



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)

No 13

July/August 2010

Obituary

Don Appelbe (1938-43): died 4 June 2010. One of the small group, as currently identified, of HTS pupils evacuated to Chichester, Don attended the two "mini-reunions" at the High School for Boys (8 October 2009 and 11 July 2008). Brother James, also an OT (1944-7), recalls: "He liked the area so much that he retired to Chichester. He served in the Royal Navy and had careers in banking, time and motion study with Unilever, and latterly in local government. He was keen on his garden, DIY and had a wide circle of friends playing bridge. He leaves behind his wife Muriel, son Paul, daughter Sally and three grand-children."

Stephen Browning

Did you know Stephen, a pupil who joined in around 1961? If so, his sister Carolyn would like to hear from you. She writes: "I am trying to track down photos of my brother Stephen who passed away at the age of 21, in about 1971. I was only nine years old at the time, and unfortunately I have no photos of him. I'm not sure when he left, but I know he went on to college to study electronics. I would really appreciate it if somebody had a photo of him. I can't even remember what he looked like." Carolyn has also posted the appeal on the Association's Guest Book page. Ted Hayward has pointed out that there are two whole-school photographs on the site, taken in 1962 and 1966, and it is therefore likely that her brother would be in one or both of them. If any OTs do recognise Stephen from these – or any other – sources please let Ted know.

2010 Reunion

As previously advised, the next (sixth) reunion will be held at The Windmill on **Saturday 25 September**; the usual notice is attached. Replies are requested only if you plan to attend.

Membership

Many thanks to all who have renewed their subscription, which as agreed at the AGM is for an extended (ie, two-year) period, to 31 December 2011. A number have decided not to remain in membership – and for this reason the current total is 97, including two Associates – but the Committee hope that they will still be able to keep in touch with the Association generally, eg, by browsing the website and coming to the reunions. Rejoiners will of course always be welcome!

Old Cicestrians Society

The OCs, formerly known as CHALOBS, have recently launched their own website: www.oldcicestrians.com It also contains a link to our own site. Ted Hayward has already given this information to those OTs who were evacuated to Chichester and are known to have access to the internet.

Reminiscences

Colin Walder (1968-72): I attended HTS from September 1968 to February 1972, although when I began my secondary education the new building was not available straightaway and the pupils travelled to Archbishop Tenison School (in the Battersea area, I think); we went there until the new buildings were opened.

I had lessons in both the new and old buildings. I played trumpet in the school orchestra, which was run by Mr David Crawley, and I remember the very high ceiling in the stepped practice room where we also had lessons, and the amazing theatre facility where we played on a few occasions. I have a grainy picture of the orchestra.

As music was my 'best' subject I also remember Professor Taylor, who taught music theory. He was a "classic" schoolmaster with the black gown.

I do not remember ever seeing a school magazine during my time and I certainly don't recall any photographs of Mr Heaton-Page, fearsome gentleman that he was.

I think the Deputy Head's name was Mr Edgler.

I played for the school rugby team run by Mr Ackland and Mr Williams, and the head of sport was Mr Allott – you didn't dare give him any back chat either.

Mr Thompson was a grand old gentleman of 80 who taught English and meted out punishment using a small cricket bat which he called “The Livener”, for obvious reasons!

Sports afternoon was held at either Rose Hill or Priest Hill in the Sutton area, and I remember one of the highlights was seeing David Webb, ex-Chelsea player, coming to see the football team.

The old ATC hut had a dilapidated old flight simulator in it and parades were carried out on the bottom playground behind the old buildings.

Derek Yandell (1945-52) recalls his final-year “Canada experience”: I was in a maths class with Mr Yorke when a small, very nervous boy came in. “What do you want, boy?” asked Yorke. “Please, sir, the Head Master would like to see Yandell.” “Well, I suppose you'd better go,” Yorke said. So I followed the small messenger, feeling rather nervous myself.

This was towards the end of Gaskin's first year as Head, and he and I had not been very friendly. He had introduced Prefects' caps and, in my view, spoilt the House system. However, we shared at times a similar sense of humour. His first words were “Would you like to go to Canada?” I replied that I would but that I was in a double maths lesson.

