

# News and Views Extra

November 2020

I wonder what happened to .....



I've been reading old copies of News and Views – including the e-Newsletters – to see who wrote what and when, but also because I know I'll keep saying 'wow' as I stumble over connections between people's stories. X says 'I wonder what happened to Y.....?' and a few copies on, Y ponders on where X might be. It's a delight, and a great privilege to then be able sometimes to join the gaps. In some previous editions there was a section in which people could ask if anyone knew 'whatever happened to so and so.....?' It was a great idea, and is re-instated in this newsletter.

You will know by now, sadly, about the loss of Alistair McGeachie in the summer. His wife Lynne has three boxes full of old N&V, etc, that he kept to refer to, and once the logistics of lockdown are paused, I'll be looking after them – and reading, reading, reading. I do have copies over the last twenty years, and Rosemary Luck 1940 cares for that bit of our archive and has the whole collection. One day I'll get together with her for a deeper delve into them. When you dig out your own pile of old copies, and sit down with them, like a good book, you no doubt notice that conversations continue from one year to the next, and you feel as if you'd just popped out for a minute and come back in to re-join the chat.

**So, who do you wonder about?** To get us going, there's no better way than with two rich memoirs, both sent back in the spring, both crammed with people, and with some lovely connections between them. They say it perfectly themselves, and so here they are.

MARVELLOUS MEMORIES    Gordon Taylor    1949

My brother (Mike Taylor – 1952) recently (Ed. sorry!) handed me the January 2020 edition of the Old Wealden magazine and as I read through, it evoked many memories of my time at the school commencing in 1949. I know that memories are not facts and some of them may be gilded (or worse), but what follows are some of my memories, for what they may be worth....

Willie Lamont lived near us in Belmont – above Ellingtons stationery shop and Post Office, I seem to remember. Although he was a couple of years older than me, he was always friendly and willing to chat - characteristics which seem to have persisted throughout his life, according to the wonderful tribute in the magazine.

Mr E Barlow Butlin was headmaster for my first two years at the school. He was a man with charisma, who commanded immediate respect. I remember the hush that descended, as he climbed the stairs onto the stage for morning assembly ...

Mr D Crowle-Ellis was, of course, the headmaster I remembered more and still marvel

at his amazing concern for his students – me included. My spectacular failure of A levels in botany and zoology was a result of my choosing to enjoy the busy social life offered by the school and being involved in many extra-curricular activities, rather than applying myself to serious study. When Mr Crowle-Ellis heard about my results, he actually came to visit me at home. I was out at the time, but he met my mother, expressing his disappointment and discussing possible options. I still have the books we were able to choose at the end of our year as prefects, signed in his neat handwriting.

Miss Clare Pope (Zoology) – she always called me TayLORR - and Mrs Thomas (Botany) were also disappointed, but they cared enough to inform me of a possible position at the Central Public Health Laboratory in Colindale. I am grateful to them for a lifelong and rewarding career in Biomedical Science with many opportunities and developments along the way, which I could never have dreamed of at that time.

What of other memories of school? The Staff: there was gentle Miss Bickerstaff, coaxing first-formers into the world of mathematics; large and loud Mr Thompson (English) who would rush into the classroom, throw his battered briefcase on the desk and fling open the windows, whatever the weather; Charlie Holt - 'Boris' (Chemistry) – “Er, go and stand under the clock outside.” Exit naughty student. Re-enter naughty student. “Sir, there’s no clock outside”; and dapper Mr Crowley (History), lover of cricket and, we suspected, also of Miss Sellars (Geography) (Ed. you’ll hear of a wedding later in these pages – but to whom?!) He seemed to be in charge of the heavy roller used on the East field cricket pitch: it had to be moved ever so slowly over the turf. There was bronzed Mr Carnie (Geography, I think) from somewhere down under and Mr Hauptrief (PE), who kicked your leg if you put a foot wrong. He served in the Spanish civil war, married Miss Murray (Domestic Science) and became Mr Hawtrey. There was ‘Nobby’ Mr J Lester Clark (French), heavy smoker with yellowed fingers, who, I believe, became Senior Master in 1956. His predecessor was Mr A E J West (who I managed to beat at badminton) and Miss Drury was the Senior Mistress, (serious but very kind). Tall and quiet Mr Lowry used to sit very upright when playing second piano in assembly. And who could forget Miss Irene Pyke, dedicated musician, conductor and patient teacher of willing and unwilling students of her music classes? On at least two occasions, she invited me to play the second piano for assembly – a daunting prospect, when I knew the likes of Elizabeth Ralls and her talented younger brother were in the hall.

There was jovial Mr H J Becker (French) – what did that little private smile mean? Quiet Mrs Ottoway (English and Drama) got me involved as a stage hand when I reached the fifth form, painting scenery and doing technical stuff: ‘The Lady’s Not for Burning’ was the school play where, just before the line, “Is that a yellow and wet whistling blackbird I hear?” I was required to place the needle on the appropriate spot on the birdsong LP – very satisfied that I got it right during the two-night production!

Remember ‘Shove’, Mr Halfpenny? “Beware the rascal” he would say and add: “But beware the clever rascal!” And there was ‘FRY’ Mr F R Young (Physics) and demure and rather pretty Nancy Dadford (Latin). Now that was a romance of which everyone approved except, perhaps, a few of the older boys who fancied themselves as better suitors. To everyone else’s delight the two members of staff married after a dramatic send-off given by the school.

