

OCTOBER

NEWSLETTER

No.5 – October – 2013



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

Joint Editors:
ALISTAIR McGECHIE (1957)
PETER LUCK (1943)

Just two words : **THANK YOU!**

COMING to Harrow Weald changed my life, and knowing the importance of detailing to students the specific ways in which they have done well, rather than just giving them a general pat on the back, here are a few specifics, from many. They are random, and not entirely coherent, probably, but here goes.

Deeply revealing play

Someone in the English department imaginatively decided to take the first years to a London production of 'Amen Corner' by James Baldwin, a play that was a revelation to me, and affected me deeply. I remember exactly where I was sitting, and the way it made me feel. When it was put on again, at the Tricycle Theatre in Kilburn (the first professional production, I discovered, since that memorable school outing), we took our older children. We were the only white family there, in a wonderful, excited audience, and the children remember it well – including the fact that their current favourite presenter

of Blue Peter was in the audience, and one of their favourite presenters of Play School when they were little was acting. The lives of our children have gone on to suggest that this experience was an influence on them too.

We mattered !

Two more words: *generosity* and *opportunity*. Our teachers shared their lives with us, always professional, but never distant or 'above'. They made us feel we mattered, whoever we were, and they leapt on little windows of ability to nurture. I have experienced the opposite since – and so have my children – and knowing that it could be done better, we departed quickly and sought out kinder, more congruent places to learn. Specifics: Miss Franklin invited me to turn piano pages for her amazing Dance Drama productions, to be part of it, when I would never have had another role, not then at least. I remember the excited darkness down 'in the pit' before the brilliant lights and colours of my

friends doing wonderful stuff up on the stage. Shove wrote only kind and positive things in my A level history report – when I was struggling with dates and treaties and revolutions – and although I don't have the certificate to hang on the wall, I do have a continuing deep love of history and went on to begin to understand the geo-political stuff too, just a bit! Scary wonderful Miss Pope cared so much about her subject – but also about us – and I remember a Chaucer House meeting, squeezed into the biology lab one lunchtime, when she quietly made sure I had somewhere to sit in spite of the crush, because she knew I had just returned after weeks off with pneumonia. I do still have to refer to 'geraniums' as pelargoniums, too, in spite of popular misconception, in deference to her – and I vividly recall the sharp smell of burning egg white, forever in my mind associated with those lab benches, and her. So many kindnesses, so much sharing of ideas, of their experiences, their passions, their philosophy of life, their clear sense of vocation in what they were doing with us in that rapidly changing, febrile, terrifying decade of the sixties – but also the memory of staff



laughter ringing up the front corridor as they shared with each other. I remember much smiling, much talking, and yes, lots of laughing and listening – a rich place to be for those of us with maybe more emotionally restricted homes, who saw how life could be, and never forgot.

Good fortune

The Thank You to the luck that sent me to Harrow Weald also includes being educated in Harrow at a time when music was so magically accessible. I went to Greenhill Primary School and was taught by the beautiful Miss Bannister, the first to lead us in a crocodile round to the Granada cinema for the termly concert by the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Muir Matheson. Gulp. One day, the soloist was late arriving, so Mr Matheson told us we would be entertained in the meanwhile by their harpist, Osian Ellis, gulp again, who played us Welsh folk songs and sang to us, sitting, it felt, in amongst us, on an apron brought out into the stalls. I don't remember if this particular occasion was during primary school days or once I was at Harrow Weald, and I'm hoping someone else out there remembers too, and got the same exquisite chills, never to be forgotten. I didn't enjoy time-tabled music lessons, I have to confess, but the extra-curriculum music more than made up for

that, and gave me the happiest days of my school life. Those LSO trips were amazing, and from Harrow Weald we still walked, down into Harrow and back up again, in our crocodiles. One day, there weren't enough places for the whole of our class, and we drew lots for those few who would be left back at school. The clear silent sympathy on Miss Pyke's face when my name came out, and she knew just how much I'd miss it – bless her.

Glorious new music

She persuaded the young Wynford Evans to sing for our performance of St Nicholas, and the sudden realisation as it all came together in the dress rehearsal of just what it was all about gave me a love of glorious new music, with scrunches and silences and so much possibility. I was a 'Pickled Boy', hidden for part of it behind the stage curtain – there were just a few of us – who was with me?! (I also remember being in something called 'the special choir' – what was it, and who was in it with me?!) Waiting for the bus, down in Harrow, for the evening performance, in my stiffly ironed candy-striped summer dress, I was so very excited, so very happy. I still have every one of the concert programmes for those years, and remember many great performances. Dave Rosamund's lovely treble voice, Stephen Ralls and Stephanie Gush, my piano

heroes, Andrew on his flute, and of course, Mr Becker singing that solo – I have Richard Lewis singing it with the RPO ... but it's always the lovely Mr Becker I hear in my head.

