

# e-NEWSLETTER



**NOVEMBER 2015**

Editors: Alistair McGechie and Peter Luck



For Members, Family and Friends of the  
**OLD WEALDEN ASSOCIATION**

Facebook: <https://goo.gl/Lrr1JR>

## Welcome to this November 2015 issue

### Editorial – 1

THE 30s building (as we called it when I was at school) or the Austen Building (as it is now known) is being sold. This means we can no longer have our reunions in that building. The question then becomes: are we going to have any more reunions? The Old Wealden Association Committee is working towards answering this question with the current college administration. We hope the answer is 'Yes'. (*It is – see panel below*)



But this leads to another question: what is the future of the News and Views? Until now we have seen the reunions as being an important part of our role in providing a service to Old Wealdens everywhere.

We have reached a crisis in the history of the organisation, and we need to have pointers towards the future. The News & Views publication could play a central role in co-ordinating developments for the future. If we do not have reunions, is this the only way that Old Wealdens can contact each other? We only seek to serve you, so we would like your views on where we go from here.

Is the News & Views a contact point for contemporaries? Does it act as a news exchange? Should it encourage and promote smaller groups to meet at 'little reunions'?

How are we to develop our programme to meet your needs?

– Alistair McGechie

### Editorial – 2

THIS is only the second e-Newsletter we have put out this year chiefly, I think, because there has been much less material coming forward from the members.



Anyway we have one here and now and sadly the majority of the pages are given over to obituaries. So sad, but they are well written and very interesting.

We will still be publishing the paper version of the Newsletter in January and could we ask members to bear this in mind and if you feel the urge please put something on paper or email, or send us some pictures, for use in that paper edition.

#### **STOP PRESS**

**Very recent news concerns our Annual Reunion.**

**The Principal has said we can have the Reunion next year but that it cannot be in the old School building (the Austen Building).**

**We can however, use the Newton Building – it is the one on the other side of the Boys' playground which we have used before on occasions when we have hired a marquee for a special reunion.**

**Two dates have been mooted – 23rd and 30th April the last two Saturdays in April – our normal time. An email consultation of the committee reveals that the 30th is favourite, so pencil it in. But only in pencil; it's not definite. Wait for the January paper issue of the Newsletter where it will be confirmed.**

# A WARTIME RELIC ...



**W**HATEVER is this, you are wondering? None of you will recognise it unless you were at The Weald during the War years. Some of you may have seen this specimen produced with much care at the last Reunion by Rosemary Luck who has been its custodian for about 70 years. It goes back to wartime school dinners when the kitchen staff did a very good job of keeping us fed and watered each day in spite of rationing and food shortages.

They produced a limited variety of puddings, but the mainstay was bread pudding. One day, after eating our dinner in the shelters, this chunk was secreted away carefully and ceremoniously buried in the long-jump sandpit on the East field, carefully wrapped in toilet paper – not the soft white variety we know today, but a pale shade of brown, hard stuff! Later dis-

interred in an even more solid state it became the form's heirloom.

For three years our Form Mistress was Miss Sellars, the Geography teacher, and we occupied her room on the South side of the building. This also had high-level small windows on the corridor side and the heirloom was put up on the window ledge where it could not be seen, carefully placed there by the tallest member of the class who climbed up on the desks risking life and limb, and certainly a detention if caught, or a visit to the Head.

Sometime during those three years a couple of bread rolls joined the bread pudding. These were the products of somebody's cookery efforts which turned out like miniature cannon balls. They were still around up until a few years ago but have since either exploded or disappeared into the mists of time.

Our heirloom was rediscovered last year in a box of Rosemary's old school books still wrapped in its wartime toilet paper, and has now safely returned there to crumble away in peace – or pieces.

(Displayed at the Tate it might win the Turner Prize nowadays !)

*Rosemary Luck and Margaret (Kay) Paine, (1941)*

## More Wartime Relics ...

### FORM 5B July 1946

*Back row:* Tom Gregory, James Burgess, Derek Lansley, Ken Fraser, Norman Mully.

*Second row:* Ann Parry, Audrey Barnard, Stan Elliston, Alan Fox, Arthur Downing, Mary Morris, Margaret Kay.

*Third row:* Ralph Love, Edgerton Green, Peter Harris, 'Spike' West, Janet Guy, Joan Howe, Rosemary Reece.



*Front row:* Muriel Grint, Jean Kirkland, Gillian Browne, Maureen Irwin, Betty Denton, Rosemary Luck, Barbara Heathcote.

