

OLD BUCKWELLIANS NEWS



Calling the Silent Majority!

UNDETERRED by the economic gloom that surrounds us I am pleased to present another selection of features and news that I hope will help raise spirits. Many thanks again to all those who have contributed to this.

Travel is a strong theme in this edition. We take a look back to a ground breaking (and ice-breaking) trip to Russia. But we are not just concerned with nostalgia, and we also feature an attractive promotion for a holiday in the Pyrenees.

We will hear from several other much-travelled Old Bucks in this edition and - closer to home - begin our review of those muddy and seemingly endless journeys round the cross-country circuit

that were a painful feature of our winters at BHCHS.

The detective work continues, despite having only 687 left to find. You may feel that you have given me all possible clues to tracing the missing few. But don't forget the relatives. If you have information about any close (and preferably living!) family member of missing Bucks it is very likely that I could make the link via this person. It doesn't necessarily matter whether you are in contact with the relative - sometimes, just knowing the name will be enough.

We have some famous detectives in the crossword this time, courtesy of Mike Ling, and it brings me to my main point. The crime writer Raymond Chandler once wrote: *the sort of reticence*

which prevents a man from exploiting his own personality is really an inverted sort of egotism.

Could this be the reticence that still prevents the silent majority from letting their peers know what they have been doing since leaving BHCHS? One subscriber recently wrote: *I have noticed that not much news of my age cohort appears in the newsletter. We seem somewhat reticent.*

I hope he and others in the silent majority will not continue in their mistaken belief that what they have done is of little interest. By the time you receive this edition I shall be planning the next, so don't leave it too long before writing....

Graham Frankel

May 2009
Number 20



Inside this edition

FEATURES

Planting the Seed - Adventures from London to Japan	7
Entente Cordiale - naïve English boy discovers the delights of Paris	9
Cross-country - healthy sport or ritual torture?	10
To Moscow and Back - first school party to Russia	12
Discover the best kept secret in France - a spectacular holiday opportunity	14
All the World's a Stage - Drunk teachers delight the audience	16
Peter Sillis - An Unsung Hero	18
Wartime Devastation - the family whose lives were destroyed	24

REGULARS

Gin Corner	6
Crossword	8
Where are They Now	22
Letters	23



Remembering Russia See p12



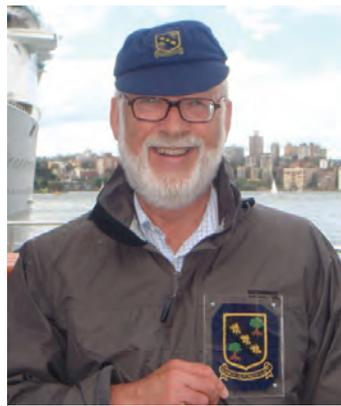
Fancy trying this? See p14



Norman wins in '45 See p10



Tributes to an unsung hero See p18



Stuart Evans in Sydney See p5

AGM 2009 goes Social!

THIS YEAR sees a departure from our recent practice, and a new venue. We have decided to hold our AGM at a hotel in Epping which will be able to cater for those who would like to stay on for a meal. It also means that accommodation will be on hand for anyone travelling from a distance.

Date: Thursday 14th May 2009

Venue: Quality Hotel, Epping (High Road, Bell Common, Epping CM16 4DG)

You may remember this as the *Bell Hotel*.

We shall start the meeting at 7.30pm sharp and aim to complete the formalities as quickly as possible, certainly by 8.30pm.

Filling the history gaps

Were you at BHCHS in 1974? or after 1985?

You will see, elsewhere in this edition, mention of the sad demise of the school magazine in 1973. The only written account of the school's activities in subsequent years was the annual Headmaster's Review of the year which he presented to the *At Home* meetings. I have obtained copies of many of these reports but still need the edition given to parents in **1974**. Also, any from **1985 onwards** will be welcome. I strongly suspect there are copies lurking in lofts! I shall gladly return any originals after scanning.

OB News SUBS

If you subscribed for five years, you will get a reminder - but only one - before the expiry date. If you renew early I will simply add five years to the expiry date, so no penalty for early renewals! Please contact me if you would like any information about your subscription status.

Please help by letting me know if any of your contact details change. I have now scrapped the little brown envelopes that have previously been inserted in each copy, in the hope that most people are happy to send an email or make a phone call to advise of any changes. I will always acknowledge messages.

I need to tell the hotel, in advance, how many people will be staying for dinner, so could I please ask you to let me know by **1st May** if you would like to eat at the hotel restaurant after the meeting.

If you plan to stay overnight at the hotel, could you please make your own arrangements.

For more information about the hotel (including their dinner menu) see their website:

www.quality-hotel-epping.com

Note that the menu shown should be treated as a guide - depending on the numbers staying for dinner we may need to limit the menu to a selection of items.

If you have any items you would like to raise formally in the AGM, please let me have these no later than 1st May.

One important piece of business will be the election of a new Treasurer.



Chris Waghorn

After seven years as Treasurer **Chris Waghorn** has decided to stand down at the next AGM. Chris somehow manages to cope with many activities as well as still being gainfully employed at 70. Chris has been a tremendous supporter, not only keeping control of the finances but also as the unofficial leader of the 49ers whose regular reunions have been highly successful and well-attended. See p4 for the latest example.

Chris has done a sterling job as Treasurer (sometimes even in other currencies) and his wit and wise counsel will be missed on the committee. If anyone would like to consider standing for the vacancy or would just like more information with no obligation, please contact me or one of the committee.

Invitation to our.....

Charity Quiz Night

7.30pm Saturday 19th September 2009

Theydon Bois Village Hall

◆ An opportunity for a fun social evening - partners and friends are welcome (Old school ties not required)

◆ At this stage, we would just ask you to **register your interest*** in the event. We will then confirm all details with you nearer the time. Tickets will be available from July.

◆ Contact **Graham Frankel** to register interest (see contact details in right hand column). Please do this as soon as possible - it does not mean you are committed to buying a ticket, but it will help us gauge the likely numbers.

◆ All proceeds will be given to the **St Clare Hospice, Hastingwood**.

* If you responded to the earlier email poll and expressed interest you will be contacted again nearer the time.

Old Buckwellians News



Old Buckwellians News is published twice yearly in May and November by the Old Buckwellians Association. You will need to join the Association to ensure you receive future editions. Contact the Editor (see below) for all subscription enquiries.

UK Membership:

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Overseas Membership:
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Subscriptions can also be paid via PayPal and sent to this address:

obsbs@genesishr.co.uk

Back issues:

(from November 1999) are available from the Editor for £2 each. *Discount of 25% if you order five or more!*

Cheques should be made payable to *Old Buckwellians*. Please send your news items and other articles for publication to the Editor by email if possible. Original photographs will be returned. The Editor reserves the right to shorten or otherwise amend items for publication.

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BUCKS FIZZ

News and notes about Old Bucks

OBA Annual Dinner 2008



The year of '62 - a fine turnout as usual

Photo Chris Brooker



Has the Editor said something funny? Well, he seems to think so....

Photo Chris Brooker



Chairman giving belated excuses for not handing in that homework?

Photos Chris Brooker

Astley Promoted



Congratulations to **Ian Astley (1979)** on his promotion to Lieutenant Colonel. Ian has been serving with the Army in Iraq and has promised to write something for *OB News* about his experiences there.

We were pleased to see many of the "regulars" as well as some welcome new faces at the Annual Dinner held at the Chigwell Police Club in October.

In response to comments and suggestions made earlier we decided to reduce the formalities even further (almost zero!) and this was clearly a popular move, allowing plenty of time for socialising.

We were also delighted that the numbers appear to be increasing again, so early booking for this year's Dinner is **strongly recommended**.

If you are thinking of getting together with a group - maybe some you have not seen for many years, please feel free to establish contact via Graham Frankel.

The Annual Dinner will be held on **Thursday 8th October** at the usual venue. A booking form should be included with this edition but please contact either Chris Moody or Graham Frankel if you need a form or have any questions.

Triumph for Two Smart Old Bucks



A tremendous victory for a pair of Old Bucks last July. **Dave Ward** and **Adrian Hull (both 1973)** won the European Canonball Run 3000. Covering 3000 miles around Europe you might think this was an invitation to pick up speeding tickets. But this is a race with a difference. The aim is to maintain an overall average speed of 61mph over the five days. Starting at Sandown Park the course took them through France, Portugal and Spain, then back to England finishing at Brighton. Competing in a field of 40, were many impressive rivals: Ferraris, Aston Martins, Porsches, Bentleys etc. But Dave and Adrian's secret weapon was Dave's car - a five year old Smart Brabus. This was the smallest car in the race, and

their success was helped by the car's superior fuel economy. The pair were surprised by their success - they had entered for fun and to raise money for the NSPCC. As well as being the first time they had entered a race of this type they were also the only competitors to take to the roads without any help from a sat nav system. Adrian tells me their prize was free entry into this year's race, which they will be doing in a purple metallflake VW Beach Buggy with no wet weather gear! The registration plate on the Smart Car is explained by the fact that Dave Ward, together with another Old Buck **Phil Mingay (1978)**, runs Kingsbridge Properties, based in George Lane, South Woodford.

Jeff Stops for Lunch



One of our regulars at the AGM sent his apologies last year. **Jeff Harvey (1952)** was on a 1,320 mile cycling tour of Britain. On the day of the AGM, Jeff was on Rannoch Moor and sent us the above photo to prove it! We hope to see you this year Jeff!

Morris Minors



Congratulations to **Nigel Morris (1977)** and wife Philippa on the birth of Tabetha Alice (see photo above) on 22nd November last year. Just one week later, his brother **Andrew Morris (1978)** also became a father for the first time when Sara Jane was born in Baltimore.

Front Bench for Evennett - A First for BHCHS



We were delighted to hear the excellent news that **David Evennett (1960)** had been appointed as Shadow Minister for Innovation, Universities and Skills by Conservative Leader David Cameron MP in the Conservatives reshuffle on 19th January. David, who is MP for Bexleyheath and

Crayford has been in the opposition Whips Office for the past three years.

David Evennett became an MP in 1983 and is one of only three Old Bucks to have achieved that status. But he is the first to have been promoted to the front benches.

He would like to give universities greater freedom from bureaucratic intervention, offer a fairer deal to part time and mature students, and create a clearer pathway from vocational routes into further and higher education. Sounds promising for any Old Bucks who are thinking of furthering their education.

David commented that he had good memories of school and friends and was grateful to excellent teachers like Eric Franklin and Pete Sillis who helped him fulfil his aspirations.

Another DVD!

Following the success of the last DVD (we have now sold almost all of the 300 that were produced) **John Robins** has now managed to transfer another old cine film to DVD.

This was a film he made of a 1968 school trip to the Harz Mountains and Rhine Valley. John's fellow travellers on this trip were teacher **Gerry Brown (Economics 1967-71)** and 18 first and second year boys.

The transfer of the cine, together with the commentary recorded on open-reel tapes, gave John an interesting technical challenge.

As the film will have a limited audience, we are not planning to produce it commercially this time. But John Robins will be happy to provide a copy of the film and suggests that recipients may wish to make a donation to OBA funds. Contact me for details.

Golf News

I had a recent message from **Ray Plato (1948)** who is interested to know if there are any other keen golfers and who live in the Wickford area. Ray is a member of the **Stock Brook Manor** golf club at Stock (near Billericay) and he tells me there are excellent value memberships available at this club which also allow members to play at the **Three Rivers Club** at Cold Norton. Contact Ray on 01268 761190 or:

raymondplato@hotmail.co.uk for more information.

The Secretary of the OBA Golf Society **Dave Blythe (1956)** tells me that the normal range of fixtures is being finalised for the summer. If you would like to find out more about these and are not on Dave's mailing list contact him on 020 8527 4970 or:

david@landerse4.wanadoo.co.uk

The 49ers Celebrate Another Milestone

By Chris Waghorn

On 29th October last year, 29 of the 58 UK resident Forty-niners congregated in Letchworth in Hertfordshire from as far afield as Cardiff, Devizes, Shrewsbury, deepest Suffolk, Weymouth on the South coast, Essex of course, and, unsurprisingly - Letchworth, to celebrate a joint three score years and ten birthday. Why Letchworth? - simple, that's where the organiser lives!

Health and Safety Regulations pre-empted any intention of using the correct number of candles - which is perhaps as well since the cake would of necessity have had a diameter in the region of five feet (what the equivalent in kilowatts or litres the author of this epistle has no idea—and cares even less!)

This was our 17th gathering since the first one in July 2002 - we meet twice a year, but also have an annual BBQ to which the ladies are invited.

To date 43 guys (including two from Australia and one from California) have been to at least one re-union and we have also welcomed Graham and Faith Frankel and Colin Harris - a former maths and form master and himself a Forty-niner, and his wife Mary. First time attendees will be made very welcome.



Alan Wiseman



Terry Williams



Tom Smith



Tom Anderson



Peter De Nayer



David Browning



Clive Moore



Brian Davey



Bob Combes



David Tilly



Johnnie Ward



Chris Waghorn



The cake carries a symbolic "2000+ and still going strong. 1938....."



David Cobb



Michael Leveridge



Brian Page



Karl Wiggins



Roger Mason



John Drake



Jim Faulkner



Ted Carter



Terry Freeman



Jim Irving



Jeff Meddings



Alan Dungeate



Peter Bolding



Hugh Davidson



Terry Newbold

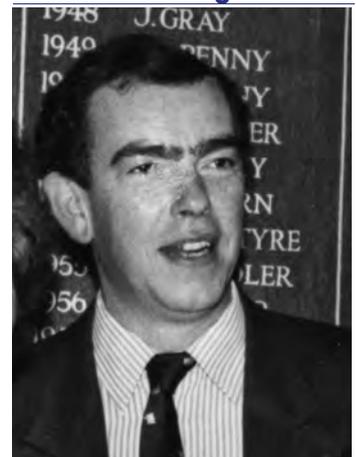


Ian Liddell



Alan Waller

Head into Danger



Ian Nicholson (Headmaster 1985-88) wrote apologising for not being able to attend the OBA Dinner.....

This year, when the OBA dinner is on, I am likely to be passing through the rebel-held '18 Montagnes' region of civil war-torn Cote d'Ivoire, travelling between Guinea and Ghana on a 3 month solo overland trip through West Africa. Wish me luck appeasing up the local rebel leaders. They are highly suspicious of anyone who could be a mercenary or a spy. If I survive I may have some stories to share....

I have not heard from Ian since, but trust he is ok.

We hope to see you this year Ian - perhaps we can hear about your adventures.

Australians Reunited

By Stuart Low



Clockwise, from left: Phil Harper (1957), Les Bassett (1953), Michael Cooper (1949), Chris Aplin (1949), Gordon Masters (1948), Stuart Low (1952), Stuart Evans (1953), Guy Lee (1953), Barry Stephens (1951), Mike Verlander (1951)

It was great that this year we could call it "a reunion" as last year many of us hadn't met before but now we are perhaps the nucleus of an annual event.

As a result of a poll of suggested venues for this year's reunion Bill Matthews and I met in October to discuss and seek out a suitable location. The poll had indicated, by a small majority, that a lunch in a local pub followed by a short harbour cruise was most popular.

As far as I can remember Bill and I met and proceeded to The Rocks area of Sydney. The Rocks is a very old area of Sydney and was rather like the Whitechapel area of London at the time of the ripper – sleazy, overrun with robbers, ladies of the night, dark dingy lanes

amongst warehouses and wharfs and an obviously suitable area for a bunch of ex convicts from Buckhurst Hill. I say "as far as I remember" because we proceeded from one pub to another sampling the various ales on offer and for some reason The Lord Nelson was selected. I would add that the area is now a very much sought after part of Sydney with many of the old sandstone houses being valued in the millions of dollars.

The Lord Nelson claims to be the oldest continually licensed Hotel in Sydney (most pubs here are called hotels and do provide accommodation in addition to the usual facilities). The license was granted to a William Wells in 1841 and the building has now been

restored to its original condition thanks to a photo from the 1850's. There is an original *Times* newspaper on the wall dated 7th November 1805 giving details of the battle of Trafalgar and the death of Lord Nelson.