I have to stop – so many memories, so much good honest kindness to carry me forward through good times and bad, and so much luck to have gone to 'the happy school'. My strong group of Harrow Weald friends know how glad I am that we all still like each other now, as well as remembering when we were growing up together, and we stood the best of chances of those relationships continuing, with the truth and generosity surrounding us back then as we formed our philosophies for trying to live richly and well. Thank you!

– *Linda Jane* (1960)

PS – Wrote the above 'straight off', uninhibited by the facts, but having sent it in, saw an ad for the National's production in August of The Amen Corner. Apparently he didn't write it until 1965, so it must have been an older version of me that was so affected. How often the memory is surprised by the facts! I'll let the rest stand, and wait for the rest of my cohort to correct me as needed.

[Linda says so eloquently what many of us can relate to our own experiences at Harrow Weald. – ED]

WEBSITE

There is another website running now. The address is

www.brookhillblog.com

YOUR NEWS: Please send to: alistair.mcgechie@btopenworld.com or
p.luck123@btinternet.com

MODERN COMMUNICATION

AT THE COMMITTEE MEETING earlier this week we had a considerable discussion regarding the communication with the membership, most notably about whether the practice we have developed with these E-Newletters can be extended to include other documents, in particular the letter which members get which informs of the upcoming Reunion and whether Members would be happy about getting this by email as a pdf (Portable Document Format) which, I think, all modern and most not-so-modern computers are able to access.

The point of using this method of communication is that it saves a lot of money. When you consider that a second-class stamp via snail-mail costs 50p (or in old money – ten shillings ! !) it should be up to the committee to make what savings they can.

This probably arose as I belong to another group (Hockey Writers' Club) whose membership is mostly scattered around the world. We regularly do most of our communication by email and thereby save a great deal of money.

There are several things to consider: we would not want the fact that we had started to use email to act as a deterrent if you don't want to do it that way. We would rather spend the money on postage than lose contact with you. But some members, although having email, tend to be quite anti about using it !

We do, of course, need to remember that there are always going to be some members who are not on email and we have, as always, to cater for their needs. What we are talking about is using modern methods of communication as much as possible in order to keep postage to a minimum.

So could those members who have an email address please let us know whether they would (a) be prepared to receive more communications by email and (b) whether they are able to access what we send out (by pdf). We believe that some members have not been able to open some of the E-Newsletters.

Initially we are interested in sending out the Reunion forms by email to those who can receive them. But there is also another way: we could put a form on the website and need to go into the technicalities of doing this but it should be possible to actually fill in the form on the net.

Please let us know what you think.

[Best wishes to all – ED–PL]

In Memoriam

We have very recent news of the sad death of another Old Wealden.

Jeanne (Freemont) Hawkes (1939) has died and we expect to have a full obituary in the next (paper) issue in January.

In the meantime we understand that the funeral service will be at Breakspear Crematorium, Ruislip, on Wednesday 16th October at 11.45 a.m.

A TREAT IN STORE !

following emails between Mollie (Villar) Mathieson (1936) and Bruce Fraser, one of her contemporaries, we have been passed a script from an Australian TV programme where Bruce was interviewed and his life story told. Bruce played a big part in the discovery of the origins of DNA and has had a remarkable career.

We are intending that this piece will be a major article in the next Newsletter.



Very many apologies to John Becker for failing to get his surname right – for the second time – when captioning this picture in last time's issue.

John's rousing accompaniment when we sing is so enjoyable and uplifting to the singers that he really does deserve much better!

Again, sincere apologies to John.

– [ED-PL]

Your letters ... sent after the last email newsletter a few months back now

Great Memories

Hello Peter,

Great to see the last email newsletter. Memories came flooding back looking at the photo of us "43ers".

I have an old autograph book containing quite a lot of our class and the only name I have that is not mentioned by Barbara and you is Margaret Whiting. Could that be one of the missing two?

We did enjoy the reunion, the committee do a fantastic job.

Hope you are well and enjoying the sunshine!

Joy Morris (Swallow) (1943)

Peter – Many thanks

Joan and John Sutton

Don't give up the paper edition!

