilities and love of gardening and birds.

In 1981 he retired from the Civil Service having reached the position of Assistant Secretary. However, feeling far too young to retire, he then took on the post of Deputy Director General for the British Property Federation, a position which allowed him to indulge in his love of travel, all over the world, often at his employers expense! At this time, he also felt the need to obtain a Tertiary Qualification and embarked on an MA in Transport Studies, from which he successfully graduated in 1987.

In 1984 his grandson Ben was born and although they saw each other frequently, it was only for brief periods. In 1994 they spent a precious 3 months together when Ben stayed with them at the Oast House. Ben returned home a stone heavier than when he left, spoiled rotten but with a lasting affection for his Ron-Ron, the French word for purring.

In 1996 Ron was hugely saddened by the premature death of his younger daughter Sally, who he missed greatly every day until he died.

In 1987 Ron retired – so called officially, but that meant he merely turned his huge energy to a myriad of voluntary local activities all of which he thoroughly enjoyed.

He was on the Parish Council from 1988 and initially Chairman of the Parish Council in May 1989. He later returned to the Chair and mother and I were very grateful to the Council for allowing him to keep that position despite ill health, until he died, as that meant a great deal to him.

He was Chairperson of the Brands Hatch Community Liaison Committee from its inception in 1992 until he died. He had a longstanding love of driving fast cars, (or perhaps that should be driving cars fast!). When living in France he and Mother did some rally driving with her as navigator, in theory. They might have done even better if he hadn't had to double check her (usually correct) directions so often!

He was a volunteer driver and Trust member of the Swanley District Volunteer Bureau for many years, although since he felt it a personal failure to drive up Farningham Hill at less than 80 mph, we were rather surprised he didn't see off some of the patients with heart failure before they got to their appointments!

He was also a member of the Farningham Horticultural Society, for many years competing, with some success, in the Annual Flower Show, success that might have been more frequent if he had not stubbornly stuck to his belief that plants don't need watering

His lasting legacy to Mother, was the message instilled by him from an early age "that girls could do anything boys could do and often better." And that in general most people are good and want to help if they can, it was certainly his personal philosophy on life and for that he will be sadly missed.

**Diane Jefferson (nee Mackinnon)**  
**377 Titirangi Road, Titirangi,**  
**Auckland 7, New Zealand**

### **Application to join the Edmonton County School Old Scholars Association**

First

Name(s) ..... Surname, ..... Nee.....

Telephone No. .... Fax. .... E.Mail .....

Address .....

.....

Years at School. 19..... To 19.....

I enclose cheque/postal order for £..... made payable to ECSOSA

How did you contact the Association – from School ( ) through Newsletter ( ) through Friend ( )

Through Reunion ( ) Through Annual Dinner ( ) other .....

Please return this form with the appropriate payment made payable to ECSOSA to:

Cliff Wilkins, 214 Maltby Drive, Hoe Green Village, Enfield, Middx. EN1 4EP

Tel: 020 8805 1570/8350 3670

E Mail: Cliff@wilkinsck214.fsnet.co.uk

May we retain your details to pass on to any old scholars who may wish to contact you? Yes ( ) No ( )

Current Membership Rates: Annual £3.00, Joint Annual £4.00, Five years £12.50, Five years joint £16.50, Ten years £22.50. Ten years joint £30.00. Life £30.00, Joint £40.00

## WEBSITE NEWS

We have had an offer we can't refuse from Graham Johnson who already has experience running a site on Edmonton. It is particularly pleasing that both Eric and Beryl Cushion are happy to work with Graham to make the most of Ecsosa.co.uk. She will be concentrating on developing the Archive with Maureen Bealby, especially copying our records into electronic form. This will mean even more photographs available on the website and we can make copies of your precious memories and return them to you. Please don't send any without contacting her first though. More details later but meanwhile keep a lookout for developments on the Website!

## HUW PROSSER

Like many teachers of his generation, Huw Prosser left his secondary school in Cardigan in 1963, spent four years in university and then returned to the education system as a graduate teacher. Huw has remained at Edmonton County for 37 years during which time he has held a variety of responsibilities. He ends his teaching career as deputy headteacher and head of Lower Site.

Huw joined the school in 1967 when secondary education in Enfield was being re-organised. As a result he has seen the growth and development of the school into a comprehensive, catering for pupils of all abilities in the local community.

Huw joined the school as a teacher of geography and became head of geography in 1972. In 1976 he was also given responsibility for careers education and Project Trident (one of the many government initiatives he has seen come and go). In 1983 he became a senior teacher and in 1986 a deputy headteacher of the school. During this rapid promotion he also managed to be the school's examinations officer for a period of time.

It is no surprise that someone with Huw's skills should be given such big responsibilities. His current role includes management of the school's budget and he carried out this duty with real care and immense accuracy.

