

Hitchin Boys' School Old Boys' Association

Formerly Hitchin Grammar School Old Boys' Association

Quarterly Bulletin February 2010

A Date for your Diary –

APRIL 24TH 2010 – AGM and Annual Reunion.

General

Hello again, nearly time for our Annual reunion and AGM....doesn't time fly these days !!!

The AGM and Annual Dinner are now being finalized as are the Hockey Matches. At the end of the Newsletter you will find :-

- The Agenda for the AGM
- The Minutes from last Year's AGM
- Details of Menu and Toasts
- an order form for the Dinner, together with details on how to send the requests to me.

The School will be open in the afternoon for Old Boys to visit the Library etc.

This year, if at all possible, I would like to have the money in before the event, to save me chasing after you on the night !

We are very pleased to have Bernard Cotton as our guest speaker this year. Bernie is now part of the British Olympic organization and, as a former

Olympian, I am sure that he will have some tales to tell ! It may even bring brother John back down from the northern wastes.

I have also had another possible candidate for next year who is part of the Olympic Swimming Management. Please keep the ideas for speakers coming through

Please make your arrangements early for the dinner and get your ticket requests into me as soon as you can. Don't forget to get your tables set up as well and tell me who will be on the tables, it does help with the organization on the day, thanks.

New Members

Gordon Leighton (1961)

I was planning a "back to my roots" trip to England later on this year and looked up the school with a view to making a visit. I saw the old boys site there.



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After leaving school I went to Birmingham University where I studied Minerals Engineering, a career choice worked out by eliminating the things I did not want to do. The other one on my short list was a degree in Malting and Brewing, I'm still not sure that I made the right final choice. After graduation I married Hazel and went to South Africa where I worked in the mineral industry for 12 years except for a short break in 1976 when we returned to England for the birth of our son Richard. There was a shortage of qualified people even in those days so promotions came round once or twice a year (good thing) but invariably involved moving house (not so great). I started as a project leader in the research laboratory and left as a consulting metallurgist responsible for several mines. Along the way I picked up an MBA, primarily so I could argue effectively with the accountants, but it also revealed my complete lack of human relationship skills ... something that I have been working on ever since.

We returned to England in 1980 and I went to The Royal School of Mines at London University to get an M.Sc. in Mineral Processing Design. Then we moved to Holland where I worked in technical sales for a company specializing in mining chemicals and traveled throughout Europe, North Africa and the Middle East peddling my wares. Our daughter Claire was born in Rotterdam. But the skiing in Holland proved disappointing so we moved to Canada where I continued my career in mining chemicals and expanded my interests to include removing ink from old newspapers when the recycling initiative took off. My efforts in de-inking did not go unnoticed and I was headhunted by another chemical company to move to Houston and help them increase their market share. I formed my own company 5 years ago and continue to manufacture specialty chemicals for my first love, the minerals industry.

Random memories from school ... those incredible sticky buns that you could buy during morning recess for a penny farthing each ... my parents being told at a teachers' meeting that I was "just your average A boy" ... a speech during morning assembly by an old boy who had become a monk and was dressed accordingly. He asked the headmaster to give us an extra holiday which endeared him to us immediately; much to our surprise we later got that extra day off ... a term report that said "Gordon is a curious mixture of understanding

and naivety" ... breaking the school record for the 440 yards while attempting "athletics standards" and being asked by the sports master if I had entered for the event on sports' day, I hadn't but I did.

Ellis Matthews (1987) details later.

David Merrin details later.

News from Members

Andrew Wearmouth (1968) I thought I would let you know my current status for the Quarterly Bulletin. I have now retired. It's hard to believe really! I have been lucky in that I have never been out of work, so trying to get my head round the fact that it has now stopped is a strange feeling. After school I went to Bristol Polytechnic (now the University of the West of England) and trained to become a Chartered Surveyor. I left there in 1971, and went to work at Hertfordshire County Council as a trainee in the County Land Agent and Valuer's office. In 1973, I married Sheila (Girls' School 1970) who I had met in 1967. Also in 1973 I left Hertfordshire to become head of the section at Cambridge City, a position I then took in 1974 at North Herts District Council (which saved a lot in time and petrol!). Over the next few years my beautiful daughters were born, Elizabeth, Edwina and Emily. I became a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in 1986, and in 1989 I became the Valuer and Estates Surveyor at St Albans City and District Council, a position I retained until I retired in January this year.

