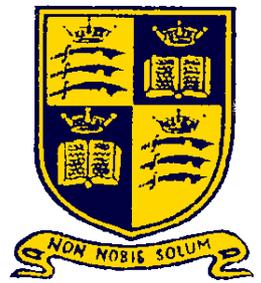


ECSOSA

Edmonton County School Old Scholars' Association

Website: www.ecsosa.org.uk

NEWSLETTER March 2021



ALWAYS LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE..

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN



Once again we are pleased to publish another Newsletter produced by our Editors, Jean and Dennis Patten. A couple of features are continued from the last edition and there are sadly the usual obituaries.

In the three months that have passed since the December edition I had hoped that we would be entering clearer waters and that this dreadful virus and subsequent lockdown would be receding. The fact that it has not leads one to speculate that an awful lot of our fellow citizens are taking unnecessary risks and are not following the rules. I have been lucky and have had my first vaccination at the wonderful Stoke Mandeville Stadium, where the organisation was carried out with military precision. However, I must wait twelve weeks for the second one.

Advice and predictions from “so-called” experts are being bounced off us from all angles. They all use words such as “may”, “might”, “could” but never “will”. Unfounded speculation such as these help nobody and gives ammunition to the press, hungry for bad news.

Committee Meetings will not take place while the pandemic lasts, and there is little to discuss anyway. Committee members will of course keep in touch with each other. Quarterly lunches at the Plough are suspended until further notice, as is the Annual Luncheon.

The Association’s finances are healthy, considering that we no longer charge an annual membership subscription. We have gained five new members so far this financial year, which helps. Our main expense is for the printing and posting of the quarterly Newsletter, which costs in the region of £420 annually, plus the costs of maintaining the ECSOSA Website at about £30 annually. Of course, we welcome any contributions to our coffers.

Our Editors are always pleased to receive articles for publication, and if you have a story for them, or news of groups from the same year who regularly keep in touch, they will be welcomed.

David Day

PAMELA PERRY (MENLOVE) (1950-55) reflects

During my second year I was selected to give the junior speech for my House, St. Patrick, in the Annual Speech and Drama Day. The talk had been written by someone else and I was told by the senior pupils on the judging panel to go away and learn it by a certain date.

After much practising at home in front of the mirror and my mother I returned to school, only to be told that I was to be coached by a certain sixth former in the Science Lab the following day.

Full of trepidation, because I had never before



spoken to such a senior pupil, I entered the lab to be met by a small group of older boys, the leader of whom was (to my mind) a rather effete individual, who announced that he was to be my coach, and would I please start.

I spent the next thirty minutes or so reading, listening and re-reading to improve my intonation and diction, trying to copy whatever was suggested. Thanks to Roy Strong’s assistance and advice I was able to stand on the stage in front of the whole school and deliver my speech—alas I was only placed second!

Pamela eventually entered the teaching profession herself.

Obituaries

OLIVE MUNDEN (Kersley) (1935-40)

By her daughter Helen



Olive Alice was born in Edmonton on 9th July, 1924. In those days everyone aimed at matrix at 16, which meant that her 5th year started in 1939. Most of her school mates and teachers were evacuated to Braintree, but Olive's family opted for her to stay at home. Consequently she went through the London blitz, spending most nights in an Anderson shelter at the bottom of the garden.

Olive left school at 16, and went to work in the offices of the Belling Company, where she was to stay for over 2 years. Mr. Belling asked which service she wanted to join and was surprised when her response was 'The Land Army'. She applied, was accepted, and went to work on a local farm near Enfield, where she joined Meg and Joan and they were all to remain lifelong friends. She moved onto another farm near Harrow, palling up with another Joan, who was also to remain a lifelong friend. Whilst at Harrow she met George, whom she was to marry in March 1947 (amid the snow).

They were to manage two farms in the group of three, firstly at Great Missenden and then at Stoke Mandeville. Their first child was a daughter, Helen, who was followed by their son George, who sadly died in 1967, aged just 13. In 1959 they took on a smallholding, and later a farm, which they ran independently for the next 30 years, until they retired and moved to Stone in 1989, where they remained happily married until she was widowed in 2004.

