

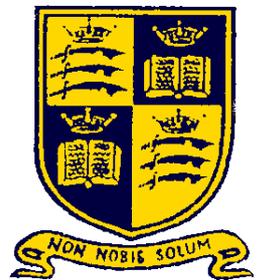


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Edmonton County School Old Scholars' Association

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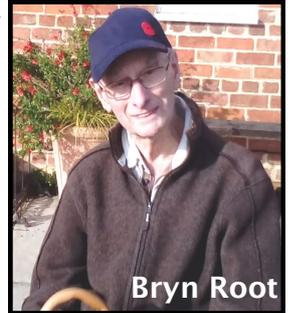
NEWSLETTER December 2021



OUR REUNION—October 10-13, 2021 By BRYN ROOT (1947-52)

The year 2021 proved to be a difficult one to organise our small group of very Old Scholars to get together for a few days. A hip operation for Yours Truly in June, followed by some months of recuperation, meant that the group very kindly delayed the reunion until October. (Unfortunately Les and Betty Dean were not able to meet up this year).

Colin and Sandy Walker had very generously arranged for us to stay for free at the beautiful B&B owned by his daughter Claire and her husband Christopher. So it was that on a beautiful “Indian Summer” Sunday we set off in high spirits for the Old Rectory in Dauntsey, Wiltshire, a few miles from Westonbirt, the National Arboretum.



Bryn Root



Claire and Sandy

Travelling by car from Kent was a potential nightmare, as there was a severe petrol supply problem just beforehand—we knew we had a round journey of 230 miles to accomplish, but only 50 miles-worth of fuel in the tank. Luckily petrol did arrive locally a couple of days before the trip!

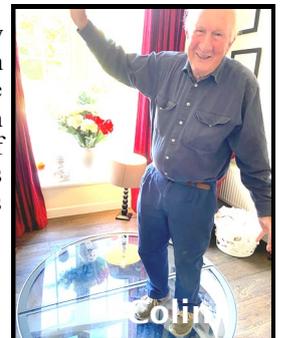
In the event, it was the closure of a section of the M4 which did delay us, but after the frustration of a long diversion we were amply rewarded with our first sight of the Old Rectory, bathed in late afternoon sun. Nobody could fail to relax in such a beautiful place, surrounded by dogs, cats and delightful kittens.

The group that sat down around the dinner table that first evening consisted of Brian and Eve Armitage, Graham South, Colin and Sandy Walker, Bryn and Helen Root, and of course our hosts, Claire and Christopher. After a sumptuous barbeque - steak, sausages, chicken and all the trimmings, cooked by Christopher - a drink or two was well received!



The next day we took advantage of the glorious sunny weather to drive to the aforementioned Arboretum, where we enjoyed an al-fresco lunch amid countless beautiful trees. Knowing that Brian and Eve had recently celebrated their Diamond Wedding we then gathered on the patio and partook of a cream tea, toasting their future health and happiness with copious champagne!

That evening, while enormous dishes of prepared cottage pie heated up in the Aga, Sandy and Eve entertained the assembled company with an ad hoc recital of songs from the shows, accompanied by Helen at a portable red keyboard. After candlelit dinner in the “formal” dining room Colin had a surprise early birthday present of chocolates and port from his family.



Colin



The next day, after a second substantial breakfast, cooked by Sandy, we unfortunately had to leave. However, we heard from Brian and Eve that we missed a relaxing day spent exploring the house and grounds, including a museum inside the former coach house, where Christopher keeps his wonderful collection of wartime memorabilia. Another interesting feature of the house is the circular cellar, designed by Colin - perfect for storing Claire’s homemade preserves, not to mention the odd bottle of wine!

To mark the final evening, the group went out to a marvellous French restaurant, ‘La Flambe’, where it is reported that a good time was had by all.