I must also mention Mr Merlyn Rees (History and Economics). I can still picture him in

his trademark brown corduroy jacket. I only ever remember having one lesson from him. He came into the classroom, larger than life, took a chair and turned it around, so that he could see us all and drape his arms over the back, while he sat and talked to us like a bunch of his best mates – totally laid back and relaxed!

And what of some of the students ('pupils' and 'scholars' in those days?) When I entered the school as a first form 'weed' ('weeds' were traditionally pelted with acorns, from Brookshill's famous oaks, on entering the school for the first time and often ducked in the cloakroom sinks thereafter), I thought the sixth formers were adults, many of whom I came to admire. My first form prefect was a 'man' called Holman. I think he was Derek, but I'm not sure now. He was so kind and considerate – and grown up!

There was another Derek, Derek Bloom. At Christmas, I remember the Debating Society put on a special Christmas debate and, during my early years, Derek Bloom was the star of one of these. The subject of the debate was irrelevant to him and he kept us laughing at his anecdotes and asides. Eventually he would move the motion without ever discussing it. I think he got a scholarship to Oxford and I have since wondered what happened to a man of such eloquence.

Among those who were good at sports there was a senior student by the name of Fletcher (I think he was yet another Derek). He was a spin bowler and his prowess against other school teams was regularly celebrated. I remember he got a scholarship to Balliol College. And what of Bob Spandler, who was in my form, a bowler and batsman par excellence? He played for the first eleven when only in the third year, scoring runs and demolishing opponents' wickets on a regular basis every Summer thereafter. Colin Smith was a dedicated all-round athlete. I was around after school one afternoon while he was practising pole vault alone. (Health and Safety legislation was yet to be invented). Colin came down on the wooden side of the sand pit and broke his ankle very badly. Amazingly, he recovered and was back into athletics the following summer.

There was a General Election in 1951, following on from one the previous year, and the school held its own School Election for a second time within around 18 months. I cannot remember who the other 'candidates' were, but my interest was awakened by Valerie Beckwith, a very attractive upper sixth former, standing as a Conservative candidate. I have no idea what her 'policies' were, but she certainly had my vote!

1954 was the year that Billy Graham came to Britain and held an Evangelistic Crusade in Wembley Stadium. As a result, Christian unions in schools were started or rejuvenated. Harrow Weald was no exception and I still remember some of the speakers who came as special guests to the after-school meetings.

I wonder if anyone can remember the barbershop quartet? Four lads in my year got together and would sing in four-part harmony – usually on the east field in the summer. I believe they were Bob Chamberlain, Micky? Annals, Chris Cornford and one other. I didn't let on at the time, but I hung around within earshot and loved their singing! Another singer I admired was Bryan Gilbert. He had a rich baritone voice. He was in the fifth form when I started. I met him later during my National Service, when he was minister of Woolwich Baptist Church. Ian Marshall became a very talented 'cello player on his journey through the school, playing in the school orchestra and as a soloist. He went on to Birmingham University, where, I believe, he studied music.

These are just a few of my 'marvellous memories' of Harrow Weald and of the people who so enriched my school days. Although I attended the 50th anniversary celebration, I'm afraid that I have not made the effort to travel from Hereford to any reunions since. However, the latest News and Views, given to me by my brother, with its appeal for memories of our headmasters and other staff, prompted me to try to recall some forgotten memories. The result of that recall has surprised me!

*Ed. Do you remember that happy picture of Gordon, in his music room, to cheer us up deep in lockdown, back in April, when we couldn't have our reunion, and things were very uncertain? Apologies that the great piece he sent with it has only now appeared. It's a great dilemma to have – lots of material, lots of people digging out memories as they walked for exercise, or rediscovered projects laid aside in busy lives. The following is another wonderful product of that. NB Gordon sent some photos too – but they're best viewed after reading Len's piece – you'll see why.*

Leonard Whitford, 1950 / 1949 equivalent (explanations follow)

It has been an OW Memories week for me this week. As I take my daily walk across Wimbledon Common to get exercise during Lockdown, more thoughts come to mind for which there is time to write down and share.

Seeing the message from Gordon Taylor (what a beautiful music room) triggered my memory of how we went carol singing at Christmas time in 1956 when Gordon played a portable organ, parked under a street lamp, with us 6th formers gathered round, singing loudly, collecting for Save the Children Fund, often getting ribald comments from the householders we were collecting from!

I also remember a House music competition. I entered the piano section knowing that as a lowly Grade 5, I was likely to be last. Which was the case, but, as there were only six competitors, all were generously allowed by Miss Pyke to go through to the final with an independent adjudicator. I didn't really deserve it and although as expected I did come 6th, I gained a point for my house (Tennyson was always struggling). The star performers were Liz Ralls (Miss Pyke's protégé) and Gordon Ross. Did Gordon Taylor take part, I wonder? In the same competition, I accompanied Cyril Harris in the vocal section (he was persuaded to take part because, as always, Tennyson House needed the points). I was very nervous that the poor quality of my playing would distract the judges from properly appreciating Cyril's fine bass voice! I didn't pursue my piano studies further until I retired over 40 years later, since when I have proceeded to Grade 8 and beyond, and never regretted taking the instrument up again. It has provided much enjoyment during Lockdown.

During my time at Harrow Weald, Milton was often 'cock' House and Tennyson mostly bottom. I remember a swimming gala at Wealdstone swimming pool (only held every 2, or was it 4, years). I was House swimming captain (how desperate was that) and I remember swimming in the freestyle event, doing the breaststroke, coming last but getting a point for competing!

Seeing Anthea Teal mentioned in a recent newsletter reminded me of internal exams, in

particular when I was in 1c. The boys from one year were put next to girls from a different year and the girl sitting next to me was Anthea. I can still remember what beautiful handwriting she had. I hope that is still true Anthea!

