

HITCHIN BOYS' SCHOOL OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

(Formerly Hitchin Grammar School Old Boys' Association)

ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER MAY 2004

General:

Another successful reunion saw 108 sit down to dinner. Our thanks to Bob Deveroux for providing another excellent meal and the Parents' Society for running the bar. . John Bridges presided in his usual calm manner with Guy Randle providing an outline of his career in the medical profession and his considerable climbing feats in all parts of the world. The Headboy, Neil Bundy, responded on behalf of the School with some well timed political comments that were well received by the audience. The reunion in 2005 will be on APRIL 16TH PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF IT.

As is traditional, I have included the minutes of the AGM in this newsletter.

I have received letters notifying the Association of the loss of two of our senior members:

George Harvey McKay died suddenly on December 18th 2003 in his 86th year. His widow Margaret sends her regards to members who may remember her when she owned Ye Olde Baby Linen Shoppe at 4 Churchyard, Hitchin. Harvey had not been well for some time but Margaret said that he always enjoyed her reading the latest Newsletter to him.

Our sincere condolences to Margaret on her loss.

Eric Norman Lowe (1937) died on 14th March 2004 aged 84. Eric particularly wished to change what he considered misstatements by the post-war generation regarding the conduct of the school in the pre-war years. T.E.Jones was a headmaster of great repute and was supported by a staff of great integrity. Eric for the first five years of school suffered illness and absence. The staff were unremitting in the extra effort that they gave to help him achieve his School Certificate and Matriculation. Messrs Thomas and Whitworth travelled to the Herts County Hospital, at their own expense and in their own time, to provide him with books to read and essays to write. Their journey was by the little push-pull railway, which in those days, ran on the Hertford-Hitchin branch line.

Having visited Germany on school trips, he did not like what he saw of the Nazi regime, so joined the R.N.V.R. on leaving school and was demobilised as Lt. Cdr RNVR. He re-joined the reserves in 1947 and served actively until 1970, qualifying himself to command 'frigates and below'.

In commercial world he was overseas director at B.T.R. until 1970, when he set up his own overseas merchandising company.

In the 1980s he developed and co-patented (with Dr Andrew Stratton, Fellow and past President of the Royal Institute of Navigation, and Martin Poppe Cambridge Engineering of Massachusetts USA) a means of improving the accuracy of terrestrial radio navigation systems to the level where they could be used for land navigation, prior to the introduction of satellite systems.

During his 70s he was periodically retained by the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development as a senior adviser to factories in the former Soviet Union as part of their aid programme, mostly in Bellarus and western Russia.

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Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 6.00pm. on 3 April 2004
in the School Hall

Present: J Bridges (President Elect), M.J. Cranfield, J R Mayhead, M. Hart (Hon Treasurer), D E Stancombe (Hon Sec), K S Wadsworth - Headteacher, G. W. Brown J C Coxall, E.L. Foster, S C Harding, R.J. MacArthur, B.D. Robinson, G H Russell, M. Russell, G L Shaw, J.R. Mayhead, M. Paradis, N. Chambers, D.E. Simmonds, M.J. Pratt, N.R. Pettigrew, P.J. Highton, D.G. Niven, T. Bartlett, L. Hoskin, A. Sillence, R Crabbe,

Apologies: E.M. Cooke (President), J.A. Monk, D.L. Walker, A D W Garvie, R. Bonfield, F. Papworth, D Peters, R J Bowker , O J Stedman, P Mallpress, M. Philpott, P.R. Downey, J. Gwinell, R. Kingsley, A.Hazlewood, O Hoeg, P. Cropper, R.F. Corder, D.G. Stedman, P.J. Cranfield, T P Brooker, R.M. Gardner, J.W. Gatward, T.E. Hales, R T Whitmore, B.H. Waters, , R. Chandler, G.R. Chenery, T. Hales, A.P Cherry,

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 5th April 2003 were taken as read and confirmed on the proposal of R. MacArthur and seconded by M. Russell.

Matters arising: There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Hon. Treasurer's Report: The Hon. Treasurer tabled his report and the Statement of Accounts to the 31st December 2002. J. Bridges proposed and S. Harding seconded that the Statement of Accounts be adopted. This was agreed unanimously. The President expressed his appreciation for the Treasurer's good work.

Increase in Subscriptions: Ordinary Members from £4 to £5 annually. Term Members £40 for 20 years. Proposed by M.Hart, Seconded by N. Chambers This was unanimously agreed by the meeting.

Hon. Secretary's Report: The Hon. Secretary presented his Report. The President proposed the adoption of the report and expressed the appreciation of the meeting for the secretary's continued efforts throughout the year.

