



# THORNTONIAN DAYS

## Newsletter of The Old Thorntonians Association (Clapham)

*"Education is the leading of human souls to what is best, and making what is best out of them."*  
John Ruskin (1819-1900)

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No 12

March 2010

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### Corrigendum

Issue 11: the article "Mr Evans and HTS" was incorrectly dated Summer 1961. As some readers may have surmised from another item on Mr Evans, reproduced in the preceding newsletter, it did in fact appear in *The Thorntonian* of Summer 1951.

### Obituaries

Sadly, the newsletter has to record the passing, in recent months, of four "senior" OTs, all of whom attended the school in the 1930s.

**Eric Smith** (1938-43): died 27 September 2009. Eric spent his time at HTS at Clapham, including the wartime Emergency School (1940-3). Joe Keeble Pipe (1942-50) adds: "Eric was my cousin by marriage. We were at school together but as he was two years older our paths rarely crossed. After leaving HTS he joined the army as a regular for some years, serving in Germany, Palestine, etc – all the usual places in which the British Army served during and after wars! I believe he became a captain in the Royal Fusiliers. Subsequently he spent his life in the antiques silver business, finishing up in charge of the silver department at Phillips, the auction house."

**Adrian (Eddie) Mann** (1931-7): died 27 January 2010.

**Philip (Pip) Plummer** (1931-6): died 30 May 2009.

**Douglas Routledge** (1931-7): died 9 September 2009.

Please let the Editor know if you are able to offer any memories of the above, particularly related to their school years.

### Annual General Meeting 2010

The third AGM was held at The Windmill on Saturday 20 March 2010, with 14 members present. The main items discussed or reported were:

- Jimmy Hill OBE was re-elected as President for a further year. The other Committee members elected to serve until 31 March 2011 are:

Chairman: (Vacancy; the Vice-Chairman and/or other Committee members will act in this capacity as required)

Vice-Chairman: Brian Bloice

Secretary: Ted Hayward

Treasurer: Terry Lawlor

Co-opted: Mike Surridge (as local representative); Jeff Green (as immediate past Chairman)

Entry-year representatives:

1930s/1940s: Brian Robinson

1950s: Chris Bishop

1960s: Peter Greenwood

1970s/1980s: (Vacancy).

- The audited statement of account for the year ended 31 December 2009 was adopted (copy attached).
- Subscriptions: on the recommendation of the Management Committee, it was agreed that a. they should remain at £10 for Full and £6 for Associate membership, and b. on this occasion the fee should be for a two-year period, ie, from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2011. If you would like to continue in membership and haven't already paid, the Treasurer will be delighted to receive your renewal

subscription. Please post a cheque for the relevant amount, and made out to "Old Thorntonians Association", to: Terry Lawlor, Spring Cottage, 11A Deepdene, Lower Bourne, Farnham, Surrey GU10 3QP. NB The deadline for receipt of payments is 31 May 2010, and no further reminders will be sent after this date.

- Pupil honours boards: recently returned to storage at Lambeth College's South Side premises. Members of the Committee plan to re-inspect the boards in the coming months and consider what further action should be taken to preserve/restore (and possibly display) them in the longer term.

It was agreed that the next AGM should be held at **2pm on Saturday 19 March 2011**; venue to be confirmed.

## Membership

Currently 120, including three Associates.

## Reminiscences

**Kenneth Neate (1937-42):** I have been interested to read about Mr Jeremy in the newsletter. He was far and away my favourite master. One aspect of his teaching, though, I have not seen referred to and I hope in offering this I do not denigrate in any way his integrity and his dedication to education pure and simple. But I am sure he propounded a little Socialism in his lessons. Perhaps because my leaning was in that direction I detected more than was really there but the prominence of such as Peterloo, Robert Owen and the Co-operative Movement, the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the rise of Trade Unionism and so on seemed to me to be revealing. I wonder if others recall his fondness for reading to the rest of the class an essay submitted by one of them. "The Gospel according to Bloggs (or whoever)," he would announce. It would cause great merriment including, even, on the part of the poor wretch who was being victimised. Because, being Mr Jeremy, there was no malice in this; he used it as a teaching aid. He was a much-loved man.

**John Jones (1963-70):** I do have quite a few memories (though I must admit I didn't know the sculpture outside Mr Dorrington's office was called "the scholar"). But certainly the school milk sticks in my mind, delivered in 1/3 pint bottles, often frozen on winter mornings and supervised by the most miserable of men (I'm afraid I think he was also a Ted!), who was the school caretaker and would tell boys who sat on his wooden table to "get off that bleedin' table". Of course, school milk was abolished in the early 70s by Mrs Thatcher, then Minister of Education. I also took part in a school play in the famous "quadrangle" soon after I started at HT, I seem to remember.