It certainly is true with me that childhood memories get clearer as one gets older and I hope these reminiscences will trigger more thoughts from my school day companions. I think particularly of Tim Sullivan, my great friend in the 6th form.

The mention of Graham cramming Latin reminded me that I did the same. He probably did his in the 3rd year sixth, but I did mine in the upper sixth under 'JV' Barker, taking GCE mid-year. I can't remember who else did it with me. I wasn't going to Oxbridge but I relished the challenge, having started Latin again in the Lower 6th and not having touched it since the 2nd form with Miss Dadford (subsequently Mrs Young of course). There wasn't time to learn the set books so we were taking a chance and doing the Unseen Translations paper. Mr. Crowle-Ellis announced the examination results from the platform (not so many pupils took GCE mid-year then - I think the exams were in January). When he came to Latin O Level, he announced my name as having passed, and then added 'some of you people do cut it fine'. It turned out that I had just scraped through with 47%!

That 'equivalent' against my year of entry is because Mr Crowle-Ellis had the idea that pupils with 'potential' could cover all their schooling in one year less to give them more time to prepare for Oxbridge at the end of secondary schooling. I and others from the 2nd form jumped to the 4th form in 1952. This was called Double Promotion. The others were Graham Kingsley, Francis Allen, Michael Owen and Graham(?) Hines (unfortunately he drowned in a bathing accident in the summer holidays before being able to take it up). I know that other pupils subsequently jumped from the 1st to the 3rd form. I would be interested in the protagonists' views on whether they thought it a success. I personally have my reservations.

Further to Double Promotion: we were put into bottom set maths as there was a lot to catch up. It was taught by A.E.J. (Spike) West, a brilliant teacher who gave me a lifelong love of mathematics and enabled quite a few of us to take and pass A level maths in the lower sixth. He wrote model answers to all the questions in the Scholarship Maths paper on only two sides of an exercise book! He always wanted the shortest and most elegant solution. A method of solving one type of simultaneous quadratic equation by removing one variable was, firstly to square one equation and write it down and then add it to the other; Spike wanted us to do this in our heads without writing down the intermediate step ie to 'square and add' all in one go. Tim Sullivan said if he ever owned a race-horse he would name it Square & Add!

Geoff Hammersley reminds me that one person who was Double Promoted from 1st to 3rd forms was John Collins (1950 I think) who does regularly attend Reunions with Geoff. Myself, I haven't attended for some years but this correspondence may cause me to change my mind! (*Ed. We do hope so, Leonard..... Len! see following note*)

#### **Leonard adds:**

I don't know what your rule for the Newsletter is, but perhaps names should refer to how the person was known at school. So, in regard to my previous submission could you

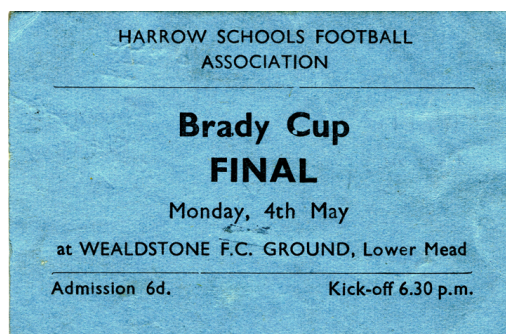
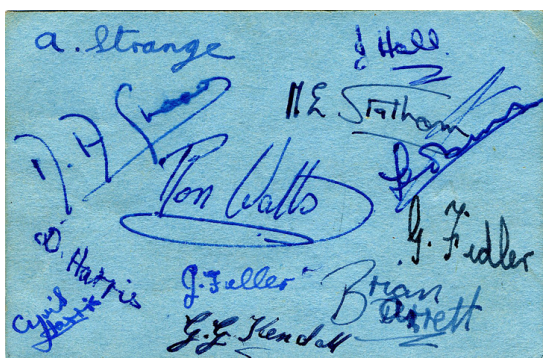
add the name in brackets where different, as follows:

Leonard Whitford = Leonard (Len) Whitford, Francis Allen = Francis (Fuzz) Allen,  
Michael Owen = Michael (Mick) Owen

*Editorial answer: Consider them added. There isn't a rule, but I do think that people should be known by whatever name they choose, as long as it retains historical accuracy – for which we ourselves depend on past recorders, of course. Thank you for this great piece, Len, indeed a testament to all that lockdown walking.*

**Memories are so often really memories of people, aren't they, and how they made us feel. Those pieces were rich with them. Here are Gordon's photos. He wrote:**

I was walking past a cupboard today and the vibration caused the door to fly open and my old autograph book (do you remember those?) fell to the floor, spilling out a little card - this ticket to a Brady Cup final, May 4th 1953, with the signatures of the team on the back, many of whom were my classmates.



I'm not sure if the school team won - but at least they were in the final. You'll see that at least two of the names - Johnny Hall and Cyril Harris – are in this photo of the Lower VI Physics class.