Sadly, there will probably be no more of these reunions, as we are all a bit more restricted in our mobility than when we first met in 1947! No doubt there will be individual Zooms and ‘phone calls to keep in touch with such honest and reliable friends—it has been a great privilege to know you all.

OBITUARIES

DICK PLATT (1939-46)

Reported by Robert Costa (1939/44)

I regret to report the death of my oldest friend, Dick Platt, in rather unusual circumstances. After leaving ECS he got a Bsc at Kings College, London, and did his National Service in the RAF. He met Mavis, a Canadian girl living and working in London. They married and decided to live in Canada, where they had a happy family life.

However, in recent years Mavis had several strokes and spent time in care, and sadly died at the age of 90. Dick was devastated by the loss of Mavis—he suffered from painful arthritis and was losing his sight and hearing. He bravely decided to take advantage of a civilised Canadian law that allows you, under medical supervision, to decide the time and date of your death, which can take place in your own home with family and friends present. (In contrast to the UK law, under which he would have had to travel to Switzerland to get such help alone, because anyone going with him could have been subject to prosecution).

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

SPENCER SOAMES 1945-50)

Reported by his daughter

Patricia Lucas-Clarke

No other information about him



PETER SUTTON (1944-49)

From his wife June.

Peter was one of seven children and when he first went to the County School he had a paper round and helped out at a café. He joined the Old Scholars' Association after leaving school and played football and cricket for them. He was a long time Spurs supporter.

On leaving school he joined Wiggins Teape, a Paper Company, then did his National Service in the R.A.F., where he became an Officer and trained as a Navigator. He spent 9 months of his training in Winnipeg with the Royal Canadian Air Force, when in 1951, he proudly marched holding the sword when Princess Elizabeth made an official visit.

On finishing his National Service he rejoined Wiggins Teape, becoming a Pensions Manager in Basingstoke until 1976, when he joined Fitch Lovell back in London. These were subsequently taken over by Bookers and Peter stayed with them until early retirement due to Parkinsons commuting daily to Gerrards Cross.

He married June in 1973 and they were blessed with a beautiful daughter, Alison, in 1974, then a grandson, Michael, was born, who he adored.

Peter moved to Moorhouse Nursing Home 2½ years ago, where he was looked after with the utmost respect and kindness, but we did not let Parkinsons affect our lives too much, joining several groups and going out for lunch, a drive and coffee.

CHAIRMAN'S SEASONAL MESSAGE



Our financial year ended on 31st August 2021, just too late for reporting in the September issue. Your Association is currently financially healthy, if not wealthy. Since we have ceased to charge subscriptions, other than a fee from new members, our resources are dwindling slowly, but even if we take no more subs we should remain solvent for a few years. As this Newsletter is published on our website, which is public and can thus be read by anybody, I will not publish figures here. If you want figures then contact me. Feel free to make a donation to our coffers!

We have obtained a couple of back numbers of 'The Stag' magazine, courtesy of Roy Lindermere (1959-67) which, produced annually was the forerunner of the Newsletter. These will be published on the website, as are back numbers of the school's annual magazine 'The Chronicle', which, it would seem that 'The Stag' was based upon. To the ear of those of us who have survived until the twenty first century, many of the contributions now seem rather intellectual, if not downright pompous.

I was struck by two features in the September Newsletter that revealed that the authors were not inclined to the sporting life, indeed avoided it. I was useless at sport, being a 'shorty', but nevertheless loved it if I was lucky enough to be picked. My one claim to fame is that having left the school and grown a bit, I played football for Tottenham for a couple of years. Now I suppose that I should be honest and reveal that I played, not for Spurs, but Tottenham Town Hall Football Club. Ah Well!!

We are reviving the Annual luncheon and suggest The Bull's Head, Turnford. We booked this venue last year, but of course had to cancel it due to the dreaded "you know what"! The proposed date is Saturday 7th May, 2022, and we hope to keep the cost to £25 per head. Several members are paid up, having decided to leave their cash in the kitty. We will publish a reminder in the March 2022 Newsletter. However, please confirm that you wish to attend so that we can estimate numbers.