He explained that a Bradford business man, W H Rhodes, had set up a fund in the 1930s for 40 boys to visit Canada each summer. He had acquired a great admiration for the country and its people and wanted to share his enthusiasm with others. The trips were discontinued during WW2, and I think that mine, in 1952, was only the second since the end of the war.

The group consisted of 16 from London and eight from each of the other cities: Bradford, Birmingham and Glasgow.

The London group met at what was then County Hall and travelled by train to Southampton, where we boarded the *Samaria* (Cunard line). This was quite an eye-opener for us: a shopping centre and a lift in a ship! In addition, we enjoyed amazing food, partly because, I think, there was still rationing in England. Furthermore, each evening there was dancing to a live band. I had been learning to dance, Victor Sylvester-style, for several years and was therefore very popular with sundry ladies amongst the passengers.

We started our visit in Quebec and toured the city by coach, so that we were able to enjoy its quaintness and the many different styles of architecture. We then moved on to Montreal, which is very different with its many modern (at the time!) buildings and copies of some famous structures.

The next stop was Toronto, where we were entertained to lunch by the Royal Canadian Yacht Club, and then by coach on to Niagara. Here we were able to walk under the Falls and, over lunch, high up in a hotel, we could see all of them – a quite amazing sight.

We had a short break from touring, during our visit, to stay at a “holiday camp”, which was most unlike Butlin's. It was log cabins next to a lake and everyone, except myself, enjoyed swimming and canoeing. I was excluded as a non-swimmer but had pleasant walks through the trees.

Our final visit was to Ottawa, where we were taken to the Royal Mint, the National Gallery and the Parliament buildings.

We made our way back to Montreal to join the *Ascania*, where we said goodbye to Dougie Gordon, the Cunard representative who had looked after us so well. We all (40 of us) sang “A Gordon for Me” as the ship pulled away, and I'm sure Dougie was wiping away a tear or two!

The return voyage was disappointing as the weather was poor and we all had tonsillitis in various degrees. I had a very sore throat and spent the crossing in the library.

There was an Old Rhodians Association for some years whose activities included holding an annual dinner at County Hall. I attended for eight years but few of my group did. The Association probably disbanded when County Hall closed.

OT doyen **Wilf Finbow (1931-6)** shares a few memories of the 1930s: Prewar school journeys and visits were limited. However, one in 1932 took us to Eastleigh, just outside Southampton, then the Southern Railways' main depot. We witnessed at close range – no protective clothing in those days – the spectacular casting in white-hot liquid metal of one of the huge driving wheels of the steam monsters.

We went by rail down to Southampton docks to tour RMS *Berengaria*, a passenger/cargo ship (no cruise liners then). Years later I discovered that *Berengaria* (d 1230) was Queen Consort of Richard Cœur de Lion. Most liners in those days were christened with mythical or historic names.

In 1935-6 Leo Russell and Campbell took a train to Ashford, Kent and cycled down to Rye Harbour, a hamlet isolated from the old port of Rye on a vast, flat shoreline formed as a result of sea recession. We camped by the Martello Tower.

There was only one little general store on the “front”, and we became friendly with the owner and his daughter Honor, who joined us for a chat – and a share of Campbell’s apple fritters.

We left school and then war intervened: those happy days became just a memory.

However, in (I believe) 1948, there was Rye Harbour, featured in *The Times* or *The Daily Telegraph*. Secret German invasion plans had been found: the map showed Rye Harbour as “Tonbridge” – 30 miles inland! An incompetent spy had seen the fascia board of the little shop, Tonbridge Stores, not realising that it was the owner’s name, and that his daughter was Honor Tonbridge!

Still on a German theme, in or around 1935 we had an exchange(?) visit by a group of students from that country. They were well-built, smart, blond Aryans. It was strongly rumoured that one was a nephew of a prominent Nazi, later executed. Little did we, or they, appreciate that we would be “crossing swords” four-five years later. On their return they probably reported back that, judging by us slaphappy schoolboys, Britain would be a pushover!