Mr Linden, Mr Davies and Mr Taylor all hold special places in my affections as I am now a professional linguist (translator at the European Commission) and I love singing (I sing in one of the best choirs in Belgium, the Brussels Choral Society). Mr Taylor ran the school choir in which I sang as a treble and a bass. I loved it, which ran against the grain in many ways as most boys hated music (and languages). At Christmas the choir toured four London hospitals, with a number of the teachers singing as well, where we rendered Christmas carols in stairwells and on wards to the patients in return for "tea" (sandwiches, cakes and mince pies), which became more copious from one hospital to the next. By the end of the afternoon we were quite bloated! I wonder if this tradition rings any bells with boys who were at the school before me?

**Peter Lawson (1936-41), with further memories of the wartime evacuation:** ...we met on Friday, 1st September, 1939 at 8.30am. travelled to Balham (S.R) with haversacks and small attaché cases, to arrive in Bognor just after mid-day. In crocodile formation, we marched, full of excitement, to the Social Centre/Theatre opposite the Pier Head, where we were "selected" by "locum parents" or put into small groups for billeting. I was lucky, being in a group of five with Prefect Veryken and billeted in holiday rooms over a restaurant on the promenade within a hundred yards of the pier. The weather was glorious, and Bognor was still filled with holidaymakers – we had a fabulous time. The only sign of war was the black-out with every one colliding and jostling as they walked along the promenade. The only military prominence was a small Walrus flying-boat slowly skirting the coast at a snail's pace, once in mid-morning and again in the afternoon with the front gunner sitting half out of the nose. It was generally assumed it was a U-boat patrol.

War was declared on Sunday 3rd September and, since one of our group – Koch – was a German refugee, after listening to Chamberlain at 11.00 am we tuned into various German stations but could only find dance music!

The list of Masters who were evacuated with the school I never saw outside school lessons, but I notice that one has been omitted: Mr Collings ("Coggs"), who taught German. The most memorable lesson he gave was when the Graf Spee broke the news and each class lesson for a week was a running report on the progress of the battle until the final scuttling - all in German.

The 1939 December freeze was incredible, with many of the telephone poles snapped in half, due to the weight of the ice in the wires – but the fun on the canal, frozen solid to Dell Quay, and slides on the slopes of Goodwood.

This section concludes with an amusing if slightly irreverent contribution from **Peter Benson (1932-8):**

## THE THORNTONIAN THIRTIES

My school life began in nineteen thirty-two.

My form master was *Pops*, Mr Spofforth to you.  
 We had Fortnightly Orders, sometimes a disaster.  
 Bottom boy in each form had to see the Head Master.  
 I remember *Ma Earp* giving me fifty lines,  
 Don't ask me "What for?" – I was asleep at the time.  
 Composition, perspective and balance and shade,  
 Art master *Dix* was so strict and so staid.  
 Epidiascope, books of remote foreign parts,  
*Lenny Bundle* was my favourite Master of Arts.  
 Mr *Cooper* taught Latin in a flowing black cloak,  
 But all I remember is hic, haec and hoc.  
 Cellist Jeremy donned his historian hat,  
 To dish dates by the dozen, ten six six and all that.  
 We were kept fit by *Bramble*, a gymnast, of course,  
 Upside down on the ropes after vaulting the horse.  
 And *Plugs* taught us woodcraft, precise tenon joints.  
 Much later this earned me good DIY points.  
*Moggy Morgan* taught English: you may think it worse  
 That he gave me good guidelines for writing in verse.  
 My school chum Bassani at mischief excelled;  
 His deeds displeased *Taffy*, then he got expelled..  
*Wiggs* enjoyed a good scratch teaching Heat, Light and Sound.  
 His class dubbed him "B...sitch". Bad manners all round!  
 Wilf Finbow's a big boy. Respect him we do.  
 Why should one kow-tow? Well he's bigger than you!  
 The Head Boy at this time, a fellow called Dennis,  
 Had skills unequalled at cricket and tennis.  
 Myself at lacrosse little talent I showed,  
 I preferred to play football at Dover House Road.

#### Staff Personae

Pops: Mr J A H Spofforth (English, History)  
 Ma Earp: Mrs M A Earp (Mathematics)  
 Dix: Mr G W Dix (Art)  
 Lenny Bundle: Mr L B Cundall (Geography)  
 Cooper: Mr W J Cooper (Latin)  
 Bramble: Mr R S Bramble (PT)  
 Jeremy: Mr C E G Jeremy (History)  
 Plugs: Mr H G Rawlings (Handicraft)  
 Moggy Morgan: Mr W Morgan (English)  
 Taffy: Mr W D Evans (Head Master)  
 Wiggs: Mr H W Wigley (Physics)

### **From the Pages of *The Thorntonian***

Autumn 1961:

#### **Past Editions of the School Magazine By DAVID WHITING**

It is no surprise to discover that school life and school magazines alter very little through many years. Senior Old Boys will remember the "Bat", the school magazine of Battersea Polytechnic and Latchmere Road.