Many thanks for this Peter. These intermittent reminders of the "good old days" are great – but don't give up the bumper edition!

Cheers, Thelma (Gyoursy) Wood (1943)

Must do better !

Thanks so much for the emailed newsletters but please, please note that our wonderful pianist for the school song/hymn was John BECK-

ER (not Baker). This is the second time I have noticed this error – Obviously I should have written earlier!!!

It is great to get monthly news – thanks for your efforts.

Best wishes,

Wendy Greenwood

That name again!

It was John Becker playing the ivories. Not John Baker as stated.

Regards

David Wood

Racially offensive

Hi Peter,

I'm sorry to say that I found the final joke in the Tailpiece section of the June Newsletter to be racially offensive and I hope that such a racial attitude will not appear again in the OW Newsletter.

Regards

Richard Wood

Looking good

Thanks for the latest newsletter. There are some lovely comments about the Reunion.

I expect you already know that there is a mistake – John Baker playing the piano should read John Becker, but apart from that one thing it looks good.

Best wishes, Kay

Must get facts right !

Very belated comment on your "former programme" sent on Feb. 7th – it was obviously a 'big' reunion and therefore I think 1983, not 1985 ... and my computer tells me that 24 Sept was a Saturday in 1983, but not in 1985.

While I have your attention, may I say how much I enjoy your newsletters – a splendid innovation and very welcome!

Best wishes,

Graham Kingsley

Trip to Wipers

I was a member of the School's first post-war overseas trip. Mr and Mrs Swallow took us to Belgium to visit the battlefields of the two World Wars, e.g. Ypres.

We stayed in Bruges and Brussels. The next year, 1948, I went on the School trip to Buochs on Lake Lucerne in Switzerland. I have had itchy feet ever since.

I have just reached the big 80 and am off to Sydney next week to visit my daughter and grand-daughters.

Betty (Tunstall) Robinson (1944)

(Address available if any member wants to write.)

Bee Springwood (Sanderson) writes about her Mum – Peggy

Hello Kay, Keith and others,

I KNOW my mum Peggy has attended your events over the years, but she will no longer be able to travel.

I'm so pleased she managed to make the last event after a military-style operation to get her there, because not long after, just before her 90th birthday in July, she had a major stroke and is now in a nursing home, unable to speak or to move much at all.

new address:-

Beggars Roost
Old Park Lane
Fishbourne
Chichester
PO18 8AP

While she will not be in a position to pay for continuing membership, she may welcome the odd bit of news of activities etc.

Following are some more details for friends of Peggy who remember her.

On a good note we just man-

aged to publish her last collection of poetry (1934-2004) in time for her 90th birthday in July, which I have available for £3.50 plus £1.50 postage. You might want to mention that in the newsletter, as a few of the poems were good "juvenilia" ones she wrote while still at school.

Also within same family and Old Wealden related...

My aunt and uncle Sheila (Butler) and David Evans both Old Wealdens, (wartime) have difficult news too, as he has also had a stroke. He is currently back at home, with carers four times a day. David can speak, so brief phone calls are welcome!

I may join OW myself when the flurry has died down to see what we / some of us are up to.

Malcolm Black and I continue to inhabit Norwich, in the same house for the last 30 years too.

I'm planning to mostly retire from 35 years of psychotherapy next year, and get on with being an

artist and Permaculture / Transition Town / community agriculture activist. If things were different this year I might have asked for a Nancy Young bursary to take me and someone from Africa to Cuba for the international permaculture exchange in October.

We nearly had a visit from Roy Buckland last week or so, but missed him cos down at my mum's.

We continue to get xmas cards from Sean Tickell (or his wife Luba!) and messages re art stuff from Ben Joiner, who has done well in the sculpture/installation field.

The new website is looking better.

Best wishes,
Peggy's daughter
Bee Springwood
(née Sanderson 1963!)

[Best wishes also to Peggy from all on the Committee. – ED]

2		4				9		
			7		8			
7						3		8
	9			6	2		5	
			8		9			
	3		5	7			2	
6		9						2
			6		7			
		1				4		7

SUDOKU

Here's another Sudoku for you. Again it's standard 9 x 9: you need to fill the grid horizontally, vertically and each 3 x 3 box with the numbers 1 to 9.