From the Pages of *The Thorntonian*

Autumn 1959:

In Memoriam

W. R. John 1918-1949

C. W. Gribble 1920-1954

With deep regret we have to record the death of two former Masters for whose long and faithful service the School will always be grateful. None of the present boys knew Mr. John and few knew Mr. Gribble, but hundreds of Old Boys will remember them with admiration and affection.

Mr. John joined the Staff in 1918 as History and Economics Master, and in 1937 he succeeded Mr. Hart-Smith as Senior Master. Shortly after coming to us he instituted our first Advanced Course in modern studies, the success of which was proved not only by brilliant examination results but also by the subsequent careers of many of his pupils. During the war he was in charge of the South-West London Emergency School, a post abounding with difficulties which only his remarkable energy enabled him to overcome.

Mr. Gribble joined us in 1920, became Senior French Master shortly after, and in 1949 succeeded Mr. John as Senior Master. On his retirement in 1954 I paid a tribute in *The Thorntonian* to his admirable qualities of mind and character. [The text of this piece will be published in a future newsletter. Ed] He was an excellent teacher and a man whose humour and quiet charm of character endeared him to boys and men alike.

If I may add a personal note, it grieves me that one of my last sad duties is to record the passing of two old friends and to express our profound sympathy with John, Mrs. Gribble and their families.

*C.E.Jeremy

*Whose own passing is recorded in the magazine extract reproduced in issue no 7, November 2008.

Autumn 1943:

S.S. “CERAMIC”

In 1936 our School adopted the S.S. *Ceramic*, at that time the longest single funnel liner. In December, 1942, after two successful engagements with enemy submarines, our ship was torpedoed and sunk by a U-boat during a heavy gale in the Atlantic. According to the German radio there was only one survivor, and we can only express our heartfelt sympathy with the relatives and friends of all who shared the fate of this gallant ship and record the gratitude of all Thorntonians for having been privileged to associate with the magnificent seamen who formed the ship’s company.

During the years of peace the *Ceramic* was engaged in bringing home from Australia and New Zealand dairy produce and meat for our food and wool and minerals for our industries. In a letter to the School in 1940 Captain Elford wrote: “I would like all the Masters and Boys to know that the thoughts of my Officers and Myself often go out to them.” Although an attack of pneumonia kept Captain Elford away from his Ship for a short time, he resumed command in 1941 and remained with her to the end, a great captain of a great ship.

The *Ceramic* was built in 1913 for the Shaw, Savill and Albion Line and during the first world war carried more Australian soldiers than any other vessel. Afterwards the ship was completely overhauled, the cabins rebuilt and supplied with hot and cold water. A gymnasium and verandah café were built on the boat deck and the latest talking picture and broadcasting system installed. Many of the latest films were shown. Below decks there was refrigerating plant for freezing butter and mutton and for chilling eggs, apples and cheese. Old Thorntonians will recall the lively descriptions by the officers of the cargoes, voyages, and adventures of our ship during the years which immediately preceded the second world war and the fine June afternoon when Captain and Mrs. Elford visited us to present the “Ceramic Cup” to the School Captain, Hope, and the “Ceramic Marine Library” to the School. Others may remember a later occasion when Hope and Captain Elford discussed Ship Adoption in the television service of the B..B.C.

Our debt to the Merchant Navy is undiminished, and Thorntonians all over the world will be proud to learn that the School has now adopted three more ships. May we hope that when peace returns we will continue to acknowledge and to discharge our debt to those who risk their lives at sea in order that Britain may live.

*T.S

*Unidentified, but probably a senior pupil.

A photograph of the ship is on the website. Go to Memorabilia on the Home page menu and click on Miscellaneous.

Also Autumn 1943: **ITEMS OF SCHOOL NEWS**

The School field is producing food, and the allotments thereon are really a very creditable sight, the soil being far superior to that which tried all the skill of the School gardeners at Chichester.

Summer 1937: **A NEW CALENDAR**

May I suggest that the School adopt the new calendar which has proved so popular in America? This calendar divides the year into 13 months of four weeks each, instead of the present arrangement of 12 months, with fractions of weeks at the end of each month. These fractions of months – with seven months of 31 days, four of 30 and one of 28 – make calculations exceedingly difficult, a difficulty which is obviated by the new calendar.