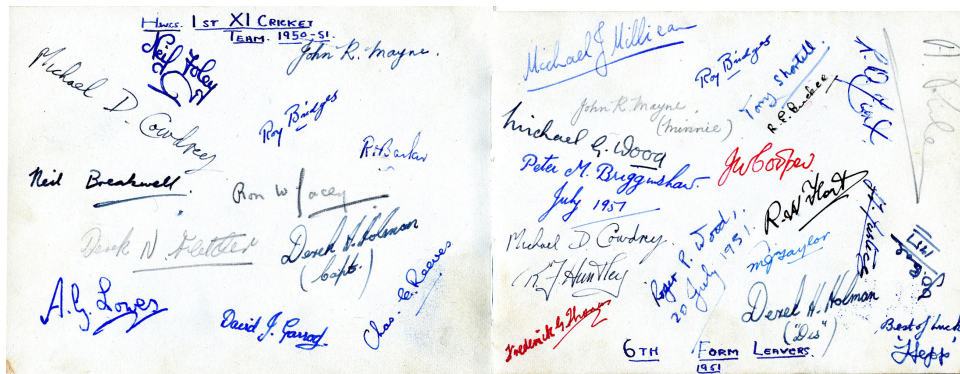
Front bench: **Peter Heath**, 2nd Bench L-R: **Len Whitford**, **Colin Tripp** (obscured behind Peter), 3rd bench L-R: **Johnny Hall**, **Cliff Farrell**, 4th bench L-R: **Cyril Harris**, **Norman Beazant**, **Michael Owen**, Back bench L-R: **Tim Sullivan**, **Gordon Taylor**, **Ron Young**, **Anne Barker**, and right at back by the chemical balance: **June Hawkins**

*Ed. The meticulous naming was done by Gordon and Len working as a team, over email – grateful thanks to both. It makes such a difference to really know who everyone is.*

The downside of an e-Newsletter is of course having to read off the screen, although you will have relished those pieces regardless; but the huge upside is that you can magnify these photos to get the full benefit of them. Two more follow, again, full of people you may remember.

**Gordon writes:**

Two adjacent pages in that autograph album were dedicated to the 1st XI Cricket team of 1950/1 and the VI form leavers of 1951. I'm not sure what possessed me to obtain their autographs, but Derek Holman and Roy Bridges were our successive form prefects and, to us second formers, those fellows were grown men and took something of a hero stance.



So many people remembered, and lots more to come. Thank you for those terrific pieces.

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**Sad news to share, of Yvonne Orchard née Awcock 1951**

On Sunday 13th September, the message below arrived from Eddie Orchard 1945. You will remember the lovely picture from the front of the most recent News and Views, Issue 43, in February this year. Yvonne and Eddie had returned for the first time to the place where their wedding reception had been, 57 years before. It was to join us for our first reunion in the new venue, the Memorial Hall in Harrow Weald. Eddie's message, although typically positive, was a sad shock.

My dear wife, Yvonne, died early on Friday morning. She had been diagnosed at the beginning of July with inoperable cancer of the pancreas. Yvonne remained at home throughout and received wonderful care in the hands of the members of the local Specialist Palliative Care Team who kept her free from pain as far as possible and when she died she was relaxed, peaceful and her face had a wonderful complexion.

Eddie went on to say that Yvonne had written 'her story', originally for their church, but which could also be shared with us. Again, typically positive, Yvonne's voice is so clear in this lively thoughtful piece. She wrote:

## YVONNE'S STORY

### About myself

I was born in March 1940, soon after the war started. Dad was in the army so he was absent during my early years and I was brought up by my mum and auntie. My grandfather lived with us, but later went to live with my uncles. I was a shy, quiet little girl (oh, yes, I was!). I got on well at my infants and junior schools and eventually went to Harrow Weald County Grammar School, which I enjoyed, although I sometimes think I was only there to make up the numbers. All this time I was going to Wealdstone Baptist Church, through Sunday School, then church and Girls Life Brigade, where I eventually became Lieutenant. When I was 15, I went with some other girls from GLB to a Billy Graham meeting at Wembley, and it was there that I gave my heart to the Lord. I am forever thankful to the Lord for giving me the best Sunday School superintendent in the world. He taught me so much. After becoming a Christian, I came out of my shell, as it were, and was happy to contribute during Bible Study and prayer meetings etc, and I taught in Sunday School for a while.

I was 17 when a handsome young(ish) man called Eddie joined my church (he was also an Old Wealden) and we were married when I was 21. We celebrated 59 years of marriage on the 2nd September 2020. We had two lovely little daughters, Diane and Ruth, who grew up to become beautiful young ladies who married and had children of their own. Diane had five children and Ruth had three, so Eddie and I had eight grandchildren who kept us busy. Sadly, Diane died of cancer when she was 44. It was a dreadful time for us and it was only our Christian Faith that carried us through it.

Our eight grandchildren also have their own children giving Eddie and I eleven great -grandchildren! I have helped with different activities in the churches we have attended through the years, including looking after young children in the creche, but eventually I realised I was too old, and unable to play on the floor with the babies or pick the toddlers up if they cried. I was also involved with older folk activities which I loved and enjoyed helping cook meals for them every other Monday.

Eventually, we knew God wanted us to change churches and decided to try Willenhall Free Church. As soon as we walked into the church, we both knew this was the place God wanted us to be. So, here we are!

Yvonne then speaks of her favourite hymn and bible verse, and for many of us, of any religion or none, the balm of being outside and seeing things grow and flourish has been so important to sustain us during all these strange months.

She says:

My favourite hymn is, 'O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder'. I especially love the second verse, which is rarely sung!

When, through the woods and forest glades I wander,  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;  
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur



And hear the brook  
And feel the gentle breeze  
Then sings my soul....' etc.

*(Ed. this was originally written, of course, for an audience who would need no reminding of the words that follow; but I'm sure that any lover of a good hymn will already, like me, have been singing along with her, and the words will surface.....)*

**Yvonne** says: I love this because I love God's creation, weather, trees and flowers etc, or animals. I'm reminded of God's power and goodness to us. I am also reminded of a day when in Israel, we were taken to a huge Roman Amphitheatre in Beth Shean. When walking around there a beautiful male voice began to sing, 'O Lord my God.' All the people there were silent, listening to this Christian man singing so peacefully – hardly a dry eye there!

