

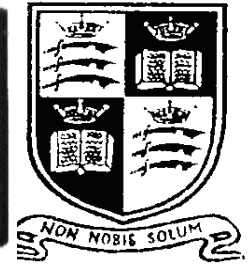


# ECSOSA

Edmonton County School Old Scholars' Association

Website: [www.ecsosa.org.uk](http://www.ecsosa.org.uk)

NEWSLETTER June 2012



## "It were a reet good do"

Our Annual Luncheon reported by David Day (1947-52)

Having waited twelve months, the great day finally arrived, Paddy's Day of all Days for the ECSOSA Annual Luncheon at the new venue of Bush Hill Park Golf Club.

The locals knew how to get there, but some of us from further afield had to trust our 'Sat Nags', which had no idea of the rubbish traffic conditions around Enfield. Having finally reached the place, and solved the mystery of the sliding main gate, we dashed across the car park in the pouring rain to enter the grandeur of the entrance hall to the Clubhouse, with its great staircase and wood panelled walls resplendent with the gilded names of past Presidents and trophy winners.

More than 50 of us assembled in the dining room, to be confronted by seven huge round tables worthy of King Arthur. A certain amount of jockeying took place to decide who sat where and with whom, and eventually we settled down to greet old friends and exchange the usual reminiscences. After a short welcome from our Chairman, Frank Wallder, grace was said and the business of the day began. The vegetable soup was excellent and a good start to the meal. The main course was from the carvery, and we took our turns to be summoned. There was a choice of roast beef or gammon and tasty gravy (sorry-sauce) and some very good spuds and a selection of vegetables filled the plates. Conversation lulled a bit (but not much) with the concentration needed to eat, and everyone seemed very pleased with the quality of the food. The next problem was what to have for dessert, a choice between crême brûlée and rhubarb crumble. Coffee and tea followed and we sat back and serious conversation resumed.

The customary raffle took place, with the usual groans when most of the tickets pulled out of the tombola seemed to be pink. Thanks are due to the ticket sellers and to the ladies who folded the tickets.



A demand for silence from the chattering, reminding one of the school hall, brought Frank Wallder to his feet again to give his usual vote of thanks to all involved in both the running of the Association and the organising of the luncheon. The subject of the War Memorial was mentioned, and it is good to know that it is now restored to its rightful place in the school hall.



Bush Hill Park Golf Club was a dramatic and welcome change from the Jolly Farmers, and one would venture to suppose that we shall assemble there again next year. Huge sigh of relief from Eileen Ford (Ambridge) who kindly fixed it for us to use this facility.



In view of the recent postage increase we ask all members if it would be possible for us to send their Newsletter by e-mail, which would prevent us having to put up the membership fee to cover costs. Contact Cliff on [cliff@ecsosa.org.uk](mailto:cliff@ecsosa.org.uk) to arrange this and it would be a great help.

## Obituaries

### Jean Walford nee Binder (Prefect in 1941) sends in news of the death of her brother Desmond Binder (1936-41)

Desmond died on 1st January 2012. He left school at 16 years of age and worked for the Scottish Life Assurance Company in London. He was called up at 18 years and served in the Royal Marines for about 3-4 years. After the war, and his discharge, he returned to the 'Scottish Life' and stayed with them for the rest of his working life. He met his wife in the London office. He became a Branch Manager and ran the St. Albans branch for some years, living in Hadley Wood for the last 30-40 years.



### Wendy Ramsdale (nee Crack) (1948-52)

Wendy peacefully passed away on 31st March 2012. She was in poor health for many years and spent the last eight months in hospital, and then in a Nursing Home, leaving her husband, two children and five grandchildren.



J. T. Ramsdale

### Irene Patricia Wright (1938-44)

My own bad impressions of a recent visit to a modern hospital are diminished by the privileged recollections of a dear sister, whose death followed many of the diseases she had herself studied.

A dedicated career lady of great charm and authority rose to Matron of no less than three hospitals over many years, to die where she began her training straight from Grammar School. She had retired from her career, again selflessly, to attend to her own dear mother, who in fact survived her by some seven years.