Be that as it may, other than impressing Mr. Wigley or Pete Sillis, our group was more interested in the brew that is produced on the premises rather than the history. Like last year there were twelve of us. Some of who had made the journey before and some new members. Those who couldn't make it this year had prior arrangements so it is hoped that the next reunion will increase in numbers. Of the twelve, seven (Bill Hardwick, Michael Cooper, Stuart Low, Phil Harper, Bill Matthews, Guy Lee and Les Bassett) were from New South Wales, three (Barry Stephens, Gordon Masters and Chris Aplin) from the ACT (Canberra), one (Stuart Evans) from Victoria and one (Mike Verlander) from Indonesia. Barry and Mike hadn't met for 50 years but it was through Barry that Mike was contacted and persuaded to make the trip for the reunion.

The Lord Nelson provided us with a very reasonably priced bar lunch which together with either the amber nectar or perhaps old age reminiscences produced many stories of masters, misdeeds and sporting prowess.

After lunch we walked down Ar-

gyle Street to Circular Quay passing through the Argyle cut constructed in 1845, past the Garrison Church (1844) the observatory (1858) the Orient Hotel (1844) and the old military hospital (1815). At Circular Quay we, minus Les Bassett who had to leave for another engagement, boarded a Captain Cook cruise boat which took us on a conducted tour of Sydney Harbour. Unfortunately the weather turned a bit sour so rather than sit on deck admiring the view we adjourned to the lower deck where we were subjected to the "tourist commentary". From the number of sleeping Orientals it was either incomprehensible or they had been on the go for too long.

It was a shame that the weather was bad because the cruise took us past such historical places as Fort Dennison, The Opera House,



Bill Hardwick (1956) and Michael Cooper (1949)

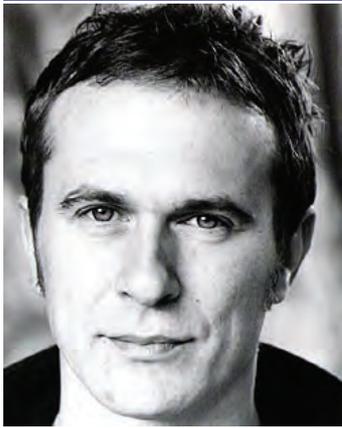
Taronga Zoo, Garden Island Naval Base, Cockatoo Island, under the Harbour Bridge to Darling Harbour and the old suburb of Balmain. However, conversations started in the Lord Nelson were continued here. So little was lost. On returning to Circular Quay we gathered for a group photo, said our farewells and went away. I hope, planning to return next year maybe with our spouses or partners.

Editor's Note: Another curious discovery, reported by Barry Stephens. There were three Old Bucks working simultaneously at the Patents' Office in Canberra - Jim Fogg, Gordon Masters and Barry - but at the time they didn't realise the connection.



Mike Verlander and Barry Stephens - met at Sydney for the first time since leaving school fifty years earlier

Jason's New Series



Actor **Jason Merrells (1979)** is rarely off our TV screens these days. In his latest venture, which started in January, he plays a charming hotelier James Dowland in a new series of the BBC drama *Lark Rise to Candleford*

Rude Boy



Journalist **Tony McMahon (1974)** has written a biography of Neville Staple - vocalist in *The Specials*. Published by Aurum Press, and available on Amazon, the book is called *Original Rude Boy*. The photo above shows Tony McMahon (left) with Neville Staple. Tony writes.....

I remember Doug Pike and some others "skanking" (type of dancing) to the music of *The Specials* and *Madness* around 1979 to 1981.

The Specials are re-forming for their 30th anniversary reunion tour this year and the book will be part of the official merchandise. The gigs in April and May were sold out in January.

The book's story is all about growing up black and British on the mean streets of Coventry in the 1970s and how Neville escaped all that to become a regular feature on *Top Of The Pops*. A tale of redemption and hope...much like my time at BHCHS, on the mean avenues of Chigwell.

Double Gold



Ken Bales (1943) celebrated his Golden Wedding to Hazel in August 2008. Behind him is **Stuart Henderson (1943)** who had celebrated his Golden Wedding to Margaret in July the previous year. Ken and Stuart had served as each others Best Man at weddings in Scotland since by coincidence they had both married Scots girls.

Missing Corporal

Roy Savill (1949) is one of only seven in his year group not yet found, and various of his peers have asked me what progress had been made.

I have known for some time that he entered the RAF as a musician after leaving school. Given the less-common spelling of his surname I was surprised we had not been able to track him down.

Recently I was given some useful advice by **Group Captain David Murray (1971)** who suggested putting an appeal in the RAF newsletter. This resulted in a very helpful contact from someone in South Shields who knew Roy very well in his RAF days. He had been based at RAF Catterick and was last known to be living in Darlington.

My helpful contact told me that at some point in the mid-60s Roy left the RAF rather suddenly. They played in the RAF band, and at rehearsal the conductor asked: "Where is Corporal Savill?" The answer was never given, and he was not seen again. It is believed that he moved to the Isle of Man. At that point the trail went cold. I do not wish to publish further information about his removal from Darlington but suffice it to say that it seems unlikely now that we will be able to find him. I hope I am ultimately proved wrong!

Tony Jolly's.....
Gin CORNER



five "lads" from our Hockey Club which made me realise that I should belatedly fulfil my intention to submit an account, with pictures, of the birth of the club which, on a sunny day in 1949 at the King's Head Chigwell, Ben McCartney & Co had asked me to found. Then on page 7 was THE MAN – my French master when in Mrs Dale's 1A at which I was named *Antoine Deux* (*Deux* because I sat behind Tony Coyle who was the *Premier*). Mr May was a real teacher, disciplinarian et al (sorry- that's Latin!) with me through "Remove" right to the School Cert – I should have got more than a Credit! – my fault! On page 17 was Mary Herbert, who followed my idol, Vera Crook. What is more, the accompanying picture showed me standing behind and to the left of Mr "Hockey-initiator" Wilson. Finally, on page 20 was Roland Buggiey, a fellow Taunton House school pal before we both passed the Scholarship to BHCHS – haven't seen him for years. Finally, following the popularity of the last puzzle, here are some pictograms for you to solve.....

Tony Jolly (1943-49)

Puzzle answers on p8

1 Blood H ₂ O	2 Dump Dump goose feathers Dump	3 Collar 111°
4 GRATIS All All All All	5 PERSON PERSONS PERSONS PERSONS	6 O_ER_T_O_
7 J AN B	8 B \$ F U O L D	9 T T +T 3T
10 HEAD SHOULDERS ARMS BODY LEGS ANKLES FEET TOES	11 YOU JUST ME	12 knee LIGHT

Planting the Seed

By Peter Phillips (-Foster) (BHCHS 1955-61)



A NOTE on names - When I was born my name was Phillips. My father was killed in the war just before I was born and his name was Phillips but my mother married again and became Foster. No one actually managed to tell me this. So I entered the school as Foster, then became Phillips-Foster, then became Phillips-Foster but I changed it to Phillips by the time I was asked to leave.

I was late 140 times in 1961. Actually I had not realised that I had been to school so many times!! Spud told me unless this (amongst other aspects of behaviour) improved he would not like to have me back. I had 7 O Levels but in the June of 1961, I re-sat the couple I had failed. But I left anyway in 1961 and got a job in the Truman's Brewery bottling plant in Brick Lane Stepney.

Sometime before term started I went back to school to get my results and bumped into him by his study. He retrieved my results for me and said "Congratulations you passed both re-sit O levels." I said, "Well are you having me back or not?" and he said "In the circumstances I don't think we shall."

I worked out the summer in the brewery and then got a job on Woodford Council lopping trees and cutting grass around the borough. And then a succession of 30 or so jobs labouring on building sites, farm work, fruit picking, hod carrier (failed), dispatch, Dawsons washing machines in Southend road, Rowntrees Smarties, PDSA Ilford and Romford, Fullers transformers, Morris Singer, back to Woodford council, other councils around the country, some teaching prac-

tice, barman at Kings Head and then back to Southend Road in Charlie Brown's The Roundabout, failed attempt to run away on a Shaw Saville liner to Australia, scrap meat porter, Wanstead Hospital mortuary porter, itinerant and more.

Finally I was disqualified from benefit for some failure to fill in a form correctly. I appealed to the National Insurance Commissioner but failed. When I went back to the dole office I met a young clerk who told me that I had more O levels than he did and I should be looking for 'different' work and be on a different register.

Well I had a wife and two kids by this time and almost none of my family were speaking to me so I was tempted by relative respectability ie a job. The clerk made an appointment with the Professional and Executive Register (rather than the 'down and outs register' which I was apparently on.) I went to their office in Holborn Viaduct and met a Mr. Bird who cautioned me not to close the door unless I was serious as "No one ever leaves here without a job."

He looked at my list of O levels and went to the filing cabinet, fiddled around for a bit and then "Well we have chartered accountants and chartered quantity surveyors. What's it to be?" I did not fancy being stuck in an office all day so I opted for the quantity whatsits. He made the appointment there and then and I was round the corner for the interview and had the job in 30 minutes. Actually I hated the job! The office was about 50 metres from Charles Dickens' old house (now his Museum) and stuck in the same period. The partners were as rich as could be, but paid us articulated clerks 100 shillings a week.

As I got thinner they noticed. Finally one said "Look here Phillips the partners and I were talking and we thought ... well would another five shillings a week help?" I touched my forelock and took it. Anyway I thought I ought to stick at something so I studied in evening classes at Regent Street Poly and eventually passed the exams. Changed offices and moved back to my

family in Wales (where I was born and my grandparents still lived at that time). We had one more child.

But Spud had planted that seed and I knew that to "get an education" you had to go to Oxford or something like that!! I was active in a trade union and was asked to apply for a TUC scholarship at Ruskin - which was nearly Oxford - but I could not afford to go with a wife and three kids and I really wanted to study law so I did two A levels in the evening and got into University College in Cardiff a mile from where I lived. I worked as a quantity surveyor for enough to fund it. I finally graduated in 1976. Then I went lecturing at the Hong Kong Polytechnic for two years and back to industry to work for a British contractor there. In 1983 I went to Kobe Japan to work for a Japanese contractor as Chief QS

pan and my passport always gets a special look at airports as it has stamps from Nepal, Iran, Tanzania and Sri Lanka over the last twelve months. After an aborted landing in Katmandu which put my blood pressure up I then had to be helicoptered out of site directly to the airport because the Maoists had surrounded us with burning buses!

I have often wondered whether I had a 'good' education at BHCHS because most of it was after I had left! But maybe the seed was planted. I remember Spud as being so 'impressive' but as someone said in a previous issue of the magazine what did he actually do? We all looked up to him and maybe that was his secret: he had perfected the art of just being impressive.

There were outstanding teachers and mentors - I remember 'Tommy' Leek and a field trip to



Peter Phillips was airlifted out of Nepal after being surrounded by Maoists. "My fingers were crossed and I was wearing a nappy."

in the contract section. Apart from a 10 month break in 1989 to do an LL.M at QMC London (just by the site of Truman's Brewery where I started work in the bottling department!) and a short break for the Arbitration Diploma at Reading University, a short break after the earthquake, and 18 months to look after my mother in 1998, I have been in Kobe ever since. Divorced, re-married, a 14 year old Japanese daughter and two younger and two older grandchildren. Ten years ago we set up and now run the Japan office of a British construction consultant. Most of my work is outside Ja-

Snowdonia, Ingram and his tapes of Professor Neville Coghill's Chaucer and a brilliant but asthmatic Robert Donat, Tilley with his clarity on quadratic equations, Walmsley for the origin and meaning of life, Turner on Spirogyra and because one of his damn bees got up my trouser leg and stung me on the a**e in class, Boultonwood because he rescued a puppy from the PDSA when I asked him, Webb and his car, Heater for Esso Blue and the Hundred Years War and many other things, Haggis (a hundred times) for "Procrastination is the

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7) thief of time" but especially Johnson for allowing us to go to the lab unsupervised in the lunch time and make gas, explosive iodine powder, acetylene blow torches and MUCH more. He finally banned me because first I practiced my judo ankle throw on a class mate, who fell down and broke a Winchester flask of something or other. Then I dropped a big lump of phosphorous into a sink of water. It exploded and threw an evaporating dish up to the ceiling.

I recognise many of the names in the last edition. Martin Jordan made me laugh. I remember him being caned so many times. He had the most Saturday morning detentions in our year but I had the first! I think that it was the first week when a second year called Rutherford persuaded me to throw a mashed potato (spud) at Spud on Dining Room duty for some reason. Was it the first day maybe? Of course everyone was looking at me when he asked "Who did it?" I got a Saturday detention. On that Saturday I caught the wrong train at South Woodford and went to Hainault. I finally arrived at school as everyone else was leaving so had to repeat the following week. The Under-performers Lunch with names like Jordan, Emms, Imms, Tarry being mentioned are all names that conjure up the past and walks up Roding Lane during floods, pea soupers, freezing

cold and tropical heat.

BHCHS certainly was a strenuous education. That walk to and from home to the station, then South Woodford to Buckhurst Hill on the unreliable underground, then down that endless Roding Lane from Buckhurst Hill. Was it better to wait for and miss that damn 167 or just accept it and walk? Did it really get so cold in the winter mornings and evenings? Did my forehead hurt so much in the wind and did my lips really freeze into an eerie smile twice per day for 6 months every year?

I hated games at the best of times but the winter cold, the numbing cold. How could we run in those flimsy shorts anyway? Especially the blue Chigwell ones. I am sure they were thinner than everyone else's and the reason for our poor performance. Were Warne's in George Lane persuaded to thicken them in the seven years of Chigwell's success? Who can forget on one Wednesday afternoon in the winter of 1959 the thwack of a freezing hockey ball on some poor class mate's genitals - not me!

I only went back to school once some years after being asked to leave. Miss Coulson spoke to me by name and went straight to her filing cabinet and pulled my file and photo out. I sat in Spud's office and had a chat for five minutes and then he shook my hand and I left! The next time I saw the place was from the M11.

Caption Competition Result

Setting up camp and cooking on the school field. Spud may not have approved, but it certainly generated some amusing captions and the record entry gave the judging panel a considerable challenge. The winning entry (see right) was submitted by **Ian Fordham (1963)**. He receives the prize of £25 from our sponsor and OBA Vice-President **Malcolm Beard (1941)**. The second placed entry deserves an honourable mention. This was sent in by **Andy Imms (1955)**: It says here "Add Spuds"..... but Spud's what?



Efforts to turn BHCHS into a boarding school to compete with Bancrofts and Chigwell were being badly let down by the new accommodation and the catering

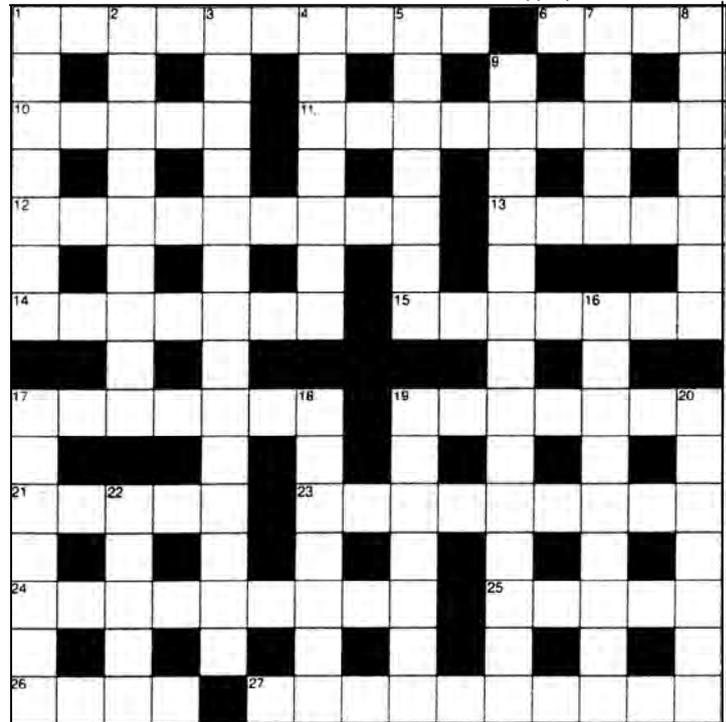
There is no shortage of archive photos but it is time to give the

caption competition a rest. Thanks to all those who have entered in the past, and also to our judging team and sponsors.

