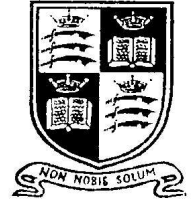


ECSOSA



Edmonton County School Old Scholars' Association

Website: <http://ecsosa.org.uk/>

NEWSLETTER Summer 2006

We get letters...

One letter we received kindly pointed out the loss of text at the end of several articles in the last Newsletter. Thank you for taking the trouble to write in. We **had** noticed and we really must apologise to all our scribes and readers.

We put the text disappearance down to our assumption that we were on the same wavelength as our printers, but apparently they saw fit to increase the size of the type, hence the loss of some endings.

However, this has now been rectified and all future Newsletters will appear as originally intended.

A letter from ALAN FLOOK

About four years ago a chance conversation put me in touch with a group of people who had been my friends at The County in the 1950's, and for a few years after. We tended to just drift apart as people moved and focused their lives on such things as family and careers.

A get-together was arranged, which I attended, and was amazed that after around 40 years virtually everyone was instantly recognisable. Sure some of us had added a little to our waistlines and lost that youthful hirsute appearance, but the basic facial appearance seems to have survived whatever else nature had done to us.

Just two of the old gang were missing. Again, chance took a hand and one of our number (Steve Black), now resident in Canada, found that Terry Haines lived about 60 miles from him. He in turn put us in touch with the last piece of our somewhat disparate jigsaw - Michael Molyneux - now living in Market Harborough.

The latest reunion was held on 18th May and was attended by most of our group. Steve Black rang us from Canada and spent a good 12 months' income on a long call speaking to all of us. He vows to come over next year and to try and persuade fellow expatriot Terry to join him.

The other latest recruit, Michael Molyneux, showed his dedication by travelling on public transport from Market Harborough to Goffs Oak. The hosts were Alan and Vivienne Flook, who kept their reputation intact by arranging a barbecue on a day blessed with gale force winds and occasional downpours - if you ever want a drought broken just ask Alan to hold a barbecue, it works every time.

I hope such mini-reunions take place among various people who had the pleasure and privilege of attending The County - our group certainly have the intention of maintaining the contacts and friendships made so many years ago.



From left to right: Meg Brett (Stiven), Dave Brett, Sue Watson, Michael Molyneux, David Curtis, Viola Mason (Ackhurst), Alan Flook, Peter Evans, Sue Evans and Brian Mason.

A letter from BRIAN ARMITAGE

Since the annual dinner, Bryn Root, Roy Head and I have met up to celebrate the year of our 70th birthdays! As a result of these meetings it has been suggested that a get-together be arranged for pupils 1947-52 'A' Class. Is it possible to print this request in a Newsletter? Our contact points are:

Bryn Root	01843 604470
Roy Head	01473 710529
Brian Armitage	01992 463500

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Summer time - and the living is easy - at least it seems that way compared to last year. Although it is impossible to hold a major reunion every year without an influx of helpers, we are always on the look-out for new ideas.

Whitewebbs seems to keep jogging along happily, and although our Spring outings have never attracted huge numbers, as long as those that do attend enjoy themselves we shall continue to organise them.

The Dinner is more of a problem - it appears that every venue we try starts well but then standards start slipping. Is it complacency? Or perhaps corners are cut in order to save on costs. Whatever the reason, we are looking to move on - any suggestions?

After last year's turnout at the Reunion we are also looking to provide something for our "younger" members, i.e. those that haven't retired yet! Trouble is, if the old dodderers organise it we are bound to get it wrong, but no-one of the sixties and seventies generations seems to want to take it on.

I feel for them in a way - whereas we older generations had more opportunities to get to know each other and slip easily into a group covering many years, they perhaps suffered from a more PC education. We had a team building House system at school. School teams could cover as much as five different years, in one building we all knew each other, and when we left we could go onto a thriving group of Old Scholars' Association Societies and Sports Clubs.

Our younger colleagues had far fewer opportunities to mix - many never knew people outside their own year, at least until they reached the sixth form. Two buildings, just one year's intake equalling half the whole school of our time, House system abolished, sports players snatched up into Clubs before they even joined the school - the Old Eds didn't stand a chance. And yet, when these old scholars have met other generations they are usually surprised at just how much they have in common - I'm not!!