My favourite Bible verse has kept on changing, but my favourite at the moment is Psalm 117 v 1&2: 'Praise the Lord all you nations; extol Him all you peoples. For great is His love towards us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures for ever.'  
At this time of anxiety about coronavirus, and mourning for loved ones who have died, this verse is a reminder to praise and extol the Lord at all times – His faithfulness will never end. He can be trusted!



**Eddie** ended his message 'wondering whether I will be at the next Reunion whenever that is held.' We do really hope so, Eddie, and meanwhile send our love and thoughts to you. Here's that happy photo from back in April 2019.

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## Weddings!

Yvonne, without a doubt, would have loved this next bit, which we owe largely to **Gillian Broadbent née Hammerton 1953**, who sent us this:

Another memory I have is of Miss Marjorie Sellars, the geography teacher. She was a delight as a teacher. I went on to do Geography at A-level, but I was sorry she was not there for my 6th form studies. In 1957 she married a Mr Jackson and left HWCGS. Some of her pupils went to the wedding which was in the church near the school. I am attaching the photo that was taken. I am sitting in the front next to Mr Jackson.

Oh, Gillian, so much to unpack there! First, did Gordon (memoir, first page) not mention another of Miss Sellars' admirers?! We can only hope that 'dapper Mr Crowley' went on to have a lovely life, too. This is a wonderful photograph, and even without all those smiling Harrow Weald faces, and the blazers, and the open-toed shoes, the very words A and J Hare, on that deckled wedding album paper, are part of many of our life stories.



As, of course, is that setting. My wedding was there - also with lots of smiling and then-young 'Old Wealdens'; and my sister's (me, a bridesmaid, with a day off school allowed, as it was a middle of the week one); and friend Lin Wallbridge's née Taylor 1960; and we did art there, down the side path, for calm hours with gentle, brilliant Mrs Passfield (and for later students, Helen Brooks, as Simon Stanley 1971 says in his news). I have no doubt there are many others who have similar memories on seeing Gillian's great photo.



All Saints Harrow Weald, August 23rd 1969 L-R: Geraldine Young née Williams, Clive Cooke. Gordon Jones, Penny Ginger, Sue Walker, John Holt, Robin Benton, Linda Jane, Dorothy Derbyshire née Mayes, Lin Wallbridge née Taylor, Rosemary Dear née James, Chris Chapman née Richards. Sadly, we no longer have Sue or Clive, both much missed. All 1960, or equivalent – Gordon joined us in the sixth.

## PS for radio fans

Back to those wedding albums, serendipitously, while ideas for this newsletter were emerging from all your contributions, Radio 4, on November 3rd, was playing an item from a quirky series called 'The Wedding Detectives', which feels very much 'our' sort of thing – in that, our membership, by definition surely, enjoys connections, history, people, stories, often leading to detective work! BBC Sounds will have it, if you want to listen. This item in particular seemed relevant to us, because the underpinning theme turned out to be life-long friendships, through good and bad times, as strong as family ties.

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### Mini-Memoirs

Thank you for these – a wonderful mixed bag.

#### **Barbara Summerfield née Penny 1943      Seven Get Lost in the Maze!**

So many happy memories. In the third year several of us went to Hampton Court Palace, into the maze, and promptly got lost! We were Elizabeth Martin, Jean Upton, Joy Swallow, Pat Norton, Marigold Ruffle, Celia Daly and myself. What fun we had!

#### **Eileen Buttle née Linford 1949**

Responding to the image of the School Captains board in the August Newsletter, Eileen said: My small claim to fame was that I featured on all three boards but I guess the others have been scrapped. If not, please don't send me a photo – my memory is enough! Yes, I enjoy the newsletters and am grateful to you all for keeping us in touch.

*(Ed. Obviously we reassured Eileen that they're safely tucked away – definitely not scrapped – and if anyone does want digital photos, please ask)*

#### **Chris Overson 1957**

I met another 1957er a year or so ago, John Radley. He had a cine camera at school (and later went into photography, TV production etc). He showed me a film he took at school and surrounding areas. Some of it was very silly. It included Marshall Colman 1957 wearing a gas mask getting on a bus in Wealdstone High Street. There were many bemused shoppers looking on. Very Monty Python.

#### **David Rowe 1956**

It was the day of the Harvest Festival morning assembly and it was of course traditional to sing the hymn 'We plough the fields and scatter'. The fifth and (some sixth) form boys hatched up what we thought was a cunning plan to stay silent for the first few words and then all shout out the word 'scatter!' Miss Pike was not amused and handed out a detention to the entire male fifth and sixth forms where we spent an hour after school honing our singing skills. *(Ed. so she could 'make the punishment fit the crime?' – and did she put you all on 'a little list' too? If you were in that detention with David – and there has to be someone else out there who remembers it – more please!)*

In response to the August newsletter, **Jocelyn Short née Johnson 1955** wrote: The 'Memories and Thoughts of an Old Wealden' reminded me of many teachers who made a lasting impression on me. I too became a teacher and I know I have to thank Harrow Weald for my place at Newton Park Training College in Bath. They must have given me a reasonable report as my exam grades were not brilliant (Ed. plenty of us can relate to that, Jocelyn!). I am grateful for the caring and inspirational people who were part of my formative and happy years at Harrow Weald.