OB NEWS CROSSWORD

No.13 "An Exact Science" By Mike Ling

The answers to the asterisked clues are names which are appropriate to the title



ACROSS

- 1 Constellation containing Sirius, the brightest star in our sky (5,5)
- 6 US crime writer, author of *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (4)
- 10* Dexter's code? (5)
- 11 Dogged composer? (9)
- 12 Optimum temperature - I held a tea dance (5,4)
- 13* Stout fellow? (5)
- 14 Ann's cue to display subtle differences (7)
- 15 English crime writer, author of *The Moving Toyshop* (7)
- 17 The central part of a sea-going vessel (7)
- 19* Simenon's Jules? (7)
- 21 Supergiant in Orion (5)
- 23 Gesturing with the shoulders (9)
- 24 Unilateral (2,3,4)
- 25 The feminine part of a man's personality (5)
- 26 The garden of flawed entities? (4)
- 27 Bribe (10)

DOWN

- 1* Allingham's flowering plant? (7)
- 2 To be overprotective towards
- 3* ACD's mastermind? (8,6)
- 4 Strollers - even with the right start! (7)
- 5 Technically, concerning desire or appetite (7)
- 7 Blacksmith's ear-piece? (5)
- 8 Yellowish cotton cloth (7)
- 9 Played when there is no play! (3,7,4)
- 16 The killing of a parent (9)
- 17* Chandler's literary name-sake? (7)
- 18 Intense love or enthusiasm (7)
- 19 French mime artist (7)
- 20* Glasgow's finest? (7)
- 22* Keating's Indian? (5)

Solution on page 27

Gin Corner - puzzle solution

- 1. Blood is thicker than water
- 2. Down in the dumps
- 3. Hot under the collar
- 4. Free for all
- 5. First person singular
- 6. Painless operation
- 7. An inside job
- 8. Mixed doubles
- 9. Sum total
- 10. Head and shoulders above the rest
- 11. Just between you and me
- 12. Neon light

Entente Cordiale: A French Exchange

By Clive Greenwood (BHCHS 1952-59)

WHEN I was in the fifth year at Buckhurst Hill, in summer 1957, my parents arranged a French exchange through some agency. Michel arrived in July and came to school for the last week or so of term. He was a slightly-built, intelligent, sparky and likeable fellow, with a good sense of humour.

We did the obvious: trips to London, to see Buck House, Tower Bridge and the Tower of London, Madame Tussauds, London Zoo - when, seeing the Big Cats prowling their tiny, concrete-floored cages, I first came to deplore such zoos - and, essential for a French boy, Trafalgar Square. One weekend my father took us around the Cotswolds and I recall staying at the Lygon Arms in Broadway for the night.

Another weekend we went to a local Gymkhana, taking with us Jacques, a French boy staying next door. Michel and Jacques occupied corresponding bedrooms at the fronts of the two houses, separated by driveways, and on warm summer's evenings chattered away animatedly in French late into the night. At the Gymkhana we all fell for the same becoming bejodhpured young female. Do all men fancy girls in jodhpurs? Remember, these were the pre-Jilly Cooper days, before we knew that we were obliged to!

In August, it was my turn to spend three weeks or so in France. Michel's family lived in the 14th arrondissement of Paris in a fourth storey apartment. Father was an engineer with Air France and had a friend who was chief engineer at the Eiffel Tower, so when we visited we by-passed the queues and went to the very top, above the public platform, to M. Eiffel's private suite.

Michel showed me Paris: Notre Dame, L'Arc de Triomphe, Montmartre - also Les Invalides, to see the tomb of Napoleon. I have to record that, despite my love of France and the French, I have never understood their veneration of Napoleon who was, after all, a self-serving Big Loser. (How I would love to be able to seek enlightenment from Pete Sillis.)

We travelled around in the large,



Clive Greenwood (wearing his hockey colours tie on holiday!) and Michel Ragot

black family Citroen Traction, with its seven seats. Two folded down from the front compartment, facing the rear, where sat Michel's three sisters; the scrawny, skinny Danielle, perhaps 13, the fair, curly-haired and rather voluptuous Marie-Claude, probably two years Danielle's senior, and Françoise, the eldest, at 19, who was dark and stunningly beautiful. At that time I did not know any other 19-year-old girls.

I was surprised to observe that father watered his wine - at lunch-time, at least - and that when we returned from a trip he parked the car and then had a pee on a bomb site. The French! As for the old pissoirs in Paris, and Pshitt!!!! advert. We - ell!!

One Sunday a trip to Versailles was projected and Madame, who had taken charge of my language development, told me I would enjoy the remarkable 'gronzoh'. I was mightily puzzled until I saw the magnificent fountains, 'les grandes eaux'.

From Paris, we went en famille for the congé annuel, when Paris half-empties and everybody races to the coast or to their family roots. The grandmother we stayed with was in a ferme in Doubs, not far from the beautiful city of Dijon. I have four enduring memories: more flies than I had ever seen before, for grandmaman had a huge heap of dung just outside the windows; an extremely amusing cousin of Michel's, nicknamed 'Cacajaune', with whom we cycled everywhere; a rather skeletal and mysterious Oncle Bernard, who drove an ancient Mathis, dating from the mid-

Twenties; and a derelict château, in one corner of which, where a roof precariously survived, a farmer was drying his recently-harvested corn.

Our last stay was on the border with Switzerland in a little village near Vallorbes. There are three outstanding memories there: seeing snails being fattened for the table - then enjoying some. Excellent! Being taken to see the ossuary under the chancel of the church¹, where Françoise, having prepared me with ghoulish tales, was disappointed I was not shocked by the piles of human bones; and a table-tennis competition, where I turned up to play to find that, not knowing my surname, the organisers had listed me as 'Churchill'.

What did the exchange do for my French? I am not a good linguist, but Michel and I were quite diligent, speaking only English in England, French in France. Madame was very thorough, putting me through a regular evening review of the day, so perhaps it contributed to my scraping through 'A' level French.

A postscript:

Ten years ago, crossing The Channel on my own after a tour around Portugal, Spain and France, I engaged in conversation with a chic French lady of about my age. As usual in these situations, we did not formally introduce ourselves but, as we chatted, a common link unfolded and established itself until, as the ferry prepared to dock in Dover harbour, I asked her with some degree of mounting excitement: "Your name isn't ? You're not Françoise, Michel's sister?"

She looked at me as a delightful smile - the broad, steady smile I have so come to adore - spread slowly across her face. "I was wondereeng..... I sink you mus' be shursheell!" That Gallic accent, that can make strong men weak at the knees.....

I owe it to you to come clean. Everything is true - except that last paragraph. However, I did indeed meet my Françoise ten years ago; she is about my age, very chic, and she has a lovely smile. One difference: we met not on a Channel ferry but in a pub in Rye, one of the seven Cinque Ports. Yes, despite the name, there are indeed seven, as I discovered when I researched it. Originally there were five, viz. Sandwich, Dover, Hythe, Romney and Hastings, but subsequently Winchelsea and Rye were added. Given that these ports for long constituted our first line of defence against the perfidious Frenchies, and given that Françoise has successfully stormed an English heart, it is quite wry that she and I met in Rye.

¹**Footnote:** It was only recently, reading Louis de Bernière's excellent novel, *Birds Without Wings*, that I came to understand the role of ossuaries in Christian culture, as in many more primitive cultures - ie for the performance of secondary funeral rites after a period of several years of initial grieving.

Clive Greenwood spent most of his career teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) in many parts of the world. He began this while serving in the Royal Air Force - where he taught wanabee pilots, including Prince Bandar bin Faisal. After a spell of four "miserable" years teaching in the UK he returned overseas working on TEFL projects in Oman, Malaysia, Kuwait and Pakistan, where he became Director of English Language Development at a university as part of a British Council-managed aid project. Clive then retired to France, where he has been engaged primarily on the war against mole eruptions in his 1.5 acre garden. He has been married twice, with two children and two grandsons.

Cross-Country at BHCHS Part One 1938-49

Preparing for action at the 1942 junior inter-house race



The Early Years

IF we were to take a poll of all activities at school, cross-country would surely finish up as the most hated. But after reviewing athletics, we could not possibly ignore the regular winter torture. It appears that cross-country running was not one of the first sports to be adopted at BHCHS. A comment in the school magazine of 1940 suggests that cross-country was not a regular feature of the curriculum:

Cross-country runs were held on games afternoons when football was unplayable. Competition was on an inter-form basis, every runner counting. There was one very close competition between 2A and 2B when 2A won by a single point. Hughes (2A) must be congratulated on his consistently good running.

It was not until the 1940-41 school year, which saw the establishment of the house system, that the first inter-house race was

held, with fifty boys from years 3 and 2 lining up (year 3 was then the senior year). The winner was the formidable **Sid Bryett (1938)** who dominated just about every sporting activity.

In the following year, the inter-house event was split into a senior and junior run with a total of 111 boys competing. Sid Bryett was again the favourite. But things went sadly wrong for him. This race was being run over a new course, and Bryett had failed to check on the directions. Having opened up a 200 yard lead, he took the wrong turning. By the time he realised his mistake it was too late for him to regain his place with the leaders. The race was won by **Tony Chapman (1938)** who sadly died of meningitis only six months later.

The 1942 races also saw the first appearance of the White brothers who would play a prominent part in cross-country during the following five years. **Skee White**



Exhaustion after the 1942 junior race

Mr GR Harding (PE 1941-43) organising the 1942 first year race



(1940) won the junior race, while his brother **Vic White (1941)** finished third in the same event. During the following four years, the brothers never finished outside the first ten in any of the inter-house competitions.

1943 saw the addition of a first year inter-form race - winner **Dick Gooch (1942)** - to the junior and senior inter-house events. The winner of the senior race

years was a serious shortage of gym shoes. However, the numbers of entrants continued to rise, reaching 150 in 1944. The junior race was won by **Jimmy Gold (1941)** who emulated Don Hughes by winning at his third attempt after being runner up for the previous two years. Hughes won the senior event for the second successive year. Again, Sid Bryett failed to participate – this time as a result of contracting



John Harnden finishing 4th in the senior race 1942. Note the rooftop spectators

was **Don Hughes (1938)** who had been the runner up in the two previous years. On this occasion Sid Bryett failed to even start the race, having twisted his ankle in a football match a few days earlier. The junior race was won by **E. Beecham** (full identity not yet established!)

Harsh times

One of the challenges facing participants during these war

chicken pox. Incidentally, the school magazine in that year recorded not only the fastest time but also the slowest time in each race. Many of us will be relieved that this cruelty was not continued in later years.

Amazingly, Bryett's run of bad luck continued in the following year – 1945. It was to be his final opportunity to gain the win that was always expected. This time he pulled a muscle during the



Dick Gooch wins the junior event 1945

race, and had to withdraw, thus allowing **Malcolm Beard (1941)** to take the honours – a notable achievement considering he was in the fourth year at the time (this was the first time a fourth year had won the senior race against older competitors). The report on the senior race in the school magazine concluded with a rather curious admonishment of non-participants: “...the host of boys on bicycles hemming in the leaders as they ran down Roding Lane showed more enthusiasm than discretion. Such was the wheel to wheel phalanx packed between Beard and Rattenbury that not Wooderson himself could have succeeded in challenging the leader.” The Wooderson referred to here was Sidney Wooderson, former world mile record holder. **Paul Rattenbury (1939)** finished second.

The winner of the first year race was **Norman Tyler (1944)**. See photo of Norman’s finish on page 1. Dick Gooch (see photo above) won the junior race, in which there was also a notable feat by **Robert Hiscott (1943)** who finished in fourth place when he was only in the second year at school.

1946 marked the beginning of a new era. BHCHS now had a full complement of pupils, and this allowed the school to compete in cross-country races against other schools. The *Burn Cup* was a competition between schools in Essex, and BHCHS finished fourth behind Wanstead CHS, Bancrofts and Brentwood. However, Paul Rattenbury was the overall winner, managing to



Malcolm Beard wins the senior inter-house race in 1945. Appreciative onlookers include a youthful Peter Sillis

overcome not only the opposition but also a blizzard that raged for most of the race. Paul also won the inter-house senior cross-country, trimming almost a minute from the previous record.

In 1947 BHCHS finished 5th in the *Burn Cup*. A notable absentee was **Alan Manning (1941)** who had been the comfortable winner of the inter-house senior run. But the school entered in two other external competitions and in a race against six local schools Alan finished first against strong opposition from schools including Leyton CHS and Bancrofts. There was a notable performance in the Junior inter-house event, with **Ian Dunbar (1945)** winning the race against older competitors while only in his second year.

Dofort’s Legacy

1948 was the last of Ken Dofort’s ten years as head of PE. Despite some excellent individual performances, the school had not generally excelled at the inter-school competitions. The significant changes he initiated in his final year may have laid the foundation for future success. In his report on cross-country, he wrote:

Until this year the courses used...have hardly been entitled to the name “Cross-Country” as they have included a considerable amount of road and hard track. Although the fields along the Roding valley are so near to the School they were not used owing to the likelihood of flooding. The danger seems to have been reduced by the efforts of the Catchment Board.

Another reason for changing the

course was that BHCHS was chosen to host the *Burn Cup* in that year. The new course involved going through the river twice (described by Mr Dofort “very refreshing”) and was apparently so popular it was adopted for the inter-house cross-country. Whether it was the attraction of running twice through the Roding or for some other reason the number of participants doubled. Mr Dofort also initiated a rather intricate new scoring system enabling each runner to see exactly how their performance contributed to the overall score achieved by their respective house.

The winner of the Junior race was **Dickie Doe (1945)** – the first of many outstanding achievements. The Senior winner was **Ken Bales (1943)**. He overcame many older opponents including the captain of cross-country **Ken Shave (1942)** who finished second.

The resurgence of interest in cross-country was not yet reflected in the results of inter-school competitions. In the 1948 *Burn Cup* the School finished 11th out of thirteen competing schools and there were no outstanding individual performances either in this or the other competitions.

Mr Dofort’s replacement was John Grover, whose career and life was tragically cut short when he died only eight months after his appointment, following a duodenal ulcer. His death was a great shock to pupils and staff alike, as he had made an enthusiastic and promising start. Participation in the inter-house cross-country races increased dramati-



Skee White 3rd in the senior race in 1945

cally again in 1949, with almost 400 competing. **Roy Low (1943)** won the senior race and was thus, as we have previously seen (*OB News, May 2008*), the first winner of the cup presented in memory of John Grover. Notably, Dickie Doe, who was not yet 15, finished in third place in the senior race. In the junior race there was another outstanding achievement by one of the future heroes of cross-country. **Barrie Lucas (1947)** won the event while only in his second year.

But it was too early for the emerging talents of Doe and Lucas to make an impact on the inter-schools competitions, and the best school performance was fourth out of thirteen participants in the Essex Youths Championships.

In the next chapter we shall see how BHCHS became a dominant force in cross-country.

If you have any cross-country photos from later years, please contact me - Ed.

To Moscow And Back

By David Faulkner (BHCHS 1959-66)

Buckhurst Hill Goes To The USSR, April 1965

David's seven years at BHCHS were the last to be presided over by "Spud" Taylor, who always gave him good marks for his RI essays because David sneakily wrote them in a neat copperplate handwriting that he didn't use for any other masters. David was rubbish at sport although Mr. Webb did once tell his parents that he "could catch a ball". After school he joined an advertising agency and, over thirty four years, moved from mail boy to something called Worldwide Director-in-Charge which, he says, sounds a whole lot more important than it was. He married Jennifer, a copywriter with the same ad agency, and has two sons, George and Edward. He is now happily retired, lives in Dorking, Surrey and has recently celebrated his thirtieth wedding anniversary and his sixtieth birthday.

IT WAS not usual for a grammar school to plan a trip to Russia in the Sixties. Less than three years after the Cuban missile crisis the world was in the midst of the Cold War. But in the calm of the Essex countryside Buckhurst Hill County High School decided to offer Russian as a language op-



Dane Thomas and Ian Hassall

tion. So it made good sense to plan a school trip to see what Russia was really like.

