

# Hitchin Boys' School Old Boys' Association

**Formerly Hitchin Grammar School Old Boys' Association**

## Quarterly Bulletin September 2009

**A Date for your Diary – APRIL 24<sup>TH</sup> 2010 AGM and Annual Reunion.**

### **Old Boys Centenary book is now sold out.**

**If you have a copy you would like to pass on there is a waiting list. Contact for this David Stancombe**

## General

Firstly can I say a big thank you to all those who have sent letters, emails and telephone calls expressing your appreciation of the events we put on for the Centenary. It certainly seems that we marked the occasion well. Thanks also to the Association for the marvelous presentation I received at the dinner – it sits proudly on display upon the piano. The book, Stuart Halsey and I collaborated on has now sold out and again we have received warm appreciation of our efforts in getting this published.



The concert - I am indebted to all the musicians who turned out and gave us such a wonderful evening.

Anne Marie Hetherington, the current Director of Music at the School, organized the talented current pupils and took charge of the Big Band numbers, which proved a suitable way to remember the founder of the band, the late Bill Thompson, and a most successful way to end the concert. A recording of the concert was made by Tim

Hassal and a CD of this is available – see the order form later in the Bulletin

The dinner proved a great success with the largest number of Old Boys ever to assemble for a reunion – as it should be for the Centenary. Good food and bar facilities were provided by Jane and Paul Cousins with their industrious staff from the Three Horseshoes, Norton, which is always worth a visit if you are that way. **Joe Worsley**, our

guest speaker just back from his tour of South Africa with the British Lions, gave an entertaining speech and held his own in a question and answer session. Thanks Joe for the donation of a British Lions Rugby jersey which was auctioned during the evening.

We are looking for photos taken during the evening. If you have any then please send a CD/email (limited number please) to David Stancombe – contact at the end of the bulletin. Robert MacArthur is hoping to set up a password for “photobucket” so if you would like to use this facility please contact Robert email:

I received a phone call from Pauline Dolden – daughter of MGD, to say that her mother, May, passed away on Sept. 6<sup>th</sup> aged 94. She outlived Maurice by 16 years. We had a long talk reminiscing over the time in the 50s when MGD took over as headmaster. He brought with him a wife, four daughters and two red setters and the family could be seen at weekends and in the evenings doing a circuit of the school grounds

**Geoffrey William Brown (1943)** passed away on 5th December 2008.

Geoff was 84 years old when he died and had only recently moved to a retirement apartment in Hitchin, having previously lived in Mount Pleasant, Hitchin for over 50 years. He and his wife, Betty who passed away in 2003, were great supporters of the Hitchin Branch of the RNLi and Geoff was their Treasurer for a good number of years having reluctantly 'retired' only a year or two before he died. Geoff was also a member of the Hitchin Probus Group and regularly enjoyed their outings and lunches.

Geoff worked for Kent Industrial Measurements Ltd for 48 years from 1940 to 1988, which included 3 years in the Royal Navy as an Air Mechanic. He started as a Student Apprentice and during a long and varied career rose to the position of Principal Engineer (Flow Measurement) with responsibility for design, procurement and engineering of calibration test plants.

**Elizabeth Boyce – 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin**

In my search for members to attend the centenary dinner I tried to contact **Peter Cockram**. I spoke to Rita and received the sad news that Peter had died some 6 years ago. His widow Rita has kindly forwarded the following:

Peter died suddenly of a massive coronary, which went undetected by his doctor, after visiting him several times. It happened just after midnight or in the first hour of 26th November 2002, leaving everyone in shock and devastated. Peter had been his same usual, tall, thin, jovial and jocular self, setting the family laughing outrageously with his jokes. He loved being the centre of attention amongst his family, the heart and soul of family's gathering. There is a dramatic vein running in his family, so it came naturally to him. He could imitate anyone's accent. He was a well travelled man.

