

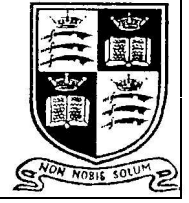




# ECSOSA

NEWSLETTER  
Summer 2004

Published by the Edmonton County School  
Old Scholars Association



## EDITORIAL

Well, Spring is sprung and the birds are bursting with song in my garden. What a pity the same cannot be said for the ECSOSA garden. All I can hear there is a deafening silence! Are you all still in hibernation after the winter? Come on folks, wake up and get your writing hands moving and send in some copy, otherwise there will be four blank pages next time!

How about writing in about your life since leaving School? Your contemporaries especially would be very interested (as would we all) and if accompanied by a fairly recent photograph would make for very interesting reading. Why not give it a go

One very welcome contributor this time is Eric Wilkinson, who has recently had a long spell in hospital

## A BIG THANK YOU FROM ERIC

As you will probably know, I have been in hospital for an infinitely boring twelve weeks but have escaped now, weak as a kitten, unable to sleep, and believe it or not, without anything being done! I must, however, have the most inside out inspected body about. I have had X-rays, ultrasound inside and out, cameras up and down and even two radio-active Thallium scans, all to find out that they can do nothing about three arterial blockages and a leaking valve, so I will have to continue to be my old obnoxious self as before. Be warned, that hospitals are terrible places, full of sick people, and, if you are not sick when you go in, you will be when you get out! Enough moans and groans. I would like to thank all those who individually or collectively sent wishes for my recovery. My glass cabinet at home is completely covered with cards, notes, etc. wishing me well. It is nice to know that, after all these years, fellow scholars still remember who you are. It must say something for the value of the Old Scholars Association. Long may it exist! Many thanks  
**Eric Wilkinson**

## OBITUARIES

I am sad to report the death of my very good friend, Betty Fraser, nee Lewis, on 25th January in Colchester after a long illness. Betty joined ECS in 1945 and took an active part in School sports. She was married in her late teens to Alfred Fraser and went on to have two children, Janet and Andrew. It was an exceptionally happy marriage until the untimely death of her husband in the mid 1980's.

She eventually moved to Colchester to be near her son and his wife who, by now, had four sons of whom she was extremely and justly proud. Her daughter, Janet, is also happily married - altogether a close and loving family. Betty was a lovely lady who will be sadly missed by so many. I am writing this on 19th March, which would have been her 70th birthday.

**Sheila Fisher (nee Olive)**

## JUST A THOUGHT

The secret of life isn't what's happened to you, but what you do with what's happened to you.

## Alan Gething

It is with deep regret that we write to inform you of the death of Alan. He would have been known to many past students and parents from his work as a maths teacher at Rowantree School and after the amalgamation of the two schools in 1967 as a Head of Year at Edmonton until his retirement in 1991.

Many past students and parents will remember him for his commitment to the school as Richmond house master, for the Lower Site Christmas parties, running Year 7 (first year) trips to Jersey and his sporting prowess at basketball, football, badminton and squash, all in addition to his normal classroom teaching. He demanded certain standards of dress and behaviour but these were always applied with understanding and compassion; he was a colleague, friend and teacher that was respected by all with whom he came into contact. We feel privileged to have known such a true gentleman and are saddened by his passing. Our deepest sympathy goes out to Pauline, his wife, and their family, Laurence and Susan at this difficult time.

**Mr. Dunlop. E.C.S**



Dr. Galen demonstrating Surface Tension to 5 S, 1947. Photo by Eric Wilkinson. 'Solly' never knew it had been taken.

*Anybody recognise themselves?  
Or anyone else for that matter?*

### Letter from Bob Goodman

My sister and I have been talking about the suggestion of a Reunion in August or thereabouts and we would both like to volunteer to help on the actual day. Distance is a problem and naturally you become involved in your own community. I have just taken over as Chair of the U3A Cliff Villages (Lincoln) and I am also Secretary of the Royal British Legion. Add to this my continuing Presidency and now I am the Editor of the Lincoln Railway Society magazine for the next two months so I keep fairly busy. Good job I haven't a computer as I wouldn't have time to read the manual to see how it works! I say all his because I am mindful of the needs of EC-SOSA but these should be satisfied by members in the local North London environment. I shall try and put pressure on Ralph to 'volunteer'. However, if a Reunion takes off, and hoping that any settled date will not clash with on-going arrangements, Pam and I will be pleased to help on the day. My guess is that Brian, Pam's husband, can be counted in as well. Jobs 'on the door', helping with refreshments and, more particularly, clearing up afterwards are areas where we can help and we can be marked down as volunteers.