There have been some changes in the hierarchy of the school in recent months. Mr. Paul Miller has been appointed as Head of School. Dr Susan Tranter remains as executive Head Teacher, whilst also becoming Chief Executive Officer of what is now Edmonton Academy Trust with in the region of 2000 pupils. As a member of staff Mr. Miller is automatically an honorary member of the Association.

Your Chairman/Secretary
David Day—1947– 1952

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Wed. 16th February 2022—12 Noon
Lunch at The Plough, Crews Hill.

Sat. 7th May, 2022. 12.00 Noon.
Annual Luncheon, Bull's Head, Turnford.

"THUMB'S UP to the kindness of Strangers"

Schoolboys' Adventure holiday by Brian Armitage



This adventure started with a most unlikely, but very close, friendship between A.E.M. Bridge (Pont) and me, B.R. Armitage. Pont's nickname came about due to French lessons, and the singing of "sur le pont D'Avignon", remaining with him all his life. My nickname "Tich", was due to my diminutive size, which made us an odd pair.—Pont being a tall, strong, intelligent fellow.

At some point Pont expressed a wish to visit Looe in Cornwall, where he had spent two of the War years as an evacuee on a farm. A plan was made to pay a visit. Our finances wouldn't stretch to public transport so we decided to hitchhike. Firstly we needed to accumulate the necessary equipment, i.e. a tent, groundsheets, sleeping bags, cooking stove, rucksacks and maps, most of which was loaned to us by my classmate Peter Lansdell, who was a keen Boy Scout.

7 a.m. Easter Saturday, 1951 found us at Church Street, Edmonton traffic lights, carrying our heavily loaded rucksacks. Our first lift came very quickly—a car breakdown truck from nearby Winchester Road garage, en route to Romsey, took us as far as Sutton Scotney on the A30—our chosen route to Looe. An excellent start, but unfortunately our only lift that day. We walked for the next 7 miles to Stockbridge in Hampshire, where we camped on the sideline of Stockbridge Town Football club. On this rather long hike we had become desperate for a drink, and asked at a house for water, and to our surprise were seated in the garden and given a pot of tea. I recall our first night's food was a meat and potato pie, made by my mother. We were still on wartime rations so the meat was corned beef, but very welcome.

Early on Sunday morning we were given a lift on an empty low load lorry, destined for Yeovil. The driver suggested that if we were prepared to help him load a complete haystack onto the lorry he would buy us a Sunday lunch. From Yeovil we had a lift in a car bound for Exeter, but the driver explained he needed to stop en route to visit a relative, but would pick us up if we hadn't succeeded in getting another lift. We were still on the road when he came along and picked us up for a second time, taking us for tea and cakes before dropping us off at Exeter. From there we had a lift in a "Chitty, Chitty Bang Bang" style car, with the handbrake outside. I believe it was a 1929 Bentley Blower. That night we were dropped off at Buckfastleigh and camped just by Buckfast Abbey.



Next day we arrived in Looe, and met up with the family Pont had stayed with, who made us most welcome. Although we had pitched our tent it was suggested we might be more comfortable in the hayloft, but we didn't bargain for the constant scuffling of the rats, and swiftly returned to the safety of our tent.

Having had two days in Looe it was time to head for Nant Peris, a hamlet at the foot of Snowden in Wales. We made great progress on our first day and were given a lift to the outskirts of Bristol. The driver said he admired our spirit and offered us a ten shilling note (50p), which we declined. However, he was determined and left the note at the side of the road saying we would be foolish not to take it—so in the end we accepted his kind contribution to our diminishing funds.

