



ECSOSA

Edmonton County School Old Scholars' Association

Website www.ecsosa.org.uk

Newsletter - March 2024



Welcome to another year. I hope that you all had a peaceful Christmas and New Year! Please note that the Annual Luncheon is now arranged for Saturday 25th May 2024 at The Goffs Oak Newgatestreet Road, Goffs Oak, Waltham Cross. **Please book early.** See Page 4 for details.

Dave Day - Chairman/Secretary - email: diddy11cg@gmail.com.

The French “NHS” by Norman Pallin 1953-59

When younger, I managed to avoid personal treatment in UK, other than a radiation burn on my right hand while stopping a Russian visitor getting too close to a new device I was developing. I acquired a rather large abscess that had to be treated in a Hampshire hospital, where I met my first wife. Two traumatic experiences! Before that, having done some damage to myself at sea, got treated in Australian, Turkish, Iranian, Nigerian and Singalese hospitals, all quite good, except that I did notice a couple of cockroaches scuttling around in the Turkish one. I managed to carry out my duties during the process.



On returning to Britain I visited other folk in hospital, which were not exactly good. Communal wards, male and female in together, little

privacy, inadequate administration. Reasonably clean, but the grub was next to inedible, Guess that when you're flat on your back not too many calories are required, but maybe a bit of flavour might help.

Forward to France. Administration could be a bit more simple, use of the 'Cart Vital' easy until you lose it, additional payments pop up, and if you have a 'Complémentaire' which is a private health insurance, you have to pay the bit that the state doesn't cover, twix 60% and 70% Being France, the state controls the cost of the complemetaire, but there are normally six levels of cover. Unless you are on the bread line or have one (or more) of the 20 conditions that are life long thingys like cancer, renal disease, and a collection of other conditions. The Mrs and I have a touch of the cancers, so medical treatment comes cheap, and the treatment is next best thing to exceptional. It's paid for by the British tax payer anyway. This is due to an EU agreement that remained

after Brexit, probably because the worthy Brits come to France, buy houses that the French don't want and spend lots of money in the process. Returning to the French hospitals, they are much more relaxed, very calm, immaculately clean, far fewer people. And then the medical staff, Far more are able to speak English than they did in Britain, and the nurses, words cannot describe. In all countries, I have learnt that you do not jest with those in the medical trade, I guess they take the job too seriously, but I find it hard to resist. For an example, last time I saw the most delightful oncologist (in a very short skirt) I asked how long I had got. Reply was that normally it took between 20 and 30 minutes for the consultation. Pointed out that I thought I might live a bit longer than that, she twigged and said that she didn't know, one year, five years, ten years. So I asked if there was a twenty year option and how much did it cost. The shake of the head said it all.

Another advantage of the French system, the nurses, sorry, infirmiers. The great majority are female. They pop into your house to take a blood test, deliver medications, and even show you how to apply a sonde*. I can't say no thank you, not allowed. But, having been told that I have the bladder the size of an elephant (a doctor's description) can cope well.

In summary, the French system would seem to be a great deal better than the British. But it does cost more, but only if you are French. Seems that they contribute about the same amount of their GDP as the Brits, but the French have a substantially higher GDP than the Brits. Can't understand this, the French have far more bank holidays, longer 'wakes' when everything shuts down, a 35 hour working week and shops are more often shut than open. Even hospitals shut down at weekends, although those that are trapped inside are cared for, and the A&E bits are still available, and the nurses, sorry, been there before. No intention of going back.

Cheers! Norm and the Mrs, one dog and two cats.

*Catheter!! (Photo - Norm & The Mrs on his 81st)

Memories from school days Brian Porteous 1945-51

Some of my happiest days at the County were when we went on the summer camps organised by Mr (Eddie) Bruyneels. (Known as "Bruiser")

The first was to Fairlight, outside Hastings. Those of us who had tents took them but the school bell tent was also taken. This was just as well as during our first night there we had a terrific storm. I was in my ex-US army bivouac and slept through it, unaware of the chaos around me until I was woken up by Mr B. My tent was requisitioned as the store tent. All the campers blankets were collected and put on the floor of the bell tent. From then on everyone slept on these. Later that week we all went down to the Hastings Old Town where there was a fish and chip shop (I think it was called The Blue Saloon) where Mr B told the owners that we were boys from the east end of London on our first trip away since the blitz, as result of which we got our meals at a very reduced price.

