

HITCHIN BOYS' SCHOOL OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

(Formerly Hitchin Grammar School Old Boys' Association)

ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER November 2001

General:

The School Hall Appeal has gone well, members, other Old Boys, parents and past staff have contributed over a magnificent £16000+ with the grant aid tax rebate. This is a tremendous effort and the Head Teacher has asked me to pass on the appreciation of the school. It is a great credit to the Association that we have been able to carry out the refurbishment and so enhance the very centre of the School. The Head has made considerable play on this in his speeches to potential new parents pointing out the strong tradition of the school which is so clearly demonstrated by our action. Work is not quite finished. A new pelmet has to be fitted for the stage curtains and the floor requires stripping and re-varnishing. So if there are any members who have been meaning to send a contribution and have not quite got round to it, then there is still time – the very last time – to make a donation. Please send in your donations – cheques payable to Hitchin Boys' School Charitable Trust to the Hon Sec.

The Reunion Concert on October 12th was a great success. The School Big Band and the Junior Choir joined members to make a memorable evening. Richard Whitmore (1951) acted as MC introducing a range of instruments from a mandolin (Klaus Misch) to a tuba (Ben Douglas), a string ensemble under the direction of Stuart Ford, a brass group led by Simon Birkett and a number of vocalists. If you were unable to get to the concert but would like to hear what went on then a CD – price £5.00 (cheques payable to HBSOBA)– is available. Those who did go might want a souvenir of that evening? It would make a good Xmas present?

A programme for the evening and the chat from Richard will be available on the website. My thanks to all members who have expressed appreciation of the evening. I include the following from Adrian Sillence (1975): 'I thoroughly enjoyed the evening, not just the playing of (and listening to) the music, but also the pleasure of meeting several former teachers of my era. In

addition to you I was delighted to bump into John Gwinnell and Barry Robinson. It was fascinating to wander round the old familiar corridors and to see how much had changed, but also how much (a surprising amount) is still the same. I have to say that I was amazed at the musical abilities of the youngsters - I'm thinking of the Big Band particularly - I think the school is much stronger in the musical direction now than in my day.'

Books by Old Boys: I am putting Birkenshaw The Birch-Grove by Phillip Mallpress (1940) and The Stem Doctor by Anthony Chant (1956) into the Old Boys area in the school library. I would welcome copies of other member's publications to add to these if they so wish.

It is sad to report the death of Ray Denne. He used to live at the back of Bearton Green where Michael Pratt, Chris Studman and myself also lived. Ray was a bit older than us and being a great games- player, someone we very much looked up to. I hope to include a suitable appreciation of Ray in the next Newsletter.

Membership:

Numbers continue to grow slowly to over 600. Please encourage any Old Boys that you know who are not members to join. We need 1000+ to make ourselves strong and viable for the rest of this century.

Subs:

Could I remind Associate members who left in 1996 that they should now send in their subscription. Ordinary £4 per annum or Term £30 for 20 years (can be paid in three annual payments of £10)

Reunions:

Associate Members evening Friday 14th December at Blueharts Hockey Club – Disco and bar. We are targeting the recent school leavers for this reunion but all members are welcome. We are trying to rebuild the close links of the past between the Association and Blueharts, which has been an Old Boys club for the greater time of its existence. Robert Bridges has asked me to make members aware that they are always welcome to come and watch hockey and enjoy the 'apres game' atmosphere in the bar afterwards.

Spring Reunion. Saturday April 13 2002

2.30pm Football Tournament, Boules, Tours of the School, Archives in the Library.

6.00pm AGM in the Main Hall

8.00pm Dinner The speaker is John Gardiner and other members of staff of that era who will be there include Barry Robinson and Emlyn Cooke so why not come along and share a few reminiscences?

Time to think about getting your group together. Eric Nutter is looking for as many 'Golden Boys' as possible, i.e. the 1952 entry to join him for the 50-year reunion. Let me know if you are in contact with any of these and I will let Eric know. Just to remind you here is the entry list:

1a R.Beedel (P), G. Boyd (M), D.J. Buckingham (M), G.E.Carr (P), M.Conder (P), B.T.Earing (M), G.P.Ellis (S), R.H.Foley (P), D.A.Hartless (S), B.G.Hull ®, O.L.D. Hoeg (M), M.D. Holliday ®, J.K. Howard ®, P.S.Jackson ®, B.N. Leadley ®, N. McArdle (P), R.J. Murphy (S), N.P. Murray (M), E.A. Nutter (P), D.E. Ramsbottom ®, R. Selby (M), C.J. Shaw (P), T.J. Shilladay (P), P.H. Summers ®, R.F. Sunderland (S), J.W.E. Tribe (M), D.B. Turner (S), D.G. Turner (S), D. Walmsley (M), J.N. Whipp (P), A. Wilkinson (S).