I loved tennis, belonged to a club at home in Edgware, and enjoyed playing in matches for the school. I was not a highly academic pupil but PE was always a favourite subject so I braved the cold in the winter and played in the hockey team too. The school recognised something in me and, during my time in the sixth form, I spent part of my timetable assisting the PE Mistress with first and second year lessons. She also taught us Anatomy, Physiology and Hygiene, which was recommended for those of us thinking of becoming teachers or nurses.

I have recently found my way to the Facebook group so I have enjoyed seeing and reading about a few familiar folk. I think we are lucky to have had some notable and famous former pupils at our school, impressive for a school that only lasted a relatively few decades; and I have realised that we were fortunate to be part of a largely happy institution.

We had another thank you to inspirational teachers **from Stuart Irwin 1971**, which you can read in full at the end of this newsletter.

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### I wonder what happened to....

**By popular request, here is your place to think aloud about people you've wondered about.**

#### **Bob Chambers 1948**

The same week I received News and Views, in which Valerie Jablon née Mairants wrote memories of Thelma Emmans née Ergis, I was checking the line-ups of bands on a CD called 'A potted history of British Trad 1936-1963'. On one of the three discs I found 'Pete Kelly's Blues' by Sid Phillips and his band, and who was listed as the guitarist but Ivor Mairants, who I believe was Valerie's father. I hope that's right, the memory not being what it was.

And speaking of Trad I actually discovered the genre through a friend of Brian Giddings who asked me along to see the Ken Colyer band at The Royal Festival Hall in 1953. Brian was a 49'er and I often wonder what became of him, and indeed many others of my year. I seem to recall leaving his house one evening with Nell Harris, Brenda Harrington and Willy Hambleton, who I last saw at our Millennium Reunion at the Weald. Might there be a mechanism to publish names asking if anyone has information? My only remaining contacts are Bob Spandler and Johnny Hall. *(Ed. Indeed, Bob, and thank you for the prompt to put this feature back in).*

## **Stephen Berg 1950**

When looking through my OW folder I came across many 'memory jogs': OW News and Views till 2012, letters and photos of old friends, all of which prompted the inevitable question, "What happened to so-and-so?" Jackie Fenn, Christine Green, David Pickard and his wife Sue, Ron Young, the subject of the great send-off, being driven around the East Field on the roof of my Austin 7, Ann Pagnell, whom I don't recall but discovered a letter she once wrote to me. Another name I lost is Malcolm Wood with whom I studied engineering at Oxford. The last I heard is that he lived in Norway. A great hero of sports day in, I think, 1958 was Geoff Hammersley. He was one of the less sporty pupils but trained hard for and won the mile walk. I'll never forget that. And where is Craig Young with whom I spent many happy years building and flying model aeroplanes?

Campbell Watkins, where is he?

Jennifer Pallant?

The more I think about it the more names pop up!

What fun!!

I am in contact with Roger Hatt who left school after the 5th form and married Janet Bray, who unfortunately passed away a little while ago.

I also think of John Becker, my most memorable English teacher with whom I had a lively correspondence until at least 2005. We shared a love of humorous poetry.

*(Ed. Sadly, as we know, he is no longer with us; but Steve is going to tell us in a later edition about a 5th form poem recital, in unison, conducted by the most memorable and much lamented Mr John Becker. It concerned a certain 'John Jenkins'. If you were in that class, we'd love to know!)*

## **Fred Moore 1947**

Being greedy I hope you have space in the 'where are they now' section re Hilary May & Valerie Heath. I am not absolutely sure of their year of entry, possibly 1949 or 1950. If either or both contact me, it's lunch, dinner or afternoon tea on me anywhere, as long as it is not Australia.....or something. *(Ed. No problem Fred, but obviously, if this happens, we'd like the story please!)*

## **Gordon Taylor 1949**

In his great piece at the beginning of this newsletter, Gordon wonders about Derek Bloom, and also the barbershoppers of the East field. As he says, 'I believe they were Bob Chamberlain, Micky? Annals, Chris Cornford and one other.'

## **Leonard Whitford 1950 equivalent**

In Leonard's memoir, similarly, he wonders about his great friend, Tim Sullivan.

## **Eric Whittington 1959**

Eric has been working on tracing people from his year group, and recently 'found' us Liz Hall née Sanders, in Canada, who we're delighted to welcome back, and whose own story will be in a future edition.

Eric has also wondered about a teacher, Elizabeth Stalker. He writes: She taught geography but was only at the school I believe for about four or five terms before

leaving on maternity leave. She came on a field trip in 1966 with Ian Murray.

**Linda Jane 1960 (Ed.)** I wonder about my friend **Carol Bowell 1960**, sitting with Penny Ginger 1960 and myself (Ed.), all rather self-consciously eating our lunch on the South field.



We're not quite socially distanced, but actually obeying the rules more or less, re not breathing on each other! I have no idea who took the photo, but if you were male, it's probably too late for retribution at being on the girls' field. This photo was dug out when **Rosemary Dear née James 1960**, our Head Girl then and now, still keeping us organised, wrote cheerily to our year group in the face of everything being cancelled: 'so let's look forward to next spring

and summer and see what we can manage then. Even if we picnic in small groups around a park!' It's a shame the school fields aren't available for it, Rosemary, because it could be fun!

**So, do send your own 'I wonder's and we'll put them in the next edition.**

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### **Your news**

#### **Tony Radford 1957**

I have kept myself busy with various musical pursuits. Practising saxophone without having any rehearsals or gigs was a challenge but I am in reasonable shape for a first rehearsal since March of a group I play with which, hopefully, will happen 'spaciously', in a local Arts Centre in a converted church. I have also been writing/arranging loads of music for the various groups I play in - one way of alleviating the boredom.