There has always been a thread of continuity running through generations of staff. Huw Prosser, for instance, always quotes Jack Long as being a huge influence on his early years, and he in turn has influenced another generation - and there are other links.

I hope some of you will take up the challenge of organising a get-together of a whole group of your generation rather than just your own year. You will be surprised at just how well you will all get on. We can help with contacts, publicity and even funding - but you don't want OAP's running a disco - only you can organise what appeals to you, and only you can attract your own.

Frank

ANNUAL DINNER 25th March

Have you noticed that when inviting 'youngsters' at a defined time they will dribble in 15 minutes after the 'start' time and continue up to five minutes before close? With the 'greying' population the reverse is the case; they arrive well before the 'off' to ensure parking, a good table place, order the wine, or merely to get a few drinks in before they sit down! Any opportunity for wining and dining seems to bring our members together, and places were set to achieve a 'full house', without using 'rent-a-crowd'. Early arrival surely confirms our desire to get together again and to meet old and new friends! By 7.05 p.m. there was already a good crowd. It took a little longer to get our hands on the drinks as the barman departed to press the grapes and ferment the wine with each order!

Frank welcomed the around 40 people present and brought greetings from the present Head Teacher, Linda Robinson, and it was a pleasure to see our Joint President, Beryl Dewhurst. He proposed a toast to Absent Friends, some of whom have 'moved on' to higher planes, including Jack Long and Eric Wilkinson. Impromptu entertainment was provided by a joke from Peter Francis and a rendering of a long-winded, politically correct version of the Battle of Trafalgar by Arthur Spencer. Those who delayed their departure were able to enjoy Dennis Patten locking someone's wedding ring in a combination padlock. In spite of growing anxiety and tension that it could not be released, Dennis did, of course, unlock it, as we always knew he could! With a fund-raising raffle even the Treasurer, Peter Mansell, sporting a winter suntan, still had a smile at the end of the evening...

As you will gather, the evening was very informal and relaxed... but ask yourself, "Where were you?" Join us next year!

Arthur Spencer

We are still making arrangements for this year's Christmas dinner. If anyone has any suggestions for a suitable venue please let one of the committee know as soon as possible as we have to act very soon to secure the booking.

BLETCHLEY PARK

On a bright, sunny day in May a group of us went to Bletchley Park in Buckinghamshire, home of MI6 for its wartime operations.

Most of us started with the guided tour, while the rest (who had been before) decided to explore on their own, with the help of the informative handsets. We started off in the main mansion, where we were told of its history, right back to when it was owned by Sir Herbert Leon. It was taken over in August 1939 by the Government to house their Code and Cypher School, where it would be unhindered by enemy air raids.

We were then taken round the various outbuildings, being shown all the code breaking machines and how they were set up and used, including Enigma, Lorenz and The Bombe (developed by Alan Turing), which reduced the time required to break the daily changing Enigma keys. We then went to see Colossus, a working model of the original codebreaker, built by a group of volunteer enthusiasts, showing how each message was received and de-coded.

Lunch followed, after which we were free to spend the afternoon investigating on our own and exploring the beautiful gardens.

All in all a very interesting and informative day. Well worth the visit.

JOURNEYS TO HELL...

...OR ALMOST!

**By Maureen Shelley
(Thompson)**

I really shouldn't have boasted to Cliff Wilkins, and then you would never have to read this bad bit of writing! Well I did, because I was telling him of the love of travelling I had, which I think I can safely say came from my old Geography teacher, Jack Long, who sadly passed away recently.

My first real taste of long haul flying began, well badly, some years ago. I had decided on a four and a half month trip to the Far East, setting off from Charles de Gaulle in Paris. My first flight on a Jumbo - what a size, how will it get off the ground? Well, actually it didn't! Not until over five hours or so later.

We were a full contingent that day, almost 400 of us. It took an eternity to load passengers, baggage, trolleys, food and goodness knows how many crew. As the flight was going on after Delhi to Ho Chi Minh Ville it was almost half full of little, **very little**, yellow men, in regulation grey suits, who, with an eastern charm, bowed before each passenger with a "hamaste", a delightful, but time-consuming, gesture.

