



EC SOSA

Edmonton County School Old Scholars' Association

Website: www.ecsosa.org.uk

NEWSLETTER March 2020



SPRING HAS SPRUNG!!

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN / SECRETARY

Here we are into Brexit (although I have written this on the 31st January). Has the sky fallen in yet? All of my European relatives and acquaintances think that we are mad. But then, to paraphrase Mandy Rice Davis, they would, wouldn't they? Can anyone remember who was the last Politician that represented the U.K as President of any European Institution? Anyway whatever your opinion, the die is cast.

The Annual Luncheon at the Bulls Head, Turnford is due on the 28th March. It has been decided to drop the price to £25 per head excluding drinks, so if you require a tippie you can pay for it on the day. We are not publishing a menu since the Manager said he could cope with any order on the day. However, if you are on-line and want to look at the menu follow this link:
<https://www.mcmullens.co.uk/media/Pubs.PubMenu/650/menu/MAINCGU.pdf>.

It is sad that we lost the spouses of two members in the last few weeks: Renée Spencer and Tom Wilson. Our sympathies go to Arthur and Joan.

Orders for the Potted History and Notable Alumni booklets have now dried up. I will keep a few, but will hand the remainder to the School with our compliments.

The following year will see the reduction in Committee activity since we now only have five members with the retirement of Peter Francis. Peter was a stalwart of the Association for many years and we thank him for all his efforts. He will still arrange the quarterly lunches at the Plough and will also continue to distribute the postal copies of this Newsletter. If you would like to volunteer for the Committee please let me know.

Regards David Day



LAST ORDERS FOR OUR

ANNUAL LUNCHEON on Saturday 28th March 2020. 12.30 for 1.00 p.m.

At THE BULL'S HEAD, High Road, Turnford, Herts. EN10 BZ.

Cost per head £25.00 for 3 courses

First Name Surname Nees
 Address

Years at School: 19..... To 19..... E-mail

I forward a cheque for £..... Made payable to ECSOSA

Together with the full names of my guest/s.

Alternatively you can pay by Bank Transfer: HSBC Sort Code 40-22-19 Account 81849999

Please return this form, together with the appropriate payment to: David Day, 11 Coniston Green, Aylesbury, Bucks.

HP20 2AJ. Tel. 01296 484382. Mobile 07743 479752. diddy11cg@talktalk.net



Obituaries



DOREEN BAYLEY MBE

We regret to report the death of Doreen Bayley, who passed away peacefully on the morning of the 10th February.

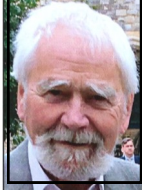


Doreen was a student at ECS during WWII from 1939 to '46 and was a prefect from 1943 to '45, being Head Girl for 1945 and '46. After leaving ECS she attended Leeds University from 1946 to '49, reading English, then UCL, where she obtained a diploma in Librarianship. She joined the Institute of Civil Engineers from 1951 to '87 as a Librarian. She was awarded the MBE in 1987 for services to the Institute of Civil Engineers, and an honorary MA from Leeds University in 1988 for services to students in London (Leeds University Old Students' Association from 1949 up to 2014).

Doreen was a dedicated Committee member of ECSOSA for many years, but unfortunately made the decision to resign due to severe mobility problems. She requested that any donations in her memory should be made to "All Dogs Matter" <https://alldogsmatter.co.uk>



Although they were not old scholars we send our condolences to the partners of **RENÉE SPENCER** (wife of Arthur) and **TOM WILSON** (husband of Joan), who both died in December. They were both loyal supporters of the ECSOSA, attending the lunches at the Plough and all our social occasions. They will be sadly missed.



There's a certain amount of CONFUSION writes DAVID DAY (1947-52)

"IT'S ALL TO DO WITH COMPUTERS!"

For many of us !old-uns" I.T. came a bit late in life. I was handed my first P.C. (Personal Computer) at work in the late 1970's—an early IBM with a monitor the size of a wardrobe and a monochrome green screen. It took ages to "boot up", having to load in several plate-sized "Floppy Discs".

Emails did not exist in much form then (I seem to recall Trumpet-Winsoc), even the fax machine needed a PhD to operate it. I didn't see word processing for some years, and only used a primitive form of spread sheet for the budget. Don't get me going on photocopiers!