Our next lift was on the back of two solo motor bikes. When we told the bikers we needed a place to camp for the night they took us to an area of common ground at Filton, just North of Bristol. Early the next morning we were woken by a tremendous noise and wondered what was happening. We later discovered we were close to Filton aerodrome, and it was the day for testing the engines for the Brabazon, which was to be the largest plane in the world! Although this plane did fly it did not become a commercial success and was discontinued.

The following day we arrived at Nant Peris, where we camped in the same field which had been used by the school summer camp in 1950, which Pont and I had attended. During Bruneels' camp many of us climbed to the top of Snowden several times. The average time for the climb was 3½ hours. As a result some of the older boys decided that mountaineering was a great activity and formed the E.L.K. Climbing Club (the name came from the initials of our president, Edgar Leonard Kennedy Bruneels. Funds were raised and we became affiliated to the Mountaineering Club of Great Britain. Sadly the club soon folded as boys left school for University or National Service, and Bruneels retired from teaching.



To be continued

DAVID DAY recollects:

Most commentators really ought to ask their Grannies what austerity was really like after WW11 from 1945 to 1956. Hardly any cars, we walked, rode our bikes or went by a relief coach or an electric trolley bus (where did they go?). A tube ride "Up West" was a special treat if only to gawp at those posh people who had some money. No holidays, maybe just a day trip to good old Southend or Margate.

Everything still rationed; even sweets until 1956. Still queues at the butchers. Few homeowners - everyone rented. No telephone, no television only the "wireless". Make do and mend still operated, families losing their sons, who could have provided income, to National Service for 2 years. Milkmen still delivered glass bottles to the door, which were washed and returned to the dairy for re-use. Plastic bottles and bags were still unknown. We still got our groceries in paper bags which we re-used to cover our free school text books,

The only people with tattoos were sailors.

The wonder of the Coronation and the pomp and circumstance that was a joy to austerity Britain.

At least the NHS was formed which gave all free access to health care.

There was nearly full employment, although wages were low, average wage in 1950 about £7 a week. Even professional Footballers only earned £10 a week if they were in the First Division. Grammar Schools were the great achievement until many became Comprehensive in the 1960s

The BBC was a patriotic organisation with a worldwide reputation to be proud of. Then along came ITV which introduced advertising that astonished many of us.

NORMAN PALLIN (1953-59) continued

At the end of my contract I had to make up my mind whether to start a normal life, or carry on at sea. I loved the seafaring life, but thought that something was missing, and so I parted company with BP with a bulging bank account (full board and nothing to spend money on), and bought a house in Hampshire, Hythe, and in nearby Lymington, where Wellworthy, part of the AE engineering group were based, and I got a place in their research team. I started at night school in Southampton, two and a half years, three nights a week, each session lasting three hours. To say the least, exhausting. To cap it all, got married and had a child, so life became even more exhausting.

Being on the Eastern edge of the New Forest I spent what little free time I had walking up, down and through it. The best bit was I worked on the Ford Dorset and Tornado diesel engines, and that caused me to visit the very new Ford Research and Engineering Centre at Dunton, Essex. It struck me as being a bit impressive, and after a few visits I was taken into an office and asked if I would like to join them. This took me a bit by surprise, but I agreed to a formal interview, and that started 33-years with Ford.

I loved every one of those years, petrol engine development and calibration, loads of foreign travel, University visits and press launches of new vehicles. Even drove, in Southern Spain, with Jeremy Clarkson on a couple of occasions. He did not approve of my driving skills, but I found him a very pleasant sort of bloke, didn't mind the pint, but the fag was a bit annoying. There was a downside though. Dagenham plant was just 20 miles away, and I had to make visits from time to time, and I always came back with a headache. Niehl plant in Cologne, the Belgian Assembly plant at Lommel, the Port Elizabeth plant in South Africa, the Sao Paulo plant in Brazil, and even the Minsk plant in Belarus, plus a few others, great, but Dagenham just got me down. Think it was the people, it was far and away Ford's oldest plant in Europe, and although it was modern in equipment, old traditions remained, and it bugged me.