The following year we went to West Bay, just close to Bridport in Dorset. Apart from small memories like travelling on the Town Bus, an old Ford, from Bridport station to the camp site and being sent along the shore to collect water from a spring, my main memory of this trip was when David Tyler and I decided to hitch hike to Torquay for the day only to get stuck late that night in Seaton and taken to the local police station who organised a taxi to take us back to camp. Mr B was not happy. A Bruiser anecdote is that on walks he would poke his stick into a cow pat and then stir the morning porridge

The last camp I went on was to Snowdon, or to be precise Nant Peris a village near the base of Snowdon. I arranged for the school to take my gear with their stuff as I planned to go there on my bike as I was going on to Blackpool after the camp to



ECS Group at Snowdonia

visit my Grandma. On my second day, the Saturday, the weather was miserable so I found myself just plodding on, hoping to find a barn I could stop in, until I came to a level crossing close by the Welsh border. The gates were closed so I waited for them to open. When they did the man who operated the gates from the nearby signal box came down to secure them for the night and invited me in for a cup of tea whilst he was closing down for the night, after which he took me home to sleep and share breakfast with him and his daughter.

On my last night, Sunday, I was near to our camp site by early evening when I noticed a Dutch barn close by. It seemed to be the ideal place to spend the night as it contained loads of bails of hay so I kipped down there for the night. In the early hours I woke up boiling hot only to discover that I had been surrounded by a flock of sheep.

On leaving school in 1951, the year of The Festival of Britain. Michael Collins and I decided to visit the travelling Festival in Manchester on our way back from a trip to the Lake District. We hitch-hiked starting from the end of the A6 in Barnet. On our way we were surprised when a large limousine stopped and we were offered a lift. Two scruffy school boys with their back packs jumped in the back. As we travelled north we learned that our chauffeur was The Marquess of Exeter, the Chairman of the British Olympic Association, on his way home, with his lady, from a meeting about the 1952 games in Helsinki. Whilst travelling he stopped at, what was called in those days, a Roadhouse. We thought that to be the end of our lift but in fact we were invited to join them for lunch – a completely new experience. After lunch we continued North until we reached a place called Holmes Chappel



Brian in a hired canoe

in Cheshire where his wife went into a little shop and came out soon after with a box which was full of groceries. We were told that they were turning off at this point to their home but before they left us we were given the box as stuff "to see us on our way".



The camp site

We eventually ended up in The Lakes. Walking along a lane near Hawkshead we spotted what we thought was a ideal site for us to camp. I had an ex-US jungle hammock and Mike the bivouac. We set these up and got on with cooking some of

our goodies before settling down for the night. To my surprise I was woken up early by Mike who was soaking wet. Apparently we had had a storm, which I had not heard, and the site was in fact a grass covered rock bowl which quickly filled with water so he had been flooded.

After few more days in The Lakes we headed for Manchester and the Festival of Britain. We reached the site only to

discover it had ended on the week-end we were travelling North. We went into the city centre, had some lunch and decided to head for home. Walking past what was then Manchester London Road Station, now Piccadilly, I said to Mike let's try to get lift



Mike cooks breakfast

from here. He said there was no chance but I thumbed a car or two and one stopped and asked us where we were going. We told him London and replied he was going to Northwood so he would take us there. That sounded great but as we were travelling he told us he wasn't going to stop on the way but then started preaching to us. This lasted the whole journey – were we glad when it ended?

Brian Porteous

OBITUARY – BRIAN (BRYN) ROOT **ECS 1947-52**



Bryn died on the 30th November 2023 at the age of 87. He joined ECS in 1947 where his older brothers Mick and Derek had preceded him.

Bryn, like his brothers, excelled at football and cricket during his school years. On leaving school he and his old classmates wanted to continue playing together so they formed Old Edmontonian Juniors until called up for National Service at 18. After 2 years in the RAF, Bryn and others rejoined ECSOSA. He was active in the Old Scholars football association and produced a weekly newsletter containing Old Boys football news, crossword puzzles, engagements, weddings, births and other news. He organised jumble sales and a large summer fete which took up the whole school field. He also campaigned to get a clubhouse built in the playing field opposite the school but the council refused the application. He was finally able to obtain use of a clubhouse at the Henry Barrass Stadium. He designed the Stag badge which became the Old Scholars logo and is still used today.

