

HITCHIN BOYS' SCHOOL OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

(Formerly Hitchin Grammar School Old Boys' Association)

ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER November 2000

General

A sad start is to report to death of Eric Reed who taught and later took on the audio-visual technician role for a period of over 30 years. I attended his memorial service at Tilehouse Baptist Church, where he worshipped, and was especially moved by the contributions of his three sons to the celebration of their father's life. I have asked Reg Williams who was Head of the Physics department and taught at the school from 1965 to 1999 to write a few words about Eric. His appreciation follows later in the newsletter.

There have been many memories jogged at the sad news in the last newsletter at the loss of Roy Allen. Norman Greenshields (1956) recalls sitting down next to an elderly gentleman at a dinner in Letchworth a few years ago. He was delighted when it turned out to be Roy, not having met him since leaving school, and they had a most enjoyable evening reminiscing. Norman retired from teaching 5 years ago but got bored and went back to work half-time. (I retired at the same time and have taught 1 day since then). However there are similarities in that we have both got the travel bug.

I was really impressed that Norman achieved a lifetime ambition and did a bunjee jump – I probably watched at the Hacker bridge that Norman took off from but did not have the courage to do it. (He did get it half price being over 60) So if you want to find out more look out for Norman at the next dinner.

Pat Thornhill has put some early school photographs into an album for the archives. They look really good and will be available for all to see at the April reunion. She is preparing a second

album for us and would particularly like items over the period 1950 to 1980 so if you have any please send them to me or directly to Pat at the school. Date and identification of people and places are helpful if possible.

E H (Ted) Harris (1924 – 2000)

Ted left school in 1940 and joined the Royal Navy in 1942. He was serving as a Navigating Officer onboard an LST in the Far East when the war ended. On leaving the Navy he worked at ICI, during which time he studied to become a Cost and Works Accountant. He then joined a London firm of accountants and after a further five years study became a qualified Chartered Accountant. He furthered his career in accountancy when he joined BP and was eventually appointed Finance Director of BP Oil..

During his retirement he served for a number of years as Hon County Treasurer for the Hertfordshire Guide Association. He was also involved in helping to form a global network of lawyers and accountants now known as McIntyre Strater International and only retired from this involvement last December. Ted loved sport and was a founder member of Blueharts Hockey Club. He played cricket for Knebworth, Potters Bar and finally North Mimms where he became Chairman of the club. He later took to golf and was Captain and then President of Arkley Golf Club.

Ted and his wife Ethel celebrated their Golden Wedding last September. They have 3 children, 11 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. Our sympathy goes out to all the family in their loss. (He died on 13 April 2000, aged 76.)

Staveley Harding

Eric Donald Reed (1938 – 2000)

Eric died unexpectedly and suddenly in September following a heart attack. He joined the school as a Physics teacher in 1965. He was a man of many skills and he supported the Science Department devotedly throughout his many years at the school, both as a teacher and latterly as the Audio/Visual Aids Technician. His expertise with video and camcorder was called upon regularly to record school life, events and concerts. He sang bass in the choir on Founders Day and the Christmas Concerts, and in the early years organised the lighting for school dramatic productions.

Eric was a gentleman in the true sense of the word. He was kind and considerate, a ready listener and a willing helper. A new face in the school would always find a warm welcome from

Eric, and staff and pupils alike responded to his gentle sense of humour. He was a person for whom nothing was too much trouble and, whether helping boys, fixing equipment or simply providing a listening ear, he was someone to whom people turned.

His years of service were very much appreciated and he will be greatly missed. Our sympathy goes out to his wife Margaret and their three sons in their loss.
Reg Williams.

Committee News

We welcomed Mark Russell (1986) onto the committee and hope he will be the first of many younger members to help direct the future of the Association. The other main points discussed were about the current efforts to raise the number of members and in particular those from the 60's, 70's 80's and 90's. Perhaps you could check that those you are in contact with are members and if not give them a nudge in that direction. Application forms can be downloaded from the school website or by post from me.