Degree of difficulty – 70%

8	1	7	2	6	9	4	3	5
2	3	4	7	8	5	1	9	6
5	6	9	1	3	4	7	2	8
7	5	3	9	4	6	8	1	2
4	2	1	8	7	3	5	6	9
9	8	6	5	1	2	3	7	4
1	7	5	6	2	8	9	4	3
3	9	2	4	5	1	6	8	7
6	4	8	3	9	7	2	5	1

Last time's solution ...

Going MAD in Zanzibar

by Mairi Enticott

ON JANUARY 28TH as our plane lifted off and the street lights of London grew ever smaller I knew there was no turning back. It was going to be three months before I saw those same sights again. Feelings of excitement and apprehension bubbled inside of me. At 18 years of age this was going to be the longest time I'd ever spent away from home; though little did I know that the small Tanzanian island I was heading to was going to make us feel such a valued part of the community that I wouldn't even want to leave by the end of it!

Our group of six was the first Go M.A.D (*Make A Difference*) team to head to Zanzibar and pursue volunteer work, with plenty of projects for us to get involved in. From manual labour work, to decorating, teaching, to gardening, it's fair to say my skills set has been broadened!

Settling in to a 99% Muslim culture was definitely an interesting

experience. It was easy to see that the locals appreciated our culturally sensitive clothing and it soon became apparent we were not your average 'mzungu' (white person). Especially when we would sit on the local mode of transport, called a 'dala dala' covered in paint! Within two weeks we were able to start sleeping through the 5.30 am call to prayer, and we soon learnt that you weren't going to be able to get any shopping on a Friday afternoon, due to it being their Holy day. We also quickly learnt that in African culture, health and safety is non-existent, time is never of the essence, and Africa will win a lot!

Tackling the Nursery

We spent a lot of our time working in a village called Mahonda, where there is a nursery run by the Anglican diocese. The nursery has no electricity or water and the two classrooms were not in the nicest condition. Their lack of teaching resources was also evident, with some tatty blackboards to work on, and not even enough of these to

have one per child. We were able to provide them with some new blackboards that we had brought with us from England, and spent time cleaning and decorating the classrooms – ultimately making it a happier learning environment.

On Wednesday mornings we would go and do teaching. We alternated between English and Math lessons, covering basic things such as the alphabet or counting from 1-10. The class consisted of around 30 children aged 3 to 6. At times it would be hard to control the children



COMPLETED – The Pit Latrine (above) and the Water Tower (below)



with the language barrier, but we found ways of getting round this, such as using a clapping pattern to gain their attention. After an hour or two of classroom time the children would enjoy some singing or playing and we had great fun joining in! Over the course of the three months we were able to build great relationships with the kids and it was lovely that they would run down to see us as soon as we arrived.

A first for the Island

To address the issues of water and sanitation we also built the nursery a water tank and a new pit latrine (squat hole toilet) to replace their current one which was getting rather full and smelly. The water tank we built is huge and, excitingly, happens to be the first cement one on the island. Witnessing the beginning of the rainy season just before we left to come home was fantastic as we



Above: the Classroom when we arrived, and below, teaching in the decorated classroom.





Fixing the roof

then got to see it start filling up, knowing it is going to make such a difference for them. The construction of the water tank also enabled some of the locals to be trained in how to build them so that in the future they should be able to build more on the island. Doing labour work in the intense humidity was very tiring, and the Africans definitely put us to shame with their endurance and general capability – no machines to do the work for you here, it's all down to manual work!

Getting water a problem

Another community we were able to make a difference for was Kiwengwa, or what we referred to as the 'coral village', as they make their living from smashing coral all day. The village doesn't have any electricity, and again access to water was a problem. The only source of water was from a well, a 15-minute walk away. The route to get there was, of course, made from coral and as not many of the children were wearing shoes it was shocking to think they have to make this uncomfortable journey for something taken for granted so much in the UK. The water issue in this village was additionally leading to many of the children getting skin diseases from not being able to keep clean. Some of our fundraised money went towards helping them to get treatment. It was amazing to see one little girl's skin completely cleared up after having a rash that

was so severe she could have lost her hearing.

The power of prayer

Although initially short of money for building the tank in Kiwengwa, we decided we would pray about it, and amazingly within 24 hours we had the funds to be able to build them the tank. The pastor of the village even informed us two months prior to this they had prayed for clean water in Kiwengwa. All the community was keen to watch the tank being built and their gratification and enthusiasm was definitely evident. We also grew to be quite attached to the children in this village and it

was wonderful to spend time playing with them when we visited. Simple clapping games and balloons kept them entertained for hours, and the limited use of words we were able to exchange with them was never an issue.