Now I have a lap-top, old admittedly, and a mobile 'phone (cell 'phone to our American friends) - only G4 though—whatever that is. My granddaughter thinks that I am a bit of a fossil and occasionally gives me advice on where I am going wrong.

However, the thing that is bugging me at present is "predictive text"; some genius at Microsoft, or Apple, dreamed this up. Unfortunately, although they apparently speak English, they think in Californian English, so it might as well be Swahili. If I am texting a friend and don't pay careful attention to the screen I find that what I have just typed has been corrected by Bill Gates to another word entirely. I was telling a friend the other day that I had been having a "doze" - which you tend to do at 80 plus—and it was corrected to "Dozen". Understandably my friend came back and said "A dozen what?" Once it corrected "bloke" to "black", which could get you into all sorts of trouble. I am therefore compiling a "Predictive Text Dictionary", which may eventually get published. Meanwhile "Have a nice dog".



WHEN I STARTED SCHOOL by SYLVIA DEACON (McGIFFIN) (1948-53)

When I started school I wanted to be like everybody else, but my mother was a Tailoress so she made my shirts from sheets, and she got a second-hand gymslip which was too small to go over my burgeoning chest. Oh dear, how I wished for shop bought uniform, and to be a bit thinner.

To celebrate getting to the Edmonton County School I was presented with the biggest brief case I had ever seen. I think it was one my dad used for his work, given a polish. I was also given a bicycle, big, black, heavy.

This all sounds dreadfully ungrateful because I know they were pleased, but I just wanted to fade into the background, and I felt that my homemade shirts stuck out like a sore thumb, and all the other kids had "drop handlebar" bikes. Also I was taller than most, so that was not a good look.

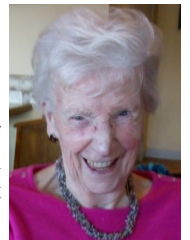
Of course now I realise why these things happened, but as soon as I could get a Saturday job a sleek, gold, drop handlebar bike appeared. Also, as our year were "the last of the War Babies" the dress code was not quite so strict.

I loved my time at the County, and the family are fed up with various people coming on T.V. and me saying "They went to my school." Long may you prosper.



EILEEN FUNNELL (Stone)

1943-1948 writes:



"I eventually joined ECSOSA last year after having attended the Centenary celebration at the school. I have just been to my first ECSOSA lunch at The Plough, Crews Hill. What a lovely time I had. I received the warmest of welcomes and so enjoyed it all. I did know three people but everyone was so chatty and kind, and I felt I'd known them for ages when I left.

Having left school in 1948 I was the oldest one there but it was surprising how many names came up who were known to several of us. I really look forward to the next one."

QUICKSILVER



To me New Year's Eve has never held an interest, December 31st of one year is just as likely to resemble January 1st of the next as not; time is a continuum. A need to punctuate the year with special days is understood, but organised jollity is anathema. Our memorable days creep up unexpectedly as a rule. What a waste of time it is to make a New Year's Resolution; vices and desires are ever with us and sweets were rationed anyway.

**By John Norrington
Davies
(1938-43)**

The Easter Term did not beckon benignly to a willing student, a period of attendance was a requirement even if, in my own case, it was irregular.

Notwithstanding, the Physics Laboratory was always an acceptable place to spend a double period. Soon into term the topic of discussion was mercury, that noble metal of atomic number 80, known to be an awkward member of the periodic table and highly toxic. We were going to make a barometer. First of all, working in pairs, we were given a sample in a small dish to observe its behaviour. Globules of mercury could be broken up by poking them with the fingers; coalescing upon contact they slid around the desk faster than a penguin on an ice flow. Once the joys of familiarisation were past the instructions were given. Solly did not waste words but spoke shortly and with a clarity sufficient for the task to be undertaken. The notes that follow are reproduced as written that day:

Take a long thick wall tube and hold it upright, carefully filling it with mercury, trying to avoid air bubbles. Then put your thumb over the end, place it in a dish filled with mercury, removing thumb when end is well under the liquid. If the atmospheric pressure falls or rises so does the barometer, by which means future weather may be forecast. If the tube is slanted the vertical height remains the same.

Our drawings showed the column of mercury to be 30" in height, giving the atmospheric pressure recorded that day in the laboratory. Further instruction was given on the construction of the U siphon type and the aneroid barometer, a mechanical device.