Peter would be now a very Old Boy of the Hitchin Grammar School. He was born 9th Feb.1933, at 10, Digswell Road, in Welwyn Garden. City, where his father was sent from London to develop Welwyn village, in the capacity of Director, Surveyor. Park Street in W.G.C. was developed by his Father. At the age of 8 yrs old his Father died and the war was raging on. He was sent to West Country. I have a school report of the Sidmouth Infant school dated 14th Aug. 1941, reporting 10/10 in reading, writing, numbers, with comments Excellent work and top boy in the School. Later, it was Hitchin Grammar School. A report dated July1949, gives credits, very good and passes, signed by John Lowe from the Oxford Board. Peter obtained a place at the Cambridge University, but turned it down, preferring to work and have a bit of money in his pocket; a story that he repeated often to his four girls: he worked for the local Council, earning 8 shilling a week

painting houses.

Not long afterwards. Peter was called up for National Service. He joined the Royal Canadian Air Force as a Navigator. His Flight Log Book first entry dates 16 Feb.1952 and goes on for a long while. I believe he served for two years, in the meantime travelling through Canada and North America. I still have his Officer Air Force uniform. His love for the sky and the stars reflected on his girls.

His first job, once the National Service ended, was in a big London Firm as a designer, draughtsman, Surveyor, Storefitter and Interior components for Hotels throughout the country. In 1966 we married, while I was in London studying the language. Between 1968 and 1982 we had four girls, who he adored and lavished upon.

He travelled a lot in Europe and to the Middle East and Iran. Several trips were made to Belfast in the 70s, when the IRA was bombing there. The Hotel Europa, there was target several times and Peter was in charge of its rebuilding it. One morning before leaving for Belfast, I noticed that he was wearing white trainer shoes with his immaculate grey Italian suit. When I remarked about it, the answer was that he would be able to run faster in case of further bomb explosion. In spite of the danger, one had to smile about it.

His last assignment, abroad, was for the Hilton Hotel in Lahore Pakistan. He spent nearly a year there in the 90s. The beauty of that part of the Country impressed him as well as the generosity and simplicity of the people he encountered. The heat was unbearable though! Back in England, he continued working, giving a hand to his sons-in-law. At last some men in his family after all the girls, he would say! He left 6 grand children, 8 by next month.

Peter loved football and was a keen supporter of Tottenham Hotspur, going to all the home matches and crying at their bad performances. He certainly infused his passion to his girls and the four boys!

He is very much missed and remembered for his good humour, His jokes never forgotten and often repeated, making him come alive again.

**Finally this is the last bulletin that I shall be putting together so a big thank you to Stuart Halsey and Ann Field who have helped in getting the regular issues to you. In future please contact the new Hon. Sec. Peter Hollingsworth for any items for inclusion in the bulletin – his contact details are at the end of this bulletin.**

## News from Members

I have just read the list of those attending the Centenary Dinner, they include many I would very much like to meet again, unfortunately I cannot be there, as I have to be in Australia on that day. I would appreciate it if you could please give my regards and best wishes to any who remember me, either from my school days ( I think that I left in 1949) or from my time with the Grammar School Scout Troop which I helped with for many years after that. I still live in Thailand for most of the time although I am officially resident in Australia. I can usually manage a trip to the UK each year, but I am missing out this year.

**Geof Allenby (1949)**

I'll not be able to attend the Centenary Dinner; it's a long ride from San Diego. It was a great idea to include in the Quarterly Bulletin a list of member's who have signed up to attend; if there was any way to be there I would!

I don't suppose that there's a place in the event for "regrets for non-attendance", but if you have a chance, please let some of my contemporaries know that I was delighted to see their names, Barry Bray, Dick Crabbe, Peter Downey, Stuart Halsey, John Norris, Peter Webb (of course) and Pete Wilshere.

It's interesting too, to see the names of people just a few years older, to whom younger boys looked up, including Angus Brown, Mike Pratt, John Rainbow, Guy Randle and David Walker; they possibly didn't realize at the time the important influence that they had on the younger boys.