From her brother she extracted a promise. She wished to endure her passing ANONYMOUSLY. She would not allow complaint of the loss from her bedside of a very expensive edition Bible, which I know meant much to her. Although I felt so many in her profession would have rejoiced with the chance to remake contact, it was not to be, and in due course her remains were dispatched to Pathology for any further use:

This part of her life I am mentioning to set down for posterity. Over 30 years have not blown away the past, and I surely owe it to her and her splendid example of both dedication and charm. "A true Professional".

Sent in by her brother Ron Wright (1937-40)

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wed. 4th July.	Lunch Get Together. 12 Noon.
	The Plough, Crews Hill.
Wed. 12th Sept.	Committee Meeting. 7.30 p.m.
	Cambridge Campus
Wed. 10th Oct.	Lunch Get Together. 12 Noon.
	The Plough, Crews Hill.
" " "	A.G.M. 7.30 p.m.
	Cambridge Campus.

## WHERE ARE YOU NOW DOREEN?

At the recent lunch Ron Wright remembered colleague Doreen Aris, who became an actor, and wondered what happened to her. He has been helped by Cliff and Beryl and their Googling. It lists many stage appearances with fellow cast members of some note (John Gielgud to name but one), at theatres in the West End and in the provinces. It mentions just one film "The Night my number came up", released in 1955, but many television appearances in various series during the 1960's. These included the likes of 'Z Cars', 'The Troubleshooters', 'Weaver's Green' and 'Armchair Theatre'. There the trail goes completely cold - There are no personal details on the web.



Can you provide any further information ?



Ted Lawrence's archive



I came across this photo today. It was taken by my father, probably mid. 1950's to early 1960's, and is of the wives and/or girlfriends of the Old Studs Cricket team (these days no doubt called 'WAGS'), some were themselves former pupils at E.C.S. Can anybody name them?

I have also dug out the Order of Service for the Memorial Service at Edmonton Parish Church on Saturday 14th December 1946. It was attended by staff, pupils, Old Studs and parents of the deceased, and was conducted by two Old Studs who had become Clergymen, the Rev. Donald Bailey (1933-37) and Rev. A. Cowell (1922-27).



I so enjoyed the article in the last issue of the Newsletter on dancing lessons in the gym. I will remember trying to dance to the record of Victor Sylvester playing 'Whispering'.



I was very keen but had two left feet and none of the boys ever wanted to dance with me. I did learn in the end though, and still like a dance when I get the chance.

What a pity that ballroom dancing does not seem to be on the menu in schools now. We used to go to St. Stephen's church hall for the A.T.C. dances—boys on one side and girls on the other, waiting for a brave lad to ask if he might have the pleasure of the next dance. Happy Days!!

Brenda Nichol (nee Baxter) (1939-44)



# IMPRESSIONS OF THE CRISIS

We returned to school on Tuesday, 13th September, 1938, full of hope, ready and eager to begin a new school year, though somewhat dazed by the world situation. But on that Tuesday, 27th September, a fortnight later, there was no hope left in England. We were saying that it couldn't really happen. We were saying (rather pitifully) that Chamberlain would think of something ... that maybe Roosevelt would suggest something ... that maybe Russia ... that maybe Czechoslovakia ...

On Sunday, the 25th, there was an enormous crowd outside the Town Hall, waiting to be fitted with gas masks. The black and white A.R.P. posters had gone up overnight on Sunday. From pulpit, stage and loudspeaker came instructions as to what precautions to take, and where to go to get your masks.



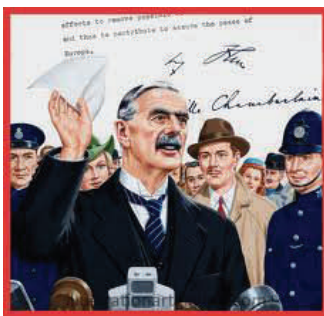
When Monday came, in every park there were trenches. In the small private squares and back gardens of many houses—trenches. Men had been digging all night by the light of flares. Sandbags were going up round public buildings. On all roads traffic was complicated by trucks loaded with anti-aircraft machinery and Air Territorials, as well as private cars carrying their owners to places of safety. All that night spade-work went on, and the hum of planes was never absent, and on Tuesday night searchlight drill with target planes began.