Alongside these main projects we also kept ourselves busy through helping to do some renovations for a hostel in order that they can generate a higher income, and gardening for a local church. Zanzibar also gave us plenty of wonderful things to enjoy on our days off, with a beach never too far away, and a fascinating history to discover.

Different world

It's true to say that taking a gap year has been very worthwhile and this trip is definitely going down as my best life experience so far. People often talk about getting the Africa bug and I now know what they mean! In the future I'd love to return to Africa. The culture is a completely different world to England but one that you fall in love with. The people are all so caring and friendly and although life worries are completely different to ours, they ironically seem happier! I am very thankful for the Nancy Young Memorial Bursary helping to make this trip a reality for me, and as a team we're all pleased with how successful the projects have been.



With the children in Kiwengwa

In Memoriam

WILLIAM (Bill) REECE

(1942)

(We have to thank Donald Abbott for the majority of what follows)



BORN ON the 4th December 1930, Bill spent the first years of his life near the centre of the busy part of Harrow Weald. The Kiangra Sweet Shop and Tea Rooms, next door to the Harrow Weald Infants' School were run by his parents, Bill's father running the sweetshop and his mother attending to the refreshment needs of the bus drivers and conductors from the bus garage just over the road. The bus garage is still there, the Infants' School is long since gone.

Pupils travelling to Harrow Weald County Grammar School from Wealdstone and Harrow, either by bus, or cycle, or shanks' pony would pass the shop every day, twice a day.

Bill was a bright pupil and eventually graduated in mathematics and physics. Called up for National Service Bill converted to a short service commission and became a Flight-Lieutenant, serving for five years. On leaving the RAF Bill had a couple of teaching posts before becoming a Maths Lecturer at the College of Further Education in Southall.

Bill married Miriam (Mim) on the 20th June 1953 and they had three children: Sue (born 23.2.56), Gail (9.7.59) and John (29.6.64).

Bill has been described as a political activist and was elected as a councillor in the London Borough of Harrow and was created an Alderman in 1976. He wore a very grand crimson robe and a tricorne hat. Aldermen were considered to be non-democratic and the post

was abolished about 1980 with Bill then being relected as Councillor again. He was later appointed a JP on the Ealing Bench and served many years, becoming a chairman of the Bench.

Demonstrating considerable business acumen, Bill's business activities dealt in buying, building and selling houses. As a result Bill and Mim ended up in a fine house (Chesters) in Loudwater. They had to leave the UK for a few years when Bill sold his land holdings to Homebase in Harrow Weald and they went to live in Greece near where daughter Gail was living in Athens.

Bill and Mim found that their political life took them into a very active social life with the usual round of receptions, dinners and dances. The game of bridge was played a great deal with Bill and Mim having games with Donald Abbott and his wife Sheila on a regular basis and playing for money with the winnings spent on weekend breaks.

Towards the end of their stay in Athens, Mim fell down a pothole and broke her leg. Although she recovered from this accident, her health began to deteriorate. In due course they returned to Chesters and with the house and garden becoming too much for them they moved to a somewhat smaller house in Chalfont. They were happy enough there but Mim contracted cancer and after a long illness died on 1st September 2002.

Bill was bereft and distraught and completely lost without Mim. His family and friends did their best to console him but to little avail. Nevertheless Bill tried to cope and moved to Cedars in Chorleywood. Although he had moved he never really unpacked and his health began to deteriorate. During this period his son, John, was ever-present, supporting his father and becoming his full-time carer as Bill's condition worsened. In the end the inevitable happened and Bill is now reunited with his beloved Mim after eleven years of separation.

He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.



DIANA (Luck) BALKWILL

(1947)

13/10/36 – 19/9/13



DIANA (Luck) was born in 1936 in Harrow Weald, Middlesex. She was the youngest of three children. Her father, Harrald Luck was a master printer (proprietor of J. N. & H. Lock & Co, Printers). The other members of the family were her mother Kathleen, her sister Rosemary and her brother Peter.

Diana attended the local primary school and around this time the family moved to a larger house in central Harrow (Sheepcote Road). Her sister and brother both gained places at Harrow Weald County (HWC) Grammar School. Diana followed them but left school at 16, keen to spread her wings. She had a variety of jobs; including a bank, a dentist and Simpsons (The Strand), but didn't find these to her taste. After a couple of years, she became a "city girl" working for a stockbroker, which she thoroughly enjoyed with the attractions of London close at hand, with many friends and social activities.