### **Graham Stubbs**

I joined the school in the first year in 1957 and left during the first year sixth in February 1963. Dear Mr Dolden had insisted I joined the Science course whereas I had elected to do a Modern course (Economics) that had been introduced that year but which had been over subscribed. My mistake was having done rather too well with the mock physics exam where I came top in the year despite not being in the higher physics sets, Mr Whitworth was so incensed he made 5A and 5b1 resit the exam so you can gather I was not exactly the flavour of the month with those boys! The headmaster therefore regarded me, despite my protests, as a scientist whereas I had no interest whatsoever in Chemistry. As a consequence I was struggling with the course and as I still regarded a job in Finance as my future I took the decision to leave and began a successful career with a Lloyd's insurance broker.

### **Nigel Richardson (1963)**

## **New Members**

We are pleased to welcome:

### **Alistair Fulton**

### **Andy Krajewski (1975)**

### **David Ebers (1954)**

First job was in a cost accountants office with a company in Letchworth for a few months but of course we were all waiting for call up and National Service. Mine came, Royal Artillery in Wales then transfer to RMP (Cpl)- finally demobbed 1956 after Suez, at Bulford, Wilts. I carried on my football representing Southern Command on several occasions. Didn't return to Hitchin, but went in west to Taunton, Somerset, where I joined the local Constabulary, married with girl & boy ; served at Taunton, Glastonbury, Bridgwater which became adopted as my home Town ; played with Bridgwater Town (then Western League side) and Somerset County Police for several seasons. But by 1970 progress was too slow and I changed direction and transferred my services to Metropolitan Police in London. Served at Tottenham, City Road, Hackney in the East End of London; also had some overseas service to count in Rhodesia during the elections, now of course Zimbabwe ; retired from service 1989 serving in the role of Inspector from Hackney. My son still serves with the Met and has had many glamorous overseas postings which quite eclipse mine. After retirement, another change of direction after a holiday in Mauritius, decided to give it a go and thought I would spend 6 months; which has quite unbelievably turned into almost 20 years, having bought some land and built a house we live here

on the west coast close to the Indian Ocean; belong to 4 clubs and waste my time playing snooker, tennis & golf. I had many chums at school most prominent the Burges twins Tom & Rob and Johnny Davis .

### **David Jones (1979)**

I graduated from Manchester University with a degree in Economics, but thanks to Mrs. Thatcher and the new economic climate there were few opportunities for a newly fledged economics graduate. So I went to Sudan for a year as a volunteer teacher.

After that, Greece for 4 years, teaching, but mostly for what young men really want in life. Taking things more seriously, did some post grad teaching qualifications in ESL and went to Hong Kong to work for the British Council. There I raised my game as a teacher and a rugby player (never could get into that hockey stuff) and then after 6 years was transferred to Kyoto., Japan. Here I met my wife, decided to finally settle down and went for the Master's. This opened the gates to university work and a move away from the British Council.

So here I am, married with two wonderful children, living in Kyoto, earning my crust as a University lecturer and martial arts teacher.

I've kept in touch with messrs Biggerstaff, Banks, Brydon et al. over the years and HBS remains an important touchstone for me.

### **Justin Barnard (1975)**

I had quite a lot of friends at school but few with which I keep in touch with having moved to Derbyshire over 20 years ago. Most notable of these are Ian MacArthur and David Ingram. I am one of a multitude who ended up marrying one of the girls from 'the top of the hill' – Linda Carlisle!

Over the years I have worked as a farm hand, art dealer, engineer and finally as an Architect (Mr. Cope, our art teacher always said that was where I would end up.)

I am at present not working due to heart attacks and all that sort of thing. DON'T SMOKE OR DRINK!! Mind you that fellow who recently died in England at the age of 113 said " I give my health down to plenty of cigarettes and whisky!"