It is difficult to recall in all its vividness our state of mind and nerves during the tension of last September. Compared with September, 1938, August 1914 was an irresponsible carnival of high spirits, blind settlement and sublime ignorance. In 1938 we said somewhat the same foolish things—that economically Germany could not last two months, that they were already short of food. There were already rumours of anti-war riots. We said “He’s not a fool, he must know the temper of his own people. He won’t dare ...” But after Chamberlain’s first visit to Germany it became plain that he *did* dare, and by the end of September almost the only question left was: “How much damage can he do before he is pulled down?” Yes, damage was going to be done. We must therefore concentrate on protecting as far as we can.

Nearly all the schools in certain areas had been warned that they were to be evacuated. In all these schools labels were written out, instructions issued and as much information given as available to the pupils telling them what to do. Twenty four hours would elapse before their parents would know where their children were, for their destination was—unknown. Meanwhile the fitting and distribution of gas masks was going forward. But was Edmonton a danger spot? Were the children in our schools to be evacuated? Some said “Yes”, others wagged their heads and said “No”!

It was in such a spirit of doubt and anxiety that a very large meeting of parents was held in the School hall on that Wednesday evening. They were pleased with the arrangements made and were practically unanimous in favour of the scheme. Then consternation. By ‘phone it was announced that no arrangements could then be made for local children. A spirit of gloom was manifest. Though it was determined that efforts to include local children in the scheme should continue to be vigorously carried on. But in spite of this alarming new factor, the spirit never wavered. That is English morale.

The Tuesday evening papers had carried the news of Germany’s mobilisation order for 2 p.m. (Wednesday). That cut down the possibilities of peace considerably. Thursday—Friday—Saturday—could nothing still be done? On



Tuesday evening we listened in a spirit of hopelessness to Chamberlain’s broadcast from Downing Street. “I would not hesitate to return even a third time to Germany.” It was noble. But what was the good? He said that he had done all that one man could do. On Wednesday morning newspaper placards announced the mobilisation of the British fleet. And then Mr. Chamberlain went to Germany on his third visit. The Thursday morning papers proclaimed respite. We dare not call it more. There had been a hitch in the negotiations. Would the two meet again? But one more supreme effort was made. And late on that evening the two did meet—an agreement was reached at 1.30 a.m. Friday’s papers announced peace. Well it was over War was not going to begin on the Saturday. The tension was relaxed.

It will be impossible to say for a while perhaps, whether Mr. Chamberlain was right or wrong to pay so high a price for the present safety of the people of England and the world. But at least there would be no war. And so the crisis passed! And what has the future in store? Is the tension only relaxed temporarily?

P.S. Edmonton is now included in the areas to be evacuated.

**Historicus**

This article appeared in the School magazine Christmas issue of 1938 and was discovered and passed on to us by Archivist Beryl Cushion (Levett). She writes “I was at Raglan Infants School at the time, so was hardly touched by the panic. I vaguely remember though getting a gas mask and my parents coming to a meeting about evacuation”.

## Correspondence re: The Memorial

My name is Brian Booth and I have been given your details in the hope that you might be able to help me with a possible past pupil of Edmonton County secondary School—Edwin James Hedley Smith (or Hedley-Smith).

I am a meteorological historian and I'm attempting to write a brief biography of Edwin James Hedley-Smith, whose parents lived in Edmonton from his birth in 1914 until he was killed in 1941. Their address at the time was 74 Fairfield Road, N.18. The biography is for a revised edition of the Book of Remembrance for all meteorologists who died during the war, and which sits alongside the Met Office Roll of Honour in the Met Office HQ at Exeter.

Edwin joined the RAFVR (Meteorological Branch) when war was declared in September 1939. After serving at a number of RAF airfield meteorological offices he joined the SS Toronto City in late November 1940. The ship had been chartered for weather reporting purposes in mid-Atlantic. Apart from brief periods in port he was almost continuously at sea, until the ship was torpedoed on 1 July 1941. Edwin was one of three meteorologists on the ship and they, along with the other 37 crew, were all lost.