I wasn't learning Russian myself but there were some spare spaces after the Russian class had taken



Martin Pippard, Graham Forbes, Dane Thomas, Ian Hassall, Chris Hassall, ? In front of the Reichstag

there to Riga on the coast for a boat back to Tilbury. Quite a lot to pack into a ten-day trip.

Our custodians were three of the finest: Tom Leek, universally respected and with more gravitas and self-confidence than any man deserved and a nice line in ironic put-downs, also he was in charge of the gun at Sports Day, so you had to take him seriously.

David Clapton, who brought a new more interactive German language-teaching technique to

quite racy for a maths master.

Our first stop was Berlin where the destruction of the war was still visible right across the city centre, but so was the rebuilding and regeneration. We didn't find the seedy bars we were looking for but we did see the Reichstag, the Cathedral, the Brandenburg Gate and the Olympic Stadium.

We were excited by the exhaustive security checks as we passed back through Checkpoint Charlie into West Berlin - they even wheeled a giant mirror under our coach to check if anyone was trying to escape the East by holding on beneath the coach chassis.

Next was a train journey across Poland to Moscow: an endless empty landscape broken only by the flat and colourless buildings of the capital as we crawled through Warsaw. I was reminded of the journey many years later when I heard Mel Brooks describing the problems he had making a film in Poland: "It was like the whole of Warsaw was lit by one sixty-watt light bulb". We changed trains at the Russian border and were impressed by how smart the new carriages were: wide, wood-panelled and clean. It was only the grim-faced gun-toting guards that made it seem less than friendly.

Things looked up on arrival in Moscow. We were met by a charming young Russian girl

who was to be our Intourist guide and interpreter. Of course, she was KGB too so we needed to be careful she didn't spot our micro-film cameras or codebooks.

The main thing I remember about our Moscow hotel was that the horsemeat steaks were exactly as tough as you would expect them to be and that we had



Walking from the Kremlin

to be very careful when returning to our rooms. One of us had to distract the watchful eyes of the stern well-built ladies stationed at each lift exit while another smuggled in the bottle of Stolichnaya we had just bought for eight shillings at the nearby "currency" shop (taking foreign exchange only but everything was really



David Faulkner at Checkpoint Charlie, guards watching closely

up their options and I was keen to go. We were not a well-travelled family - apart from a day trip to Boulogne in 1962 this would be my first journey abroad. The itinerary was to fly to Berlin, go by train across Poland to Moscow, back east by train to Leningrad, a plane from

BHCHS and was also in charge of the Russian classes; seemed to be one of the more "modern" teachers at the school.

And Denis "Duffy" Clayton who had the bristliest moustache, and the straightest back I had ever seen, and drove a green open-top MG Midget which made him



David Clapton with rose. Duffy Clayton may be jealous



The staff are clearly fascinated by the youthful Russian (KGB) interpreter (cheap).

Our personable young KGB guide was anxious to show us as many of the marvellous achievements of the USSR as she possibly could and we were anxious to slope off and see some of the things she didn't want us to see. Quite near the giant sky needle sculpture that symbolises the state's glorious achievements in the space race we came across a shanty town of dishevelled hovels where some of the city's manual workers lived with their families in shameful conditions. I snuck a photo before the KGB could track us down.

We saw an impressive array of sites in Moscow: the walled Kremlin, Red Square, Lenin's tomb (we were able to cut into the mile-long queue and go straight in and, no, I don't know if it was really him in there but he certainly didn't look too well), the vast GUM department store which seemed to have very little anyone wanted to buy and the stunning St Basil's Cathedral (then, in secular USSR, used as a store for the Bolshoi company's scenery); we were told that the architect had his eyes put out by Ivan The Terrible so that he would not be able to build anything like it ever again.

One evening we saw Swan Lake performed by the Bolshoi at the

Palace of Congresses – a vast and impressive modern theatre. During the interval the local Moscow wide boys were trying to tap us for chewing gum, bios and Levi jeans; if we had known to bring a few boxes of any of them with us we'd have made a



David Faulkner, Chris Hassall, Dane Thomas, Ian Hassall, Graham Forbes, Michael Laver, Andrew Hardman, Ralph Althorp, (hidden), Alan Trevelyan.

fortune. It was the first time any of us had seen a ballet so it was good that the music was well-known and we could make a stab at understanding the story. We were not impressed, however, at needing to applaud for over twenty minutes at the end of the performance.

We viewed the original sputnik, Stalin's grave, the boat that fired the shot to start the 1917 revolution, and then went for a swim in a huge lido with ice-cold water.

This was followed by a dinner of yet more yummy horse steak and greasy potatoes. We even yearned for the delights of school dinners.

The local population we saw on the streets looked uniformly drab and much of what they wore was literally uniform – most men seemed to be wearing the same ill-fitting blue "state" suit that was probably produced by the million in a state factory somewhere and very few of the women, even the young ones, excited our adolescent interest. In contrast to this drabness on the streets the underground railway stations were stunning – spacious, well-lit and clean and the trains ran swiftly and frequently, a long way from the grimness of

the Northern Line.

Our next move was to Leningrad (originally St. Petersburg, then Petrograd, then Leningrad and now St. Petersburg again).

During the overnight journey the temperature dropped from 56°F to 26°F, snow and ice was everywhere and I was glad of the rabbit fur hat with big ear flaps that I had bought in Moscow. Not the height of fashion but it kept me a lot warmer than the school scarf.

The Hermitage offered us an impressive collection of European art. It had been established by Catherine the Great and now includes works from Rembrandt to Picasso as well as those amazing jewelled eggs that Carl Fabergé made for the last two Tsars' families. The building was in need of renovation in 1965 but my wife and I were there again in 2005 and most of what was ignored as decadent and bourgeois during the soviet years is now fully restored to its former glory to pull in us 21st century tourists.

A quick flight and we were on the Baltic coast. Although it was probably culturally enhancing to visit the town named after the

famous poet, Pushkin, and to see his grave we were a lot more involved in the large-scale snowball fight that we had on the beach in Riga. The idea of snow on a beach was a new one to us.



Stuck in the ice

The boat journey home from Riga was good fun. There were plenty of other school trips on the boat (even some girls) and we managed to make friends with boys from Ampleforth despite our initial misgivings about toffee-nosed prats from private schools.

The best bit was getting stuck in the ice. We were the first boat out of Riga after the winter and there was more ice than expected. Our boat got stuck fast in it. The first ice-breaker they sent cut an impressive swathe through the ice but not wide enough for our boat so a second ice-breaker was sent to get us out. This entailed the school making calls to worried parents about why we would be a few days late, whilst we were enjoying a few extra days on board, and finishing up our cheap vodka.

Overall, a darn fine trip.

More pictures are available at: www.photobucket.com

Login: **russia1965**

Password: **spud1965**



On Riga beach: Martin Pippard holds snowball, Chris Hassall throws.



Time for bed, said Zebedee

Discover the best kept secret in France!

By Andy Hoy (BHCHS 1966-73)

Andy Hoy and his wife Karen have run The Green Man pub in Royston for the past seven years. In 2007 they bought a large house in the Haute-Pyrenees and now operate an all year round activity holiday business from there, with the day-to-day running of the pub being handled by a manager.



Lake Genos

AFTER centuries of French exclusivity, a handful of Brits have finally discovered a great alternative holiday destination – one that millions of others have literally overlooked whilst flying down to the Spanish costas. It's time to spill the (French) beans and tell the rest of Europe about the Hautes-Pyrénées.

Tucked away in the south-western corner of the Midi-Pyrénées, which is the largest region in France, itself covering an area greater than the whole of the Netherlands, it is one of the eight *départements* that make up this region. Located in the centre of

the rugged mountain range which forms an imposing natural border with Spain, the Hautes-Pyrénées boasts some of the most stunning scenery in Europe.

It is an area steeped in charm, tradition and natural beauty. Breathtaking landscapes provide a home to an abundance of wild-life, some roaming free in the many designated pastoral areas, others a little more elusive to human visitors.

Expect to see Golden Eagles, kites and vultures – maybe wild deer, foxes and red squirrels. If you're really lucky you may spot a *marmotte* peeping out from the

rocks where the lizards usually laze on a sunny day. Less familiar sightings include boar, wild-cats, and even wolves or bears.

You will find sleepy villages with gentle streams, old buildings surrounded by even older trees and mountain rivers rushing through ancient rock formations. You will not hear much English spoken, but will be made very welcome, wherever you stop, especially if you attempt a little conversation in the native tongue.

It is common to see a Frenchman dashing along with a baguette

The Bordeaux wine producing region is not that far away, but lesser known, more local alternatives of excellent quality can usually be found at very reasonable prices. Cahors (red) and Jurançon (white) are popular, while Madiran is the only red wine actually produced within the *département*. It has a strong tannic taste, as it is rich in Pro-cyanidins, which are reported as being an aid to help prevent heart attacks, and consequently, Madiran is considered by some to be the healthiest red wine in the world!

If gastronomy and sightseeing



The road to St Lary (and Spain)

under his arm – and quite often wearing a beret as well! Life revolves around mealtimes, whether in town or countryside. Folk of all ages work tirelessly on their smallholdings or tending to livestock, and the local markets are buzzing with activity and animated conversations - but everything comes to a standstill when it's time for lunch!

The food is what would typically be considered rustic French, with undertones of Catalan cuisine detected here and there. Local specialities include duck, trout, *garbure* (a thick soup), sheep and goats cheese, sausages of all shapes and sizes and, when in season, *cèpes* (wild mushrooms). You can occasionally find paella, cous cous and Basque tart on the menu and *foie gras* has pride of place in the tourist restaurants, but the only pan-European indulgence seems to be the ubiquitous pizza. The wine list, however, is very much locally influenced.

are a prime reason for taking a holiday, then there could not be many better destinations than the Hautes-Pyrénées. Try walking or cycling as a means of exploring the area, whilst also helping to work up a healthy appetite.

For those who like an action holiday, there are plenty of activities to keep you occupied, or even stretched, if you are prepared to seek them out. In fairness, this is not difficult, especially when using local sources, such as holiday activity centres or the many well-located tourist offices – and of course there is always the internet – what on earth did we do before its arrival?

The peak summer season (July and August) sees swarms of French tourists (plus a few British, Dutch and Belgian) arrive to enjoy the mountains.

Canyoning, white water rafting (see photo on page 1), rope trails (*parcours aventure*) caving and



At BHCHS Andy Hoy (number 10, and with a little more hair) was part of John Lakeman's most successful basketball squads, losing only one match during the 1971/72 season.



Canyoning on Mont Perdu

rock climbing use the natural facilities available to provide an extra dimension to your holiday experience.

Pull on your brightest lycra, don a sporty peaked cap and a cool pair of shades and try to negotiate the tough hill climbs experienced by the *Tour de France* riders – only then will you realise how incredibly fit these guys really are!

Descend the rugged slopes by mountain bike (*VTT*), *Arapaho* (giant scooter) or for a smoother ride, come down by parachute (*parapenting*). Travel cross country or explore mountain trails on horseback. Relax with a round of golf or a few hours fishing. Get pampered in one of the many thermal bathing complexes or just sit by a lake and read. There really isn't enough time to fit it all in!

In the winter there are a number of good ski resorts to choose from and plenty of opportunities for cross-country skiing and snow shoe walking, either with a

guide or by following the many and varied marked trails.

Skiing (or snowboarding) is not on such a large scale as the Alps, but then it does not have the bustling commercialism, the long lift queues – and is also considerably cheaper!

There is a quaintness about the area and whether on foot or on skis, it is quite possible to find yourself scanning the wonderful panorama from a deserted peak – or to have a ski slope completely to yourselves.

Ski hire is very reasonable (from €5 per day) and the cost of a one day lift pass rarely exceeds €30 – with options for half days, or less, at most resorts.

If you are based in a central location, it is possible to ski at a different resort each day for a week, without having to travel more than an hour to get there. If you stay at St Lary or La Mongie, you will have 100km of pistes on your doorstep.

Whilst La Mongie is a purpose

built resort, St Lary is a sympathetically developed village, with tons of charm and plenty of activities to choose from, in both summer and winter.

Generally the local snow record is very good – and don't forget that The Pyrenees range has over 20 peaks in excess of 3000 metres.

Travelling is very easy, with budget airlines serving Pau, Toulouse and Lourdes, the Eurostar/TGV service now going from

London to Tarbes and ferries providing numerous options, with Santander 3-4 hours away and Calais a 10 hour drive.

Don't take my word for it – take a look for yourselves – we did and our only regret is that we didn't do it sooner!

Andy will be pleased to offer any Old Bucks a 10% discount against their published prices for 2009. For more information see: www.pyreneesmountainholidays.co.uk

DATAFILE

Start Year	Intake *	To be found	Deceased	% Found	Overseas	Members	% Members
1938	93	23	43	75	3	19	70
1939	88	14	23	84	4	33	65
1940	82	15	21	82	3	40	87
1941	99	15	34	85	9	36	72
1942	90	12	23	87	8	42	76
1943	90	10	19	89	3	50	82
1944	90	9	23	90	7	35	60
1945	97	4	29	96	8	54	84
1946	104	14	20	87	7	47	67
1947	108	17	19	84	14	46	64
1948	101	22	19	78	10	41	68
1949	102	7	15	93	13	66	83
1950	101	17	12	83	10	45	63
1951	102	13	19	87	9	46	66
1952	100	16	12	84	10	46	64
1953	124	19	13	85	12	60	65
1954	113	15	12	87	13	55	64
1955	106	13	9	88	12	53	63
1956	100	5	6	95	13	58	65
1957	103	4	10	96	12	50	56
1958	131	7	10	95	8	71	62
1959	101	5	3	95	6	70	75
1960	99	10	7	90	11	44	54
1961	100	5	5	95	20	63	70
1962	97	5	5	95	11	59	68
1963	83	5	2	94	6	39	51
1964	77	5	4	94	6	43	63
1965	82	6	2	93	5	38	51
1966	86	7	3	92	11	43	57
1967	98	5	4	95	7	44	49
1968	84	5	3	94	4	47	62
1969	97	6	1	94	6	37	41
1970	90	1	0	99	11	44	49
1971	93	4	2	96	8	45	52
1972	89	8	2	91	7	35	44
1973	76	0	1	100	5	38	51
1974	77	9	0	88	8	20	29
1975	64	6	1	91	4	15	26
1976	132	24	4	82	7	31	30
1977	133	26	7	80	11	25	25
1978	123	17	1	86	12	34	32
1979	132	35	3	73	8	23	24
1980	119	38	2	68	4	12	15
1981	123	39	2	68	2	14	17
1982	115	30	0	74	7	20	24
1983	113	37	1	67	4	6	8
1984	123	51	2	59	2	7	10
1985	91	27	0	70	3	9	14
Totals	4821	687	458	86	384	1898	52



Pic du Midi from Col d'Aspin

*Intake includes pupils joining later than the first year. Intake for 1939-44 is an estimate.

All the World's a Stage

Drama through the decades at BHCHS: Part nine 1969-71



The Drunkard: full cast

OUR leisurely stroll through the history of drama at BHCHS has now reached a period when the staff, both in the English Department and others, were drawn into the action. Even to the extent of appearing on stage. But there are some other productions to be mentioned before we get to the staff play.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

In December 1969 the junior play was A Midsummer Night's Dream in a shortened version which incorporated some incidental music specially composed by John Ripplin. We have not yet discovered any photographs either of this production or of the following year's senior play. Mike Walker (1967) told me had been very disappointed that there was no photographic evidence of his performance as the second Christian woman in the previous year's play Androcles and the Lion where, "dressed up in a white bed sheet, with a long auburn wig, a well stuffed bra, and allegedly the spitting image of my Auntie Jean, I spoke my one line with great gusto." Mike's performance as Starveling the Tailor in A Midsummer Night's Dream also seems not to have been captured on film.