I have four children, one married and living in America, and another about to be in Harpenden, (England.) Two girls and two girls ...well Architects are supposed to think symmetrically!

### **Russell Howard()**

After school, I went on to North Herts College studied Art, got an A at A Level Art and an O Level in 3D Design and a D at O Level English. Then I went to St Albans College of Art and Design, studied Art and Product design. I spent one year at a Community Rural Aid repairing furniture and toys and then I worked at Shefford, manufacturing boomerangs for 12years making approximately 120,000 of them. In 1985 I learnt Transcendental Meditation. In 1992 I learnt the Sidhi Programme. I went to a group called Followers of The Way and learnt all about the original meaning of Christianity , such a profound experience, totally re interpreting the meaning of all the stories so that every story contains the whole and the whole that is greater than sum of the parts, that is the mystery of the oblation, and a whole new language of the soul. In 1998 I stood as a candidate for the Natural Law Party for the Local Council and got 32 votes, and twice more getting 62 and 42 votes. In 2001 I learnt how to use a computer at North Herts College, where I last met up with you. Since 2002 I have been living in Devon where I have been making furniture for Really Rural Inspirations.co.uk. And since the death of business partner I have been running it with full responsibility for

everything. I am a founder member of Rendlesham Peace Palace which is coming up soon.

What I know of others in my year group. Richard Bashe went live in Glasgow. Richard Quinn turned a bit hippy and imports ethnic goods from Nepal or some where. Robert Norris worked for the post office and told me that Toby Venables went to live in the Cambridge area. Robert Lock had a Thailand gaol experience. Steve Dewe found dead under a London Bridge or so I think I read in the paper.

## News from Members

From **Barry Bremner (1953)**. Like Richard Whitmore, I joined the local press as a reporter after leaving school, and Richard and I often worked together, but on rival newspapers. National Service took me into the Royal Air Force in 1957, but the two years were not wasted because I was appointed Editor of the Royal Air Force weekly newspaper in Germany that circulated among the then many RAF bases in Europe. After demob, I rejoined the local press, but, like Richard Whitmore, I moved out of newspapers, he to the BBC and I into public relations. I spent many years in London and was Managing Director of a Bond Street agency before spending the last 20 years of my career as a freelance consultant, specialising in the brewing industry, which I found very agreeable!

I retired in 2004 and dabbled in a small amount of local consultancy, but gave this up in 2007 when my wife, Terri, was diagnosed with cancer. Sadly, she died in June last year.

I have since moved back to Letchworth to an apartment next door to Letchworth Golf Club (1 St. Mary's Close), a very pleasant location. I don't play golf any more, but the club serves as an ideal "canteen" in my bachelor status!

Although I was not an academic champion by any means while I was at HGS, I have always valued and taken pride in my HGS education, so I regret that I have not taken greater advantage of my HGSOBA membership. I was asked at one stage if I would take on the writing and editorship of the old boys' bulletin, but my responsibilities in London made it impossible. As I state above, Richard Whitmore and I had similar careers to start with, and even though we subsequently moved in different direction, we have remained firm friends.

**Tom Willoughby (1992)** lives with his Irish wife, Erica, in London. Following school he spent a winter season in a ski resort, working in a French Bar Restaurant with fellow Old Boys **Will Corder** and **Trefor Evans** and the intention of improving his French 'A' Level grade. Although (predictably), there was only minor improvement, he managed to scrape a place at Portsmouth university studying Financial Services. Graduating in 1997 and proving the 'right place, right time' theory of employment he got a temp to perm position with the Investment Bank SBC Warburg before joining Chase Manhattan the following year. Having since worked at Deutsche Bank and Barclays Capital and somewhere in-between, working another winter season as a hotel manager in Courcheval, he now works for boutique Investment Manager, European Credit Management, in central London. Tom is still a keen cricketer and turns out on occasion for Ickleford Cricket Club.