Few people know the story of the SS Toronto City, and its companion ship the SS Arakaka, in fact most would disbelieve the idea that two undefended merchant ships were ordered to sea to broadcast regular weather observations during the war, but is one of the unrecorded stories of heroism that deserves to be told.

I believe Edwin might have been a pupil at the school, Edmonton County Secondary school, as it was, between about 1925 and 1933, and wonder if the school has a Roll of Honour that records his name.

I have very little information about Edwin, so if his name is recorded that would at least provide me with the name of the school at which he was educated.

Any advice you can offer would be greatly appreciated.

*Frank has confirmed that the Edwin-Smith on the Memorial is indeed the Edwin James Hedley-Smith mentioned above.*

**Editor's Note:** The story of the SS Toronto City can be seen on our website.

### Can you help?

My name is Sophie Hicks (nee McGill), and I live in Malton, North Yorkshire. My father Robert McGill was born in Edmonton and attended Edmonton County Grammar School in the 1940's. It is his 80th birthday this year so I decided to browse the internet to look for some details of his old school and came across your website. To my delight my father features on the football team photo of 1947/48. I wondered if you have any members from this era that I could contact? In particular, I wondered if John Oswald is a member, as he was a close friend of my father's. My father moved to York in 1955 and has lost all contact with friends from the area. My e-mail address is Sophie@jmpackaging.com

### John Hulley (1945-52) and (1975-95) writes:

*The good news about the war Memorial coincided with Vera Hoy's letter, with the photograph of her classmates, including Derrick Ferdinando, who was the only one of the fallen I ever knew. When I was at Raglan Primary during the war he was the 'big boy' who lived a few doors from me, and whom I used to watch making model aeroplanes before his time came to join the RAF.*

**Leslie Dean (1947-51) was delighted to note that the War Memorial plaque is being returned to its rightful place in the school hall. He goes on to say:**

*My brother, Harry Dean (1936-41) was lost at sea while serving in the Royal Navy in March 1944, and is accordingly named on the memorial.*

*I have very clear memories of attending the unveiling of the War Memorial on Sunday July 18th 1948, also of attending the Memorial service held in Edmonton Parish Church on Saturday December 14th 1945. It would be most fitting if the replacement of the Memorial could be marked in an appropriate way. No doubt those of us with personal interests are dwindling in number, but I, for one, would be only too pleased to attend if anything may be arranged.*

*My sincere appreciation to all those who have persisted and been able to influence the current School administration to put right the travesty of having the memorial removed in the first place.*

### An e-mail from Gerry Bailey (1937-42)

*The recent Newsletter brought back many memories.*

*The photograph of the 37-42 intake, of which I was a member, reminded me of many events. Principally because two of my particular pals were killed during the war—although not through enemy action. David Barrett and Derek Ferdinando. The little girl sitting to the right in the front row could be Florence Meier, to whom I was married for nine years. We were both evacuated to Bocking, she with Mrs. Lawrence, in a small terraced house, and me, just opposite, in the deanery with 3 servants. Learning to dance with Bill Pritty and Miss Nix was something we boys dreaded. An aversion that has stayed with me ever since!*

### Get-togethers

**Keith Wallace** now in Vancouver, graduated in 1965, would like to meet folk who started with him in 1958. He and Paul Smith are planning to meet at 11 a.m. on Sunday July 8th in 'The Fighting Cocks' Pub in St. Albans. For further details <http://www.stalbanpubreview.co.uk/pubs/FightingCocks.html>.

**Pat Long (nee Rainbird) and Pam Perry (nee Menlove)** both (1950-55) are hoping to attend the lunch on 4th July at Crews Hill and would like to meet as many of their former classmates there as possible. Contact us, if you prefer, on [pamela.perry1@btinternet.com](mailto:pamela.perry1@btinternet.com). Hoping to see you there.

Published by the Edmonton County School Old Scholars' Association.

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