Please don't think I was up in the ranks of management, that was not where I wanted to be. But Ford had a great system where you could remain in mainstream engineering, lead teams some of the time, and at others be part of a team led by someone else (often at the same time), have a degree of responsibility and had a real influence on what came off the assembly line. Best of all, had direct contact with the technicians, could use a spanner or whatever without being clobbered by a Union man—well, not that often—and had direct contact with those in high authority. It was genuine team work. Like I said, 33 very happy years.

Back to school: I was a bit overwhelmed by the place, especially the main hall with its high ceiling and pendulous lighting, grand piano on stage, plus a balcony at the back that looked over the whole scene. Real posh, and so different from Silver St. Junior School. In my first year, I remember Solly Galin teaching us the basics of chemistry, using a 5 ml. pipette to suck up some sulphuric acid at a low concentration, going over the top and taking a mouthful. Much spluttering and mouth under the tap, we were all too scared to laugh, but in retrospect, think that the sulphuric acid was probably water, and it was a very good way of saying "take care". Whatever, Solly survived, and we all took care—in the Chemistry Lab at least.

MARTIN HOLST (1951-57) continued

The changing scenes of Education in Edmonton.

I am deeply grateful to those who researched the history of our school, taking it through to the present day.

I would like to show how my family history is intertwined with that of the school. It seems strange that at the beginning of the 20th century the Elementary schools that most children attended were 'all age ability'. Now our old school is just that, but for a significantly larger age range!

Schooling at Croyland Road 1919

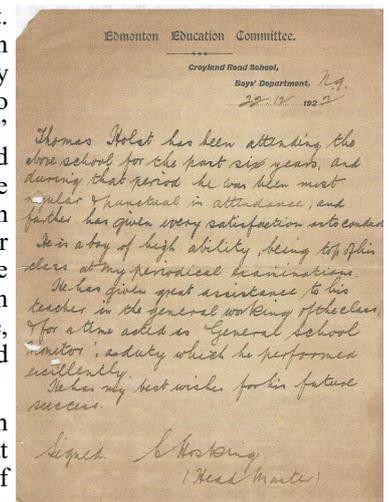
When the Boys' Central School was opened in 1919 my father was there, in the same building but not the school. He was instead in the all age boys' school, which he described as the Croyland Academy for Young Gentlemen, officially known as the Croyland Road School Boys' Department.

He came from a family which knew poverty, especially during the war, and despite his ability there was no chance of his parents paying for him to go to a selective school. All the scholarship places, he observed, seemed to go to the families of School Teachers. The school leaving age was 14, but he was granted discharge at 13 in view of his good record, and the fact his birthday was one day after the end of term. His family needed the income he was able to get as an 'office boy' in the City.

What sort of education did he receive? His testimonial is more about conduct than academic achievement. His standard of English language was certainly excellent. His ability to 'go up a column of figures' was phenomenal, and served him well when he became Edmonton Education Finance Officer at a time when £sd was the currency. He was much quicker, and more accurate, than those who used calculators.

How well did his education fit him for life? At that time the aspiration of Headmasters was to help every school leaver get a job of some sort. My father's was that of an office boy 'in the City'. He later rose through the ranks in Edmonton's Education Finance Office at Brettenham Road. At night school he obtained his one 'qualification' - shorthand. This made him popular with the Chief Edmonton Education Officer, who took him to Council meetings so that he would know afterwards 'exactly what Councillors said'! His last full time job was Awards Officer for the London Borough of Enfield. He made sure University students got their grants 'on time'. His immediate two successors, despite all their paper qualifications, could not cope, even with twice the number of staff in the Awards office.

He knew how to run meetings from his Council experience, and this stood him in good stead as a Lay Pastor of a Church in Stoke Newington, and later being ordained as the Minister of Bush Hill Park Congregational Church.



To be continued

To be continued

Published by the Edmonton County School Old Scholars' Association.