Her husband Bert was born in 1929 in Wealdstone. His father was a plumber. The '30's were not an easy time for the Balkwill family but they coped. Bert also obtained a place at HWC where he was a pupil throughout the war years. He left in 1945 and, interested in engineering, became a drawing office apprentice at an engineering company, BT-H Co. He rose to a junior engineer's post whilst completing his studies to become a Chartered Engineer.



Once this was out of the way, he was able to devote more time to sporting and social activities including cricket, tennis, motor bikes, cars and the active Old Wealden Association. It was through the OWA that he met Peter Luck. He attended a party at Peter's house where he met Peter's kid sister, Diana, by then was 20, had just had her wisdom teeth extracted and was definitely not feeling at her brightest – but a spark had been struck. A few weeks later there was an Old Wealden dance where the spark was fanned. Their first proper date was the New Year's Eve dance at the Tennis Club, 31/12/56, and what followed is a history of a wonderful 56 years!

Married Life

On 10th August 1957, less than a year after first meeting, Diana and Bert married. They set up home in North Harrow [Pinner Court], with Diana working locally for Northwood Council. They spent a very happy couple of years in their rented flat followed by the purchase of their first house at No. 3 Manor Way.

In 1956, before meeting Diana, Bert had changed jobs and was now part of what became the CEGB/National Grid. As a junior engineer, he worked on troubleshooting and commissioning the grid system in London, Middlesex and Hertfordshire. In 1960, after a few years spent gaining experience, a promotion was offered which meant moving to Suffolk. With Diana's support ("go for it!"), they were soon on their way east. They moved into their new Ipswich home: a bungalow in Bucklesham Road and Andrew was born in November 1960 and was followed by Simon in January 1963 and Zoë in June 1964.

The children grew rapidly and a normal family life developed: days out, trips to the seaside close to Ipswich, and to Harrow. Family holidays further afield had not yet arrived although Diana and Bert had first ventured abroad in 1957 whilst still living in Harrow. A trip to Majorca had opened fresh horizons of sun, sand and new surroundings (despite flying in a battered old DC3 Dakota with engines

dripping oil and seemingly flexible wings).

The Sixties & Seventies

Through the 1960's, the children grew, Andrew had started school and the family moved nearby to a newly-built house at Salehurst Road, backing onto the local golf course. Work in the area had expanded greatly with the construction of the new 'supergrid' together with construction of the new nuclear power station at Sizewell. The existing organisation needed to be expanded and this resulted in Bert being offered a new post of District Manager based at Kings Lynn. After nine years in Ipswich, they were on the road again. Bert never did have time to build a gate from the back garden onto the golf course!

The new family home was in a village called North Runcton. This was a rather elderly two-room bungalow but with a large extension and outbuildings at the back. The name of the place was 'Alpha', though some said it should be renamed 'Omega'. One of the best features was an enormous garden, originally a commercial orchard, so there was plenty of room for the children and their friends to play. During this time (early '70's) Diana's mother, Kathleen, sold her Frinton home and moved into the adjacent bungalow next door ("Little Paddock") and was able to have much enjoyment from the growing family. This time there was a gate. Granny was a willing baby-sitter and Diana and Bert were able to go out without difficulty and particularly enjoyed playing bridge together. Bert had played since he was 25 but Diana soon learned and rapidly became an excellent player. Whilst many married couples struggle to play with each other, they were an exception and always enjoyed their partnership.

Diana was able to develop an interest that she had always had in antiques and collectables, and with a friend ran an antiques stall at the King's Lynn Saturday Market and also at local Collectors' Fairs. Diana and her mother both loved auctions and they regularly attended sales regularly returning with a car load of "bargains"!

Whilst at North Runcton, the Scouts were a big part of their life, and in particular for Diana with assisting the 19th King's Lynn Scout Group to build a new HQ.

In 1975, the family moved to an attractive new house (named 'The Wealdens') in Castle Rising. Life continued in a similar vein, though with less Scouts and more bridge for Diana and Bert.

Andrew decided to follow in his father's footsteps, joining the CEGB as a graduate trainee and studying Electrical Engineering at City University in London.

The Eighties

Simon was less sure of what career path to follow, and whilst he (like his mother) very much enjoyed history, decided to do a mixed degree including business studies and chemistry. There followed a sandwich year with Esso at Victoria before completing the course and then a varied career in the oil and gas industry.