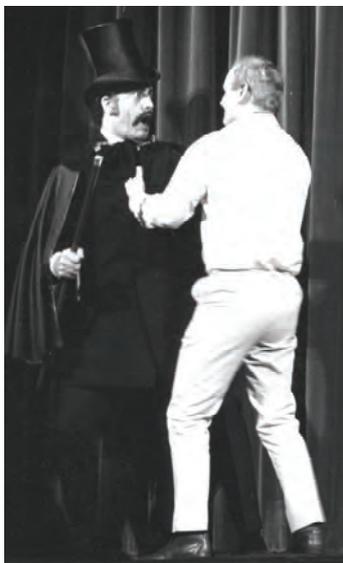
Staff take the stage

In the first term of the new decade the school was entertained by an innovative double bill masterminded by the energetic English department. A double

dose of melodrama was served up in a single evening. The first part was the senior play, followed by a drama presented exclusively by staff. The senior play, Poison, Passion and Petrification was again a joint production with Loughton CHS. This light-hearted farcical melodrama by Shaw provided Greg Cox (1964) with an ideal opportunity to display his talent as a moustache-twirling villain.

Then it was time for the staff to take centre stage for the first time at BHCHS. The unlikely choice was a 19th century American temperance drama - The Drunkard.

The following extract from the Roding eloquently describes how



The Drunkard: Dave Clapton and John Loveridge

well the staff took on their melodramatic roles:

This cautionary tale with its ennobling sentiments, tasteful songs and unimpeachable moral was produced with tongue-in-cheek zest by Mr P Downey. Mr D Clapton undertook the key role of the villainous Squire Cribbs which he played with civil leer and eloquent eyebrow, evoking very proper reactions of fury and disgust from an articulate audi-

imaginative insight he managed to do.

Mr J Drury played Simple William with an art which concealed art, and the result was a lovable character whose timely interventions to aid both hero and heroine made the audience take him to their hearts. Mrs Leach was a heroine twice over in the part of Mary Wilson for she nobly volunteered to take over the role when it became clear that the



The Drunkard: Helen Boyd and Mavis Leach

ence. Impressive in height and bearing, suitably saturnine in complexion and Mephistophelean in manner, he presented a formidable figure of moral turpitude. His chief victim, the hero with a lesson to learn, was played by Mr J Loveridge with a charming freshness and undoubted sincerity. His most difficult task was to simulate the speech and mannerisms of the drunkard, but this with fine

indisposition of Miss Kraus would unfortunately prevent her from playing the part. In the event it was a triumph of rapid learning of lines, carefully concealed aids to memory and inspired ad-libbing which rescued the production from disaster. Her scenes with the innocent daughter Julia (Hilary Plass), her spirited defiance of the unwelcome attentions of Squire Cribbs and her rendering of the songs were



The Drunkard: Ted Moore and Tony Brock

all high spots of the production – and all this at twenty four hours’ notice.

The necessity of putting Messrs Brock and Moore into transvestite roles owing to the shortage of actresses on the staff became a positive virtue in their hilarious double-act. Good support playing came from Mr J Rippin as the corrupting landlord, Mr D Stancer as the pugnacious beer-swilling yokel and Mr R Green as the deus-ex-machina who rescues the hero from his addiction to strong waters. Mrs Wilson, the heroine’s mother, was played with touching tenderness by Miss Boyd whose death off-stage was so dramatically got across by a stentorian death-rattle.

The contemporaries of Ted Moore (1954) may be somewhat surprised to learn of his later dramatic career.

Junior double bill

The junior drama in December

was another double bill. The first offering was from the first years. An improvisation devised by Ted Moore entitled *Seven Modern Deadly Sins* featured an encounter between Alan Thicker (played by Stephen Parker) and the Devil (played by Jeremy Dibble). This was followed by the juniors in a production of AP Herbert’s *Two Gentlemen of Soho*, a parody of Shakespeare in which leading roles were taken by John Skinner (1969), Nick Rufford, Nigel Cole (1968), Neil Pettifer (1968), Clive Western (1968), Steve Dyer (1968) and Rob Lane (1969). There were some notable performances from Neil Pettifer as a Duchess, “rather well worn but determined to lead a gay life” and Rob Lane, who played a “slow-witted waitress given to uttering surprising words of wisdom.”

Hamlet

1971 marked the culmination of the school career of another fine



Hamlet: Laertes (Steven Sussman, back to camera) duels with Hamlet (Philip Hinds), while Claudius (Gregory Cox) adjudicates in the background

Photograph: Michael Hopkins



Hamlet: Laertes (Steven Sussman) witnesses the declining sanity of Ophelia (Christine Howlett), observed by Claudius (Gregory Cox) and Horatio (Stephen Feber)

Photograph: Michael Hopkins

talent who would later achieve success as a professional actor. Unlike his predecessor Terrence Hardiman, Gregory Cox (1964) was not cast in the leading role in his final year. The eponymous part in *Hamlet* was taken by Phil Hinds (1963). Pete Downey’s choice for this production was clearly a success. In Hugh Colgate’s review of the school’s activities in that year he singled out the production as the “outstanding event in a crowded

year” and then went on to specifically mention Phil Hinds’ performance as “quite out of the class of school dramatics and would not have disgraced a more illustrious stage.” But the performance of Cox as Claudius was also a major element of the production’s success.

Phil Hinds commented to me recently: “he fitted the part like a glove. At the time I regretted the fact that Shakespeare had not written more scenes and dialogue between our two characters. It was good to perform with a player of such vocal dexterity and stage presence, and it was no surprise to learn later that Greg had entered the professional theatre.”

Other notable contributions were from Jim Pollard (1964) as Polonius, Stephen Feber (1963) as Horatio, Stuart Hutchinson (1967) as the First Player, and Michael Hopkins (1964) as the Ghost.

More innovation on the BHCHS stage in the next chapter, with the merging of music and drama, plus some more light-hearted villainy from the staff.



Hamlet: “The Mousetrap” - The First Player (Stuart Hutchinson) pours poisons into the ear of the Player King (Gordon Stewart). Background onlookers include Polonius (Jim Pollard, Claudius (Gregory Cox) and Gertrude (Glynis Williams), with Rosencrantz (Chris Bangs) and Guildenstern (Paul Sallybrass) fourth and third from the right.

Photograph: Michael Hopkins

Peter Sillis: An Unsung Hero

During the period 1944 to 1982, more than 3,500 boys attended the school. Most of them will have been taught by Peter Sillis at some point. Of the remainder, very few who will have passed through the school unaware of him. Although he died in 1995, I felt it was time for a belated tribute. I am grateful to his son Paul Sillis who has willingly provided additional biographical information.



In 1953 at the Coronation Fete

photo Dennis Carney

Peter Sillis's involvements outside the curriculum were many and varied, and reflected his own passionate interests in a whole range of topics, by no means limited to history, but extending to political and cultural. With the benefit of hindsight it is clear that his contributions were not fully appreciated at the time, and

certainly received little public recognition. As editor of the Roding magazine for many years, he performed the important task of assembling the record of the school's activities. It is not clear now whether he voluntarily gave up the task in 1970, but in 1971 the editorship was passed to a team of students. The familiar front cover, designed by the school's first art teacher Mr Romans, was scrapped. More importantly, the style and content became much more informal. The jazzy new magazine (see feature on p. 26) failed to record any appreciation of Peter Sillis's work over many years.

Only three years after he gave over editorial control, the school magazine ceased to exist: apparently a victim of cost cutting.

Paul Sillis tells me that his father particularly enjoyed the various additional activities he organised. None more so than the Sixth Form Forum, in which he took great pride in arranging for a wide variety of speakers to visit the school each week to give

talks. The Forum began life in 1955, and provided succeeding generations of cloistered adolescents with varied insights into the world outside. It is not clear whether the Forum continued beyond his retirement but it was still running in 1973 when the last Roding was published. As with the other activities, his contribution was made without fuss and with very little acknowledge-



Teaching in 1963

acquired a substantial collection of records. He was always available to help and advise, and very often produced well-balanced and sympathetic reviews of the musical events at BHCHS.

Another of his less visible activities, but which was nevertheless important to him, was his role as the NUT representative on the staff.

Notwithstanding all his extra-curricular activities, Peter Sillis was clearly in his element in the classroom. His influence as a teacher was profound. Looking through some of the comments about him in back numbers Old Buckwellians News (he was mentioned more than 60 times in earlier editions) it is interesting to note how often he is referred to as having given sound and valuable advice that has only been appreciated later on. And these remarks have been made by Old Bucks who have become very successful in their professional lives. No doubt there are many others who would wish to comment in a similar vein.

He was also appreciated as a colleague. I asked the staff who remember him to tell me of any amusing or other memories of him, and here is a selection.

Derek Heater (History)

My job before arriving at BHCHS was at Leyton CHS; this is relevant because the contrast was so marked, to a large extent because of Peter. He was a most efficient head of department; a fine scholar - his 1st class degree at QMC, London was well-earned; a voracious reader in a range of literature, not just History; a man of wide interests, particularly music; and a humorous and friendly personality.

After I left the school we kept in touch until he died by the ex-

OF THE 300+ staff who served at BHCHS, his thirty eight years' service was the longest. Only four others (Eric Franklin, Fred Scott, Tom Leek and John Whaler) exceeded 30 years.

Peter Sillis was born in 1922 in Great Yarmouth. His father and one of his uncles were teachers, his father being for many years Headmaster of a Primary School in Yarmouth.

It is perhaps not surprising, to those of us who marvelled at his incredibly detailed knowledge of coastlines that there were also seafaring roots in his family - earlier generations were merchant seamen.

After attending Yarmouth Grammar School he went directly to Queen Mary College, London to read history. During his time there he was evacuated to Cambridge University, where he continued his history studies.

His appointment to the History Department at BHCHS was his first job. He remained in the same department until his retirement.





In 1969 at the retirement of Fred Scott

photo Kate Coulson

change of letters and occasional phone conversations.

Here are four anecdotes:

At that time there was an interest in CP Snow's concept of 'the two cultures' - that scientists and those educated in the humanities were ignorant of each others' fields. The Times Educational Supplement produced a test. Fred Scott (Deputy Head) organised a staff room competition on these questions: Peter came first!

The breadth of his reading is illustrated by two of my memories. At the start of every term he would chat with John (McLaughlin) and me, exchanging information about what each of us had read during the holiday. This was not to test us, but out of sheer interest. His list was about the length of ours put together! Eventually, he had an extension built onto his house to hold his expanding library.

My fourth anecdote is Peter's favourite joke, indicative of his interest in words. A Polish man who was eagerly trying to learn the English language was attempting to explain that his wife was unable to have children. He said, "My wife..... how you say? .she is inconceivable.....No, that is not right.....she is impregnable.....No, no.....ah, I got it - she is unbearable."

John McLaughlin (History)

He was an excellent Head of Department and a good mentor and friend to someone starting out in his teaching career. We had three things in common: our love of history, our political outlook and our sense of humour. I stayed in close touch with Peter for the rest of his life. We were both Guardian readers and he assumed that I also read the New Statesman which I started taking immediately and am still reading 49 years later.

Boyd Gray (History)

I was fortunate enough to begin my career under the tutelage of Peter Sillis and I firmly believe that it was Peter's influence, support and encouragement which helped me to go on to find success as a History Teacher. He was the consummate academic, without ever losing touch with the younger or less able children in his classroom. And as for his unflappable personality, I did my best to emulate it in my early years and I think it stuck with me throughout my career. Oh, and did I say, he was just an all round nice guy. The term "a gentleman and a scholar" must have been written for Peter!

Alan Bartlett (Biology)

Joining the staff in 1964 as a raw recruit and new to the profession, I quickly found that Peter was

one of a number of colleagues in the staffroom who brought a kindly and caring mentorship to new staff. His calm measured words of advice were always welcome, and when I too produced a play "A Resounding Tinkle" by N F Simpson - a theatre of the absurd offering, I am sure it was not to his taste, but he was nevertheless totally supportive in his kind words and counsel. He was a true gentleman and a wise adviser.

David Patrick (English)

You need to read this internally in Peter's wonderfully cultured voice, and in the knowledge that he almost never, however provoked, swore.

When asked what he planned to do in retirement, Peter said that he liked to imagine a morning deep in winter, warm in bed, getting a phone call from Mr. Colgate saying that the school was in dire difficulty - there were many staff off with illness, many who could not make it because of the weather - would Peter please consider coming in to help out?

"I shall simply say 'F*** off, Headmaster', put the phone down, and go back to sleep."

I have to be honest and say I was not there when this happened, so it may be one of those reported stories that has grown over the years!

Dave Stancer (Handicraft)

What do you say about a BHCHS institution? He was an academic in the best sense of the word. He was a good kind listener, especially to some of us younger staff who sat and spoke with him. A good sense of humour was coupled with his sense of duty to all around him. There were two things which he did that I remember as being outside the normal Pete Sillis image. He was a recorder at sports day and as I recall an excellent table tennis player-not something he ever spoke much about!

Roger Lowry (Geography)

One of Peter's most memorable

quirks was his filing system - next to his chair in the staff room were nearly-6 foot high piles of papers and materials. After a while I discovered that this was his filing stack - each year he would start at one end and work his way through; it was conjectured that on the last day of each term he would simply turn the whole pile upside down!

John Rippin (Music)

I lived in lodgings next to his house on Palmerston Road for a few years, so usually gave him a lift to School and once or twice we even walked down together. He adopted a somewhat world-weary outlook at times, not genuine I'm sure, and at the start of term he would say how many more terms/years/months/weeks and even days he had to go before he retired. I remember walking down to School one day with him in the autumn; the sky over Chigwell Rise was a very dark grey, but there was some sun and it was picking out some yellow/golden leaves on a line of trees in the distance, very striking against that glowering backdrop. I said to Pete, "walking down here there's always something to catch the eye" and his reply was "I've been walking down here for so long I don't notice anything any more." Occasionally, in the quiet of the staff room, maybe when people were industriously writing reports, Pete's weary voice would break in with a "Hey-bloody-ho." Pete was a great music lover, classical, and had a particular spot for Haydn. He was also a great admirer of the conductor Thomas Beecham, and the combination of the two made for his type of heaven. He was a voracious reader and at his home books were massed everywhere, being two deep on most shelves. How he ever found anything I have no idea, but he seemed to know where everything was. Certainly a real schoolmaster (in the best sense of the word) of the more traditional type, with very high standards and skills. He suited

(Continued on page 20)



(Continued from page 19)

BHCHS well at that particular time in its history and the School was fortunate to have him.

It was no surprise to learn from Paul Sillis that his father was much less happy with life at BHCHS during his later years there. The traumatic change in the school from grammar to comprehensive must have been a contributory factor. But it may not have been the only cause. While it was not uncommon in those times to remain employed by a single organisation for almost 40 years, some would argue that it is almost inevitable for disillusion to occur, especially during a time of such dramatic social changes. Whether or not the comment attributed to him by David Patrick is apocryphal there can be little doubt that by the end of the 70s he was eagerly anticipating his retirement. The only tribute in the archives is a cursory report contained in the review of the school year 1981/82:

The year saw the retirement of two of the school's long-serving staff. Peter Sillis, the Head of the History Department, and Norman Marley the School-keeper. Peter Sillis joined the teaching staff in 1944 and spent 38 years here. Past and present teaching and administrative staff, parents and Old Boys all showed their appreciation by presentations to him. The Honours Boards at the back of the school hall reflect his success as a teacher of the highest calibre. Eleven open scholarships to Cambridge in History were gained between 1959 and 1982 - his years as head of the department. He also guided the choice of other applicants to universities, edited the school magazine, ran the debating society, organised the weekly speakers at the Sixth Form Forum, produced three school plays and always kept himself abreast of historical research and of new books.

Spring Fairs will be the poorer for his absence from the book-stall. He was essentially a schoolmaster in the best sense of the word, a scholar and a well-liked and respected friend and colleague.

Peter Sillis lived in Buckhurst Hill throughout most of his time at the school. He married in 1952 and he had two children, Paul born in 1956 and Jane in 1959. He separated from his wife in the



Peter Sillis at his retirement in 1982
photo Sylvia Yeldham

mid 70s and subsequently re-married shortly after his retirement in 1982. He then moved, firstly to Basildon finally to Billericay. After retirement he spent much of his time writing, and was in the process of completing a history book covering the two World Wars when he became ill with cancer. He died in 1995 at the age of 73.

His son Paul attended Chigwell School. He tells me he had never considered entering the school where his father was teaching. Curiously, history was never a strong subject for him! After studying classics and French at A level he then read Classics at Cambridge, where he then chose to study law. He is now a partner at the London law firm Collyer Bristow, specialising in Company Law. His father would have been proud of his grandson, who recently graduated in History from Cambridge with first class honours.