1b A.S. Bannister (S), W.D. Bennett (P), D.G. Bonfield (S), D.A.Y. Bonsey (M), A.D. Burge (S), G.M. Burrows (M), D.K. Carrington (M), M.J. Collings (S), F.G. Day (P), D.F.L. Edwards (P), K.F. Goodwin (P), B.F. Hawkins (M), P. Jackson ®, R.P. Jones (M), Leavy R.J. (P), Lilley R.J. (S), F.S. Morton (P), A.D. Ottignon ®, K.W. Pettingale (M), D.A. Shakesby (S), A.J. Smith ®, R.M. Smith ®, W.J. Tansley ®, M. Venn ®, D.J. Ward (S), G.C.T. Whatmore (M), D.M. Williams ®, J. Wray (M), A.R. Wyatt (S). Joined in 3a A.R. Blunt (P), M.J. Stratton (S). Joined in 4a N.I.R. Ross (P). Joined in 5a T.A. Holding (S)

Didn't you used to be Richard Whitmore ?

Richard Whitmore is bringing his Television News desk to Hitchin Boys' School on Saturday 8th December- but its nothing like the one that he occupied all those years at the BBC. This one holds a multitude of secrets, waiting to be revealed in his one-man show Didn't you used to be Richard Whitmore ?

Richard – now enjoying a 'third age' career as a professional actor since retiring from the BBC – left school exactly 50 years ago this year to begin his career in journalism on the Hertfordshire

Express. He joined the BBC TV as a reporter and went on to become one of the regular anchormen of the Nine O'Clock News. Richard's tightly scripted performance includes a rare blend of character acting and story telling as he traces hilarious and sometimes touching moments from his life as actor, writer and broadcaster. Among a host of stories from his BBC years, Richard relives the agonies of his first national newscast and reveals the secrets of the famous Morecambe and Wise Christmas Show when he featured in an amazing acrobatic performance of Nothing like a Dame! Then, there was the occasion when he was floored by that question from Prince Charles

Performed at theatres and festivals all over England Didn't you used to be Richard Whitmore ?
Has surprised and delighted its audiences.

'Barefaced entertainment! A smooth and polished performance'
- Ross-on-Wye Gazette

'Studded with hilarious anecdotes'
- Essex Gazette

Committee News:

The meeting on 30th October we welcomed Justin Snoxall (1989) to the committee. Hugh Russell noted that we now had three younger committee members and hoped that this trend would continue. It was noted that membership is slowly 'on the up'. We are looking at ways of keeping younger members involved. Philip Atkinson (2001) – last year's head boy and you will remember his jokes if you were at last year's dinner – is hoping that his year will all turn up on December 14th at Blueharts Hockey Club. There is an Associate Members Newsletter going out as well. The committee is looking to update the Association Rules and will be offering their recommendations at the AGM. Our next meeting is on 13th January 2002 so if members have any issues they wish us to consider then please let me know.

News of Old Boys:

Matthew Jones (1997) I have just finished university, after studying History at Derby.

Jonathan Bently (1989) I left HBS in '89 and studied Accountancy & Business at Hatfield Polytechnic. After that I studied at Staffordshire University for a further year to complete my

Post Grad Dip in marketing management. I then joined Trafficmaster Plc in Milton Keynes working in their Marketing Dept for several years. I then moved to London to work for a number of Advertising & Direct Marketing Agencies. In November of 2000 I bought a house with my partner Samantha just south of Guildford though still working in London. More recently i have started working for Fidelity Investments as a client services manager. Outside of work I have reluctantly hung up the rugby boots having played for 5 seasons at Letchworth then in London at Old Actonians. I am still very busy racing large yachts on the south coast and can regularly be seen out competing on the Solent. I am still in touch with Raemon Smale. He is now married to Danielle and are expecting their second child soon. Raemon is now living in the states working for an online company providing support services to the legal profession. I believe he has a very grand title, as they tend to do over there! I am also still in touch with Alla Salehianpour. He is married to Sarah and is also expecting their second child. Alla is working in London for an Arabian TV news service. No doubt he is working long hours at the moment.