Is there a definitive history of the County School and the Old Scholars organisation? I ask this because, late last summer, I found myself spending an afternoon at the Newspaper Museum at Colindale. I had booked time to look at some back issues of the Tottenham & Edmonton Weekly Herald, because I was trying to find details of a railway accident at Pickett's Lock, with which I had a connection and I wanted to find any newspaper cuttings and to pinpoint the date. Unfortunately I didn't appreciate how long it takes to look through even one year's editions of the paper and I only got to look through the years of 1939 and 1940. I kept on being distracted by other unconnected news items, so progress was slow. However, I did read about the Old Eds. Hockey team winning a match and also the O.E.'S soccer team beating Old Barkabeyans in an Old Boys League match in 1939. This was a surprise because I thought we were a rugby playing school pre war! There was also a comprehensive reference to the Speech Day results of 1939.

It struck me as being an interesting project if we could secure some volunteers to extract all this information and produce it in a digest. The researchers would have to be local members; it does take about two hours to go through each year plus time taken to make notes and secure copies. Obviously those with computers will be able to search the columns through the Web, although the Newspaper Museum doesn't like the Web because of the viruses! At any rate, I make the suggestion for anyone who is stimulated by it to run with it! Sincere good wishes to you all

**Bob Goodman**

My cousin, Kathleen Charvat (nee King) who is now 83, tells me that she had a very exciting experience in the early 1950's whilst living in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia (now Harare, Zimbabwe). At a garden fete she attended she met up with three of her ex school pals of the same years (1932-37): Irene Francombe, Ken Roberts and Joy Duncan. How's that for coincidence? She would like very much to hear from them if they are still around, and can be contacted c/o Mrs. J. Blight, 72 East Street, Corfe Castle, Wareham, Dorset. BH20 5EQ

**Janet Blight (nee Simkins)**

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Thank you for your response to my letter enclosed in the last Newsletter - it appears to have touched a nerve. As a result we now have three new officers as well as several volunteers to help at the Reunion. Which brings me to the bad news - unfortunately the School is having more maintenance work carried out this summer and it will not be available to us. We are now, however, planning to hold a reunion next year (2005) and this gives us time to liaise with the school and not only to plan and prepare thoroughly for a first class event,

but also to arrange publicity to attract greater numbers.

After a promising start, the meetings at Crown Point Inn have failed to inspire the membership. We have therefore decided to switch the October gathering back to Whitewebbs. If you do have ideas for another venue however, please let us know - from experience we recommend that you set up and organise a small group of at least half a dozen at any meeting to ensure you get off to a good start.

After consultation at the last Whitewebbs meeting, we have decided to set up a visit to the Shuttleworth Collection at Old Warden sometime in May next year. Watch out for more details!

An 'impression' we get is that members do not always read everything in the Newsletter. Of two recently sent letters to the Editor, one was addressed to myself, who gave up the job twelve months ago, and the other to Eric, who has not done the job for four years, so this seems a good time to remind you that all the Committee are volunteers. Would you please therefore take care to address correspondence to the correct person as this will help to minimise their workload.

Letters of general interest and for publication should be addressed to the Newsletter Editor, Jan Mills.

Letters for consideration by the Committee and nominations, propositions and registration of member's interest in the AGM should be addressed to the Secretary, Cliff Wilkins.

Membership applications and renewals together with any payment should also be sent to Cliff Wilkins but addressed to the Membership Secretary.

Expense claims and questions on finance should be addressed to our Treasurer, Peter Mansell.