I'm going to miss the cut and thrust of estate management. Local authorities have broad property portfolios, and I have enjoyed dealing with the wide range of property owned by them, ranging from shops and offices to leisure centres, housing, car parks, recreation grounds and allotments. However I have for many years been involved with the RICS and ACES (the Association of Chief

Estates Surveyors) and both organisations have kindly asked me to carry on working for them.

On the home front, I have three lovely grand-daughters, Lucy, Molly and Phoebe, and Edwina is breaking the mould in April this year, when she is expecting a boy. I doubt whether I shall be allowed to take it too easy!

In memoriam

Reg Bonfield (1910 – 2009)

Our oldest contributor dies leaving an intriguing reminder of Hitchin's past. Extract from an article written by our retiring President for the Hitchin Historical Society.

We are sad to report the death in his 100th year of Hitchin-born Reg Bonfield. Although Mr Bonfield had lived in the West Country since retiring there with his widowed mother in 1953, he kept a close interest in events in his home town and during the last ten years of his life became a regular contributor to the *Journal* with his childhood memories of Hitchin and its characters in the early 20th Century.

Ironically for a man who lived to such a great age (he was 99 years and four months old when he died last November) Reg had suffered from poor health as a small boy. However, after perseverance as a scholar at what was then called the Sacred Heart High School in Nightingale Road he was awarded a scholarship to Hitchin Boys' Grammar School.

As a draughtsman in the electronics industry during World War II he was involved in developing Britain's first early-warning RADAR system. One of his great hobbies, along with cookery, music and carpentry, was photography and, historically speaking, it was our loss when Reg and his camera moved to the West Country. For, during his fifty years there, he built up a remarkable photographic record of the parts of Devon and Cornwall where he lived and

boxes of his photographs are now preserved in the Brixham and Polperro museums.

However, Mr Roy Perriment, the friend responsible for winding up Reg's estate, found one intriguing photo of old Hitchin that he felt should be returned to the town and it was duly delivered to the Old Boys' Association at Reg's old school for safe-keeping.



It shows members of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants parading a banner campaigning for shorting working days. They are standing on the north side of the Market Place in front of what used to be the Post Office, apparently during the 1897 celebrations of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

The banner depicts two scenes. The first showing an exhausted signalman is headed "13 hours" with a caption beneath reading "Overwork – Danger". The second, headed "8 Hours" is captioned "Short hours – Safety"

Although Reg does not identify him, one of the figures in the group could well be his father James Bonfield who worked as a plate-layer at Hitchin Station. James died when his son was only 12, which led to Reg caring for his mother until her death in 1971. If any of the railway historians among our members

would like an original copy of this little-seen photograph I will be pleased send them a j-peg by e-mail. Apply to: oldnewsman@btinternet.com

Justin Barnard

Unfortunately Justin had a fall on New Years Eve and never recovered. No other information but I would like to print any epitaph sent to me.

Cyril Squires

I have been contacted by Cyril Squire's daughter who advises me that Cyril died on 27th January 2010. Cyril was born on 28.04.19 and had been in Blandford Community Hospital since having a couple of strokes in November. I am not sure whether Cyril was a member of the Association but his daughter has asked me to let people know. I have no more details other than his daughter, Judy's telephone number is 01929 472163. Cyril's wife, Dora is 95.

Robin Gardner (1947)

Robin died Jan 2010 - details later

School News

Keith Wadsworth, our current Headmaster has announced his retirement at the end of the current school year. We, on the committee and all who have met him will be sorry to see him go back into the arms of his family and away from all of us !! Keith will have been Head for 11 years, the same as David Garvey before him. In his time at the school there have been great changes and improvements on top of what David accomplished in his term of office. I am sure that Keith will not forsake the friends he has made in the Association and will attend the reunion as regularly as his travelling will commit.

The Woodland facilities now up and running on the ground floor with good use made for school and external activities. The first floor, when completed, will be for teaching and Sixth form study

The School is oversubscribed with over 1000 on the roll.

The Autumn and Christmas concerts were very, very good, both in content and standard.

Only one day was lost to snow recently and Keith had a number of amusing tales to tell of the e-mails from parents and pupils !

The search is under way for Keith's replacement and interviews will begin in March.

Paul Bruton is in the process of launching a new, very ambitious project, for an Arts and Drama block. It will cost a lot of money, so do not be surprised if he is after you for sponsorship, in one form or other !!