## CAN YOU PROVIDE A HOME FOR ...

DUETO the change of use of the School building some items belonging to OWA have been displaced and need a home. The Committee is wondering whether any member would like to take charge of either one of the Honours boards from the Hall or one or more out of a set of Encyclopædia Britannica which may otherwise end up in a skip!

### HONOURS BOARDS

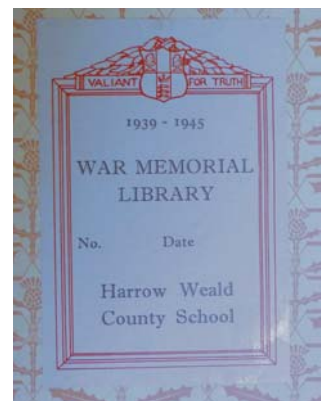
These boards variously list former members of the School for different reasons – School Captains / University Honours, etc. – and are approx 4'6" x 2'6", made of hard wood and written in black with the names of those remembered. They formerly had a place in the Hall.

### ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA

Old editions of the Encyclopædia Britannica. It is thought that these are of little value although some have a bookplate linking the volume to the School and referring to the School War Memorial Library.

Old Wealdens who would like to make an early expression of interest for these mementos, as described above, are asked to contact Chairman Chris Overson (020 8427 3597) and we will discuss collection arrangements. Decisions as to who gets what will have to be delayed until after the appearance of the paper version in January as otherwise those members without email would not get a fair chance to 'bid' for a memento.

Transfer may be possible at the Reunion at the end of next April or earlier by arrangement.



*Bookplate which appears in the encyclopædias*

## YOUR COMMENTS ...

### ANGELA BUISSON (née WEST) (1947) of Heacham, Kings Lynn, writes ...

I had a second bowel operation at the beginning of the year but I am feeling well and my usual energetic self now. Am a member of the local U3A. I enjoy hand bell ringing, rambling, Scottish dancing, playing the recorder and gardening. I am very proud of my grandson, Douglas, who is studying for a Ph.D. at Trinity College, Cambridge. In Astro-Physics !!

### CHRISTINE OLIVER (née SMITH) (1955) of Dunster, writes ...

I have recently met up with an OW from my class and we are both wondering what has happened to all the rest of Year 1955 as very few seem to contribute to the News or attend the Reunions that we each attended. Could you put out an appeal, please? Strangely I play bowls with someone from my year; we both moved to the village within months of each other. We did not remember each other.

*[ED: So, 1955ers, let's be hearing from you!]*

### GENTLEMEN OF THE STAFF OF HARROW WEALD COUNTY SCHOOL

On the occasion of Birdie Swallow's leaving in 1949

*Standing (l to r):* T. R. Thompson, C. A. Lowry, J. G. Barker, I. Wyn Jones, K. Tyler, Spike West, A. M. Carroll, J. V. Barker, A. Halfpenny.

*Seated (l to r):* R. Schofield, L. Clark, A. N. Hauptrief, R. MacGregor, Birdie Swallow, D. F. Bergin, P. J. Larkin, D. D. Crowley.



## – OBITUARIES –

### SHEILA EVANS (née BUTLER)

17th January 1928 – 27th March 2015

IN 1938 two young people, Sheila Butler and David Evans, started school together at Harrow Weald County School. For some time they were in the same class and endured the Blitz. Sheila sat her School Certificate in the air raid shelter. On leaving school they went their separate ways.

A few years later David was a graduate at King's College, London, and Sheila was working in the City. She was heavily involved in the old school mixed hockey team and "ambushed" David as he walked to the bus stop with his hockey kit and roped him in to play with the Old Wealden team. Thereafter she took to hitching a ride to the tube station on his motorbike. Greatly daring David asked her on a camping holiday in Switzerland on the bike. To his amazement she accepted. It wasn't the last time he or the family relied on her language skills.

She was a smart girl who left school at 16 to start work. Her administrative and language skills soon combined with her sense of adventure and she went to work in Switzerland for Nestlé with her lifelong friend Margaret Scarr. They shared a flat, had parties and went skiing. They also hid from their landlady the young man who turned up on his motorbike to see Sheila!

Shortly after returning to England, Sheila accepted David's proposal and they started a long and happy marriage which lasted over 58 years.

Early in their marriage they set off for a two year stay in Mexico travelling extensively in that country – when David could get time away from his work building a factory for his long-term employers, ICI.