Olive joined the RBL Women's Section in the 1970's and was to remain a member for the rest of her life. She held several branch offices over the years, and became Poppy Organiser for Stone for the next 6 years, in 2009.

Olive left us on 17th August, to the rumbles of thunder. Her good humour and giggles, her generosity and open house, and her ability to communicate with so many and her service to others will all be sadly missed.

DAVE ROGERS (1950-55)

By Stan Fletcher

Dave died in hospital after a short stay hoping to recover from the cancer that had recently been discovered, but tragically proved to be too well advanced.

Dave was always a good scholar, but would be remembered by his contemporaries and staff at the County for his sporting prowess. As a cricketer he was a very accurate fast bowler (he was awarded a cricket bat for taking nine wickets in one match), and an aggressive and powerful batsman, who could hit the ball all over the ground, but it was football he excelled at. He brought great skills, commitment and determination to every game he played, and was proud to have captained a school side that went through the school for several years without defeat. Certainly Dave could have been a professional footballer if he had so wished. Later he became a great asset to an already strong Old Scholars' football team.

Dave left school after the 5th form and commenced work at a City branch of the Westminster Bank, where he met Sylvie, who he married after completing his National Service 'flying a desk' in the RAF.

Dave studied accountancy and became an Accountant with the De-la Rue organisation, where he remained for many years, until towards the end of his working life he became self-employed with a number of private clients.

Dave and Sylvie lived in Enfield and Essex then in Hemel Hempstead. They had two sons who are married and have grown-up children. Not everything went well for Dave. He had a heart attack in his fifties, and about twenty years ago Sylvie died; and then several years back he suffered another, but much more serious, heart attack that curtailed the plans he had made to marry again.



Stan Fletcher, Ken Matthews, Dave Rogers and Tony Eaton

It was at the school reunion (circa 2006) when four classmates met up again that led to Dave hosting regular get-togethers in Hemel, and then in his last home in Berkhamstead; also a memorable cruise on the Danube, with wives and his partner, to celebrate their 80th birthdays and a friendship that went back nearly 70 years. Dave will be sadly missed by those friends, Tony Eaton, Ken Mathews, Stan Fletcher and others who knew him—as well as his family.

We are sad to announce the death on 19th December 2020 of Lady Margaret Tebbit, wife of Lord Norman Tebbit, former pupil of Edmonton County School (1942-1947). Lady Tebbit was injured and paralysed in the 1984 IRA bombing of the Grand Hotel Brighton, and survived through bravery and fortitude. Our sympathy is extended to Lord Norman Tebbit and their children and grandchildren.

LEN COSTA (1942-46)

By his brother Robert (Bob) (1939-44)

I have to report that my brother Len has died in hospital at the age of 89.

Len enjoyed his time at ECS but in general made no claim to academic prowess. The exception was in English Language—he showed great skill in the use of words (mainly derived I think from our father). He was also an excellent amateur actor—and good looking with it—and took part in many school productions.

As his older brother I did sometimes have anxieties—as when after one of Bill Comber's Field Club walks I had to tell our parents that he and a number of others had been last seen in the depths of Epping Forest! (They all survived)

I can say with confidence that for him the greatest day of his school career was when, in a mock election, he, as the Labour candidate, beat the Conservative candidate Norman Tebbit!

I would be glad to hear from anyone who remembers him.

BRYN ROOT (1947-52) writes:

It is always very sad to read the Obituaries—even sadder when you know the person and can recall various times when your paths crossed. As it did with Tim Sonnex (1961-68).

After leaving school Tim played football for the Old Scholars' 1st XI, until his career plans took him away from Enfield. At that time I was unaware of what those were—until by chance he came into my Job Centre in Margate! When I said “Next please” a handsome young man sat down in front of me. I said “Can I take your name please?” and he replied “Sonnex”. I said “That’s an uncommon name—I used to play football with a chap called Tim Sonnex”. “That’s me!” he said.

It was not until we had finished talking about football and the OSA that Tim made me aware of his career plans. I then advised him to complete his medical qualifications and update his CV. I never saw Tim again, and although I am an avid supporter of Arsenal, I was unaware of his links with Arsenal and England. I would love to have known Tim better, and have followed his incredible career (especially as I was born on 26th April, 1936—the day that Arsenal won the F.A. Cup at Wembley).

