

Hitchin Boys' School Old Boys' Association

Formerly Hitchin Grammar School Old Boys' Association

Quarterly Bulletin June 2016

A Date for your Diary – APRIL 22nd 2016 AGM and Annual Reunion.

General

Introduction

Welcome to the June edition of the Bulletin. The turnout for the Reunion was the lowest for some time, with two or three regular groups not appearing this year. Other groups who had intimated that they might come did not materialise, a great shame. Peter Offer gave a very interesting talk on his role as a continuity announcer for the BBC over numbers of years. Head Boy Joe Wilmot also gave a very good speech, they have something to live up to now and they all talk to their predecessor about how they got on. Please do and try to come next year, it is on Saturday 22nd April 2017, AGM at 5.00pm meal at 7.15pm.

Benches

We have or will shortly have supplied 10 benches for the students to sit around the quad. That is a job well done by the Old Boys and who knows who will be sitting on your seat in twenty years time !!!

Career Histories.

Caroline Hope at the School is creating a new prospectus and has asked for Old Boys to provide some interesting career histories. The response was not bad at all and there will be some printed later in the Bulletin, I hope they don't mind !!

Obituaries

Again, there are some Old Boys who have left us and their eulogies are printed later in the Bulletin.

Situations Vacant

There are two positions that will become available at the next AGM. Mark Hart, who has been our **Hon Treasurer**, counting the beans for, we think, eleven years by the next AGM has told us that he will be moving on to other activities more aligned to his children's activities and he cannot split his time any more. It is a sad loss for us and I would like someone to come forward before the next AGM so that they can be trained by Mark to take over the reins as seamlessly as possible.... is there anyone out there??

The other position is that of **Hon Secretary**. I have done the job for a few years now and enjoyed it with all the conversation I have had with all of you. But, I want to do some other things now and I cannot fully commit to doing this job as well. Is there anyone willing to give it a try? It is not difficult !! Just a few Committee Meetings, an AGM, a Reunion Dinner, three Bulletins and a very easy website to maintain. Again, any likely candidate will be given a memory stick with all the information and I would always be in the background for the first year. Any offers ?

News from Members

What have you been up to ??

As I intimated earlier, here are a few Old Boys' histories. It is hoped that all of these and more will be put together in an Old Boys' Portfolio :-

Peter Massam

Principal Business Consultant, Huawei Technologies Peter was an early champion of Customer Experience Management when monitoring from the customer viewpoint was deemed superfluous. With over 20 years experience spanning mobile, carrier, enterprise, retail, government and education markets, he has comprehensive operational end-to-end knowledge of mobile, wireless and fixed networks, customer access methods, devices and customer touch points as well as back end IT, service management and OSS/BSS platforms.

Creating business intelligence from customer analytics data, he has led unique customer-focussed strategies at Nortel Networks, 3UK and Mformation Technologies, taking a mobile CEM solution from concept to production and implementation at several tier 1 operators globally.

Peter has authored a book entitled Managing Service Level Quality across Wireless and Fixed Networks, John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2003 ISBN 0-470-84848-0 and has also published a paper entitled 'A Decent Service Level', IEE Communications Engineer, June 2003 that illustrated an innovative method of maintaining customer service quality across multiple operator domains using today's technologies.

He also holds a patent in the US and Europe entitled "System and Method for Service Quality Management for Wireless Devices". United States

WO/2007/016337 July 27, 2006 A system and method for detecting and recording events related to the quality of service experienced by a wireless device in a wireless network.

Ray Weight regrettably did not live to see my book published, but he was an absolute inspiration to achieve that. I am also indebted to Messrs Pickard and Parr for their encouragement in French, which I have spoken fluently since my university days and picked up and used many others in the meantime, Swahili and Russian among them.

My current position in a global Chinese company allows me to immerse myself in a myriad of cultures internationally.

The love of languages has carried over, without prompting, into both my children, one of whom is studying Spanish and Portuguese at Bristol, while the youngest is taking Italian and Business Studies at A level next year and intends to carry forward to university.

Simon Gainsford – (1953)

Studied Agriculture at Oakland's College, graduated as top student.
Travelled around Europe and North Africa, 35 countries, hitchhiking.
Joined ICT Computer co. Seconded to LM Eriksson's as Head of Software dept.
1965 Manager for ICL in Mauritius, later in 71 to Zambia as Country Manager for ICL.
Back to London as Manager MEA for 2 years. West African MD. MD for new operations
ICL in Iran, closed with the Ayatollah's arrival. To USA as Head of 11 Western States
for ICL. Left ICL after 17 years, President Teamco Europe software and 4GL. MD SPL
Australasia based in Sydney. Later Vice President Symix Asia/Pacific. Now retired and
living in Bangkok.