Later that week the form was required to attend Dr. Galin in the laboratory at the close of the school day. Much as Miss Capewell would have described Stromboli he stood rigid! From every facial fissure he was fuming. When it came the eruption was around 7.4 on the Richter Scale, but, in the interests of objectivity, some of the rumbling and trembling came from knocking knees within drill slips. Someone had nicked the mercury, which, in its earthenware jar, stood normally on the shelves of the physics store. Emotion had overcome reason for once his general invitation for public confession went unheeded, so too did the individual interrogations that followed. Girls, for some reason, were either ignored or asked in softer tones whether they had seen anything suspicious of late. Boys were asked in harsher tones what they knew about it, implicit the motion that they did! Time passed slowly when he stood in front of me, his eyes penetrating, fuming and hissing. Soon, one thought, he would be heating up a spatula over a lighted Bunsen Burner and having the boys put out their tongues. Leaning against the wall throughout, and apart from the class, Solly's

monitor, certainly the most unpopular member of the form. He rode an upright bicycle which bristled with lights powered by two dynamos. All the wiring looked suspiciously like that we had used during practicals headed 'electricity and magnetism'. The class remained steadfastly silent in the face of Solly's promise to pursue his enquiries further.

Discussion with respect to their monitor's guilt was unnecessary, we in our turn were fuming. Relief was sought for our hurt feelings. Later that week in the metalwork shop, surrounded by fish slices in various states of construction, it was noted that the miscreant had finished his. Addicted to ingratiating himself with the staff, the monitor left his bench to talk to 'Daddy' Mason. Albert Capon initiated the action which followed, ensuring that Bobby Haydon and myself joined in. It is remarkable how quickly a fish slice, passed successively through a vice by three pairs of hands, comes to resemble a car which has suffered the 'crusher', from the class came laughter, variable in pitch and volume; quite enough to bring Mr. Mason to the scene and in close attendance, soon to be greatly distressed, the monitor. No need for confession, we, in our turn, had been nicked. It was a misdemeanour grave enough for Headmaster's Orders next day.

Each of us was interviewed in turn, a motive for the wanton destruction sought. The code of silence could not be broken, but when Mr. North pointed to the lapel badge on my jacket indicating a First Class Scout within, a tear rolled down my cheek. Dr. Galin gave up his enquiries once the monitor sold him an earthenware jar of mercury for a 'fiver'. With as much plausibility as effrontery Solly was told that the mercury was surplus to requirements at the Tottenham Gas Company, and a friend had acted as an intermediary in the deal; that is school lore!

(Taken from John's book 'Cheerful with insufficient reason'. Enquiries donnorri@btinternet.com)



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

DEBRA MORDEN (PROSSER) (1974 to '81) would be pleased to hear from any Old Scholars that could help with the following:

Old members of the Old Edmontonians' Football Club are aiming to hold a big reunion in June, with guests from as far afield as Australia. The one "old school boy" they are having no luck in tracing is Robert Wing—1974-79, who played for them from approximately 1979 to 1983. The only other piece of information I have, which has so far borne no fruit, is that he has/had an older brother, Philip, who was last known to be in the Portsmouth area.

If you could help in any way please contact debshere@btinternet.com

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sat. 28th March.	Annual Lunch.
Wed. 13th May.	12.00 Noon. Lunch at the Plough. Followed by Committee Meeting.
Wed. 5th August.	12.00 Noon. Lunch at the Plough Followed by Committee Meeting.
Wed. 7th October	12.00 Noon. Lunch at the Plough. 7.00 p.m. A.G.M. at the school followed by Committee Meeting

In reply to "Is it just me?" in the December edition of the Newsletter

CHRIS BRITTON (1966-73) writes:

In reply to Dennis Patten's question in which he lamented the 'overuse' of certain words and phrases on the television, it isn't him—I think we all have our pet hates when it comes to modern language usage. In fact Dennis would probably find it is not just on television (and radio) that the words he dislikes are being used. The broadcast media only reflect what is happening everywhere else.