Peter's daughter Jane inherited his love of both history and art. After reading history and art history at Anglia Ruskin University she has had a successful career in museum and art gallery management, including positions at the Museum of London and the Whitechapel Gallery.

I have no doubt we shall read more about Peter Sillis in future editions, but for now I shall leave the last words with **Martin Smith (1970):**

Peter Sillis was a giant amongst history teachers, who knew his subject intimately, and who, for those who had the passion and the interest, animated history in the style of AJP Taylor. I suppose that in today's soundbite age his style is out of date which I think is more the pity. How he would have fared in today's classroom, with interactive whiteboards, target driven education and accountability can only be open to speculation.

Robert Druce Collected Poems



I RECEIVED a welcome call recently from Elizabeth Druce, the widow of **Robert Druce (1940)**. She has published two volumes of Robert's poetry. Robert was one of the first academic high-flyers from BHCHS whose early promise was more than fulfilled. After graduating in French from London University he became a secondary school teacher, but his profound interest in the teaching of poetry resulted in the first of several published texts on education and English teaching.

Following the success of his first book *The Eye of Innocence* he moved to Trent Park teacher training college (he was a colleague of **Geoff Parker**, head of English at BHCHS in the early '60s).

In 1972 Robert moved to Holland where he taught at Leiden University until he retired in 1995. After retirement he continued writing and leading a very busy academic life. Readers may remember the report, in an earlier edition of *OB News*, that he had written an autobiographical novel. At the time of his death in 2005 this novel, entitled *My Dad's a Policeman*, had not been published but I still hope that Elizabeth may find a publisher. There is no doubt that for Old Bucks there would be a lot of interest in reading about Robert's impressions of school.

The teachers at 'Monkwood' will be easily recognisable to Old Bucks from the 1940s. The staff list includes: Fitz Fitzroy (FAS), Alwyn Black (Ralph Steele), Walter Mason (Walter May, of course!) and the headmaster Dusty Rhodes.

Robert's interest in poetry flourished while he was still at school, and, with the influence and encouragement of Walter May, he was writing excellent verse in

French at an early age. This example of his work, published in the *Roding* magazine of 1944, may have been seen as precocious at the time. Nowadays, writing in a foreign language to this standard at the age of 14 would be unthinkable.

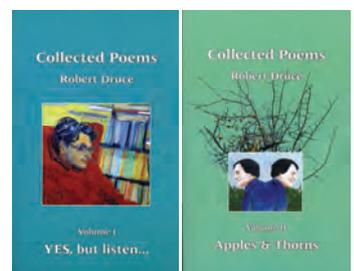
Sonnet – Un enfant dans un jardin

Etincelant clairement dans le soleil chaud,
Parmi les feuilles vertes brille l'étang d'eau,
Dont les petits poissons, rouges et jaunes
d'or,
Nagent nettement comme rayons de couleur.
Il y avait alors un enfant jeune et vif
Qui jouait près du tronc noir et pourpre de l'if,
Ce géant qui déploie ses grandes branches
brunes
Le soir aux rayons d'argent de la belle lune.
Encore cet enfant jouait dans l'herbe d'or,
Jetant de petits cailloux dans le ruisseau clair
Qui coule à l'étang où venaient les vieux
pêcheurs.
Plumant des pétales il les lança sur l'eau
Où elles surmagèrent par les glaïeuls hauts
Tandis qu'un éphémère voltigeait dans l'air.

The recently published collections (all in English!) each contain a large selection of his work. His poetry is extremely accessible and often very amusing. Each volume contains an extensive tribute to Robert written by one of his colleagues. Here is an extract:

'Robert,' said one of his MA students to me recently, 'was like the icing on the cake of the English Department in Leiden.' He was also the cake, and the surprise that jumps out of it. He was uomo universalis, a renaissance man, as adept at dismantling a carburettor of a Ford, as he was at weaving an intricate sestina, building a wall, playing the comic lead in a Shakespeare play, landscape gardening, or writing his cum-laude doctorate. Anything Robert undertook was done with the greatest dedication, skill and craft, but also with an infectious sense of fun.

The poetry collections are available priced £8 each plus £1.50 postage from Elizabeth Druce at 'Appletrees', Spout Lane, Little Cornard, Suffolk CO10 0NX. Email: elizabeth.druce@svw.org.uk



The Duchess of Woodford: Mystery Solved

WHEN I received the letter from **Clive Greenwood (1952)** regarding the Mysterious Duchess (*OB News, November 2008*) I was not immediately sure whether to publish it. The response took me completely by surprise. Within a few weeks of publication I had heard from at least a dozen Old Bucks from year groups ranging from 1938 to 1958. All mentioned having seen this mysterious lady in Woodford, commenting variously on her strange appearance, theatrical clothes and white, heavily powdered face. It wasn't long before I started receiving messages that started shedding some light on the identity of this lady.

The first was from **Bob Bambridge (1952)** who wrote.... *The lady referred to was a Mrs. Ross who lived in West Grove Road, a turning off Snakes Lane. This poor lady was a widow who would make daily trips to Woodford Station and wait for hours in the hope that her only son, whom Clive rightly thought was killed in the war, would arrive home. If the weather was wet she would wait in the porch of Puddicombe's, a store in Woodford Broadway, close to the station. Clive's description of her is spot on except that I believe her gown was maroon or brown velvet. She was one of the colourful characters of our childhood and reading about her brought back many memories of the early post-war era.*

Bob's brother **David Bambridge (1957)** told me that some of the children used to refer to her as

the *Ghost Lady*, on account of her heavily made-up, ghostly white face. He also provided the following quote from *Woodford as I Knew It* by Jack Farmer:

Mr. & Mrs. William Ross moved to 106 Westgrove (sic) somewhere about 1930, and almost opposite where I lived. Mrs. Ross was a heavily built woman who wore long flowing garments, usually with about three strings of beads which reached well below her waist. I don't think we would have paid all that attention to her, except for her make-up of rouge and powder which might have been applied with a trowel! She would wear various decorations in her hair, but I cannot ever remember seeing her in a hat. She would walk up to Woodford Green winter and summer and might be seen standing at the corner of Johnston Road or walking along Monkey's Parade. Her arms were always bare and I never saw her speak to anyone. Every afternoon she would meet her little boy of 8-10 years at Woodford Green School, but she would be back 'on parade' in the evening. Nicknamed 'The Duchess', the 'Sergeant Major' and 'The Painted Lady' she caused no trouble to anyone. Her eccentricity seemed to get worse with the years, but when I moved to Theydon Bois in 1934, I lost track and do not know what became of her.

This information was a surprise – some readers had assumed the lady had lost her son in the Second World War but clearly it was

the Great War. This is also confirmed by **Fred Manning (1942)** who remembers seeing Mrs Ross on his early journeys to and from BHCHS.

I then heard from **Dick Thomas (1958)**. He had been reading, earlier in the year, the best-selling memoirs, entitled *Our Betty*, of the actress Liz Smith who appeared in popular sitcoms such as *The Vicar of Dibley* and *The Royle Family* and who had moved to Buckhurst Hill in the mid 1950s:

On we walked into Woodford Green to the shops and to the doorway of the chemist's, where a woman stood. She was growing old, but every single day since the war ended she stood in the doorway, looking down the High Road. Waiting for her son to come home.

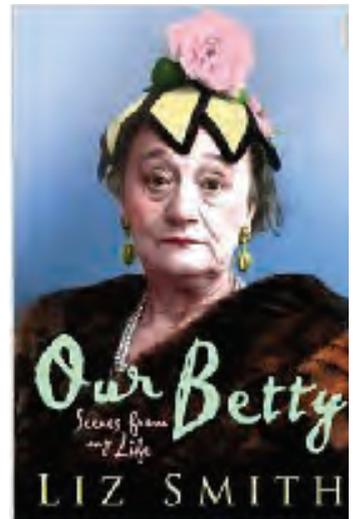
She must have been there for nearly ten years by the time I met her, and I imagine she was there until she died. Every day she powdered her face, and as the years passed her powder grew thicker and more careless.

John Harnden (1938) found yet another source of information. This was a 1986 Woodford Historical Society publication (now out of print) *A Century of Woodford Memories*, including the following:

Mrs Ross was another marvellous Woodford character. She could be seen walking for what seemed miles, from the lower end of Snakes Lane, the other side of the level-crossing, up the hill to the Green and all across it,

return home again, and then do the complete journey all over again later in the day. She was a very statuesque lady dressed in a long robe of pink satin, with bare arms, a brown velvet cloak, and a large brown felt hat. Her face and arms were always powdered very white as though she had dipped them in flour, and we children used to giggle at her as she strode on her way. We were told that her son died during the 1914 war, but she thought he was still at school and was looking for him. She lived to be an old lady but I never heard what finally became of her.

Woodford as I Knew It is not in



print but at the time of writing a couple of copies are available on ABE Books (www.abebooks.com)

Our Betty is available, published by Simon & Schuster. See picture above.

PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY

Spotted on eBay recently. This post card apparently dates from 1918. I wonder whether **Buckhurst Hill College** was in some way a predecessor of BHCHS. Notice the rather interesting tower at the rear - I wonder if it was green? Also, the windows look surprisingly large for a building of that period. I decided not to put in a bid for the post card so possibly it may still be available! Can anyone throw any light on the location or history of this institution?



Where are they now?

Hugh Dow (1953)



I am alive and kicking and still living in Toronto, Canada. Been here over 40 years, and married almost that long –to the same amazing lady. We have two grown up children who are also living in Toronto.

I am still working full time as Chairman of one of Canada's largest media buying agencies although I plan to start phasing myself out in the next 18 months or so. I keep in touch with Roger Mew and visit him when I come to the UK. In fact just spoke to him this past weekend and I know he is coming to the OBA Dinner. Sorry I can't make it, but it is one heck of a drive home.

Alan Seabrook (1954)

Rev Alan Seabrook, who was Rector of Bitterley, near Ludlow, since 1980, has now retired and moved to Herefordshire.

Nicholas Lockett (1955)

Rev Nicholas Lockett has retired and moved from Cirencester, Gloucestershire to Norfolk. Following a career as a teacher, he was ordained in 1998 and latterly Priest in Charge of two village churches in the Cotswolds.

Brian Tarry (1956)

I spent 46 years working with an International insurance broker in the City of London from 1961. Despite insurance being one of



the most boring topics of conversation(!) I was fortunate enough during my time to be asked to travel to many parts of the world on business, includ-

ing the Far East. One of the countries that I travelled to was Thailand, three or four times a year, for a week at a time, from 1984. In 2007 our man in the Thailand office resigned to work in Hong Kong. With three years left before my planned retirement (at 65) I was asked if I wanted a three year contract to run our Thailand office. "Brian, you know Thailand, you know the Thai insurance market, you even speak a bit of Thai, what do you think?" No hesitation on my part and although my wife was a bit reluctant at first, we took the plunge and arrived here in September 2007. So far so good. The company provide accommodation, a driver, a reasonable salary and life is good.

We are able to travel to other countries in the region very easily and of course there are some very interesting places in Thailand that one can visit, places that looking in the Sunday newspapers back home would cost a lot of money to travel to in addition to the long flight. My wife has met some expats, she is learning to speak Thai and her shopping skills have improved dramatically!

We have a daughter living in Australia and our son is in the UK. So we are now roughly halfway between the two of them - a trip down under does not seem so daunting so that's another benefit. As I tell my mates back in the UK, it beats going down the tip on Sunday morning and wandering around B & Q for a tin of paint or whatever. Of course we miss things, like driving on relatively traffic free roads, compared to Bangkok, and the English fresh air, but in all honesty there's not a lot else that I miss. This is the first time that I have worked abroad and to anyone else getting a similar opportunity whether it be you or your friends or family, I would say - do it. If I am asked to stay beyond three years then I already know what my answer will be.

If anyone would like any advice about Thailand, places to visit in Thailand or whatever then please drop me an email [brian_tarry@hotmail.com] and I will happily give you or try and get for you any information. *Brian is one of seven Old Bucks currently based in Thailand - Ed.*

Chris Fuller (1960)



We moved to the small country town of Hernando in N. Mississippi, about 18 miles south of Memphis, in the summer of 2007. Previously we lived in Central Oregon for almost 20 years, and prior to that in Manhattan Beach, Ca. Going back even further, I lived on the east coast of Florida when I first moved to the US in 1975. I have worked as a journalist (including a stint 30 years ago as Senior Staff Reporter on the National Enquirer, once the country's most infamous tabloid - great fun!), and as a stockbroker (less fun but better compensation). I now work as a financial services trainer for State Farm Insurance Company, working with agents throughout Mississippi and southern Alabama. I really didn't enjoy my time at BHCHS too much - I was very aware (perhaps, with the hindsight and maturity of time, too sensitively so) of a class-driven oppressiveness, especially since I hailed from Debden Council Estate - and I thrived much more both socially and academically once I continued my education, from 1965 to 1967, at Loughton College of Further Education. If memory serves me accurately, I received the cane twice while at BHCHS, and headmaster Taylor was less than distraught when I left after completing the fifth grade.

Nevertheless, I am respectful of the fact that my folks made many sacrifices for me to attend BHCHS in their most unselfish quest for me to receive the best education possible. And I must confess that some of the learning exposures and experiences I received at BHCHS stood me in good stead during later years.

The photo shows Chris in Memphis with his wife Yvonne (who is originally from Gateshead)

Steve Champness (1964)

Whilst my wife Donna is still successfully running her hairdressing salon here on the Gold Coast, I am still keeping busy and out of trouble. Currently hosting two Pub Trivia nights per week and also calling Cash Bingo sessions 5 times a week at a major Gold Coast venue. Not very intellectual but good relaxed fun at this stage in my life.

Still following the Arsenal and hoping for an improved showing over the next few months as well as following the fortunes of England's Test Cricket team. Hoping they can get into good enough shape to win the next Ashes series against the Australians.

David Pizzala (1972)



David moved from San Ramon, California to Lagos, Nigeria in February. He has accepted a three year assignment with his company Chevron Oil, working as the Comptroller for Chevron Nigeria.

Jason Gidden (1983)

After leaving BHCHS I applied to be a pilot in the RAF where I unfortunately discovered that my eyesight was not quite good enough to meet their (perfect) standard. Slightly disillusioned, I then worked for a couple of years before going to Luton University (formerly Luton College of Higher Education) where I completed a BSc in Project Management. After graduating I joined the French bank Banque Nationale de Paris (now BNP Paribas) in their IT department where I still work to this day as one of the IT Development Managers.

I have been married for three years with a son aged two and a daughter born in January.

From the Editor's Postbag.....

Computer Confessions

David Bernheim (1966-73)

Looking at the list of old boys, reminded me that I once worked with Esmond Hart (BHCHS 1954-61). In 1979 in the early days of the PC revolution, I joined CAP MicroProducts (Computer Analysts and Programmers) as a programmer, as they were leading developers of microcomputer software. I worked with Esmond who was then the chief architect there of the pioneering MicroCobol, and found he was an old Buckwellian. MicroCobol was a business language, with which you could do just basic arithmetic, so I offered to write a subroutine to calculate square roots. Though it took about half a second per square root, I'll never forget Esmond's pleasure at seeing his baby growing and doing new things. I was not in the language development team, and this gave me great kudos, so I never admitted to my colleagues there that I just adapted the method straight out of a computer magazine.

I also bumped into him a few years later when we both lived in Highgate. I built up a lot of software contacts and when in 1982 Bill Gates interviewed me, he said that CAP had been his main competitor at the time. He had 200 employees then and I did not take the job, as he wanted me to work in England when I wanted to work in Seattle.

We published Esmond Hart's fascinating account of his pioneering computer work in earlier editions (OB News, November 2000 and May 2001). - Ed.

Michael Standen

Owen Eastal (1951-58)

I was very sorry to read of Michael's death. For many years we were neighbours in Epping and Michael and his older brother Peter were my "chief" play-mates.

I wonder how many know that Michael was an amazingly talented model maker in his early and mid-teens. He specialised in aircraft models possibly motivated by the fact that his father was a meteorologist with the RAF based at North Weald at that time.

We scoured each new *Flight*

magazine and he would then produce a scale model of the latest aircraft – he must have made a model of every aircraft that ever saw service with the RFC and RAF and also prototypes produced by the then very active British aircraft industry. I was the proud owner of a couple of the models. Cornflake boxes were avidly collected as the raw materials.