Memorabilia Sales

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

All prices include postage and packing.

******* Special Offer – All three items for £20.00, including p&p !!!**

Centenary Badge - £5



Print of school view – signed and numbered - £10



CD of centenary concert + programme - £10

ORDER FORM

Item(s) required :-

Name:

Years at School: -

Address:

.....
.....
.....

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

Contact Addresses for HBSOBA

Communications for the Association may be sent to the **Hon. Sec. Peter Hollingsworth**
01462 834854
panda_hollingsworth@yahoo.co.uk
8 Baldock Road, Stotfold, Hitchin. Herts. SG5 4NZ

Membership matters and sale of memorabilia please contact **David Stancombe**
01366 328153
davidstancombe@tiscali.co.uk
Beck Springs, Beckett End, Foulden, Thetford, Norfolk. IP26 5AF
or via our website www.oldbo

HITCHIN BOYS' SCHOOL OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

Formerly Hitchin Grammar School Old Boys' Association

AGENDA for the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

to be held on

Saturday 24th April 2010 at 6.00pm in the School Library

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting
3. Matters arising
4. Hon Treasurer's Report and adoption of the Accounts
5. Hon Secretary's Report
6. Election of David Stancombe to the position of life President Emeritus
7. Election of Officers and Committee Members :
President for 2010 - A. G. Buckland
President for 2011 - A. G. Buckland
Vice Presidents : D.C.Baines, T.P.Brooker, W.S.Bowker, J.C.Burges, D.Carnill, A.P.Cherry,
E.M.Cooke, R.F.K.Corder, J.C.Coxall, C.C.Day, P.J.Day, S.C.Harding, J.R.Mayhead, M.A.Norris,
B.D.Robinson, G.H.Russell, G.L.Shaw, D.E.Simmonds, O.J.Stedman, M.J.Steeley,
N.A.Thompson, R.T.Whitmore
Hon. Treasurer - M. E. Hart
Hon. Secretary - P. R. Hollingsworth
Committee Members :

Retiring in 2010 - M.J.Cranfield, D.G.Niven, D.Garvie, D.E.Simmonds
Retiring in 2011 - A.Russell, M.Jones
Retiring in 2012 - R.J.MacArthur, M.Russell
Retiring in 2013 - H. Gregory, S.Hilleard
Co-opted for 2010 - M.J.Cranfield
Nominations from the floor
8. Re-appointment of Hon Auditors – Messrs Watts Knowles Hunt
9. Head Teacher's Review
10. Any Other Business
11. Close of Meeting

HITCHIN BOYS' SCHOOL OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

Formerly Hitchin Grammar School Old Boys' Association

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 7.30pm. on 22nd April 2009 in the School Library

- Present:** David Simmonds (Chairman), Mark Hart (Hon Treasurer),
David Stancombe (Hon Sec), Keith Wadsworth (Headteacher),
Peter Webb, Stuart Halsey, Dick Crabbe, Andy Russell, David Garvie, Keith Crockford,
Peter J. Thomas, Paul Brooker, Hugh Russell,
Michael Cranfield, Derek Wheeler, Bill Bowker, Roy Hawken,
1. **Apologies:** Richard Whitmore, Anthony Buckland., Peter Hollingsworth,
Matthew Jones, David. Niven, Mark Russell, Robert MacArthur,
David. Brown, Geoffrey Shaw, Neil Thomson, Brian Waters.
 2. **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting** held on April 12th 2008 were taken as
read and confirmed on the proposal of Michael Cranfield and seconded by Mark Hart.
 3. **Matters arising:** The item raised under AOB concerning the future development
of the Association had not been dealt with by the Committee during the year and it was
agreed to remove this from future AGM Agenda and leave the matter to the discretion of
the new committee.
 4. **Hon. Treasurer's Report:** The Hon. Treasurer tabled his report and the
Statement of Accounts to the 31st December 2008. Michael Cranfield proposed and Paul
Brooker seconded that the Statement of Accounts be adopted. This was agreed
unanimously. The accounts are an appendix to the minutes. The chairman proposed a vote
of thanks for the Hon Treasurer and the meeting expressed its appreciation for the
Treasurer's good work throughout the year.
 5. **Hon. Secretary's Report:** The Hon. Secretary presented his Report. Stuart
Halsey proposed and David Garvie seconded that the report be accepted. This forms an
appendix to these minutes. The Chairman expressed the appreciation of the meeting for the
secretary's continued efforts throughout the year. Votes of thanks were also expressed to
Stuart Halsey for his efforts in producing the high-class bulletins during the year and to
Matthew Jones for updating and maintaining the Association website.
 6. **Election of Officers and Committee:** The following members were put forward
by the committee and elected or confirmed in office. The meeting agreed unanimously.
 - **President for 2009:** Richard Whitmore
 - **President for 2010:** Anthony Buckland
 - **Vice-Presidents:** D.C.Baines, T.P.Brooker, W.S.Bowker, J.C. Burges, D.Carnill, A.P.Cherry,
B.I.Cook, R.F.K.Corder, J.C.Coxall, C.C.Day, S.C.Harding, J.R.Mayhead, Michael Norris
G.L.Shaw, O.J.Stedman, M.J.Steeley, N.A.Thomson.