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

First Name(s).....Surname.....nee.....  
Telephone No.....  
Address..... Fax.....  
Years at School. 19.. To 19..... E.Mail.....  
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 Life £40.00

Although Eric has now retired from all ECSOSA activity, he will still be pleased to hear from old friends. We wish him well, with thanks for all he has done over many years, and send our best wishes for a long and relaxing retirement to him AND Pat.

Another retirement coming up is that of Hugh Prosser. Huw has been Head of the Lower School for many years and with him we lose a link to what we might call the "middle years". Huw started his career with stalwarts such as Doris Staples, Jack Long and Edward Doubleday and has been particularly helpful to me as Chairman and I would like to add my personal thanks to those of the Association. Please keep in touch Huw.

Our thanks also to Cliff Wilkins who has taken on the tasks of Secretary and Membership Secretary. He has made an impressive start and we look forward with interest to the coming year(s). Our other willing volunteer is Beryl Cushion who is taking on the Website. Hopefully she can iron out the wrinkles caused by Eric's illness - welcome and thanks.

Archiving continues to progress and now that I have more help in other fields, hopefully this can be accelerated. This is a very interesting task but Maureen and I will be happy to welcome any helpers who would like to share in the fun.

Although the AGM is still four months away, if you wish to nominate anyone for the committee, have any propositions or even wish to volunteer to help, we need you to do so by July 31st. If you want a postal vote, we also need you to register your interest by this date. This is to ensure that you can be informed of any information and comments sent in that could affect your vote. You will be pleased to know that no changes are proposed by the Committee and subs will remain unaltered (unless someone else suggests them!)

**Frank Wallder**

#### **Letter from Dick Platt**

Bob Costa, a close friend since ECS days despite a separation of several thousand miles sends me the ECSOSA newsletter which I read with great interest. Raymond Tabor is often mentioned and although I only met Raymond once, he played a large part in my going to ECS. Raymond's aunt

Ida Tabor, was my mother's closest friend since their schooldays and when it was being discussed where I should go after eleven plus, Ida suggested that we should speak to Raymond who had just left ECS. So one Sunday morning in the spring of 1939, my Dad and I visited Raymond in Bush Hill Park and on his recommendation, I was enrolled at ECS. My father was also acquainted with Mr. North, the Headmaster, by membership in the Edmonton Football and Cricket Club, which was a contributing factor. So I was all set to go to ECS in September 1939, but Hitler intervened and after being evacuated to Kent, I didn't get to ECS until the spring of 1940 just when the balloon really went up. At that time we were sharing with Latymer and it wasn't until early summer of 1940 that we returned to the Cambridge Road.

The photo of the teachers really stirred up memories for me. George Locke, Bill Comber, Doc. Rogers, Bill Pretty, Solly Galen, Jimmy North are faces I clearly remember and although the women are harder to identify, Miss Staples, Miss Emery, Miss Rudwick and Miss Fothergill must surely be there. I wonder how many old scholars remember the Harvest Camps run by Bill and Mary Comber and Bill Pretty in the summers of 1943,44 and 45 at Lord Vestey's estate near North Leach Glos. For a month we harvested and did odd jobs around the farms and had a very good holiday. Happy days!

I left ECS in 1946 and after University and three years in the RAF, I met a Canadian girl in London, went to Canada in 1953, got married and have lived here and in the US ever since. We retired to Vancouver in 1992.

**Dick Platt. 1940-46**

#### **From Sylvia Deacon**

I will come to the August reunion and am more than willing to help, before, during or after the event. May I make a suggestion, would it be possible to print words of the School song? The last rendition was a bit dismal as most people's memories failed them after the first couple of verses. Maybe include it in the next newsletter, then nobody has an excuse to say they haven't learned it!

**Sylvia Deacon,  
3 Thrale Way,  
Rainham, Gillingham, Kent. ME8**

***We will produce another "Reunion Special" newsletter and include the School Song in it!***

#### **From Olive Hedley-Smith**

I look forward always to receiving the ECSOSA letter. You may be interested to know just how busy a 91 year old can be! I was 1924-29 and we few girls of the Matric form kept in touch. Indeed, I was a bridesmaid to two of them and the son of one is my Godson. So far as I know, I am the last 'remainder' of the 24-29 intake (unless Roy Beardman is still around!).