I meet up with Graham Taylor 1957 regularly in London (he lives in Sussex) and our March get-together was one of the first social casualties of the lockdown. Hopefully, before long, we will be able to arrange to meet. Ironically, we were intending to come together to the April re-union - sods law rules again.

*Ed. Since Tony wrote the above, he's developed a pesky thumb – critical resting point for saxophones – and has all the other fingers crossed that it will get better asap. Very frustrating – and very painful. Those rehearsals did happen, though, and hopefully he will get back to his busy performing life soon.*

**Simon Stanley 1971** Helen Brooks, who joined the art department after Mrs Passfield went on sabbatical for a year in the 1970s, is still around - she is 92. She is a loyal and much-loved member of my church, St Michael & All Angels, Harrow Weald.

#### **Gillian Broadbent née Hammerton 1953**

I find I have plenty to keep me occupied - gardening, cooking, music - playing the piano, and listening to all my CDs, records and tapes, as well as reminiscing back to schooldays etc!

## **Rosemary Dear née James      1960**

Zoom is certainly stilted for meetings and hard work with a large number if everyone wants to speak. I've just chaired an AGM! Any questions or queries had to be submitted in advance by email and we dealt with them only by reading out a prepared statement. It certainly concentrated people's minds and cut out any follow up questions, so we achieved the shortest AGM on record!

We have been having our choir committee meeting on Zoom regularly since March and that's about 12 of us, (although there are usually some missing) and that's just about manageable - wine and nibbles, cake and coffee or tea usually feature in the proceedings!

*Ed. That sounds pretty expert Rosemary. I suspect there are a lot of Zoom experts out there now. I believe that Keith Mayes and Chris Overson have been doing some high-wire work with it, in the course of their non-OW activities, as well as in our own committee meeting recently. My own experience largely features small children who often go off to find things to show – or just go off.....but there have been some lovely moments, reading stories, and being able to look them right in the eyes and gaze a bit, not always so easy in person. Doesn't make up for not being able to have them under your feet, but failing that, it does seem to be a positive, on the whole. Do let us have your own stories.*

## **Jane Longford née Tann      1963**

There has been a lot of time for reflection over the last months, although precious little opportunity to socialise. I don't do Facebook or other social media, so it is my own fault if I feel out of touch! Jo (was Rogers), Chris (was Pain) and Pat (was Windust) do message each other regularly. We miss our annual meet ups in Birmingham though Jo and I have been able to get together a few times.

Strangely enough, I have been very busy. Apart from the early weeks of lockdown, when it was all frantic gardening and walking round the fields, sewing masks and finding supplies, my time has been taken over by moving. We had a buyer in early March, but could not look for houses for months, and even then it took so much planning to do any viewings, especially as we were not looking locally. If we had a day out, where could we get a cuppa or go to the loo if we were not allowed in our daughter's house?

Jo and her husband Peter were incredibly helpful during the last couple of days in Gloucestershire. Jo supplying lunch, cleaning and stopping me from getting too stressed out, Peter calmly helping Jim with last minute mending etc. Apart from the 3 years when we were in Australia and had rented the house out, we'd lived in the same place for 42 years. Jim's a hoarder; we had a large loft and a barn. So much stuff kept for when "we might need it". It took quite a while for me to convince him that maybe we didn't have another 40 odd years of DIY ahead of us. With visits to the local tip requiring bookings, and the charity shops still closed, it was hard to find homes for 'treasure' (Jim's opinion) 'junk' (my view).

Anyway, we have moved into South Oxfordshire, mainly to be nearer to the 'children': daughter and family are about 15mins away, and we are also now a decent driving distance from our sons and their families in London and Cambridge. I am managing to make some inroads into their (over?) protectiveness. It's hard to accept that I need to be looked after - caring is my role surely - but we are seeing the grandchildren at last. Not

yet as much as I would like, but we all have to be sensible, I guess.

*Ed. Congratulations on the move, Jane. Life-long OW friends helping out in a move and keeping us sane? Yes, for us, several times, and always Lin Wallbridge née Taylor 1960, and husband Roger, ready to empty out their newly built garage for all our stuff, and much other good honest help.*

## **Gillian Llewellyn née Miles 1956**

Back in April Gillian wrote: I've been rather overwhelmed by emails and messages of different kinds, some of them, I'm glad to say, from contemporary OWS. I've also been cultivating the bit of garden outside my flat while the weather is warm.

So many of us, it seems, have been gardening to lift the spirits. We'll end this batch of News with a celebration, and something we don't get to say that often these days – except to grandchildren. So.....

## **Happy 21st Barrie!**

In issue 42, back in 2019, below the great image of Heather Bickerton with her 90th birthday cake, we invited you to 'send us your birthday reports and photos, however young you are'. Took a while, but one of you did, and so we'd like to send belated 21st birthday wishes to **Barrie Hooper, 1947**.

According to friend **Fred Moore 1947**, Barrie and his wife **Rosalie Hooper née Browne 1947**, managed to fit in his coming of age party just 'a whisker' before lockdown in March. You may want to note the date.

### **Fred wrote:**

Barrie (Baz) had his 21st birthday party on 29th February this year. We had a great celebration in the village hall in Knaresborough, and I made him a big silver key, presented with full maker's notes, along the lines of:

Congratulations! You are now the owner of one of the finest products handcrafted by an artisan from yesteryear, using finest materials gathered from the best local flytips, dustbins, etc. No modern day machinery such as lasers were used, just a 30inch panel saw, rasp and sand paper. Our artisan honed this item to perfection, and you will be proud to own it – and show your lack of good taste – or, discard it at once and show your lack of humour.