Perry Woolley (1979) Incidentally, in a rather bizarre echo of my discussion with Sarah..Stancombe – (Jeremy's wife) I was in Leeds a couple of weeks ago, spending the evening with an Oracle consultant I'd started working with . The usual 'getting to know you discussion' - he mentioned that he grew up in a sleepy Hertfordshire market town....went to the Boys Grammar schooletc etc - names Glen Mountney, left around '76 ??? Am I destined only to work with people I was at school with ??? (..visions of 'Groundhog Day 2 ' !!!!)

Neil Endersby (1966) Things are reasonably good at the moment, although some major re-structuring is going on the group of companies for which I work. They are Scandinavian and a little out of touch with the way things are done over here. I'd like to hold off on any donation for a short while until things are clearer. There is not enough slack to gamble on everything being ok right now. I'm still associated with the buying profession although my present role encompasses elements of sales and marketing as well. Since we last met I spent 5 years close to the Hampshire coast at B&Q's head office and what a stressful period that was - they bought you and all your time, in the end I had to get back up here or lose my sanity or worse!

John Black (1955) went to the states in 1966 and has just got into contact by e-mail after many years of Newsletters crossing the Atlantic by airmail. He promises to send me some news for the next Newsletter

David Tomlin (1970) A funny time of year for the New Year resolution but thought I would respond to the request to say I am getting the newsletter so am still in the land of the living - although have got to the stage where the obituaries are probably more interesting than the 'what I am doing now' section - the one on Reginald Smith is a case in point - how many people

can say their mother died in a Model T Ford accident!

I am still in touch with two of the 1970 leavers - Philip Fawcett who I think has at least shown some interest by attending Old Boys' dinners some years ago and Frank Woolston who probably isn't on the list (current address - 2 Ferndale Close, Honiton, Devon EX14 8NY). He has been working for the planning department of East Devon District Council since about 1984 having previously had a similar job at North Herts District council and lived in Baldock.

What would be quite interesting would be to try and gather what information one had on the people from the different years and then e-mail or send it to the others of the same year - it might bring some more Old Boys to light. As most people stay in touch with one or two only but would be interesting to just see what happened - even if now one probably doesn't actually remember more than perhaps a dozen names anyway!

One minor problem is since the dates used are those of leaving. Do I remember that some boys left after 'O' levels rather than after 'A' levels so presumably their date would be 1968 even though they were with the rest of us for 5 years. Do you still have the complete pupil year lists to see whom you would be chasing anyway? It would also be interesting to use the relevant teaching staff list and see what happened to them afterwards.

Peter Roth (1969): After School I went to UMIST when I gained a physics degree in 1974. I then went to live in Israel where I married and have 5 children including 2 sets of twins and 4 grandchildren. At the moment I am working as a system manager with Ness Technologies for a project with the law courts.

Paul Vickers (1985) has left Liverpool University to take up a new post at the University on Northumbria at Newcastle.

Chris Studman (1978) Many thanks for the newsletter - always a pleasure to read. It just still surprises how few (if any?) of my year (left 1978) joined the Association. Sadly I have now lost contact with all my 'compatriots'. I thought I would send an update as there has been a major change in my life this year. After 13 years of marriage Benita and I finally managed to move to 'an old house in the country with a bit of land' - we'd been planning to do this either in Chile (Benita's home country) or Wales (my mother's place of origin) ever since we married in 1987. It

came about in a slightly unusual way. Last autumn we had begun looking at new houses in Coventry (where we had been living since 1990), but could find nothing in our price range that took our fancy. By chance at the same time my internet company had just completed a website for an estate agency in the north of England. Looking at the (low) price of rural properties with land in that part of the country gave me the idea of looking for estate agents in mid Wales where my mother was born and I spent many an enjoyable holiday during my childhood. A few days before Christmas we spotted a place on the web that seemed to fit the bill and on a snowbound New Year's Eve we made our way to Wales to investigate. Twelve days later we'd made an offer that was accepted and by Easter we'd moved into our own rural idyll - a renovated Welsh long cottage, 17 acres of hillside, a lake and 362 bats. But the tale doesn't end there. Whilst catching up with my Welsh relatives (my mother died in 1982) we discovered, much to our utter surprise, that we had actually bought an ancestral home. The house had been built by long gone ancestors in 1799 and had remained in the family until it was sold in 1958. And now we have returned - how's that for the power of the internet! I still run the internet company in Coventry working two days a week there, otherwise from a distance. If anyone wants to see what I look like now you can catch a photo or two in occasional Editor's Diaries I write for the Coventry news site I still edit: www.cwn.org.uk/diaries More on the chickens and the forthcoming alpacas in my next dispatch.

Michael Holloway (1970) I have lost contact. Can anyone help?