I have had a wonderfully full and interesting life - first as a trainee actuary in the Prudential then, when the National Insurance (Welfare State) came into being in 1948 I was offered a post in the new Ministry of National Insurance. Instead of completing actuarial training, I took Chartered Insurance Institute examinations in N.I. Law and qualified, after which I became a lecturer/staff trainer to the new Ministry. To the amazement of my colleagues, I retired at 50 (freezing my pension and gratuity) to care for a blind and disabled friend here in Torquay.



**Olive Hedley-Smith MBE**

Almost immediately I obtained a post as Deputy Principal of a new (first in Devon) School of English, teaching adults referred to us through the Embassies. I had a most exciting and satisfying 11 years in this role and continued after retirement, to teach privately when requested by various Embassies.

Now at 91, I am Chairman of the Torbay and District Branch of the Carer's Association (which I founded in 1971); I still teach (for fun) children towards their 11 plus; still give talks to organisations; still read the lesson on a rota

**DIARY DATES 2004**

Lunch Get Together	Whitewebbs Park	Thursday 15th July	12.30 p.m. On
<u>Summer Term ends</u>		Friday 16th July	
Deadline for nominations, propositions and members to register their interest in the AGM		July 31st	
<u>Autumn Term starts</u>		Thursday 2nd September	
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	4.00pm
Lunch get-together	Whitewebbs Park	Thursday 7th October	12.30pm on
<b>ESA AGM</b>	Lower School	Thursday 7th October	8.00pm
<b>ECSOSA AGM</b>	Lower School	Thursday 14th October	8.00pm
Deadline for registered members to record their votes for the AGM		October 15th	
<u>Half Term</u>	week commencing	Monday 25th October	
Deadline for contributions to the Autumn Newsletter		October 31st	
Archive Group	Upper School	Wednesday 3rd November	4.00pm
<u>Autumn Term ends</u>		Friday 17th December	

in Cockington Church; still do a large amount of Welfare work for Carers (phone and letters) and still edit a twice-yearly newsletter for Carers. I was very honoured in 1996 to receive an MBE and, 3 years ago, to be made a Freeman of the Borough of Torbay - (there are only 7 of us!) I should add that, because of severe osteo-arthritis, I am in a wheelchair! That's no hindrance. I'm so proud of my old School  
**Olive Hedley-Smith MBE**

*(A wonderful achievement. Olive must have second sight bearing in mind what I have written in my opening paragraphs!! I am sure there are lots of you who have interesting stories to tell. Ed.)*

**Arthur Spencer writes**

Report on Dinner

There were about 30 of us in the end who had a very enjoyable and happy evening in Potters Bar at the Old Owens Sports Ground. We were well looked after by the hosts who served up a plain but very satisfactory traditional English Roast dinner. We had no speeches

no speeches - though Frank Wallder informally brought us up to date with affairs and brought news of Eric Wilkinson, currently awaiting major heart surgery, and one or two things about the school, like the retirement of Huw Prosser, who worked with Jack Long in Geography. We sat with long standing friends Ron Wright (a pre 1939 pupil!) and his wife Irene, Peggy and Peter Mansell whom I have known since I took part in one of Sam Elengorn's dramatic productions for French afternoon. Peter as the Treasurer of ECSOSA seemed well pleased with the evening that it had not lost money! Many people were unable to come for one reason or another - obviously distance and an evening out clearly dissuades many from travelling too far. Others are away, or 'suffering' - but it is surprising that not more members were present. The lunches at Whitewebbs which are without any formality are now at least as well attended - perhaps one of these should be designated 'The Annual Dinner?'

**Arthur Spencer**

Home is the place where we grumble the most but are often treated the best!

**A LIGHT HEARTED RECIPE**

To equal quantities of generosity and thought for others, add a few dozen pleasant smiles, followed by the same number of kind words

..Sprinkle freely with fun and merriment. Flavour with wit and mix thoroughly with the spirit of love. Warm with bright looks and serve immediately.

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 Please send all contributions 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

**Final Thought.**

**Heredity is something you believe in if you have a bright child!**

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 Published by the Edmonton County School Old Scholars Association.

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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