The *Eagle* comic had a cut-away drawing as their centre spread each week and when the aircraft carrier *HMS Eagle* appeared, Michael proceeded to make a model – even more cereal boxes needed! From memory it must have been 5 feet long and all to scale. Even the aircraft lifts to the flight deck moved as well as the ship having a full complement of aircraft. I was so proud to assist Michael with the creation of the sea and waves that we made from plaster on the base-board of the model.

Michael appeared on the TV programme *All your Own* with Huw Wheldon with this model. The family subsequently moved to Nottingham and I lost touch.

If you would like a reminder of the Huw Wheldon TV show (and many other nostalgic video clips) see www.whirligig-tv.co.uk - Ed.

Perspectives: Time and Space

John Gray (1941-48)

I should like to submit a few comments on the November issue of the OBN, which I greatly enjoyed reading.

In beginning my comments, I should like to reflect the opening paragraph of Peter Ackland's contribution. It is still a puzzle to me why I find the OBN so interesting. It is mostly about people with whom I have only the most tenuous relationship, and, in general, I am not a backward-looking or nostalgic individual. Nevertheless, I do find much enjoyment in reading the results of your efforts, for which I tender my sincere and profound thanks.

I should also like to endorse the sentiments of Peter's final paragraph; in the years when I taught young teenagers, and interacted with parents of this group I concluded that, in the main, whatever parents did wrong, and it all came out right in the end.

I also endorse Roger Street's remark about the purpose of education. With my usual hyperbole (already exemplified above), I used to say that anything that can be tested numerically is not worth teaching.

I seem to recall that Brian Tarlton was a fast bowler, and Roy Penny definitely was. It has occurred to me for the first time while reading your excellent article on projectile propulsion that the javelin and fast bowling seem to go together – something that does not seem very surprising.

Incidentally, I recall seeing Brian Tarlton acting in *The Taming of the Shrew* on an open-air stage in a garden in Theydon Bois, the favourite destination of my walks from my house in Loughton.

Keith Madgwick comments that he had mostly lady teachers. This may reflect the experience of the lower forms, but it did not conform with mine. I missed this phase, having joined the 1941 year group in the third form in 1943, and apart from a couple of student teachers, one very competent, and the other not, I can recall direct contact with only three: Miss Kirk (art), Miss Rayner (geography) and Miss George (French), and probably only two of these were concurrent; there was another at the school, whose name escapes me.

Although I did not have Vera Crook as a teacher, I vividly recall her from the time when she spoke to the 'Sixth Form Council' and described her most interesting experiences in Allentown, PA; I have no recollection of her opposite number from the U.S. Mrs Herbert noted the outward degree of politeness on the part of English boys, but their inner independence. My own experience in contrasting the responses on two continents (although not BHCHS) was that in England boys would ask questions as long as they could get away with it to postpone the subject matter of a lesson, while the Canadian pupils whom I taught would rather get down to some task than ask questions.

Mrs Herbert also expressed concern about 'fitting in' in an all-male staff room. I recall that Jim Shillito told me once that Miss Rayner said that she enjoyed being a member of a mostly-

male staff, as it did not have the gossip and backbiting of a female staff room – I hope I have not misrepresented his remark.

Phil Dixon comments on the inadequacy of Tommy Leek's teaching in preparing him for the weather in Belgium; he should have paid attention to history rather than geography in this context - that is assuming that 1914-1918 was part of history; in my day, history stopped at 1815, presumably leaving everything thereafter to current events.

I was rather surprised that Harry Smith should have been so much struck by the prevalence of nicknames, and your subsequent conjecture as to the origin of this phenomenon. I can recall only three (i.e. about 10%) in my form, and one of those was the result of Miss George's decision that all the form should be addressed with a French given name. There were two Peters, and so one was addressed by the French version of his middle name, and he became Jack thereafter. Probably the custom varied from form to form, and perhaps changed with the passing of the years.

In connection with your report of Graham McClelland's move, you suggest that he might be the first Old Buck to be based in Egypt. Pete Aldridge did his National Service in the Royal Medical Corps, and was based in Egypt for most his abbreviated stint, curtailed to allow him to enter teacher training college (St. Mark and St. John's, Chelsea) at the beginning of the academic year. Perhaps this kind of service does not count.

The further tribute to Mike Playle mentions some concern about living in Ireland during the difficult times there. However, I cannot imagine that the Irish would kill a brewer.

Got your tie yet?



The new silk OBA ties featuring the school badge are selling fast. A great gift and bargain at only £10 including postage.

Order yours from Graham Frankel (see contact details on page 2).

Wartime Devastation

The date 11th July 1944 is permanently etched on the memories of anyone at the school at that time. This was the fateful day when a Flying Bomb or "Doodlebug" fell on the school grounds, landing just outside the caretaker's house. The incident happened at lunch-time, and it was only through the foresight and initiative of JH Taylor that there were not a large number of casualties. He had taken the decision to send pupils home early, several days before the scheduled end of the summer term. However, the Caretaker and several members of his family were having lunch when the bomb fell. Mr Beresford, the Caretaker, was permanently blinded. Many have mentioned this, but only very recently have we discovered, through an amazing coincidence, more about Mr Beresford. It was **Peter Mason (1941)** who made the connection. Peter lives in Wiltshire and is a member of the Wiltshire Blind Association - his wife, Joy, suffers from macular degeneration. At a recent meeting he overheard a conversation in which another member, Cyril Perkins, was describing an incident during the war where a school caretaker was blinded. Immediately the connection was made, and it turns out that Cyril Perkins knew the Beresford family quite well. We are grateful to Cyril for having written these memories of the family both before and after the traumatic incident.



The Caretaker's House

BEFORE the war, Mr Don Beresford, along with his wife owned a shop in West Grove, Woodford. He sold everything from paraffin to biscuits. I remember being told he bought the shop after having to stop work after an accident that left him with a club foot. They had five children, Edna, Rhoda, Geoffrey, Peter and Norman, Norman being the youngest and my friend for many years.

Through being too kind hearted, they had to give up the business because so many of their customers used the "slate" until the end of the week but were unable to clear it. They would wipe it clean for them, but still allowed them to continue using it. The shop was situated in the poor end of

West Grove, with families struggling to feed and clothe themselves.

Very soon after war was declared I moved to Theydon Bois, Don and his family moving to Buckhurst Hill sometime later, where he secured the post of Caretaker for Buckhurst Hill County High School

I shall always remember him as a very quiet family man, whose day consisted of going to work, tending his garden, reading the paper and having a good night's sleep. His nickname for me was Squibs - Why? I have no idea!

Norman and I attended Loughton Secondary Modern School together, and I stayed with him quite frequently over the weekends. After

one particular air raid on the Barge Balloon establishment, and without his parents knowing, we set about collecting unexploded incendiary bombs from the sports field. Magnesium, when turned into filings, burns rapidly giving off a very bright light. Don didn't see the funny side of it as the trail of magnesium we had laid round his vegetable patch went up in a flash!

By the time it came for me to start work, it was 1944 and I was living in South Hornchurch. My first job was in Bata's shoe shop in Heathway, Dagenham. It was during a lunch break, on a Wednesday I think, that a Doodlebug flew over

The only positive thing about it was that nobody was killed.

Don was totally blinded. Edna lost one eye and everybody else, (except Norman who was at school when it happened), suffered from multiple glass wounds ranging from mild to severe. Edna and Rhoda's babies were saved from injury by a door falling on each of their prams. Rhoda had not long been told that her husband had been killed in action. For a very long period of time, fragments of glass would appear under their skin which they would carefully cut out and put into a glass jar.

I have the greatest admiration for that family; they came out of that terrible event with strength of mind that I would challenge anybody to better. They had quickly come to terms with their situation, Don most of all. As I said earlier, he was content to just work, read, and tend his garden. Very quickly he learnt to play the piano, and despite being totally blind became almost unbeatable at shove-halfpenny! He would almost tire me out cutting the wool for him when he took-up rug making.

Once we had each bought a bike, Norman and I continued our friendship, each of us marrying our first girlfriend. The last time I had

any contact with Norman would have been in 1972/3. He was living in Ilford then. Possibly, with a little research you could find him and be able to fill in the details that have vanished from my mind. I still think of him as my best friend, but we just drifted apart.

11th July 1944: Head's Report

Here is the account of the Flying Bomb incident as recorded by Mr Taylor in the School Magazine.



The South Wing

and cut its engine at the same time. I heard a couple of weeks later that the bomb had glided all those miles from Dagenham to crash into the front of the Beresford's home.

How I learnt of that dreadful event I cannot remember. Neither Norman nor I had a cycle; public transport other than the underground was not a practical option, and neither of us had a phone. Contact between us hadn't existed for quite a few months.



The Dining Hall

With the climax of the school year in June, intruded the flying bomb. In fact, the beginning of the School Certificate examinations almost coincided with the regular arrival of these highly distracting robots. For two days, candidates had to sit, outwardly unconcerned but inwardly tremulous in the gymnasium with its glass walls, while that unmistakable splutter and roar became louder and louder. This however was subjecting all concerned to great risk and strain; the lower and middle school were packed off home and the examinees were spaced among the ground floor class-rooms with instructions to dive underneath their desks on the ringing of the hand-bell. Happily the examination was completed without serious alarm or any danger and the Governing Body agreed that the wisest course was to end the Summer term a fortnight before its appointed time.

School ended thus on July 10th, and then about 1.15 p.m. on the following day, Tuesday, July 11th, a flying bomb exploded in the roadway opposite the Caretaker's cottage. The siren had wailed its devilish ululation previously and the Beresford family had taken refuge in the nearer underground shelter. They heard one 'doodle-bug' roar overhead and, as lunch was ready and time short, they returned and sat down, hoping that the 'all-clear' would sound in due course. Instead, a second bomb cut out over Barking and glided towards the school, narrowly missing the anti-aircraft battery and appearing to veer towards Mr. Furse's fields until it swung right very late in its course and fell in front of the only house for a quarter of a mile. The front of the cottage was blown out and the eight occupants of the dining room were injured, but none killed outright. Mr. and Mrs. Beresford and their two married daughters were on the danger list for some days. Mrs. Beresford was very badly cut about the head, face and hand and lost a great deal of blood; one daughter lost an eye and the other had to have jagged pieces of glass removed from her back. Mr. Beresford was most savagely hit by flying glass, losing one eye immediately and receiving a severe cut in the upper forearm. Nobody was in the school, the Secretary, Miss Heath, having cycled over the spot about ten minutes earlier. Extensive damage was done to

the South Wing, especially to the Dining Hall and Geography room.

While we must be thankful that no lives were lost, no boys were in the school and the buildings have been so quickly and well repaired, everyone was deeply grieved to learn that Mr. Beresford would not regain his sight. To such an active and hardworking man this is the hardest of all losses and the sincere sympathy of the whole school is felt for him and his family. Mr. Beresford's first thought after he had been blasted and blinded was for the safety of the Secretary and Headmaster, who, he thought, had not left. He directed his eldest son, Geoffrey, himself suffering from shock and an injury to his ear, to go into the school to help them if necessary. We grieve for his cruel and irremediable loss so bravely and quietly borne. We are glad to have Mrs. Beresford back working courageously in her husband's place and we are proud to have been able to show in so practical a manner our appreciation of and sympathy for him and his family. J.H.T.



The "Beresford Cup"

Postscript

The incident of the flying bomb was, of course, remembered at BHCHS for many years after. Also, there was regular contact between Mr Taylor and the Beresford family. In 1951 a trophy for inter-house cricket, presented by the governing body, was named in honour of the wartime caretaker.

I have tried, so far unsuccessfully, to trace Mr Beresford's youngest son Norman to reunite him with his old friend Cyril Perkins.

More Letters.....

Missing the Fun

Mike Page (1949-54)

On seeing the article about the Coronation Fete (*OB News, May 2008*) I was puzzled that although I had started at BHCHS in 1949 I couldn't remember any of the sports, games etc shown. On closer inspection the reason became very clear - I was in the right hand corner photo in charge of the Art Club printing press. Stuck in the Art Room and missing the fun and sun!

I have the happiest memories of BHCHS (apart from dropping the projector down the stone stairway and watching lenses etc flying off and clanging downwards) and particularly the enthusiastic, non-clock-watching staff who ran the many after school activities.

Formidable

Colin Selby (1940-47)

Your picture of Walter May (*OB News, November 2008*) brought back many memories of French lessons. Pronunciation was encouraged by using lists of words which we repeated rather like multiplication tables. Also we were told to pronounce 'ee' with one two or three fingers placed in our mouths to produce different vowel sounds with or without a nasal overtone. Later in that first year we produced a play entitled *Le gateau de roc* which involved the mistake of using plaster of Paris instead of flour! In later forms we had our essays marked using the SWIG system - Spelling, Words, Idioms, Grammar.

In the 5th form all French lessons were conducted in French and a fine of a penny a word was paid for the use of English. On one occasion as Walter entered the room we must have caused his annoyance because he came out with a torrent of English! Someone said: "that will be half-a-crown sir." Walter took it in good part and the money went towards an end of term tea party. He was, as you say, charismatic but very tough. In 1947 the school was inspected by HMI. Walter May left BHCHS that year to join the inspectorate. I was not an outstanding pupil but I enjoyed the French lessons. Thanks Walter for being such a good teacher.

Colin Selby spent most of his own working life as a Schools' Inspector.

Mini-skirt Pioneer

Guy Lee (1953-59)

Just one comment on the article on Mary Herbert (*OB News, November 2008*). I may have misread the detail, but I got the impression that she was cited as the only female teacher at BHCHS, but I'd just like to correct this: in the fifties, Mr Gray (English) was off sick for a few months and was temporarily replaced by Miss Janet Hulls. She was a young, attractive lady who must have been a bit ahead of the times for wearing the mini-skirt so popular in the 60's. I'm sure it comes as no surprise that all those rogues, who previously covered at the back of the classroom, made a concerted effort to relocate to the front!

Being quite unused to addressing a female teacher, I well remember responding to her question with "Yes Ma'am" to which she replied "Who do you think you are, a G.I.?"

The article on Mary Herbert may have been misleading. It was not intended to imply that she was the only female teacher in the history of BHCHS, but just at the time when she was on the staff. But I am grateful to Guy for raising a topic that could be pursued..... — Ed.

Wrong Generation

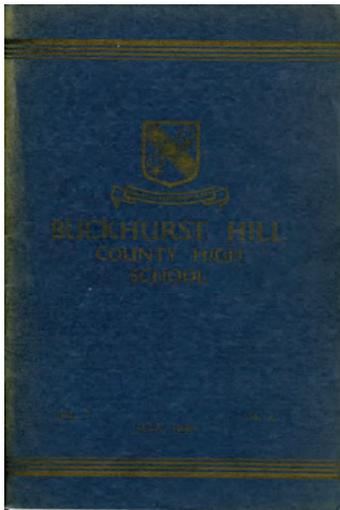
Alan McAndrew (1946-52)

I was intrigued for two reasons by the article on Mrs Mary Herbert. Firstly I remember she kindly gave me (and I believe, the rest of the class) an actual American made pencil. One, which was brightly painted, hexagonal shaped and sporting a pattern. Up until then I thought all such things were dull, round, drab, bland and very, very utility looking. Clearly I was impressed.

The second reason was the school photo showing Miss Herbert with staff and pupils but, in particular, the little boy in the front row second from the left. My first reaction was to be surprised just how much he resembled my eldest grandson (a spitting image in fact) and then of course the penny dropped. I'm certain the other boys with me in the first two rows are from the same class (1B or 2B) but regret after 60 years I cannot remember their names.

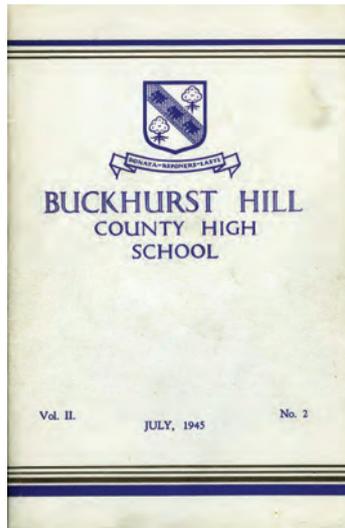
OLD RODINGS: The Rise and Fall of the School Magazine

The format of the BHCHS school magazine did not change many times during its 35 year history.....