At last the doors were closed, we fastened our seat belts, we had our 'demo' from delicious looking Air Chance Hostesses, and then slowly our massive bird pulled out into the long queue at the end of the runway. Our number came up and the pilot cruised forward towards the starting line, when BANG, BANG, BANG, BANG and BANG. The Pilot completely misjudged the turn onto the main runway and went over several large, projecting drain covers, which blew out our tyres!

Fire engines came rushing from all directions, oxygen masks fell down, hostesses starting rushing around - oh, goody, goody, what a fun start! Full scale emergency alert.

So, what do you do with a Jumbo Jet you can't move? Well, the first concern is to keep the passengers happy, so you feed them, rule one. But first, the pretty Air Chance girls had to get out of their 'welcome aboard' uniforms and don their pinnies. So out came the food trolleys and we all tucked in to our really quite good food, while more fire engines and ambulances arrived. Full shut down of the Airport, as it's pretty hard to get around a Jumbo, half onto the main runway, to take off;. 'Glass of champagne Madam?' 'Bag of toiletries Madam?' 'Slippers Madam?' 'Yes please!' Eco passengers up-classed to First without supplement.

O.K. if you think it takes time to load an aircraft, it takes even longer to unload it, when everybody has taken off their shoes, got out their magazines and everything else you have on a nine hour flight.

An hour and a half later out of the hold came all the luggage, and the "will you please identify your baggage" before we, and it, were stowed on a coach. Then, of course, a jolly ride around the airport on the bus, while deciding what they should do with 400 well fed and champagne passengers.

Well, to cut a short story long, 5 hours later we eventually took off without any damage, having once again gone through the comedy of baggage and passenger loading. As our slot must have mucked up a lot of schedules all over the Far East we were told that we would have a stop-over at Karachi, and that exceptionally we would be allowed to get off and go into the Airport.

The wait for the buses for 400 passengers was so long that by the time the last passengers got into the transit lounge, VERY heavily guarded by soldiers with machine guns, it was time to re-load again. Getting quite an expert at this now!!

However, by this time it was past midnight, but the heat, smell, ambiance at putting my nose out of that plane I shall remember always. It was delicious! My first taste of the Far East,,,

After that I spent six weeks in India, but only going by train... but then that's another story.

to be continued

64 YEAR MEMORIES Peter Francis (1940 - 1945)

A very belated reply to the letter of Dickie Platt in the Summer 2004 Newsletter, re. 1942/3/4 E.C.S.Harvest Camps at Stowell Park, Glos. I vividly remember the train journey from Paddington to Cirencester in a fourteen coach train, pulled by two engines.

In the summer of 2004 my wife, Eileen, and myself spent a holiday in Shropshire and returned via Hereford to Northleach and Stowell Park. We spent some while in Northleach, where we spoke to ladies from the Church and the village. They informed us that the four German airmen buried in the Churchyard had been re-buried in the German cemetery at Cambridge.

All members of the harvest camp will remember the German aircraft being brought down one Sunday evening not far from the campsite. I did not know until 2004 that the plane had been rammed by a newly qualified pilot in a training plane, and he and the four Germans all lost their lives. The plane crashed with its bombs still on board.

I remember vividly the camp fire we enjoyed with boys from a school forestry camp, together with a group of newly arrived American airmen from a nearby camp. The Americans provided the music, and two tunes that they played were 'South of the Border' and 'Deep in the heart of Texas'

I often wonder how many of those airmen survived the war?

As we stood by the locked gate of the site it was a very nostalgic feeling from 64 years ago.

DOUGLAS WAUGH writes from Kent

I found the enclosed photograph. It was a School outing to Corfe Castle, Poole. Apart from Jimmie North, the one next to the Head was Jones (a violinist) then Heesmen (an excellent swimmer). I am the tall chap third from right. To my left was Johnny Ratcliffe and to my right Alan Wrigar.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

14th September
21st September
12th October
Wednesday T.B.N.
T.B.A.

Lunch Get-together @ Whitewebbs Park.
Committee Meeting @ Lower School.
A.G.M. @ Lower School.
Archive Group @ Upper School.
'Still Swinging'/Happy Days/whatever.

12.30 pm on
7.30 pm for 7.45 pm
7.30 pm for 7.45 pm
4.00 pm



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