We are very pleased to report that Barry Robinson has accepted our invitation to be President Elect for 2001 and therefore our President for 2002. It is hoped to provide a small area in the library, the old doorway that leads through to the cloisters, which will be used to store, and display Old Boy archives and memorabilia. A suggestion from Gerald Cherry (1948) that the Association might like to consider a major project, to re-furbish the school hall, has been taken on by a sub-committee and we will report any progress on this in the next newsletter.

Another sub-committee will be selecting a suitable tie for the association and it is hoped to have these available for the April reunion.

News of Old Boys

Roy Hawken. (1952) writes: Having rejoined the Association after far too long a lapse and thoroughly enjoyed the last two Annual Dinners I have a few minor items to pass on which may be of interest to other members. I have some half dozen names and contacts which I suggest are best set out on a separate missive to be transmitted to you within a couple of weeks. (so where are they Roy!). Of selfish interest to myself was the whereabouts of one TWIGG. Ian David. (1945-1953) With whom I spent virtually every day for at least six years at -the then - Grammar School, and completely lost touch on the day I left. Delighted to say that we have recently made contact, met a couple of times and intend to continue to sort out whatever went awry during the last 50 years.

David Lewis (1962) reports on his son Matthew (1988) who has been travelling in Malaysia and now started his final year at Plymouth University.

Peter Downey (1957) A pleasant surprise when I came in this morning and opened up the system. I had taken the day off yesterday for my annual visit to Bakewell Show - our local agricultural one day show which nowadays is held over two days and has become 'big business' but still an enjoyable day out. It takes me back to the days when I would have preferred to go to the Cattle Market by the Fire Station rather than trotting down Grammar School Walk. Anyway, no time to reminisce this morning, as there is a load of work waiting. Why, when I have a day off, there seems to be a week's work waiting the next day I have never been able to fathom out. I'll be environmentally unfriendly and print off the Newsletter and enjoy reading it this evening. I already have seen several names on the first page, which bring back memories, including the first time

Maurice Dolden introduced us to Rugby! Hoping to pop down to Hitchin one day this weekend to see Dad, only a quick trip this time but it would be nice to meet up one of these days for a drink and a chat. I genuinely feel in debt to you for your perseverance in 'getting me back'. I had thought it would be just for the one time, but I now know I was wrong. Is it part of getting older that our roots become more and more important?

David Simmonds (1954) says 'All is well with me and my ever-growing family - 11 grandchildren now. I keep gainfully and intellectually occupied with my three Companies although I do find the ever-increasing traffic on the roads somewhat irritating nowadays. Journeys that used to take a couple of hours now invariably take two and half etc. Retirement still not on my agenda although

I am just beginning to consider exit strategies!

Nigel Hughes (1963) wonders if he is the closest-living Old Boy to the School? (Lancaster Avenue, Hitchin) If not, who is? Who is the farthest away? Silly statistic time! On a sadder note, I am sorry to hear of "Bilge" Allen's death. He taught me English for a year, and we would sometimes try to side-track him on to his wartime tales of his BSA motorcycle and adventures, in Norway if I remember rightly. Also try to goad him into his favourite expression "Bunk,bilge and balderdash!", which I believe was carved into the snow on the North Court one cold winter (whatever happened to those?).

Roger Sexton (1966) was saddened to read of the death of Roy Allen. I studied some basic German as a "General Study" in the sixth form. This basic knowledge of German has come in extremely useful, and I owe a great debt to Roy. Until five years ago the usefulness of German was confined to leisure activities - trips abroad to Germany and Switzerland. However, the Law faculty where I work (Nottingham Trent) then introduced a Law-with-German degree, and needed somebody to teach basic principles of German Law. "Roger, you understand German - could you do it?" I took up the challenge. I am very glad I did. German law is fascinating, and the students on the Law-with-German degree are very good.