Zoë completed her A levels, including photography and biology, in 1982 and left home to be with her boyfriend (later to become her husband). They married in 1990 and over the years moved from Milton Keynes to Beckenham to Manningtree to Royston. They worked in a number of jobs, usually farming related. But tiring of the rat-race, and with a deep love of Scotland, they decided to buy a croft near Ullapool in the north west of Scotland where they now live, rearing sheep, pigs and poultry, and living a simple life, "away from it all".

In 1983, following a promotion for Bert requiring a move to CEGB's Regional HQ at Bankside (now Tate Modern), Diana and Bert bought their house at Chislehurst, ideally situated for travel to London Bridge. This was in the days of Thatcher and there was considerable difficulty selling the house at Castle Rising. Diana remained there with Bert commuting home at weekends.

In Bert's absence Diana "held the fort" at Castle Rising and continued with her numerous interests and friends. She was never short of playing partners for bridge. Gregarious and fun-loving, she had a sharp sense of humour and a

remarkable memory; she was always able to offer advice or opinions in lively discussions with family and friends. But Diana never regretted finishing her education at 16 and found the life with her family to be extremely happy.

The Move to Chislehurst

The Castle Rising house was eventually sold in 1984 and so Diana and Bert could start to properly establish themselves in a suburban Chislehurst way of life. With London close at hand, they were able to enjoy theatre, galleries and the occasional auction.

Bridge was a growing passion with membership of several local clubs, with a competitive game available most days of the week, subject to Bert getting home in time from work (not always possible due to an increasing amount of travel). They made many long-lasting friends through their love of bridge and also went on a number of enjoyable bridge holidays.

With the children all grown up and more or less flown the nest Bert and Diana were able to undertake new experiences. They drove through France, including the Loire Valley and the Dordogne. Speaking sufficient French to make themselves understood (though struggling with some of the replies), they fell in love with this kind of holiday and with France itself, including Corsica and also Paris, by then readily accessible via Eurostar from Waterloo. Many trips followed, including a family trip to Paris to

celebrate Bert's 70th birthday in 1999.

In 1987, Bert's job was subject to yet another reorganisation. With privatisation imminent, many staff were being offered redundancy. After carrying out a final project and grooming his replacement, Bert seized his chance of early retirement at the age of 58, after 35 years of service. Diana was 51.

The 1990's: Retirement and more

Exciting new opportunities beckoned. A plan to extend the house was formulated and Diana devoted some of her energies towards reorganising the garden. Gardening became one of her great loves: often she became totally absorbed in the garden and with books and articles. She developed an extensive knowledge and over the years continuously changed and improved the garden at Chislehurst. Diana also enjoyed reading, especially history and attended history and French classes for a number of years. She assisted a local charity that taught English as a foreign language.

Diana and Bert's idyllic life came to an abrupt standstill in early 1990 when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. With two operations and radiotherapy, a good recovery was made and she returned to health. Their plans were though interrupted and thoughts of an extension were dropped. They had also considered having a longer stay in France in order to improve their language skills and at the

same time see more of the country – but this too fell by the wayside.

Life gradually returned to something approaching normal with many foreign trips including Corsica, Alsace, the Auvergne, Aquitaine, Provence, etc. A particularly memorable trip was to Santiago staying in various 'Paradors' (hotels in old buildings such as monasteries and castles) including the Alhambra Palace. Others included Rome and the Villa Borghese; Provence and St Remy with its overflowing market stalls and a street singer with his hurdy-gurdy; the ancient little church in the Medoc with Songs from the Auvergne softly playing; the heat in the square at Alby when coming out of the great red brick cathedral; and the tiny sandy coves and the mountain railway trip in Corsica

They also took out of season bridge holidays in Italy, Austria, and Spain, which allowed daytime sightseeing with bridge competitions in the evening.

All good things come to an end however, and out of the blue, in Spring 2009, Diana was found to be suffering from ovarian cancer. This was followed by numerous operations and chemotherapy which finally stopped in March. Her long and determined fight is now over but we are left with the memories of a wonderful person, and her 56 years of happy marriage to Bert.

Who could ask for more?



*At home in the garden,
Chislehurst, 1991.*



*A friendly game
of bridge, 1984.
"I can't believe it,
I've got 40 points !!"*

In Memoriam

MARGARET (Evans) FULLER

(1943)

1/8/31 – 16/9/13



*Margaret at the big Reunion
in 2003*

FOR THOSE who were at The Weald between 1943 and 1949, Margaret will probably be best remembered for her beautiful voice. No School concert took place without a solo performance from her, whether it was Mrs Munday or Miss Pyke who set the programme.