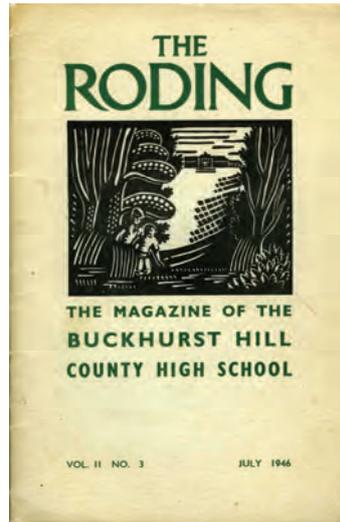
First edition 1939.

The design was created by **Mr MH Romans**, the school's first art master. The gold on blue is almost invisible (certainly ageing hasn't helped) and was dropped after the first edition.



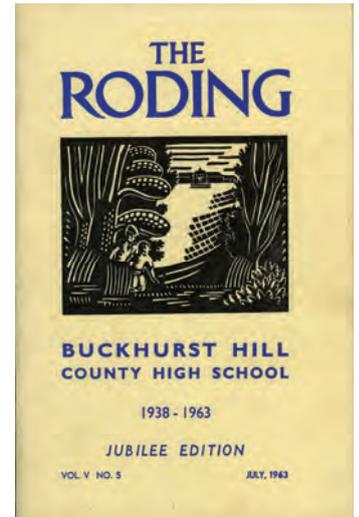
1940-1945.

During the war years the basic cover remained unchanged. We are fortunate that the magazine continued to be produced throughout the war years.



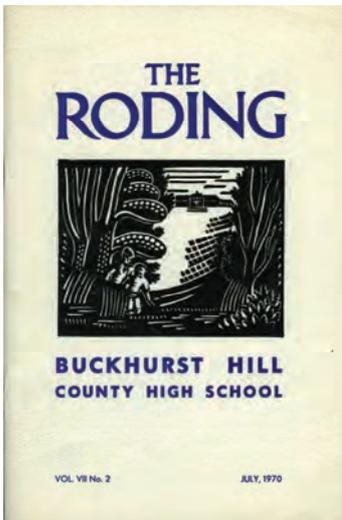
1946 By Roding Stream.

Mr Romans made a welcome return from his war service and celebrated by creating this new design. The new name was welcomed by the editor, who commented "Anonymity may be useful to a contributor; it is not a virtue in a periodical." I can reveal that the previously anonymous boys were **Paul Rattenbury** and **Norman Macleod (1939)**.



1963 Silver Jubilee.

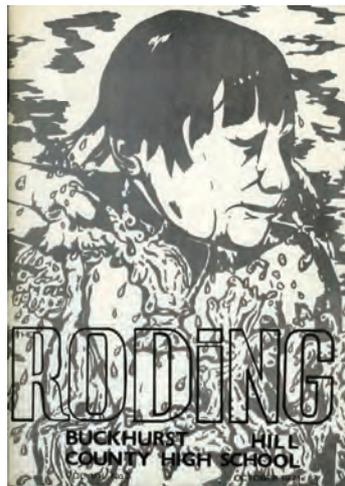
This was a special edition. There were minor changes of colour and wording on the cover. More significantly, the first 44 pages contained a comprehensive review of the school's first 25 years, probably written by Peter Sillis. It seems that his budget was not adjusted, and this meant condensing the normal content into a "supplement in miniature."



1970 - Sillis Final edition.

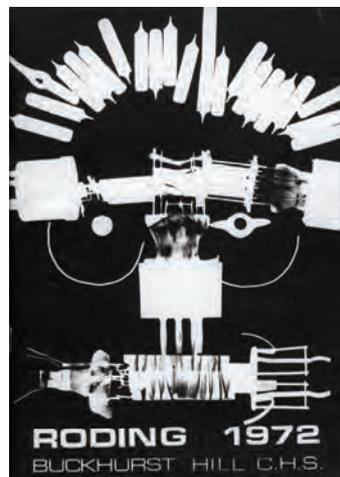
Both the cover and the content are recognizable from the 1940s version. Inside, the magazine still provided a detailed account of the year's activities.

There were, however, some changes. Gone were the examples of student artwork, and they had by now been replaced by several full page advertisements mainly offering careers. These had made their appearance after the retirement of JH Taylor! One of the banks states: *it'll pay you handsomely if you are a personable young man with good examination results....*



1971 - Pupil Power.

Responsibility for producing the magazine passed to the pupils. I am grateful to **Graham Prentice (Head of Art 1970-85)** for digging up the photo of **Stefan Slisz (1970)** who was the inspiration for first of the new-style cover designs.



1972-1973. The Final Chapter.

The last two editions contain plenty of lively material and some excellent artwork from many contributors. The final edition does not contain any hint of the publication's imminent demise, and I can only rely on the statement made to me by Hugh Colgate that the decision was taken because of increases in printing costs. The cover of the final edition seems to somehow reflect the questionable logic - seen with the benefit of hindsight.

"Old Rodings" - a postscript.

A further comment was made by the Editor in the 1946 school notes.....

May we suggest to the Old Boys' Association that "Old Rodings" is not less suitable and certainly more pleasant sounding than some of the names we heard on 30th March?

There is no further explanation of what was happening on that date, but the implication is that it was an early attempt to suggest a name for the Association. This is undoubtedly a suitable topic for a future feature.



Classroom Riot

By Mel Turland (BHCHS 1958-61)



MY TIME at BHCHS was relatively short, but I have a couple of other reminiscences to add to those you published earlier (*OB News, May 2007*).

The photograph of the geography room triggered an almost Proustian recollection of a lesson by Mr Mead on water erosion. He spent nearly half an hour trying to get us to think how this actually worked. "It's the weight of the water, sir!" we were all saying. Eventually he had to tell us: "It's not the water, it's what's *in* the water!" (ie stone, pebbles, rocks, etc.) None of us had thought of that.

On another occasion Mr McLaughlin caused a near-riot in his history lesson by referring to Copernicus as Copper Knickers. Mac had a great sense of humour and often had trouble keeping a straight face, which sometimes would break into a broad grin. I am sure on this occasion it was a deliberate mispronunciation calculated to get a risqué laugh from the class, but it back-fired and led to an uncontrolled and accelerating merriment that wouldn't subside. It must have been something to do with being adolescents in 1960.

Mac had to call for reinforcements and we were all detained after school by our Form Master, Mr Beer, who gave us a serious dressing-down, finishing by running a hand through his floppy hair, shouting "I have never been so ashamed IN ALL MY LIFE!" and flouncing out, leaving us to catch whatever later buses we could and returning home to worried mothers.

Mac was highly regarded by his pupils and also affectionately known as Cheyenne (after a contemporary TV western series starring a huge American actor as *Cheyenne*).

Copernicus could never have known at the time what trouble he would cause later in Essex.

Editorial Note:

Fortunately we are in contact with John McLaughlin who taught history at BHCHS from 1959-62. He had an interesting later career, and more information about this will be published in the next edition. Clint Walker, who played Cheyenne in the TV series, is also still around but was unavailable for comment.



Clint Walker (left) and John McLaughlin

Crossword solution

The answers to the asterisked clues are all fictional detectives: Colin Dexter created Inspector Morse; Rex Stout wrote about Nero Wolfe; Maigret was the hero of books by Georges Simenon; Campion was the gentleman sleuth in several books by Margery Allingham; Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes is arguably the most famous detective ever; Raymond Chandler's private eye was Philip Marlowe; Harry Keating created Inspector Ghotie of the Bombay CID; and Taggart is a popular TV series based in Glasgow.

The title of the crossword is a definition of detection as expressed by Sherlock Holmes in *The Sign of Four* - an 1890 novel by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.



Obituary

Don Tovey



Don Tovey (1942) was one of the first members of the OBA and a regular first team player in the highly successful early football team.

After leaving BHCHS Don became an accountant and worked in the City. He was a senior ranking Freemason, and lived in Loughton.

Don died on 13th November 2008 after a long illness.

Our condolences to his brother Lew Tovey (BHCHS 1938-43) and the rest of his family.

We have also learned of the following deaths.....

Joe Cramp (1940) died on Christmas Day 2007. He had been suffering from Alzheimer's Disease for several years. He was a retired bank manager and lived in Ilford.

Fred Newbold (1946) died in July 2004. He lived in Bournemouth and was the brother of **Terry Newbold (1949)**.

Martin J Davey (1948) died in September 2003. He lived in Chepstow and was the brother of twins **Arnold** and **Paul Davey (1950)**.

Ken H Simmonds (1951) died in September 2006. He lived near Peterborough.

Cyril T Millis (1953) died in October 2003. He lived in Brighton and was the brother of **Stanley Millis (1951)**.

Donald Campbell (1954) died in December 2008. He lived in Epping.

Michael E Jones (1954) died in November 2006. He lived in Rochford, Essex.

Peter G Warburton (1955) died in March 2008. He lived in Sutton Coldfield and was the brother of **David Warburton (1960)**.

David Pearn (1955) died in about May 1975 at the age of 31. While at BHCHS he had been leader of the school orchestra and gained a scholarship to study music at Bristol University. It is believed he died of kidney failure.

John Berridge (1972) died in July 2004. He lived in Newham.

Stan Foster

Stan Foster (1939) died on 21st December 2008. A founder member of the Old Bucks Lodge, Stan was a talented pianist and at one time musical director to Alma Cogan. More about this, in Stan's own words, is at:

www.almacogan.com/biography

Paul Rattenbury (1939) writes....

Stan and I were close friends throughout our teenage years and subsequently when he became the accompanist and manager of Alma Cogan. Alma was an intriguing mixture of shyness and exceptional verve. I first met them together at Blackpool where I was invited backstage and saw a shy and reserved little girl take a huge breath behind the curtain and incredibly instantly become transformed into a whirlwind Star of fiery action as she took the stage by storm.

Stan was always an entertainer. Around the age of seven our school (Gearies of Ilford) put on a Christmas Show and Stan displayed his considerable natural talent by wowing the audience with a dazzling display on the piano accompanied by a teacher on a tambourine.

The sadness incurred upon hearing of the death of yet another Old Buck is considerably ameliorated by the wonderful 60-70 year old memories it evokes.

Dave Keskeys



IT IS with great regret that I have to report the death of my best friend, **Dave Keskeys**. He passed away at his home in Market Harborough on 16th November 2008 after a brave struggle against cancer. He is sadly missed by his wife, Vicky, his children, Jaine, Ruth and Paul, his own parents and family and his many friends and his colleagues at the University of Northampton and elsewhere.

I met Dave when he and I turned up for interview at BHCHS in May 1976. Fresh out of university, we were both appointed to our first teaching posts, Dave in Design and myself in History.

We became firm friends, as did our wives, and over the next four years we shared many happy experiences and became Godparents to each others' eldest children.

Teaching was only a sideline, I sometimes think, for Dave and I, although we did enjoy working with colleagues like Dave Stancer and Peter Sillis. Together we started the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, taking many camping trips to the North Downs, South Wales and the Lake District; we took over from Roy Skinner as the organisers of the school ski trips and did three trips to Italy and France, accompanied by our wives. Dave was always the steady hand behind any of these ventures and his organising skills and easy control were the most important assets which helped to make them such a success. While we were away, Dave taught me how to lose at cribbage and pool and retained his sense of humour when my wife and I never supported England in any of the many sports of which he was a huge fan! In 1980, our careers once again seemed to be in step when Dave was appointed lecturer in Graphic Design at Gloucester College of Art and Technology and I left to teach at a school on the Wiltshire

Somerset border. Living only just over an hour apart, our two families continued to meet for weekends in either Gloucester or Somerset, go on many camping holidays, trips to the Grand Prix at Silverstone and latterly, when the children had grown up, weekends away at cosy little inns in Wales and the West Country. Dave was excellent company, relaxed and at ease with himself and the world and rarely without a camera around his neck to record the places we visited. Always highly competitive, my family will never forget the evenings of Trivial Pursuit where Dave's prodigious memory and wide range of interests usually ensured that his team won whatever game we played!

At Gloucester, Dave rose to senior Lecturer and course leader and in 1990 he became involved in the development of degrees in professional media and media communications. He was appointed the first field chair in 1993, associate Dean in 1998 and then Head of the School of Art, Media and Design in 2001. In 2004, Professor Keskeys took on a new challenge as Dean of the School of Arts at what was to become the University of Northampton and moved to Market Harborough, where he joined the Senior Management Team and represented the university at home and abroad.

I would like to quote from his obituary in the *Times Higher Education Supplement*:

David Jones, acting Dean of the School of the Arts, remembers Professor Keskeys' "range of memorable waistcoats", but he also pays tribute to "a man of great energy and modest determination who was competitive but also very supportive, particularly with new staff. Management meetings in the school under his leadership were characterised by a blend of great good humour, collegiality and a firm resolve to get the job done and move the school forward."

Aged only 55, Dave had so much more to give to his family, his friends and his career but I know he himself would have seen it as essential to remember how much he did cram into his life. He did not wait for retirement to take that three month tour of Australia or acquire a holiday villa in Florida and Vicky and his family will have many good memories to reflect upon as some sort of consolation over the months and years ahead. I know I will.

Boyd Gray

Clive Berridge



I AM very sorry to report the death of **Clive Berridge (BHCHS 1967-74)** at the age of 52. Clive was one of six pupils who joined BHCHS from Buckhurst Hill County Primary School in 1967 (The others being myself and Paul Brill, Robert Morgan, Michael Johnson and Michael Pritchard). He initially joined class 1X – form master Pete Downey.

Clive was always quiet at school but was an intelligent chap although he'd never admit it. He was generally in either the 'A' or 'B' class when we were streamed. His friends at school included Michael Vernon, Michael Johnson and Alan Galpin.

Never keen on playing football on cold winter days, we were of similar footballing ability and would frequently end up chatting with each other in defence because the team captains didn't want us interfering with play!

After leaving school Clive worked in various bookshops in London initially close to Tottenham Court Road. He later specialised in legal book sales working at Wildy & Sons, and later Blackwells based in the Holloway Road. He developed a vast knowledge of legal books and was described as being the most knowledgeable law book bibliographer in the UK for a time. He was a true bookman who loved his subject and the people he dealt with. At one time he had his own law book website and had two superb books published. He wrote and illustrated *The Almshouses of London* and co-wrote *The Walking Guide to Lawyers' London* for which he provided the wonderful photographic illustrations.

His profile correctly describes him as a dedicated and experienced academic and professional bookseller with excellent communication skills and a strong

focus on customer service and sales - that was Clive Berridge.

Clive was also an extremely talented photographer. Travelling to Portugal for photographs of Lisbon and the surrounding area - as he planned another book. His photographic work was remarkable for its clarity and composition. One of his slides was shown as a background to the weather slot on the BBC TV *Nationwide* programme and his name was read out on air. He was very pleased about that - but with his normal modesty. He also made lone trips to Belfast and to The Lebanon (when they were considered major trouble spots), because of their news item significance and also as he liked both locations

Clive was also an excellent broadcaster and like his younger brother John (BHCHS 1972-75 who sadly passed away in 2004) he used to be a disc jockey at Radio Forest. I know his voice and knowledge of all kinds of music would have made him a favourite with his listeners. His knowledge of television and interest in the subject led to an array of TV equipment being assembled at his flat in Walthamstow.

Sadly, Clive lost his father at a very early age, and unfortunately his mother passed away when Clive was in his twenties. Subsequently, he and his brother John bought and shared the flat in Walthamstow until John married and moved to Forest Gate.

Clive was a quiet intelligent but caring chap. Eloquent and under rated, he had a lot of ability but unfortunately never had the opportunity to use his talents to the full. He was a true gentleman and always very affable.

Not long after Clive's brother John passed away, Clive's own health declined. He developed lymphatic cancer and the steroid treatment he received for this condition damaged his lungs. He spent his last couple of years in two BUPA homes being the youngest in both I believe. He then developed pneumonia and passed away in December 2008.

The world is a poorer place with the loss of Clive. He will be very sadly missed.

Nigel Clark (BHCHS 1967-74)