New Members

News from Members

Other Old Boys

Obituaries

Peter Thair (1962)

I know you will be sad to hear that Pete died on May 1st. He had been in hospital in Swansea for over a month, following a huge operation for bladder cancer.

There were serious complications, which were not unexpected and the care from the doctors and nurses was just amazing. He spent his last ten days in ITU on life support, so mercifully was unaware of what was happening. Our eldest daughter, Juliet and I were with him when he died, which was very peaceful and a great comfort.

His funeral was here in St Davids Cathedral last Wednesday and he would have been totally overwhelmed by the number of friends and relations who came to bid him farewell.

With best wishes,

Ann Thair

Peter and I were great mates all the way from Strathmore School, through Wilshere Dacre and the Boys' School. We had all the sorts of fun that was available in those days and his house in York Road, next to Fosters Builders was always open and friendly. We were in St Marks Scouts together and there are so many happy memories from that time. He played in the colts at Blueharts but after we left school he played Rugby at Hitchin, so

we saw little of him after that. It was wonderful to see him at the reunion two years ago and we had a good catch up. Peter H

David Leyland May 30th 2016

From His Brother, Charles Robinson.

I have to sadly inform you that my brother, David, was killed in a train accident yesterday (May 30th) just near Duffield Station. I know he still has any friends from the school and would appreciate it if you could let anyone know who you think might be interested.

The funeral was on June 16th in Duffield. I know that Tony Buckland was a great friend and David had actually attended the Reunion this year. David had been sending some articles into the Bulletin, always in his own inimitable style. I hope a eulogy will be sent for the next Bulletin. Peter H

Stuart F Sanders

Stuart died in hospital on the 9th September 2015 after suffering a heart attack in church. He was a pupil of HBGS from 1947 and left in the 5th form to take up articles at Watts Knowles in Letchworth, Chartered Accountants. In 1967 he joined Bradshaw Johnson as a partner until he retired in 2008. During his life time he stood as a Conservative Councillor for the Bearton Ward and also was appointed as Chairman of the Finance Committee at the early age of 29. He was with others instrumental in the twinning of Bingen and Nuit St Georges with Hitchin. This proved a very successful venture and many friends were made. Stuart was an avid steam railway enthusiast and his knowledge on the subject was phenomenal. He was treasurer of the local RCTS branch in Hitchin. A practising Christian he was a member of Walsworth Road Baptist Church where he served as a Deacon and Treasurer. Stuart was involved in the launch of the book 'Carriages to Cars' in 2014. This book told the history of the Sanders family business, then in Walsworth Road, of its coach building and motor dealership. The launch was held at the Priory and the book is a Hitchin Historical Society publication. He leaves a wife and three sons.

DENYS J. CARNILL

11TH MARCH 1926 – 30TH MARCH 2016

Denys Carnill was born on 11th March 1926 and educated at Hitchin Grammar School. His National Service was between 1944 and 1948 in the RAF. Subsequently, he went up to Worcester College, Oxford, where he read History.

He showed considerable sporting talent from an early age. He gained an Oxford Blue for Hockey in the 1950-51 season and went on to play for Gloucestershire, the West of England, England (captain, 45 caps) and finally Great Britain (captain, 27 caps). He captained the national side in the Olympics at Helsinki (1952, where the team won a Bronze Medal), Melbourne (1956) and Rome (1960), when E. S. Hoare, another Dean Close teacher, was manager, and also during which Denys spent a year at Geelong Grammar School, Victoria, on exchange. He was also a very good cricketer and played for Hertfordshire for a number of years.

He went to Dean Close School in 1951, appointed by A. N. 'Tony' Gilkes, the then Headmaster, on the personal recommendation of the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford

University, to teach Hockey and History, in that order. The Headmaster sought to rebuild the School's previously good Hockey reputation after the problems resulting from World War II. Supported by two very able colleagues, E. S. Hoare, himself a former international, and C. A. P. Tuckwell, formerly West of England, the quality of hockey rose and by 1957 Dean Close School was producing such players as R. I. Ireland, who later captained Cambridge University, Wiltshire and England and who also played for Great Britain, together with W. J. Benton-Evans and F. C. Welles, who were to play for Wales and Scotland respectively. Talented hockey players seemed to flow frequently from the School. It gave Denys much pleasure to discover that, apart from one year, there was continuous Dean Close representation in the Cambridge v. Oxford Universities annual Hockey Match 1957-74. The Hockey XI in 1955, 1957 and 1961 were unbeaten by any other school side.