Election of Officers and Committee: The following members were elected or confirmed in office all were agreed unanimously.

President for 2003:

J M Bridges. Proposed D Stancombe. Seconded M. Russell

President Elect:

D.E. Simmonds. Proposed D. Stancombe. Seconded M.J. Pratt.

Vice-Presidents:

D.C.Baines, T.P.Brooker, W.S.Bowker, D.Carnill, A.P.Cherry, C.H.Childs, B.I.Cook, R.F.K.Corder, J.C.Coxall, C.C.Day, P.J.Day, J.Gatward, S.C.Harding, D.Highton, J.R.Mayhead, J.A.Monk, G.L.Shaw, D.G.Stedman, O.J.Stedman, M.J.Steeley, N.A.Thomson, and R.T Whitmore.

Hon. Treasurer:

M. E. Hart Proposed D. Niven. Seconded M. Russell

Hon. Secretary:

D.E.Stancombe Proposed D. Simmonds. Seconded M.J. Pratt

Committee Members:

(Vacancies to be left to the discretion of the committee)

Retiring in 2005 – M. Paradis

Retiring in 2006 – M.J. Cranfield, D.G. Niven, N. Chambers

Election of new members to retire in 2007

N.R. Pettigrew was proposed by D. Stancombe and seconded by M. Russell.

The meeting unanimously approved the appointment of the new committee.

The President expressed his appreciation of the work of those committee members retiring this year –

R.J. MacArthur, M.Russell.

Re-election of Life Trustees – J.R. Mayhead, T.P. Brooker, J. Coxall and D.E. Simmonds were unanimously re-elected. Proposed by M. Hart and Seconded by D.Niven.

Re-appointment of Honorary Accountants – it was unanimously agreed to re-appoint Messrs Watts, Knowles. The meeting expressed its thanks to Stuart Guyton for his work on behalf of the Association.

Headteacher's Review. Keith Wadsworth reported that the School has had another successful and challenging year.

The school has more students in it than ever before – 976 and we are fully staffed at present with properly and highly qualified teachers.

As always we have to be concerned with our exam results and I am pleased to say that they

were good again in August 2003. Three quarters of the boys achieved 5 or more A*-C grade passes at GCSE. Almost 25% got 10 or more passes at A*-C grade. At Key Stage 3 our results were up on last year with almost 80% getting at least the expected grade in English, Maths and Science. At A level the overall results were a little down on last year but pretty much what we expected. Nearly 50% achieved an average of 3 C grade passes or better and of the exams taken by the students that are now in the upper sixth 86% were passed.

Comparison with all the schools in North Herts shows that, if you rank us on the different statistics we get, we come fourth over all – 16 schools. Given that most schools we compare ourselves with have girls to boost their performance, and our boys made more progress than the girls up the hill did, is very pleasing. Compare us with the two other boys schools in the county in the same way and Verulam just beats us on some figures and we beat Richard Hale to be a strong second in that trio.

So academically we continue to do very well.

We have a new head of music and it is already clear that the school's music tradition is safe in those new hands. Anne-Marie Hetherington is a former professional singer herself and the concerts and the concert tour of the primary schools we have had so far have been really successful and excellent quality.

Sport has enjoyed a real resurgence this year and I would like to list some of the titles the school holds currently.

It was a very successful Cricket season, especially in cup competitions. The Year 7 team showed much promise and narrowly missed the quarterfinals of the County Cup. The Year 8 team, having won the county final last year as Year 7s, qualified for the national competition and in the final of the South of England section they met Whitgift School. They lost but put up a very fine show. Unfortunately the day after the Whitgift game they played Watford Boys' in the semi-final of the County Cup and were not quite able to lift themselves. The Year 9 team promised much and was unfortunate to lose to Watford Boys' in the quarterfinals of the county cup. The Year 10 team, however, did reach their final only to just lose.

RUGBY A notable season for school teams: Hertfordshire Schools U'16 Seven a Side Rugby Champions.

Broxbourne Invitational U'12 Rugby Tournament Champions. Bedford Modern U'13 Seven a Side Plate Winners. North Herts District U'14 Champions. North Herts District U'15 Champions

SCUF (Paris) Invitational U'13 Rugby Tournament Champions. This is the first time HBS has won the Broxbourne title and it was secured by beating Watford Boys' in the final, a team previously unbeaten.

There is no doubt that England's success in the World Cup generated extra interest in school rugby and Jo Worsley's involvement was something we could take a particular interest and pride in.