- **Hon. Treasurer:** M. E. Hart
Proposed by D. Stancombe and seconded by T.P. Brooker
- **Hon. Secretary:** P.R. Hollingsworth
Proposed by D. Stancombe and seconded by P.J. Thomas
- **Committee Members:** (Vacancies to be left to the discretion of the committee)
Retiring in 2009 – Stuart Halsey, Chris Roberts.
Retiring in 2010 - Michael Cranfield, David Niven
Retiring in 2011 – Andy Russell, Matthew Jones
Election of members to retire in 2012. Robert MacArthur,
Mark Russell, David Garvie
Election of co-opted members Stuart Halsey, David Stancombe.
There were no nominations from the floor.
The above were proposed by David Simmonds and seconded by Mark Hart.
The meeting unanimously approved the appointment of the new committee.
The Chairman expressed his appreciation of the work of those committee members retiring this year –Stuart Halsey and Chris Roberts

7. **Re-appointment of Honorary Accountants** – it was proposed by Mark Hart and seconded by Michael Cranfield to re-appoint WKH. The meeting expressed its thanks to Chris Maylin for his work on behalf of the Association.

8. **Headteacher’s Review.** Keith Wadsworth reported that the School has had another successful and challenging year. The major events of the year included
The GCSE examination results in the Summer 2008 were not as good as previous years. It was a cohort that included a greater number than usual, by some margin, of challenging students. That had been apparent even from primary school reports and visits and, despite our best efforts and exceptional levels of support and intervention; we were unable to bring some of them round. Some perfectly able boys refused to be motivated and, as a result, only 61% of students gained five or more A*-C pass grades. This was in contrast to the mid-seventies we had been achieving and was really the first dip in results we had experienced for years. A Level results were more in line with expectations, similar to previous years and allowed those that wanted to, to go on to higher education. Ironically, in the year when the Key Stage 3 exams were exposed as flawed, ultimately resulting in their demise, we were happier with the results than we had been for years. Ours, for once, were accurate.

Prior to the summer, in May, we were inspected by OfSTED and were deemed to be a good school with several outstanding features. In fact the care, guidance and support the boys receive, their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the boys’ behaviour, the curricular and extra-curricular provision and the leadership and management of the school were all described as outstanding. The inspector considered there to be a very strong mutual respect and excellent relationship between staff and pupils. And the school’s engagement with the local community was described as being very impressive. In fact the material he gathered from us was subsequently used at OfSTED to inform the inspection criteria for the new inspection framework which includes the school’s contribution to community cohesion, and in presentations to other schools as an example of how to do it.

That report was very rewarding, especially when we knew that the results were not going to be what we wanted. The report and the previous year's results meant that we were defined as a High Performing Specialist School, had our application for redesignation as a Technology specialist school confirmed and asked by the DCSF to adopt a second specialism. The Governors agreed with our recommendation to specialise in Languages and we have also taken on a focus on Gifted and Talented students.

The school is now Hitchin Boys' School: a Specialist Technology and Language College.

We continue to have a great deal of success in all areas of sport and the new all-weather tennis courts, which will soon be floodlit, will undoubtedly encourage success in that sport too. Basketball probably threw up the achievement of the year with the Year 9 team ending runners up by just one point in their level of the national championships.

Two senior players were in the U16 and U18 County Rugby teams and a staff and school team beat an Old Boys' XV by 13 points to 0. We have had a representative in the National Chess Squad competing in the Ukraine and England Junior Doubles Petanque Champions. We enjoyed great success in district cross-country and football competitions. We have a County golfer and a boy looking like a genuine 2012 Paralympian.