There were then, as now, many societies. Parliamentary, Science and Library and Debating Societies were always active and there were less popular societies being formed and reformed as they declined and ceased to be. The subjects of debate were as wide as today's, ranging from Female Suffrage in the early years to Pacifism just before the First Great War, becoming often economical during the depression when the School moved to the present buildings, and finally embracing the "wind of change" and Nuclear Disarmament of the Sixties. Early on, light relief was provided by debates on pixies and homeworks [*sic*], whereas recently we have discussed fairies and whether history is bunk.

The Magazine reveals a comforting continuity of Staff. Earlier numbers are full of references to Messrs. Cooper, Read, and Yorke. One is impressed with Mr. Cooper's prowess as a singer, and with Mr. Read's long-standing skill with a camera, and his idea of a motion picture of the School.

The style of writing, with the exception of the early use of the word "fellows", is much the same, and so is the style of speeches:

"The world is going to be a more and more difficult places for the poorly educated man...On the other hand there was never such scope for the man who has acquired knowledge and the power to use it... who has achieved the habit of a disciplined life..."

"He urged the boys to develop the qualities of leadership... He had been astounded at the vast need for skilled men in industry..."

Interesting as this aspect of the magazines is, they are most valuable as a record of the School. The Headmaster is trying to get together a complete set for reference purposes, but certain numbers are missing. We should, therefore, be very grateful if anyone could give us copies of any of the following issues: Autumn 1934; any magazines published in 1953; publications between 1947 and 1950. [*The Editor has been able to trace copies of the Autumn 1934 and Spring and Autumn 1950 issues. It is likely that, for whatever reason(s), 1947-9 and 1953 were "non-publication" years.*]

### **The "New" School**

Issue no 2 (May 2007) included an extract from the magazine report on the opening of the renamed school, on the Clapham site, in 1929. Readers may also be interested in the following additional information, taken from the Prospectus issued by the County Hall Education Officer in June of that year. The introductory page describes HTS as "A Public Secondary School for 450 Boys from 10 to 19 years of age", and the main text continues:

FOUNDATION AND MANAGEMENT. The school is maintained by the London County Council in accordance with the Regulations of the Board of Education for Secondary Schools. The Council is assisted in the administration of the School by a Governing Body, specially elected, who take a keen interest in the welfare of the School.

The School was opened in its present buildings in January, 1929. It stands in a large garden at 45, South Side, Clapham Common, and is easily accessible from Clapham Common or South Clapham Tube Stations. The School is served by many 'bus and tram routes.\* Before 1929, the School, which was originally founded in 1894 as a branch of the Battersea Polytechnic, and was taken over by the London County Council in 1918, was in buildings in Battersea. It received its present name on being transferred to the site it now occupies, near the birthplace of Henry Thornton, who took a prominent part in the movement resulting in the abolition of the Slave Trade.

\*Trams Nos. 2, 4, 6, 8, 20, 32, 34, and Buses Nos. 5, 32, 35, 42, 45, 51, 67, 70, 80, 88, 89, 105, 180 all pass near the School.

PREMISES. The buildings are of the most modern type, and include all the latest educational facilities. There are spacious Chemistry and Physics Laboratories, a specially fitted Geography room, an Art room, a Handcraft room and fifteen classrooms. There are also a Dining-hall, a fine Library and an excellent modern Gymnasium. The School assembles in the Great Hall each morning for prayers. There is a playing field behind the School, with a concrete cricket-pitch for net practice, and a large paved space for playground games in front. Plunge-baths are also provided, and in the garden are two fives courts. The School also has large playing-fields at Roehampton.

CURRICULUM. The regular subjects of the curriculum as follows:—

English Literature and Language.	History.	Art.
Mathematics.	Physics.	*Scripture.
French.	Chemistry.	Handicraft.
Latin.	Geography.	Physical Training.
Economics.	Singing.	

\*Exemption from this subject will be granted to any pupil whose parents desire it.

Pupils take the General School Examination of the University of London at the age of 15 to 17. A pass with credit at this examination is equivalent to Matriculation. ...

ADVANCED COURSES. For pupils who have passed Matriculation there are Advanced Courses in Political and Economic Studies and in Science and Mathematics. Pupils take the Higher Certificate Examination of the University of London, and by passing in the requisite subjects, obtain in addition the Intermediate Science Certificate. These Courses are particularly suitable for pupils who aim at high positions in the commercial and scientific world. There is also an Arts Course for pupils specialising in Classics, English and History. The School has in recent years obtained many open scholarships at the Universities of Cambridge and London.

[*Selected photographs from the prospectus are displayed on the website; click on Memorabilia and then Buildings. Ed*]

### **Teaching Staff**

Here's the third list, detailing appointments from (or including) the 1950s. As always, please advise Ted Hayward of any amendments or additions.

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The Editor welcomes contributions for future issues. Please post or e-mail them to Ted Hayward, 31 Linfields, Little Chalfont, Amersham, Bucks HP7 9QH; ted.hayward@btinternet.com

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