HOCKEY included the following successes: Hertfordshire Schools U'14 County Champions. Hertfordshire Schools

U'16 County Champions. U'16 placed 3rd South East Regional tournament. U'15 School team unbeaten all season. The 1st XI played eight and won six, including victories against Bedford Modern, Royal Grammar, High Wycombe and The Perse School. 31 goals for and only 9 against represents a good season, indeed.

BADMINTON The U'14 team were placed 3rd in the National Schools Final. South East Region U'14 Champions

U'16 team placed 3rd in the South East regional tournament. U'14 players Matthew Trott and Matthew Pocock selected to represent Hertfordshire Schools.

Third place in the Nationals is an outstanding achievement: one only has to think of the number of schools in the country who would enter so to reach that level is exceptional.

TRAMPOLINING: Successes here included. Eastern Zone U'19 Boys Champions. Eastern Zone U'15 Boys Runners

Up. U'19 Boys placed 7th at the National Schools Competition, a performance in the Nationals is extraordinary given how briefly the school has been running a trampolining club.

BASKETBALL: North Herts District U'14 Champions. North Herts District U'15 Champions

SWIMMING: North Herts U'12/U'13 and U'13/U'14 Champions. North Herts Seniors Runners up

The school is now embarking on phase three of improvement to our sports facilities. The original phase was the construction of the all weather surface in 1990 followed by the Sports Centre in 1999.

Our aim this time is to construct changing rooms next to the all weather surface. There would also be a physio unit for sports injuries and a health room to allow for a dietician to work with students within the school and the wider community.

As with previous projects the aim is to manage the development ourselves if at all possible, saving a considerable amount of money. If anyone is either a quantity surveyor or project manager and feels he could offer his services to the project, please contact Paul Booton at school.

Speaking of projects, we still await our new 6th Form Block. All sorts of delays since the project was granted in April 2001 mean there is still not a hole dug or a brick laid. The project didn't have enough money by the time they came up with a design so the authority has now found another £150,000 and it can go ahead. We have a completion date of May 2005.

All the usual trips continue. Skiing, geography, biology, language exchanges, theatre and so on. New conditions for teachers mean that we are going to have to make some adjustments to how we organise and finance these trips but we feel very strongly that it is these trips that can leave students with some of the strongest and fondest memories of school and we are determined to keep as many trips as possible going.

Perhaps the most significant thing to happen to us this year has been our successful bidding for technology college status. For those not clear about this it means that we get £150000 (of which we had to find £50000 and the Old Boys' Association contributed to that by individual donations and by the committee on your behalf) and about £125000 extra each year. With that we have to provide support to some nominated primary schools and link up with the Girls' School and The Priory as a centre of excellence in computer and design and manufacture.

This is going to make a real difference to this school. We will be working up partnerships with local businesses and community projects as well as schools. The school will be used more in the evenings and possibly holidays and we are likely gradually to get some regional and national recognition.

It means the name of the school has to change and, from September, we will be called Hitchin Boys' School – a Specialist Technology College. We have already installed the technology for and already running wireless laptop computers and that will expand in the next couple of years to a point that all teachers will have one and there will be around 200 computers in the school. Most classrooms will have a data projector and some will have white boards that are, effectively, wall-hung computers.

There has not been a more significant change for the school since it became a comprehensive school after its years as a grammar school.

I would really like to thank the Association and its members for supporting financially our bid.

The President thanked the Headteacher on a most interesting and informative address.

Any other business.

John Mayhead pointed out that following his comments at the last AGM, the Trustees for the Association's Life Membership Trust were still in a position where they had no control over this money in this fund. The matter was discussed at some length and it was decided that the

Trustees would meet the Treasurer at 7.00pm prior to the next committee meeting on May 4th 2004. John would then attended the committee meeting and the recommendation from the Trustees considered.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.02pm.

Date: 3rd April 2005

SignedPresident

Committee News:

A full and lively meeting on May 4 welcomed our newly elected member, Robert Pettigrew, and two co-opted members, Andy Russell and David Hall. David made a presentation to the committee with some ideas on ways of increasing the membership of the Association. A

subcommittee will be meeting to follow up these ideas and making suggestions to put before the whole committee. Expect to hear more on this subject. We are following up our intention to replace the pavilion clock and in connection with this I have received a generous donation of £200 to start the fund off. If you would like to contribute to this project then I shall be pleased to receive your cheque, payable to HBSOBA.

Minutes of the whole meeting can be found on the website. Matthew Paradis has completed the website to enable members of the school to consult with appropriate members re their proposed careers. There has been a good response from members in connection with this project but some areas like ART and MEDIA aspects do need support. If you would like to be involved with this scheme then please contact Matthew on mdjp100@york.ac.uk

News from Members:

Peter Thomas gave me a contact for Alec Wickenden (1950). I had been sending out newsletters to an old address and not getting a reply. However contact has been remade, in fact he was in England recently having a pub lunch with an uncle – this must make the uncle nigh on 100?