Music concerts continue to showcase exceptional quality and variety of musicianship. The Music Competition now stretches to two days due to the number who want to enter. A second *Spectechular* evening was even more spectacular than the first and was performed almost entirely in French and Spanish. What now seems to be our annual musical this year was 'Smike': Mrs Squeers and other female parts being played alarmingly well by our boys.

The number and range of trips continues to grow. There have been visits to the Battlefields, Iceland, India, Spain, France to name a few, supporting Art, History, RE, PE, Languages, etc. Both teaching and non-teaching staff give up their time for a huge number of boys to take advantage of both overseas and domestic trips.

We have just learnt that our plans to develop Bancroft and bring it back into service after a period in moth balls after its role as sixth form common room was taken over by our new Sixth Form Centre. It needed a great deal of work doing to it, some of which was very costly but only became apparent after we had already Invested a good deal in it. The Authority has now agreed that it has a responsibility to help with the refurbishment and work can go ahead. It will provide meeting rooms, conference facilities, teaching rooms and offices in what will be very pleasant surroundings.

In terms of staffing we have found the recruitment difficulties of previous years ease a little. We continue to need one or two overseas teachers to fill vacancies in real shortage subjects like Maths, but we have also been able to appoint some outstanding new teachers. Appointments have already been made for next September and we are really impressed with the people we have attracted to work here.

Special note should be made of the retirement of Keith Allard after 37 years here. On his retirement he was Assistant Head responsible for Post 16 education but he had been head of geography previously. He was an outstanding servant of the school and an exceptional colleague. Peter Lovell, our caretaker of 30 years, also retired in October: Peter had served the school with great loyalty and dedication and was one of the least caretakery caretakers I have worked with. The retirements of Alan Goddard after 18 years here also deserves note.

The school roll is currently a little less than a thousand, with a slightly smaller sixth form intake this year, but we were heavily oversubscribed again for the intake of 2008 and were again for September 2009. A significant number of appeals have been lodged and it is likely that we will have more than our full quota of 160 when we start in September. That, and a larger number going into the sixth form then, will take the school back up to around 1000 and possibly slightly in excess of that.

This year's report to the Old Boys' should surely finish with a quotation from the OfSTED report. One student told the inspector that, "the preservation of tradition makes for a truly individual experience." That pretty much captures what this school tries to achieve: a successful education in the broadest sense, designed to make each student feel a genuine part of its future, which will then become part of its illustrious history.

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

9. **Any other business.** Keith Wadsworth expressed the School's and, he was sure, the Association's appreciation to the retiring Hon Sec. The workload taken on by David Stancombe was considerable and to such an extent that but for his efforts the Association may not have survived though the latter years and reach its centenary. The meeting concurred with this statement and the Chairman warmly thanked the retiring Hon Sec for all he had done for the Association.
10. **Close of meeting.** There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.26pm.

Date: 22nd April 2009 SignedPresident

Annual Dinner

Saturday 24th April 2010 at 7.45pm.

**Meet in Main School Library
6.45pm. onwards**

MENU

**Cream of Chicken and Leek Soup
Dinner Roll and Butter**

**Steak Diane
Fresh Vegetables in Season**

Fresh Fruit Salad

Cheese and Biscuits

Coffee or Tea and Mints

Licensed Bar

Toast List

THE QUEEN

**Welcome by the President
Tony Buckland(1963)**

THE ASSOCIATION

**The Headteacher
Keith Wadsworth**

Reply by the President

THE SCHOOL

Bernard Cotton (1963)

**Reply by the Head of School
Alex Coles**

ABSENT FRIENDS

The President

**There will be a raffle in aid of the local branch of
the Alzheimer's Society**

Price of Tickets is £23.00

Dress is Jacket and Tie

HBSOBA Annual Dinner 24th April 2010

Ticket Order

Name	
Address	
Post Code	
Year of leaving school	
No of tickets @ £23.00	
Cheque enclosed for	
EFT transfer detail (20 characters, Name plus xDT where x = no of tickets)	Barclays Bank Hitchin Sort Code 20-41-14 Account Number 40475017
Any special dietary requirements ?	
Are you part of a table group	
Are you enclosing a subscription ?	£5.00 per annum £40.00 for term (20 yrs)

Please send to :-

Peter Hollingsworth
8, Baldock Road
Stotfold, Hitchin
Herts
SG5 4NZ

e-mail panda_hollingsworth@yahoo.co.uk

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