Terry Pattar (1997) Has asked me to include the following request to members: 'I am undertaking quite a big challenge on the behalf of a charity called Children in Crisis who operate all over the world helping children in countries such as Sierra Leone, Russia and Afghanistan. The philosophy of the charity is that children are our future and therefore they do all they can to rescue as many as possible from a childhood blighted by war or poverty. They also operate in this country, for example a programme that helps children as young as 9 kick their drug addictions in Leeds.

Through an organisation called Action for Charity, based in Letchworth, I am attempting to raise money for a sponsored trek through the mountains of Nepal in April next year. This will be a very tough challenge and will take a lot of hard work and training so that I am able to trek for 8 hours a day over mountainous terrain for 9 days.

However the greater challenge is raising the minimum £2500 in sponsorship. I was hoping that you could possibly include a small item in the next newsletter making a request to any Old Boys. who may wish to sponsor me for this challenge. Any amount is welcome and if anyone whose company or business would wish to consider a company sponsorship (a good way of

getting positive publicity) I would be extremely grateful.

Anyone wishing to contact me may do so by e/mailing me on this address or by writing to me at:

7 Mowbray Avenue, Exeter, EX4 4HP.'

Mike Halford (1972)

Mike writes: "No biology wasn't too bad, thanks. I do remember you launching me out the back of a scrum in the Masters v Pupils rugby match one year though! As I remember it I had mistaken you for someone else and thoroughly deserved my comeuppance. Yours was one of the first names that I'd actually remembered as someone who might remember me from my schooldays - I left in 72, I think. I remember Bob McLeish too. I It was funny reading of Emlyn Cooke again too. I often tell people of this fierce Welsh maths teacher who used to say 'Well, if you don't understand something, just ask'. One lesson, when I was struggling to grasp the fundamentals of quadratic equations, I did raise my hand and request 'Excuse me, Sir, I don't understand'. I still don't remember which came first, the clip round the ear or the hoarse shout 'Well, you weren't listening then, boy!' Anyway, the others who cross my mind from time to time are : John Gardiner (I'd especially like to be remembered to him. I still love rugby and I play squash three or four times a week), Bob McLeish, Mr Duncan, Mr Williams and David Highton. The boys who were my contemporaries: Liam Byrne (very sadly no longer with us), Terry Johnson, William Brooker, Jonathan Bottoms, Tim Shipman, Tony Spicer, Nicky Tibbs and Nick Swatman. Also, you either taught or were at school with my brother, Rodney Dacombe (born 1935-we're a strange family!!!). His son Chris was at the School too. Rod died suddenly on the golf course two years ago now.

Well, I think that is enough reminiscing for one night. Very best wishes to everyone, Mike Halford

P.S. if you're still wondering who on earth I am. Here's clues: Long red hair (all gone now, I'm afraid) A stammer I left rather, er, suddenly just before my mock O Levels. I went off the rails a bit!)

My website (www.sheenmicro.com) explains what I'm up to now if anybody asks..

New Members

We welcome the following new members:

D A (David) Agg (1980)
G R (Gerald) Cherry (1948)
J (Jon) Hunt (1994)
R J (John) Murphy (1954)
B J (Brian) Parker (1954)
M (Mark) Telling (1989)
S (Simon) Thurlby (1995)
N J (Nigel) Webb (1984)
P A (Paul) Linford (1981)
M (Mike) Hastings (1985)
B. (Bernard) Dagnall (1961)
A F (Alan) Peacock (1963)

Rex Kingsley (1954)

Has a Consultancy Company, Interface Business resource Ltd. which specialises in International Trade and Business development is www.interface-br.co.uk 'Sad to hear of the death of Roy Allen. He was my Form master for a couple of years. The names you mention in the T.E.Jones era certainly bring back memories. I was in the 3rd or 4th year when Dolden came in as Head. Bernard (Cess) Poole was my chemistry master for a time. I well remember several of us banished to the corridor for "inadvertently" pushing a Bunsen burner close to his Harris Tweed jacket when his back was turned. Josh Hewitt, Gabby Parker and Doc Reid, Smiler Miles and Huckle. They all come flooding back when you take time to think.'