But it is likely to be for his role as deputy headteacher at the Lower Site that Huw will be best remembered. On a daily basis he could be seen clearing the playground, supporting staff and pupils experiencing difficulties and his energy never seemed to fade. Lunch breaks had little meaning for Huw who was usually carrying out supervision duties with sandwich in hand.

Pupils will remember him as a teacher who loved his subject, taught it well and who was a firm disciplinarian who wanted them to succeed. Pupils and staff alike knew where they stood with Huw, He always had high expectations and upheld the values of fair play and respect for individuals in whatever task he undertook. He will be very greatly missed by everyone in the school.

He is looking forward to a retirement filled with exotic holidays, golf and family. Thank you Huw for all that you have contributed to Edmonton County and best wishes from all staff, pupils and parents.

**Linda Robinson.**

## Life After ECS

Here is the first in the series 'Life after ECS.' It was sent in by Ethel White.

I went to Edmonton County School in September 1933 where my eldest brother was already established. I left at Easter 1939 – in the company of Beryl (Townsend) Dewhurst. So many of our class mates went off to war as we were the 17 to 18 year olds called up at once. I had taken the Civil Service entrance examination and was called to the Industrial Intelligence Centre, which later became the Ministry of Economic Warfare. Office work was not really suited to me, so as soon as I could, I left to train as a nurse. After qualifying as State Registered Nurse and State Certified Midwife, I volunteered for service as a Missionary Nurse in the Belgian Congo. This necessitated a year's residence in Belgium studying Belgian administration and Tropical medicine and improving on my schoolday French!

After two terms of service in Africa I came home again and returned to nursing in England. I had always wanted to teach but my parents had put up so many obstacles when I left school (My father thought education was not for girls!) but at the age of 50 I took a teacher training course at Bolton. This qualified me for the exalted post of Sister Tutor, which I continued until retirement.



**Ethel White**

At that time, the minister of my church was looking for an assistant – and a retired missionary nurse seemed to be just what he was looking for! So after a few years as Pastoral Assistant, the pastor went elsewhere and left me to it until the next Minister came four years later. Since then, I have taken things more slowly, although friends need help as they get older and feebler! Now at 82, I'm still in reasonable health, keep taking the tablets, still driving a car and caring for a disabled friend.

There seems to be a lull in the White's history at ECS. - My brother Francis (Jim) started in 1932 to 38 and I started in 1933 to 1939.

My (very) young sister Hilary started in 1953 – just retired from teaching in Suffolk.

My youngest brother's sons (Nephews) David, Steve (teaching Maths in Barnet) and Martin.

My great nephew (Dave's son) - Graham went on to further education 1997 – 2002

Many of these boys were killed in the war.

Back Row – 2nd from centre – H.E. Mayncord (died November 2000)

Class 3A – 1936

Middle Row – 2nd from centre – F.J.F.(Jim) White (my brother)

Girls: Front Row.

Beryl (Townsend) Dewhurst, Joan Tanner Me.



**Ethel D. M. White,  
12 Pegasus House,  
Crossbrook Street,  
Cheshunt, Herts. EN8 8JU  
Tel: 01992 624242**

*Excellent story. Keep them coming in. I would like to publish at least one in each issue if possible. Please don't think that nobody wants to know, because they do!*

*Ed.*

## DIARY DATES 2004

Deadline for Postal votes for AGM		12th September	
Committee Meeting	Lower School	Thursday 23rd September	8.00 pm
Archive Group	Upper School	Wednesday 6th October	4.00 pm
Lunch get-together	Whitewebbs Park	Thursday 7th October	12.30 pm
<b>ESA AGM</b>	Lower School	Thursday 7th October	8.00 pm
<b>ECSOSA AGM</b>	Lower School	Thursday 14th October	8.00 pm
Deadline for registered members to record their votes for the AGM		October 15th	
Half Term	week commencing	Monday 25th October	
Archive Group	Upper School	Wednesday 3rd November	4.00 pm
Deadline for contributions to the Christmas Newsletter		November 20th	
Autumn Term ends		Friday 17th December	
<u>2005</u>			
Spring term starts		Tuesday 4th January	

### HISTORY TIME

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be. Here are some interesting facts about the 1500's.

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and still smelled pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell, so brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies.

By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water."

Houses had thatched roofs, straw piled high, with no wood underneath.

It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained, it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip off the roof. Hence the saying "It's raining cats and dogs."

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying "Dirt poor." *(Getting quite an education, aren't you?)*

Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over, they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could "bring home the bacon". They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and "chew the fat."

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning and death.

This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or "upper crust." *(We live and learn!)*

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Please send all communications to Mrs. Jan Mills, 278 Westhorpe Road, Gosberton, Spalding, Lincs. PE11 4EP,  
Tel: 01775 841320.  
E Mail: Janmills@beeb.net  
Please mention ECSOSA in the subject heading when sending E mail.

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Any opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of individual contributors and are published in the interests of information and debate. ECSOSA itself holds no collective opinions

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