New Members: We welcome the following new members:

Colin Masters (1951) Even allowing for the fact that I spent about twelve years stationed abroad, I am always surprised how few of my contemporaries at HGS I have run into over the years and, of those I have met, most were in the services. I clearly have a lot of catching up to do!

Marc Hampson (1994) since leaving Hitchin Boys' I spent some time working in the leisure industry before settling into software development. I'm currently self employed and contracting as a web/software developer to blue-chip and dotcom companies.

David Jessup (1994): I am now 24 I am working as an internal sales/account manager for an IT distribution company. I have a little 2 1/2 year old called Ben and yes unfortunately he does look a little like me(I am sure he will get over this in time) I got a 2:2 in History from Reading in 1998 and managed to get 3 A levels, History, Physics and Maths. I welcome any mails from any of the old boys. djessup@microtronicauk.com

Philip Stedman (1978) Since leaving school my main career has been in Sales and Marketing. Capital goods to start and then finishing in I.T and multi-media projectors. Last job General Manager of Internet Company but I have opted for a longer life and have got rid of the stresses and strains and took my HGV1 now drive Artics for a living and my blood pressure dropped drastically. I live with my partner Jill and will get married with in the next year or so not children yet.

Paul Russell (1976) Now a retired Bluehart Paul is now managing his brother's book shop, what used to be Eric T. Moore's shop in Bridge Street. The association between Eric Moore and the Russell family is one of bricks and mortar. The house that Eric lives in was built by Paul and Mike's grandfather, J.K. Russell, and Mike was born in that house. When Eric retired Mike bought the business and Paul manages it. For books on local history, including the School, the shop is a goldmine. Members coming to Hitchin for a visit to school could do well to pay the shop a visit. On the shelves at present there is only one copy of Reginald Hine's History of the school (£6 for a poor quality copy). The price of one in good condition is £20-25. If you would like Paul to keep a copy when one comes in then he is at Eric T. Moore Books, 24 Bridge Street Hitchin SG5 2DF. Phone 01462 450497. E-mail booksales@erictmoore.co.uk

Nick Brown (1998) I am still a drummer. I toured for 4 months last summer to South Africa, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand and LA (USA). Also I recorded some backing tracks for another group. I am an independent drummer happy to work in any group but don't belong to one exclusively. I am very interested in this reunion. I have spoken to a few old school friends and if you should hear from them soon.

Mick McCormick (1989-1999) Mick worked in industry before joining the staff to teach Physics and Science at school. He retired and to keep himself busy helped out at B&Q. He is a keen road cyclist and has received National Honours for 24 hours distance events as a veteran. He is now completely retired and is shortly jeting off on a round-the-world trip.

James Tanner (1997) is currently studying for a BSc in biomedical sciences at UWE in Bristol.

Simon White (1985) is an Executive Director Acquisition Finance with N M Rothschild & Sons.

Richard Whalley (1992) I'm going into my 5th year of a PhD in composition at Harvard, and teaching some of the undergraduates music theory. I'm still trying to keep playing the piano as much as possible (in fact I'm giving a concert in Hitchin Town Hall on September 10th, which is about as close to the boys' school for some time!) I've met a very nice American girl, Jennifer

Loconto she's is a biologist and has discovered parts of the veremonasal system that I can't ever dream of understanding. We are getting married next May here at Harvard, and we're planning on living in London for a bit.

Steven Dye (1984) Left HBS to live in Belgium for 3 years. Attended University of Kent to do a BSc and PhD in Optoelectronics. Currently European marketing manager for Agere Systems, based in Ascot.

Rupert Hoppenbrouwers (1970) Rupert studied dentistry at University College, London where graduated in 1975. After House Officer and Senior House officer appointments he entered General Dental Practice in Hitchin. In 1986 he was appointed as a full-time dento-legal adviser to the Dental Defence Union, the UK's longest established and largest medical defence organisation. These organisations provide indemnity, risk management, and other medico-legal services to doctors, dentists and other healthcare professionals. During his last six years in general dental practice he also worked part-time at University College Hospital (UCH), holding the post of Director of the School of Dental Hygiene. In the latter post he was responsible for the establishment of the School of Dental Hygiene at UCH. Rupert has been Head of the Dental Defence Union since 1997 and his working day is spent managing the division and advising, assisting and supporting dentists who are faced with complaints, disciplinary actions and claims for negligence. He has written and lectured extensively on risk management, and other dento-legal topics. He is Secretary of the UK Dental Law and Ethics Forum and a visiting lecturer in Law and Ethics at the Universities of London, Birmingham and Belfast. Rupert's leisure pursuits include cinema, gastronomie and flying light aircraft (he holds a private pilot's licence). He is Chairman of my local residents association so I have to be suitably deferential. I still have memories of the A level group including Steve Ide and Clive Hume who helped me move a piano from the fourth floor of a flat in Hitchin to Dunton in the scout van. The instrument was delicately balanced until Rupert decided we needed a musical accompaniment to the journey. It was great fun and I was most appreciative of their help. Rupert and Sheila's eldest lad enters year 7 (or for old-timers year 1) next September. So the wheel continues to turn. He was wondering when another of his group – Peter Bennett is going to join up. (I am working on that one)