Paul Linford (1981)

At university I believe Paul was a 'political animal' and was Chairman of the Union. Since 1995 he has worked at the House of Commons as a lobby correspondent. He is also political Editor of the Journal, the morning regional for the north-east.

Nigel Webb (1984)

'I left the school at the age of 18 in 1984, going directly to the London School of Economics to pursue a BSc(ECON) specialising in Computing. In 1985, I was invited to intern with American Investment Bank Drexel Burnham Lambert with whom I subsequently worked after graduation.

My introduction to investment banking consisted primarily of trading Interest Rate Derivatives, living for a number of years in New York. Subsequent trading moves took me from Drexel to Bankers Trust, and finally to Japanese Bank, Nomura Securities, with whom I spent a number of years living and working in both the London, New York and Tokyo.

I returned to London in 1993 and joined Andersen Consulting as a Partner responsible for their Capital Markets practice. In that role, I enjoyed my 15 minutes of fame as the head of the investigation into the collapse of Barings Bank. Two years ago, I was enticed away from Andersen to become Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer at NatWest Markets, the investment banking arm of NatWest, I recently left them to become a Partner once more at Andersen's rivals Deloitte Consulting.

Along the way, I got married to fellow-Nomura employee Kate, and we have a two-year old daughter and another child due at Christmas. Music remains now, as it was then, a major interest. Additionally though, I now hold a Commercial Pilot's Licence and own aircraft based at nearby Cranfield. (Nigel is setting up the website for us see stop press)

Simon Thurlby (1995)

Simon graduated from Newcastle University in 1998 and started work for ICL in Stevenage August '98. He joined the Telecommunications Division where he works in Configuration Management for the Prospero Product. He is a Queen Scout and is still involved in the 1st Hitchin Venture Scouts (that is the school group) and with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. He is Scuba Diving Instructor with the St. Albans Sub Aqua Club and has suggested that a walking / climbing trip might interest some of the more active members. Why not follow this up with an e-mail to Simon and see if something can be arranged?

The Revd. Bernard Dagnall (1961) is vicar of St. John's, Newberry.

e-mail addresses

David Simmonds (1954) dsim@classicfm.net

Chris Studman (1978) Chris@cwn.org.uk

Michael Holloway(1970) mickhwholloway@fsmail.net

David Agg (1980) daagg@smithgroup.co.uk

Jon Hunt (1994) j.hunt@jonhuntassociates.co.uk
Brian Parker (1954) brian.parker1@ntlworld.com
Simon Thurlby (1995) simon.thurlby@icl.com
Nigel Webb (1984) nigel@warp9.org
Paul Linford (1981) paul@leafinternet.com
Mike Hastings (1985) mike.hastings@arup.com
Alan Peacock (1963) apeacock@iconz.co.nz
Bernard Dagnall (1961) dagnall@cwcom.net.

School News

Following recommendations in the OFSTED report some reorganisation has taken place to give areas of the School a particular identity. The work needed to achieve this has produced some brand new classrooms, some restructured ones and others that have been redecorated and re-furnished.

Sport: Many boys have been selected to represent the county at Rugby and Hockey at different age groups. I am sure that we all welcome the continued success of boys in the sporting field and congratulate all the staff involved in achieving this.

Parents' Society: The fund-raising activities for the year are to be directed towards replacing the school second mini-bus, which has just given up the ghost.

The memorial book edited and researched by David Baines
Cost £4 or (£5 if you require postage and packing.)

Annual General Meeting and Dinner next year

Saturday 7 April 2001

How about arranging a group of your year to meet at school on that occasion?.

STOP PRESS

We have our own website. Nigel Webb is setting this up and there should be something on it by the time you receive your Newsletter

Try a hit www.oldboysonline.com

You will find a 'Bulletin board' to record your comments and suggestions so please let us know what you think how you would like to see it develop.