When they returned to live in Suffolk it was with great joy that her much wanted family arrived, three girls – Harvey, Patricia and Barbara.

Throughout their marriage they indulged their love of the British Isles, particularly East Anglia, the wild places of Europe and many countries further afield.

Sheila often painted scenes from her trips and her garden, making many friends through art classes.

She had an active role in the Liberal Party, which she saw as champions of fairness and opportunity, particularly matching her views on access to good housing and education for all.



*A fairly recent shot of Sheila and David at home at Hoxne.*

She worked for Save The Children for over 30 years, founding one branch and resurrecting a second, both still thriving. It is impossible to measure her fund-raising but we know she helped countless children through her work.

Sheila was a life-long serious singer with local choirs and derived immense enjoyment from her membership of the Eye Bach Choir whose members sang at her funeral.

After they moved to Hoxne 28 years ago Sheila became deeply immersed in the village community. They were active members of the Garden Club and Hoxne Theatre Club enjoying many trips. Continuing their love of travel they delighted in trips to Europe with Probus.

Sheila was also a long-standing member of the village W.I. And was briefly involved in a national controversy when they left the W.I. and founded Phoenix.

At the end of this very long and eventful journey that David and Sheila have taken together, they probably never imagined as they sat in that classroom in Harrow Weald in 1939, how their lives would be linked for so many years.

*(The above was taken from the family's Eulogy.)*

***Some memories from Heather Bickerton (née Wheatley) 1940 ...***

I attended three schools and two tennis clubs with Sheila. Aged 4 we met at Littleden School which became Whitegate School from whence we transferred to Harrow Weald County. Sheila and I left at 16. Our families were members of Woodlands Tennis Club which amalgamated with

the Elms Tennis Club about 1939. Here we worked our way up from the sandpit to the tennis courts.

When Sheila and David married I was Matron of Honour and then Godmother to Patricia.

Arthur (Archie) Orchard (1939) and I had many happy visits to their beautiful 15th century, wood-framed farmhouse in Hoxne. David did amazing building work there creating a beautiful, welcoming home. They also made a spectacular garden where we used to play croquet. These visits were combined with showing my 1962 Hillman Minx Convertible classic car at Rickinghall where Sheila was busy with the Save The Children stall.

I, along with so many other friends, will miss Sheila's constant friendship.

*Heather Bickerton (née Wheatley) 1940*

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### *Some memories from Peter Luck (1943) ...*

**M**y memories of Sheila date from about my fourth year at school when Sheila was a senior and used her musical talent in the House singing competition to great effect. She had a wonderful voice and scored many points for Milton House.

After school and being involved with the OW mixed hockey team our paths crossed again with Sheila excelling as a thrusting right winger supplying ample opportunities for the forwards. She contributed to much of our success. David was also part of the package and bolstered our midfield to great effect.

Both David and Sheila enjoyed the Easter jaunts which the OW mixed team (and friends) went on to Lake District and North Wales venues. One year I was fortunate enough (or not) to be offered a lift on his pillion seat by David who was going by motorbike. It was an interesting new experience for me.

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*Sheila and David were intrepid walkers.*

**DENNIS GODWIN**

9<sup>th</sup> June 1929

–  
7<sup>th</sup> May 2015



**D**AD was born in Harrow, Middlesex on the 9th June 1929, and had two sisters, Sheila and Pam, a half-brother, Cyril, and half-sister, Ethel. He was brought up in a loving, happy and supportive family.

Dad attended Harrow Weald County Grammar School 1941 – 1948, and as well as doing well academically, was in the football and athletics teams. Along with Peter O'Malley, Dad organised and hosted reunions for his 5C classmates in Aylesbury in 2001 and 2011. We were pleased some of his classmates were able to attend his funeral.

Dad joined the Boy Scouts in 1940 aged 11 years old when Baden Powell was Chief Scout of the World. On 30th May 1944 he was appointed Assistant Scout Master of the 14th Harrow Methodist Church Group aged 15, with a Certificate from the Chief Scout and as well as weekend camps he took the Troop on Annual Camp to Bournemouth in 1946. Dad went on to become a Rover Scout in 1947 whilst engaged in his Army National Service in Aldershot. He joined 9th Aylesbury and served on the Aylesbury District Committee for 32 years. He enjoyed his scouting and all of its values, integrity, duty, teamwork, and commitment. One of Dad's strongly held beliefs was one didn't just take from society; one also had to give back.