News of other old boys:

David Colbeck (1959) Hi David! You may possibly remember me from HGS. I went into teaching too but also had a lengthy spell in publishing. I published my own magazine title –'from Hitchin'- in the early 80's but lost financial control and my job! - so returned to teaching. I am in regular contact with David Leonard who I am sure you will remember. My grandson is at the School now -things ain't what they used to be!!?? – (ED. 'just different David') Yes I was in your patrol and who can forget Hartland Point in the week before the Lynmouth flood disaster?! I can still taste the mug of hot cocoa after a 10-mile trek we went on and can still hear F. A. Huckle

singing all the way! We had an amazingly good teaching staff -all such unforgettable characters, too. I am now living in Upminster, Essex and still teaching, some private tuition and some cover or Special Needs.

Karim Akhtar 1987- After leaving Hitchin Boys' at 18, I moved to London and went to South Bank Poly (as they were then), then Middlesex Poly where I gained an electrical and electronic engineering qualification. I then joined the BBC World Service, as an engineer, and became their first computer support person within a few months. I've been there ever since and have been managing one of the four shift teams for many years now. We take care of the IT and Audio/Broadcast equipment around the clock. The days off between shifts are wonderful! My memories of HBS are mixed. During the 6th form I can clearly remember a certain members of staff constantly on my back and trying to push me out of the school. I also remember some teachers that I still have great respect for. Mr and Mrs Cooke, Maths teachers, very strict, but a fantastic knowledge of their subject.. Mr Woods, our very helpful English teacher. Unfortunately I will not be able to attend the concert on Friday Would you believe that I am going to see Sique Sique Sputnik playing in London?! I will check out the website and am thinking about joining the OBA (Lets hope you do it - Hon Sec). I think it would be nice to see some of my old teachers and fellow inmates again. After my bad experiences of the 6th form, I only really kept in touch with John Gaunt. He left after the lower sixth, but has remained a close friend ever since. I have lived in London since leaving school in 1986 (my mother still lives in Hitchin). I have recently bought my first house, in Addiscombe, a nice green area east of Croydon. I was previously in Wimbledon and my landlord decided to sell up. I couldn't bring myself to buy this one bedroom flat for £200k though!

Alan Whitmore (1980) Last time we spoke I was postdoc-ing at the Institute of Ophthalmology I think - but that was 12 years ago. I did end up doing medicine (in Oxford - it was great fun) and then trained as an ophthalmologist before coming back into fulltime research - working on retinal diseases at University College & doing a couple of clinics a week at Moorfields eye hospital. Looking for a lectureship at the moment - research careers are a pain as far as permanent posts go, even when you are a medic too (although I now have the luxury of a fall back position). I will sign up to the HBSOBA - how can I refuse a direct order from my favourite old teacher?!

The School

Examination results show an improvement on last year. 90% of A levels taken were passed and almost 62% were grade A-C. GCSE results were up with 61% achieving five or more A* - C grades. All these are considerably above County and National averages.

The 1st XV visited Ireland for a two-match tour at half term. They suffered two defeats but had a good time and no doubt, a good deal of Irish hospitality. Pat Thornhill keeps up the good work in the Library and has negotiated a £1000 donation from the new Sainsbury's store in the town. The School is appealing for a 'Gardener' to look after the flowerbeds at the front of the school. The Head teacher would welcome any volunteers.

REMEMBER

HSBOBA ASSOCIATE MEMBERS REUNION

FRIDAY 14TH DECEMBER 8.00PM AT BLUEHARTS HOCKEY CLUB

CD for Xmas Reunion Concert £5

from Hon Sec(Cheques payable to HBSOBA)

OLD BOYS DAY AND ANNUAL REUNION ON SATURDAY 13TH APRIL 2002

(GET YOUR PARTY LINED UP NOW)

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.freereserve.co.uk

Or via our website www.oldboysonline.com.

David Stancombe (Hon. Secretary).