# Other Old Boys

My longtime friend **Robin Barker** - we went through HGS together - has asked if I could join many HGS Old Boys on 18<sup>th</sup> July for the Annual Reunion. Sadly I can't and have told Robin.

I left HGS (and Hitchin) in 1955 after my National Service in deepest North Wales - good grief ! - 54 years ago .... and have since worked and lived in Berkshire and Surrey, plus overseas in Spain, South America and Portugal, so obviously all my efforts to achieve 'A' level French & German and Geography with Dr Reid, Roy Allen and "Gabby" Parker (I think that's his correct name...) have been fully exploited. On the plus side what I have done though in those 54 years is to add Spanish and Portuguese to my language count by working and living where they are spoken.

Would you please be kind enough to give my very best wishes to **Joe Lawrence, Brian Palmer, Peter Highton, Tony Miles** (son of Mr. Miles who taught English) and anyone else who remembers me, and especially anyone who played I played Hockey with for the Bluehearts Hockey Team.....

## **David Walker (1955)**

### **Brian Thompson (1949-1955)**

After qualifying as a C.A. lived and worked abroad for 15 years firstly in Canada with Coopers and Lybrand and then in New York with The Singer Company the quoted US multi-national manufacturing and distribution company. International assignments included expatriate Director for Southern Africa, Thailand and Brasil. Returned to England with young family and took up Group Board directorships with FTSE Public Companies managing international manufacturing and distribution subsidiaries.

Whilst living in Far East was selected to play cricket for Thailand Select X1 against visiting tourist side from Papua New Guinea. (Opened the batting with a Scotsman who had been capped for Mexico!) . So began and ended my Test Match career!

Now very happily married with two children and two step children and retired and living in Northampton playing a little golf between showers.

### **Brian Kinnear (1944-50)**

Sorry I can't make the reunion. I trust you will all enjoy the evening. Just an odd note. I started as a fee-payer at 5 guineas per term, mind you my very ambitious mother had put my name down for Dulwich College soon after my birth but Hitler put paid to that. Anyway my education all turned out for the best as you will understand

**Does anyone have a contact for David and Ian Entwhistle, , Anthony Gribbins, Craig Hook, Rob Laurens, Howard Gregory, David Leonard. Please let me know if you have a contact for any of them.**

# School News

The current School Roll is 1018. This is the largest intake in the history of the school and probably over three times the size when most of us were there. The School is fully staffed so despite the expensive living area the School is able to attract teachers looking for a quality school with good examination results, prominent staff profiles and a wide range of activities are offered at the School. The difficult subjects to find staff for are still Maths and Sciences but good teachers have joined the staff from abroad, notably there are currently two Canadian teachers in these fields.

Sports results during the summer term produced the best cricket results and with a new enthusiasm in athletics the School walked away as County Champions.

Examination results were the best ever.

At GCSE level 76% of the entry gained grades A\* - C, which is 3% higher than the previous best and at 'A' level 48% achieved grades A or B.

The lighting for the new tennis courts has now been funded and the work is to be completed shortly. Bancroft House is being completely refurbished and will ready for use in the near future. The new house contains conferencing facilities together with admin room and teaching areas. Your committee looks forward to holding their next committee meeting in Bancroft House.

## **Memorabilia Sales: from David Stancombe (contact at end of Bulletin)**

Centenary Badge - £5

Print of school view (from the centenary book) signed and numbered, See below - £10

CD of centenary concert + programme - £10

All prices include postage and packing. Cheque payable to HBSOBA

Name: .....

Years at School: ..... - .....

Address: .....

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.....

Cheques made payable to HBSOBA and sent to the Hon. Sec. – contact details are at the end of the bulletin.



HBSOBA 1909 - 2009

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## Contact Addresses for HBSOBA

Communications for the Association may be sent to the **Hon. Sec. Peter Hollingsworth**  
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Membership matters and sale of memorabilia please contact **David Stancombe**  
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or via our website [www.oldboysonline.com](http://www.oldboysonline.com).