Also present were family and friends including Old Wealdens **Gill Charcraft née Browne 1941**, **Carol Blake née Darvill 1959** and myself, Fred Moore 1947.

Sadly several other members invited were unable to attend due to illness, including **Audrey Charlesworth née Browne (1939)** and **Sheila La Riviere née Cummins (1947)**.



Altogether more than fifty attended what was a delightful evening of feasting, drinking and Country dancing. With such music, and a brilliant Caller, everyone was able to join in the various routines, although some with more aplomb than others. A great time was had by all and everyone went home suitably lubricated in the joints and elsewhere. Barrie, naturally, being just 21, was for the whole evening full of 'le Joie de Vivre'. Someone said - allegedly - that it was more like 'Joie de Whisky'.

This was Barrie Hooper's original 21st birthday celebrated at the Orchard in Ruislip, a smart and expensive place then. 18/6 per head in those days. A small fortune. We were oh so handsome. Can't believe it.



From Left to Right: Lorna, (Alan's girlfriend) not from OW; **Alan Slater (1946)**; Barbara Gristwood (my fiancée) not at OW; Yours Truly (1947), **Rosalie Browne (1947) Barrie's fiancée, soon to be Mrs Hooper**; and **Barrie (1947)**

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### What's next?

For **Rosemary Luck**, of course, that box of Old Wealdens News and Views (front page) is a precious family archive too, as most were designed and printed by the family firm, namely by Peter, and his son Jonathan, who, in a pleasing bit of continuity, also studied at Harrow College. **In the next paper edition, the plan is to tell some of their story, from conversations with both Rosemary and Peter.**

Meanwhile, with reunion plans still uncertain, on a lovely day in September, when we could still visit each other's gardens, **Kay Haig 1963** visited Peter's, to present him with engraved beer glasses in deep appreciation of his great contribution over the years as editor and committee member.

Kay said: 'It was good to see Peter again and to meet his lovely wife, Audrey. They gave me a very friendly welcome and you will be pleased to hear that they both looked very well.' The photograph Kay took certainly shows that.



**A great reminder, too, of the lovely summer that made lockdown that bit easier! It will be good to hear from Rosemary and Peter in the next edition.**

With hopes of reunions in mind, if you were one of those wondered-about 'barbershoppers of the East field' in the fifties, we'd really, really like to know, because there's a stage in the Memorial Hall, and you'll remember, from Issue 43 (p8), that we've, tongue in cheek, already booked **Ian Davies 1965 fifth form** for a public reunion of one of his sixties band iterations when he comes for another visit from Australia in 2023. In this edition alone, as well as the barbershop, there have been mentions of trad jazz, massed comic poetry recitals, staged melodramas, piano-vocal duets, piano solo-ing, and heaven help us, country dancing with a caller (don't worry, we'd get one who knows we're all past our first flush of youth! We may even have one 'in house').

We've a wealth of talent, across the year groups, and a bit of singing and dancing and 'Happening' (remember that, from the sixties?) would be a joyous way to welcome back a more normal life again – not that it wouldn't be joyous simply to sit, eat and talk together, of course. What do you think? The committee would love to know, and can't wait to organise our next reunion, whenever it turns out to be.

Another thing in the pipeline to look forward to is the feature about our three Headteachers. With that in mind, a request: **Memories of Harry please! This is a special plea to members from the 1960s and 1970s.** I'd completely forgotten that this was our name for Mr H Thurston, until **John Carr 1960**, who is collecting your contributions, used it in a message to me a while ago, and I was instantly back in uniform, walking those corridors! 'Harry's' story suffers from his being the least obviously charismatic of our three head-teachers – but although different from his predecessors, in retrospect his was a quietly strong headship too, and his love of the school and genuine care for us all just as true.

**We do have a thought-provoking memory, and his own news, from Stuart Irwin 1971.**

**Stuart wrote:** I always feel very lucky to have gone to Harrow Weald. Had I not, I think I would have been a completely different person by now and probably would have followed my father into the building trade. I am teaching in The European School of Helsinki and not in the Finnish State schools as such (though my direct employers are The Ministry of Education). I have been here about 10 years. My own two children are in the Finnish state system. It was interesting to hear of the connection to the Institute of Education, for that is where I trained!

By the time I arrived at Harrow Weald Grammar School, as it was then known, Mr Thurston was the Head and Mr Clark the Deputy Head. I didn't see very much of either of them. I do remember that, during the first assembly, all the teachers on the stage wore black, long gowns. That is the first and last time I saw those but now they make me think of Hogwarts!

The only other memories of Mr Thurston at school were that he used to give 'Headmaster's' lessons to us first years about local history - I remember that he was talking about two up, two down houses - and that two of my friends were given the cane by him, the last ever canings in the school! I was not involved I hasten to add.

Great to think of Stuart teaching in Finland, with the legacy he feels comes from his education at Harrow Weald, and the connection with the Institute of Education at the University of London, which comes up often in our own legacy. So many questions, too. Whose decision was it that made those 'the last ever canings in the school'?

**So, over to you, for your memories, answers to questions, people you've 'wondered about', or whatever you want to share. The best of wishes to all, from all the committee, and thank you, as always, for contributing so much rich material to keep us thinking and remembering.**

Contact details for your contributions and for all the committee, are in the most recent News and Views, Issue 43, page 19. The next paper edition is planned for the beginning of February.

November 19th 2020  
Old Wealdens News and Views Extra

*e-Newsletter Nov-2020/3*