My own particular dislike at the moment (and yes, you are right, I am only really writing this to get this off my chest!) is 'Perfect!', which is almost universally used amongst young people, certainly in Ireland where I have recently moved, but I fear is taking root in England too. If I tender a note far too big for a coffee in a café, say €50 for a €3 coffee, the person at the till will say automatically "perfect". Well, no it isn't, because you now have to give me €47 in change, which will mean at least two or three notes and a few coins. When ordering a meal I will almost always get the word "perfect" back from the waiter or waitress. Well, I trust the meal will be good, but I doubt somehow it will be perfect!

My other pet hate, which took off quite a few years ago, but is almost universal now, is pronouncing the letter 'H' with an initial 'h'. I was taught at school that it is 'aitch', without the aspirant sound the letter stands for at the beginning. I believe it started because people thought that saying "aitch" was tantamount to dropping an initial 'h', and thus sounding uneducated. In fact the dictionary says otherwise. I know these days I cannot listen to a news bulletin on Irish television without hearing that the 'Haitech Es Ee' (HSE) is in trouble for something or other (HSE = Health Service Executive, very roughly equivalent to the NHS in the UK) (Now, there's a point! You try saying 'En Haitech Es' for NHS—it's actually not as easy as 'En Aitch Es'!)

And don't get me started about 'the' before a vowel. Shouldn't it be pronounced "thee"? It sounds much nicer on the ear without the otherwise necessary glottal stop between the two words!



SHEILA FISHER (OLIVE) (1944-48) says:

"Oh, how I agree with Dennis Patten (one of my ex classmates from a few years ago) re overuse of so many unnecessary expressions—'like' being the pet hate—and what about 'basically' and 'obviously'.

To change the subject—I wonder how many Old Scholars of the late 1940's vintage remember the sweet shop in Bury Street West called Lovings? It was laid back, on the opposite side of Cambridge Terrace, near the lovely old oak tree. At the end of the school day, and on hot days especially, many of us would hurry over there for cold drinks (served in glasses would you believe). Favourite tippie was either Tizer or Cream Soda. Lovely memories.

Kind regards to all Old Scholars.

Note from DAVID DAY:

I recall being summoned by Bruiser one day, handed an old white fiver, and despatched to the cigarette shop in Cambridge Parade for a packet of fags. I was served o.k. and can't recall any fuss over a schoolboy with a white fiver buying cigarettes. Another memory was of Gus Locke coming back on a temporary basis to teach English on the understanding that he could smoke in the classroom.



VALERIE MANTLE (ADAMS) (1948-53) says:

Further to Dennis "Picky" Patten's observations in the December Newsletter: I thoroughly agree with his comments which are not confined to the T.V. but are in everyday use. How many?

Not only the 'like', 'absolutely' and 'yeah' words, but the way people end each sentence as though it were a question! Could this be the influence of Australian 'soaps' perhaps?

Another of my pet hates is the mis-pronunciation of the words 'communal' and 'mischievous' - and don't mention my moaning about the apostrophe!

Now I'm being 'picky'.



And from ROY E. SMITH (1951-59):

In response to "Picky" Patten's: I share his abhorrence of the overuse of the terms he cited. There are a few others that make me cringe:

I am really tired of hearing, whenever some undesirable incident has occurred, that those who should have prevented it "take these matters very seriously" - even though it is already quite clear that they actually haven't taken the matter sufficiently seriously! Ten million customers' data has been stolen, but the custodians of this data "take their responsibility very seriously!" Really!!

Then there is the matter of starting a sentence with "so-o-o...", or the other mind-numbing opener—"I mean" Here in Canada, when a newscaster announces that there is a commercial break imminent many of them insist that "We are back in a moment!" What the literal meaning of this is I cannot fathom—perhaps time travel has been invented and I haven't heard about it yet.

I don't know whether these last two sully the airwaves in the UK, but here in North America, whenever a medication is advertised the audience is warned "Do not take this medication if you are allergic to it". One would have to have already taken the stuff in order to know that one is allergic to it—do the manufacturers really think that their customers have to be warned not to take it again?

Then there is the package of utility knife blades (or similar) that carries the message "Warning—contains sharp object". I would have thought that if you could read the warning then you could also read that the package had knife blades in it, and if you could read that Perhaps the manufacturer also sells knife blades that aren't sharp! No, probably not, it's the manufacturer's legal team who aren't the sharpest knives in the drawer!

Published by the Edmonton County School Old Scholars' Association.

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