Alec is still living in the outskirts of Sidney He has visited the Association website and congratulates Vince Holmes on the great job he has made of it. Alec is now retired and enjoys golf, travel and his 7 grandchildren. He says memories of school have now faded – I hope the 'tour' on the website rekindled some of these.

New Members:

Rod Sillence (1978) After leaving HBS in the summer of 1978 I didn't return until April 2002, when I came to the Old Boys' AGM along with my brother who had already joined the Association. It was a strange feeling to walk around the place again, as it seemed on one level so familiar and yet at the same time very different, almost part of another life! The school - especially the hall - did seem to be smaller, although I suppose that was a predictable phenomenon. Although on that occasion none of my former class-mates were present, I was

delighted to meet a few of my former teachers, namely messrs Allard, Cook, Gardiner, McLeish, Monk, Robinson, and Stancombe (sorry about the alphabetical order and surnames only: old school habits die hard). An excellent dinner and an even more excellent speech from John Gardiner rounded the day off superbly.

Having very nearly but not quite sent in my application to join the Old Boys' Association, I felt another visit was in order, so returned again for this year's AGM. This time it was a pleasure to have a chat with David Brown, and also to discover that three former class-mates were also there: David Hall, David Niven and Bob Coppage. (David and Bob Have also joined the Association) I did manage to recognise them (come on; it was twenty-six years ago!) and we exchanged news over dinner. Thanks for that guys, it was good to meet up again; and thanks to David N. for selling me the HBSOBA tie!

I have now, at long last, joined the HBSOBA. I was impressed that the Association was able to make a significant contribution to the school's application for specialist status, and I believe this needs to be widely appreciated by 'old boys.' Clearly the Association is not just a nostalgia club, but is making a tangible contribution towards the future of the school

Finally, for anyone reading this who was at school with me, here's the potted history: after leaving school, went to work for British Rail/InterCity/Railtrack/Network Rail (name changed to suit whim of Government); currently working on the West Coast Route Modernisation; moved to Birmingham in 1985; got married; have 3 children, a cat, a rabbit and a mortgage. Achieved a personal 'peak' in 2001 by reaching the summit of Mt Kilimanjaro on a charity fund-raising expedition, which has led to other similar challenges - proof that life begins again at 40-plus (knees permitting).

Best wishes to all, and look forward to perhaps seeing some others from the class of '78 next time.

John Norris (1956) Michael was an apprentice at De Havilland Hatfield and Huntings A/C Luton. His main career was as a Production Manager at Vauxhall Motors between 1965 and 1994 when he was able to take early retirement at the age of 54. (Highly recommended – Hon Sec). The last 10 years have been full with charity work, golf and his allotment. His main sport was football and he played for Barton Rovers from 1965 to 1975 – Stan Rainbow would have been pleased to see this. Like many of us John still has many good friends from his days at HBGS – Brian Tansley (1953)(This name keeps cropping up and he is not a member of the Association),

John Bridges, Mick Whitmore, Ton Burges, Mick Moss, John Murphy and of course brother Michael (I am pleased to say that they are all members –Hon Sec).

Other Old Boys

Chris Edmonds (1978)

Since leaving HBS, I went onto study music at Warwick University and then a career in teaching taking me to schools in the UK, then overseas to Cyprus, Malaysia, West Africa and now Germany where I am principal of the upper school at Frankfurt International School. Married to Thelma; two daughters Jessica 9, Caitlin 7. Still playing Cricket and Hockey, also squash. Read profusely, play the violin and piano, love to cook.

School News:

Please see the Headteacher's report in the minutes of the AGM.

ASSOCIATION CENTENARY TIES – ONLY FOUR LEFT! £15 from Hon Sec by post.

Concert CDs: I still have a few copies left. If you would like one please send a cheque for £5 - payable to HBSOBA (Hon Sec)

Books: The last few books, which were donated by Frank Papworth (1936) donated, are listed below. Any Offers? Please contact me (Hon Sec) and I will arrange to get them to you.

The Natural History of the Hitchin Region Edition Hine 1934 £35

Hitchin Old and New Hine 1946 £5

The Book of Hitchin (No. 457) Anthony Foster 1981 £10

Contact Address for HBSOBA

Communications for the Association may be sent to me at 25 Chiltern Road Hitchin Herts SG4 9PJ or phone 01462-457-510 or e-mail Sheila_David@dstancombe.freemove.co.uk

Or via our website www.oldboysonline.com.