Dad met Mum at the Methodist Youth Club and no distance was going to stop him from seeing her. He thought nothing of cycling the 82 mile round trip, to visit her at weekends. They were married on 15 March 1952. There soon followed three children, Jan, Liz and Nigel as well as son number two, David (Jan's husband) and daughter number three, Lesley (Nigel's wife); six grandchildren and one great granddaughter. Dad was an exemplary father and as well as being loving and supportive, he encouraged independence, diligence, an inquiring mind and achievement. Dad was the rock of the Godwin family.

Dad loved his role as a grandfather; as well as babysitting he spent many hours playing board and ball games and attended all the major events in his grandchildren's lives. Dad was very competitive and his grandchildren's various successes in their lives made him very proud.

Early in their married life Mum and Dad moved to

Harmondsworth village and met their lifelong friends, the Harmondsworth Crowd. In 1976 they bought their first caravan and enjoyed many holidays in the South of France, Italy and Germany. Dad enjoyed active holidays and completed five National Trails, some 617 miles, walking The Ridgeway, North Downs Way, South Downs Way, Cotswold Way, and the Offa Dyke Path.

Dad was an accountant, and worked at Heinz, Mars and latterly Rank Xerox. Even after retiring he loved to talk about business and was always interested in hearing about and discussing knotty work issues or funny incidents that happened.

Dad's career meant a relocation in 1979 and they left Harmondsworth for Aylesbury. Mum joined the Aylesbury Wine Circle in 1982 and Dad, a teetotaler, has for many years enjoyed attending the social occasions and becoming part of the Wine Circle social group, enjoying BBQs, Uno evenings, Quiz nights, Pub nights, and celebratory dinners in conjunction with the village of Puttenham.

Dad loved military band music, pomp and circumstance, and loved being English. He enjoyed the Blenheim Proms, Trooping the Colour, Remembrance Service and pageantry. As children we were regulars at the Royal Tournament and often awoke on Sunday mornings to 300 Glorious Years by The Band of HM Royal Marines.

Another passion of Dad's was sport; he competed at White City on the track, played in the school football team, played tennis, squash, skied and was a devoted Arsenal fan. He would have been delighted that they won the FA Cup this year.

Dad was keen to travel and during his National Service he volunteered to go anywhere in the world; however, he got no further than Aldershot! Dad enjoyed travelling and the family had many happy holidays. Cyprus was a favourite destination for Dad and Mum and they also visited Canada, China and cruised Egypt, the Mediterranean and the Baltic.

When Dad was caring for Mum, despite our best efforts to give him a break, he would not leave her side and showed such courage and steely determination and made us so proud of him. .

Dad was a glass half full person with a ready smile and a joke. He was always smart, reliable, and punctual ... well perhaps not always when Mum was accompanying him! Dad had a happy and contented life and although he is no longer with us, he will always live on in all our hearts.



*John Becker as many of us will remember him, accompanying the School Song for us on the piano on Reunion Day.*

## JOHN BECKER

I was very sorry to read in the December newsletter that John Becker had died. He and I were colleagues in the French department from 1958 until John left to take up a headship. He was always friendly and good-humoured, and willing to help a younger colleague, as were the other two members of the department, Lester Clarke and Françoise Hill.

My memories of Harrow Weald are of a happy, well-ordered community with lots of extra-curricular activities. I think the day-to-day discipline of the school in those days was entrusted to just two members of staff, a man and a woman, who were on duty for a whole week. I can't imagine that system working in today's secondary schools! A new member

of staff would be on duty with a more experienced colleague. When, after perhaps a year and a half, I found myself sharing the duties with a newcomer it gave me quite a jolt to realize that I was now regarded as competent and reliable!

One of my friends on the staff was Ina Grant who taught English. It was her first teaching post and she already owned a car, a present from her parents. This car aroused some feelings of envy in the minds of other female colleagues who travelled to school on public transport. One by one they started to take driving lessons and eventually acquired cars of their own. The three I remember best were Renee Joseph, Irene Pyke and Clare Pope, but I am sure that there were others who followed suit. One morning Clare, still an inexperienced driver, was waiting to turn right into the school entrance and perhaps hesitating too long. An impatient male driver behind her started to sound his horn. With great deliberation Clare put on her handbrake, switched off the engine, got out of her car, walked calmly towards the offending motorist and said in her sweetest voice, "Are you in trouble? Can I be of any assistance?" I have no record of the other driver's comments!