Well supported annual dinner dances, normally held at Pearson's in Enfield Town, always had the current head teacher and wife and also the head boy and girl as guests. Bryn became very friendly with head girl Christine Jolly and they eventually married and set up house in Trinity Avenue, Bush Hill Park. Together they were very involved in ECSOSA, Bryn becoming Chairman after Sid Perry died and Christine being Editor of Stag. Two daughters arrived and they decided to leave London and took on the Hanson Hotel in Broadstairs. Bryn still needed to work in the early years and went to his job in the city every day, returning after 12 hours to help run the hotel as barman, handyman and kitchen assistant. Financial success eventually enabled him to leave the city.

They decided to sell the Hanson and bought another hotel in Ramsgate. Sadly, the venture failed, and they went bankrupt which resulted in divorce. Bryn retained a house in Broadstairs and lived there with his daughters and got a job in the Broadstairs Employment Exchange where he remained until retirement. He was a lifelong Mason and an Arsenal supporter and his 70th birthday was celebrated at the old Arsenal Stadium 2 weeks before the new Emirates opened.

Bryn was also a popular "Best Man" and performed this duty for pals several times. He was also a staunch member of the 1A Group of Old Scholars who met annually for a weekend away.



Bryn as Best Man to Brian (Titch) Armitage

After his daughters left home Bryn bought a retirement bungalow. He raised funds for cat charities and developed a passion for gardening. While tending a neighbour's garden he became attached to their daughter Helen Crayford, such that he sold the bungalow and moved in with Helen. The partnership continued until early 2023, when rapidly increasing health problems and the onset of dementia meant that 24-hour care was necessary. Helen, with outstanding musical talent was still working so Bryn moved in with his eldest daughter. Hospice care had been arranged but Bryn died on the 30th November 2023 before it started



The stalwarts of the 1A Annual Reunion.
Back L/R - Bryn, Graham South, Colin Walker'
Front L/R Roy Head, Brian Armitage, Les Dean

From Terry Pepper - 1959-64

The yearly meet-up of a number of "Old Scholars" was held this year at a hotel in Bognor Regis in sunny Sussex by the Sea. Although over twenty were invited to this bash only five of the intake of 59 managed to attend the get-together at the end of September.

Spending the afternoon in the bar, reminiscing, laughing and generally exaggerating tales of school and work, a copious amount of alcohol was consumed by all before enjoying an evening meal - then back to the bar.

The next morning, prior to everyone setting off for home, we went for a Costa Coffee at Ford Open Prison. This was opened on HMP land just opposite the prison a couple of years ago, run by the inmates, and proves very popular with local residents. Luckily, none of us were detained for longer than it took to enjoy the coffee.

Next year's meet-up will probably be at a more central location, and if anyone is interested in attending (not only the '59 intake), possibly in May, please contact Terry Pepper at terrypepper@btinternet.com for details.

(Ed. Annual Luncheon proposed for May)



L/R - Richard Squires, Terry Lindermere, Terry Pepper, Rob Morton, Ian Day

In Memorium
Bill Sage 1936-41, June 2022.
Worle, Somerset, From his son.

ANNUAL LUNCHEON - THE GOFFS OAK NEWSTREET ROAD, GOFFS OAK, WALTHAM CROSS, HERTS, EN7 5RH **Saturday 25th May 2024 - 12.30 for 1.00pm**

Subsidised Price £30 per head. For 3 courses.
Drinks extra.

Payment preferred by Bank Transfer to, HSBC
A/C 81849999, Sort Code 40-22-19
Cheque acceptable. Payable to ECSOSA

First Name Surname.....

Nee Years.....

Address.....

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Email.....

Post Form and Cheques to Dave Day,
11 Coniston Green, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 2AJ

A MENU WILL BE SENT
TO YOU ON RECEIPT OF PAYMENT.

**RESTAURANT REQUIRES MENU CHOICE
TWO WEEKS BEFORE EVENT SO PLEASE
DON'T LEAVE IT TO THE LAST MINUTE.**

Dates for your diary.

Lunch at Plough - Wed 17 April 12.30 - 3.00pm

Joint Presidents

Dr Susan Tranter - Executive Head Teacher
Cliff Wilkins

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