Margaret was an only child, born in Harrow Weald. She attended Harrow Weald Primary School, along with Pat Pamplin, and they both joined Form 1B. She was a keen member of Shakespeare House, which usually meant they did well in the annual Music Competition, thanks to her musical talent.

On leaving Harrow Weald she

went to Teacher Training College in Kingston and on qualifying, took up a post at Preston Road Primary School. Subsequently she obtained a music degree and transferred to Bentley Wood School as their Music Teacher.

In 1954 Margaret married Julian, whom she had met at the Harrow Baptist Church where they were both choristers. This shared love of music continued throughout their married life.

After several years at Bentley Wood, Margaret became a Senior House Mistress at Woodberry Down Comprehensive School in Hackney. The change of 'atmosphere' as well as the long commute was demanding but she remained there until retirement. There was a break in 1983 when she had special 'maternity' leave since she and Julian had adopted two sisters. Consequent to the adoption, Margaret wrote a book that was published in 1986, regarding the frustrations and fulfilment of the adoptive process.

On retiring to Worcester, Margaret's and Julian's musical talents were exercised at the U3A Choir and they were able

to travel to the Three Choirs Festival each year. When my husband and I moved to the Gloucestershire/Worcestershire border in 1992 we met up with them far more frequently.

My own friendship with Margaret was constant. Since my husband and Julian had both been pupils at Preston Manor Grammar School, the four of us met frequently over the years for theatre outings, joint holidays and other social functions. There were times (in the days of retirement) when the five girls from '1B of 43' and their husbands, met up once a year – Margaret, Pat Pamplin, Jean Hall, Margaret Nicholls and me.

When Julian died in 2007. Margaret kept up her membership of the Retired Teachers' Association in Worcester, the U3A Choir and also attended the Old Wealden Reunions until her health prevented her from doing so.

Margaret was a true friend, and those of us spread across the country, not only Old Wealdens, will certainly miss her

*Audrey (Farrow) Martin
1943-1948*

In Memoriam

ARTHUR (ARCHIE) ORCHARD (1939)



AN IMPORTANT LEGACY from my days at our school has been the long-lasting friendships with 'boys and girls'. Archie and I have never moved out of this district so that our lives have crossed in many ways. These included many social events, walking our dogs, OW Reunions and the working relationship between J. A. Orchard Ltd., and W. F. Parr & Sons, the latter being my place of work for 23 years.

Archie was invested in 21st Harrow Cub Pack Congregational Church and continued scouting until he handed in his final warrant in 1953. He recounts how he and 'Basher' Benson, who was a Sea Scout with a troop in Kingston, camped out in the North Field

and entertained some luckless member of staff to a cake they had baked in a hole in the ground!

He became a Freemason in 1958 joining the Cosmopolitan Lodge. He has been Worshipful Master on six occasions and in 1988 was appointed Grand Officer by Lord Farnham in respect of his services to the Craft. Upon retirement in 1993 he joined the Royal Arch Chapter and became first principal in the Cosmopolitan Chapter.

On leaving School he joined the Post Office telephones and qualified in 1946 in circuit operation and faulting.

He did his National Service from 1947 to 1949 serving in the Royal Corps of Signals. While stationed at Catterick he ran three Scout Troops. After leaving the Army he joined his father and worked for J. A. Orchard Ltd. In 1958 he became a director. The firm covered a wide range of metal work, sheet metal work, construction, structural engineering and blacksmithing. Jim Breslin, the last blacksmith in Harrow, worked for them and

the anvil is now in Headstone Manor Museum. The firm closed in 1993.

In 1958 he married Brenda and had two children, Judith and Paul, and later two grandchildren, Lucy and Alex.

During retirement he was involved with the Hatch End Residents' Association and the Elliott Hall Medical Centre delivering bulletins for both. He joined the Harrow Weald Bowling Club but had to retire from this in 2007 due to ill health.

After Archie's divorce we became constant companions, I having been widowed since 1973. As he lived in Hatch End he responded to my every crisis coming over to sort them out for me. He was also my engineer, navigator and companion on many expeditions to shows in my classic 1962 Hillman Minx convertible.

This friendship of 73 years has been invaluable to me especially in the last 20-plus years and I and his many friends will miss him.

*Heather (Wheatley) Bickerton
(1940)*

This will be the last email newsletter before we do the paper version which will come out in January 2014.

If you have something you want us to include in that edition, please get it to either Alistair or me by the end of November. (Contact details on second page.)