Denys realised that the future of Hockey lay in the use of artificial pitches, and it was he who was behind the fund-raising efforts that eventually resulted in the first artificial pitch in any school in England at Dean Close School. It consisted of 'Redgra' and was opened on 4th March 1961 by a match between a Hockey Association XI and the School XI. The latter won 3-2. Today the pitch, since completely remodelled, is called 'Carnill's' in his honour.

When he first arrived, Denys was appointed House Tutor of Walton Court House, and so began the first of 33 years of service to Dean Close School. He was an innovator, founding the Economics and Politics Department and arranging numerous visits and visiting speakers. One former colleague comments: 'Denys was in charge of the Department when I joined Dean Close for my first teaching post as a young man. It was immediately obvious to me what an inspirational figure Denys was. He was highly intelligent, fascinated by Politics and totally involved in the life of Dean Close. Friday evenings were lecture time when Denys would invite guests from political life to talk to our students. It was a time where controversial issues would often be discussed and Denys was marvellously open minded, prepared to listen to viewpoints with which he disagreed. He was a strong advocate of free speech. I could tell when he disagreed with someone because a very serious look would pass across Denys's face. He would then say what he felt. Importantly Denys was a man who saw the shades of grey in difficult issues.'

He took over the Social Service Group in the 1960s and developed both it and ties with various homes and institutions such as the Cheshire and Eildon Homes, Nazareth House, Dr Barnado's, Ullenwood, and Betteridge School. He became aware of the need for a wheelchair in 1973 for the Social Service Group, and arranged a special Chapel collection. This led to Denys organizing, with two colleagues, the first School Midsummer Fair. Over the next ten years, the Fair grew into a large annual event, raising thousands of pounds for local charities as well as the Social Service Group.

A former colleague wrote: 'Denys had an optimistic cast of mind and it was a joy to hear him walking along a corridor or across a quadrangle singing or humming to himself. He was a man who was happy with himself with a secure loving family life. He had a ready smile and was able to laugh at himself. To give one instance of a story Denys used to tell against himself: in 1979 a new Headmaster was appointed whom Denys, being a senior member of staff, had met. During the summer vacation Denys was walking across Big Field (the playing fields which he loved) and happened to see a large man

walking towards him. "Hello Denys and how are you?" said the new Headmaster. Denys smiled, said hello and then asked if they had met before.'

Denys retired in 1984. He was now able to be with his family more often. He had met and married Pam Clarke in 1961 when she had been the Dean Close Headmaster's Secretary. They were married in the School Chapel by the Headmaster of the day, the Revd Douglas Graham. Denys and Pam had two daughters – Sally, born in 1963 and Elizabeth 'Libby', born in 1965.

His new freedom gave Denys time to develop his considerable painting talent. His pictures of landscapes and interesting buildings in Cheltenham and the surrounding area were – and continue to be – much admired, and his work was to be seen on display from time to time in Cheltenham. The same former colleague, himself no mean artist, writes: 'He was inspired by a famous watercolourist called James Fletcher Watson and when I look at Denys's mature work I think Fletcher Watson would have been proud especially of a wonderful series of paintings of local grounds where Gloucestershire played. Denys in turn inspired me, for which I am eternally grateful.'

The Old Decanians Society celebrated Denys' 90th Birthday on 11th March 2016 by sending him a 40 page booklet in which Old Decanians and former members of staff had included their greetings and memories of him. He read and understood them all but within three weeks of his Birthday he had died. Three comments in those greetings sum up the man who was Denys Carnill. The first comment was "...[Denys] has always been the most humble of men despite being one of Britain's most prominent Olympians and undoubtedly one of its Hockey Superstars..." The second observed: "...A warm and kind person, incredibly sincere and down to earth..." The last said 'I loved working with Denys and I found him an inspiration as a person. He was like a second father to me. He had a zest for life which few people have. He often said what a joy it was to work at Dean Close and I'm so grateful that some of that joy came my way.'

C. E. Whitney

School Historian at Dean Close School, Cheltenham.

School News

If any of you haven't heard, the School has been granted 'Outstanding' Status by Ofsted. This is a real milestone for Head Martin Brown and his team. Their dedication and effort into getting the boys to come out of themselves in all sorts of activities has been good to see. As well as that, the academic work has improved as well. The sporting activities have seen competitions won and individual achievements gained in so many sports away from the norm, it is hard to see where they are not champions !!

I have put a link to the School on our web site for you to be able to catch up whenever you want to.

Contact Addresses for HBSOBA

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