I was surprised to learn from the latest ECSOSA magazine that the RT. Hon. Lord Tebbit had two brothers, and that all three of them attended Edmonton County School. Being one of three “Roots” myself, I wonder if other Old Scholars had similar genes? I can recall the three Olsen boys from my schooldays (1947-52). Are there any other threes, or even fours?

Life after E.C.G.S.

By DEREK H. O'HARA (1966 to 70)
continued

During this time our daughter, Bethany, arrived on the scene, and both our children got a taste of life on the highways across the US, during the school holidays at least! I could write a book about the adventures and incredible encounters we experienced during this time.

After 10 years in the US, in 2006, I applied for citizenship.



A proud moment. My ‘resident alien’ status afforded every privilege ... EXCEPT the right to vote. How things have changed in such a short time. The other bonus was that I didn’t have to forfeit my British citizenship either?

So both our son and I can boast dual citizenship. Life was good, but the trucking industry was changing.

2007/8 saw fuel costs skyrocket and a significant, but thankfully short recession. Logistic companies were coming under intense government scrutiny. Mainly due to the influx of unlicensed operators coming across the Southern border with unsafe equipment, and often no insurance. Independent owner operators, like myself, were under tremendous pressure as a result. With increasingly repressive regulations it became apparent that change was on the horizon. So, what more of a change could a guy make than going from trucker to restaurateurs?

In 2011 we opened a little Barbecue restaurant on the East side of town. We had done all our cash flow projections, business plans, demographic studies, traffic counts ... You name it ... in the hope that it would work. Little did we

know what awaited us! It was an immediate success! In the early days we were selling out of everything, every day, barely keeping up with demand. It took a little while for us to build a good, well trained, reliable team, but once in place we felt confident we could handle a second location.

So, in February ‘15 we opened our West side restaurant, and it was received with equal fervour! The town we love and call home has grown tremendously in the last 20 years. I’m sure it could support more of the type of establishments that we have built. However, I have to say, of all the things I’ve done, and jobs I’ve worked at—owning a restaurant is by far the hardest thing I’ve EVER done! But, the rewards have been plentiful.



So now, as we are all either contemplating, or already enjoying retirement, perhaps the next chapter in our lives is not too far off. We are hoping to sell our business to a younger, ambitious owner and enjoy the fruits of our years of toil! America is an incredibly diverse country in so many respects. We are both looking forward to experiencing much more what it has to offer.

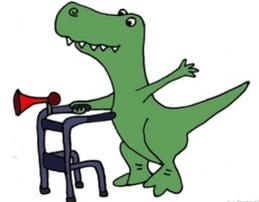


WISH US LUCK!!



Alan Flook (1951-56)
Comments on AGEING
continued

Old Age
It's not for sissies



I can only do any of these things with the assistance of a Rollator. I have refused the suggestion that I buy a motorised wheelchair on practical grounds. In my road a lot of people park partly on the pavement, so I would have to use the road to get anywhere - potentially hazardous. Anyway, not many roads locally have pavements, so about the only place I could go would be the local Co-op - the only shop with no step. No fun in that!

As to the future with deteriorating mobility? Not easy to foretell, but I have certain ‘red lines’ which my family know about. Cross the ‘red lines’ and I don’t want to be around. This is based on wanting to have a life of some description and not just be alive. The ‘red lines’ are when I cannot feed myself, wash myself, or even get out of bed. I already need help with dressing—assistance putting my socks on is as far as it has got to date. I cannot easily use a knife and fork, so my food needs to be suitable for a spoon and fork. The weekly shower is quite an event, but so far achievable. The big plus so far is that even though I have virtually no feeling in my fingers I can use a couple to hit the keyboard and pen emails. Problems holding my electric razor, writing and using the ‘phone can be coped with.

Key to all this is a dogged determination (or is it stupidity?) and a vague sort of sense of humour.