Thank you to the committee (past and present) for the interesting newsletters and for organising the many successful reunions.

*Mary Brown (staff, 1958 to 1965)*

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## IRENE (HARPER) CALUS 1934

My sister died on 18th May 2014.

Irene was advised by her maths teacher E. M. Potts that statistics might interest her, and he was right.

She attended King's College London to study for a Maths degree. After Year 1 the college was evacuated to Bristol University. On fire-watching duty a fire bomb landed on the roof. A graphic record of the event was given by a fellow student which told of Irene calmly removing the bomb with only the aid of some sand and a long-handled shovel. Perhaps she saved Bristol University?

Back in London for finals her first job was with a non-ferrous metal rod company. She then decided on a change of career and took a teacher training qualification. Her first appointment was at Salford University. Her initial class was with demobbed Polish

soldiers and was greeted by a large drawing on the blackboard of a bouquet bearing the legend 'For Teacher'. Undeterred she soldiered on enjoying the post-war atmosphere with students of all ages, disciplines and nationalities.

Her next move was to Loughborough University. She was amazed to find she was the first woman to be employed on the staff.

Irene cooperated with three colleagues to produce training manuals on Differential Equations. The use of typists using the new golf ball typewriter produced copy camera-ready for printing and resulted in a more affordable text-book for students.

The English Speaking Union sponsored a trip for Irene to America travelling on the Queen Elizabeth.

In 1961 she married a lecturer from the Chemistry Department. They both continued teaching at Loughborough until their retirement.

I am now the custodian of two leather-bound books which were awarded to Irene for First in Class in year 1 and 2. These books have a magnificent gold badge tooled on the front.

A very loyal and helpful sister greatly missed.

*Olive Harper (1940)*

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*And now some anecdotes from her very good friend. They were told to sit next to each other on their very first day at HWCS.*

#### **Irene (Harper) Calus 1934**

I went home from my first day at Harrow Weald reassured. I had met up with a former friend from Primary School in Wealdstone, Barbara (Hopson) Mackenzie, and sat next to Irene (Harper) Calus, and it seemed a friendly place.

Irene quickly revealed her mathematical talents and friends often sought her advice. Her sister Olive who was then about six or seven years old once found her standing in the bath signalling the answers to the Maths homework to me across the gaps in the houses. Thinking the taps needed turning on Olive obliged. Irene's shrieks brought their mother upstairs and alas the episode was never repeated.

There were deeply inviting ditches in College Hill Road on the way to school. We occasionally succumbed to temptation and removed our shoes and socks and paddled in those early days.

After the sixth form Irene went on to study maths at King's College London evacuated to Bristol University, and I spent weekends there with her sometimes. Thereafter we met mainly on holidays. In time, when Irene was studying to lecture in Further Education, I joined her on a college trip to France, and

one evening several of us were reported missing to the Paris Police. The Gendarmerie found it hard to believe that FIVE Mademoiselles were lost. We were eventually found safe, and a trifle repentant.

Irene then began her first job at Salford University. Her class of newly demobbed Polish soldiers greeted her with a large bouquet drawn on the blackboard bearing the legend 'FOR TEACHER'. But she enjoyed the post-war atmosphere with students of all ages and nationalities.

I was now married and living in Germany, my husband having heard of our posting there the day after our return from honeymoon. *En route* to her Austrian holidays Irene often came and stayed with us in München Gladbach.

She met her husband Dr. Wacek Calus when she transferred to Loughborough University and they settled there. On retirement Irene took up charity work. She practised rôle-playing and conversation with boys from the home for the blind which backed on to their garden and did 'make do and mend' on garments given to the charity shop where she volunteered. Wacek sadly died a few years after retirement and Irene became less mobile and had hearing problems. But she still got about by taxi.

We also instituted an annual day trip to Leamington Spa – adjudged half-way between our two homes – for lunch and catching up. We managed to do this for ten years. But the heart problems she had had for a while became increasingly troublesome recently. She was admitted to hospital and died on May 18th.

Despite her talents Irene was a quiet and self-effacing person. She was also a good and loyal friend. I shall always miss her.

*Gwen (Fewings) Birkett (1934)*

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*Could we remind members that the copy deadline for the January 2016 paper issue of the Newsletter is the end of December just about six weeks away.*

*Please, if you feel moved to write something to share with us all, be it memories, pictures or original writings, do so and send it to one of the Joint Editors:*

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