MARTIN HOLST (1951-57)
**TURNING BACK THE YEARS,
 OR GROWING OLD DISGRACEFULLY**

Have you noticed that ‘Take care’ has crept into our culture as ‘the thing to say’ at the end of any encounter? It has become the usual ‘parting remark’, or ‘sign off’ for an email. This is perhaps symptomatic of the concern for ‘being safe’ and expecting to have an environment that is risk free.

Gradually certain risks have been eliminated or reduced through vaccination programmes, safety legislation (e.g. compulsory seat belts), Health and Safety at work, etc. Could it be said that we are becoming ‘risk averse’, and when something goes wrong ‘not our fault’ there is a ‘compensation culture’?

The NHS now has to be careful to require patients to sign that they accept risks, and there is a huge bill for compensation where procedures ‘go wrong’. This is in contrast to the acceptance in the past that honest mistakes were ‘forgivable’.

I would not argue that we should fail to respect the Covid regulations about social distancing, quarantine, etc. However, my choice of parting remark would be “See you later alligator”^{*} - sadly fewer people know the appropriate response in today’s world. When I am offered the unsolicited advice to ‘take care’ I usually accept it for the kindly way it is meant, but am tempted to say instead “I have too much on my plate at the moment to ‘take care’ as well—I will live as dangerously as possible within the prevailing rules=.

I have decided to reverse the digits of my age, so I now regard myself as a revolting 18 year old.

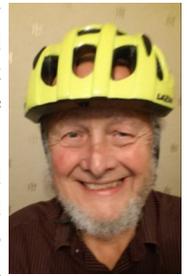
The result of the ‘off bike’ experience I relate is, that for a few days, I had to use again the Philips bike I bought at the age of 18 to commute daily from Edmonton to Queen Mary College in the East End. The Sturmey Archer 3 speed gears and dyno hub lights still work efficiently, despite some 40,000 miles over the years. The significant difference is that I now wear a crash helmet. My new bike is a Genesis with 18 gears and seriously better hydraulic brakes. I can go much faster with less effort. I rely on the helmet to give protection against a premature Exodus as you will see below.

An ‘off bike’ experience.

I was merrily going down a hill and veered off the road over what I thought was a line of kerb bricks at the same level as the road. Unfortunately it wasn’t quite as I thought. They were just a little too high. All of a sudden I found the bike going along the line of bricks whilst I was flying off the bike at considerable speed. I landed rather heavily. After pausing to see if any major damage had been done I rolled over and slowly picked myself up.



I had plenty of clothing to prevent too many grazes, but my face was running with blood and my mouth felt strange. It turned out that my false teeth were beyond repair. The helmet undoubtedly saved serious injury.



A very kind lady had stopped her vehicle and came to see if I was O.K.. She had witnessed the whole incident. She offered me tissues to mop up the blood, and then asked if I needed an ambulance to take me to A & E. I said I was O.K., but she could see that I might need help getting home. She offered to take me back, and was most insistent that she thought it wise. At first I refused, saying I would like to continue with my ride, but then, on examining the bike, I realised it was unrideable.

It was only after I accepted the offer that I looked at her vehicle; it was a private ambulance and it did not have the usual markings. I puzzled why she had only offered tissues for my injury—surely any ambulance carried a First Aid kit. Gradually light began to dawn that this was no ordinary ambulance. Then she explained. She worked for an Undertaker. She said I could **sit** in the front alongside her, and the bike could **lie down** in the back (it did not have company!) It was about a 20 minute journey home, and fortunately we arrived before Margaret had missed me. She did not have to witness the manner of my return.

The injuries have been healing well. The bike was soon repaired. I needed a new top plate anyway, and am having fittings at a Dental studio. (Eating nuts is a little difficult at the moment!) I suppose I should heed the advice to ‘take care’ as they say. On the other hand, perhaps I should regard the inci-dent as a re-hearse-al! I was fortunate not to be a croc-odile.

^{*} Bill Haley and his Comets were famous in the 1950’s and identified with the song ‘Rock around the Clock’. A less well known song had the phrase ‘See you later Alligator’ and when given in a parting remark evoked ‘In a while Crocodile’. The actual phrase in the otherwise forgettable song was in fact ‘After a while crocodile’.



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