The thirteenth month would be known as “Sol”, and would consist of the last 13 days of June and the first 13 of July, being placed between these two months so as to cause the least possible disturbance of the present position of the months.

December would have 29 days, and the last week in that month, 8 days. But this eighth day would be given the non-weekday name of “Year Day”, and would be observed as a public holiday – as would the last day of June on a leap year, to be known as “Leap Day”.

The #advantages of such a system are obvious. Every year, every quarter, and every month would fall on a Sunday. Each day of the week would be bound to fall on one of four dates – for example, every Tuesday would be on the 3rd, 10th, 17th, or 24th.

All School functions would thus be regularized, including beginnings and endings of terms, half-term holidays, Speech Days, and organized activities on Wednesday afternoons.

Obviously, there would be no need for printed calendars, and the current date and its weekday name could be seen on clocks and watches.

Within recent years, more than 500 large businesses in the U.S.A. and Canada have adopted this calendar, and it has even been urged by the U.S. government delegate, which goes to show their confidence has not been misplaced.

Until other schools could be induced to join in this tremendously beneficial scheme, a table for the conversion of dates of the old calendar into the new revised one could be hung in some prominent position in the School.

*I .Hazard

#But perhaps not fully appreciated or understood by the contemporary educational and other authorities in the UK!

*1931-8; killed in action during the Second World War. He is commemorated on the replacement plaque displayed at Lambeth College’s Sixth Form Centre, South Side, Clapham.

Teaching Staff

The 1960s list (E & O E, as with those for earlier years already circulated) is attached.

Magazine Query

As a follow-up to the article by David Whiting, reproduced in no 11, and also prompted by the reference in Colin Walder’s contribution (foot of page 1), the Editor is trying to ascertain whether a school magazine, regardless of title and format, ever appeared after 1963. His enquiries so far indicate that publication of that known as *The Thorntonian* probably ceased with that year’s issue, but if members who were at the school from the 1960s onwards have any further information Ted Hayward would be pleased to hear from them.



**TEACHING STAFF: 1960s
(excluding temporary appointments)**

Dorrington, B J F	Head Master (1956-66; died ? 1999)	Jones, D G	History (1960-3)
Read, S W	Acting Head Master (1966-7; died May 1968)	Kent, H A	English Literature
Davies, W R	Acting Head Master (1967-8)	Lambert, A W	French (1931-61)
Heaton Page, R A	Head Teacher (1968-71)	Lees, J G	Technology (1960-2; succeeded Littlewood)
Allott, J	PE (1958-?)	Linden, S J	German (1950-1970s)
Ayres, S	English	Littlewood, A N	Technology (1959-60)
Barlow, P	English (1962-)	Luce, ...	English
Bayliss, J E	Languages (1962-3)	McKie, H B	Head of Mathematics (1961-)
Bennett, R	? (1961)	Marshall, A L	Art (1959-)
Black, D	Science (1959-?)	Marshall, D J	Geography (1965-)
Bonner, C B	English (?-1963)	May, S	Geography (1946-?; died 1973)
Bracey, ...	?	Millhouse, A	Mathematics (1964-)
Bradford, ...	?	Morecroft, ...	?Mathematics
Cairncross, ... (Ms)	?English	Moscrop, C D	Technology (1963-?; succeeded Lees)
Chatterley, A	Music (1957-61)	Murphy, P	Mathematics, Physics (1961-2)
Comer, J	Geography (1960-?)	Newton, D R	Chemistry (1964-)
Cooper, W J	Latin (1928-62, and subs part-time; also i/c Sixth Form)	Noel, ...	French
Cotterell, R B	Latin (1962-3)	O'Malley, J	? (?-1962)
Creutzberg, J	Mathematics (1959-?)	Parfitt, ...	French
Cribb,, G S	English (1963-?)	Phillips, J B	Biology
Crofts, F W	Science (1960-?)	Pollard, M B	English (1959-62)
Cryer, E	History (1963-)	Porter, ...	?
Cullen, A P	French (1961-?)	Prendergast, D	English
Davies, G	Mathematics (1964-?)	Price, K C G	Science (1959-60)
Dodsworth, G W	Physics (1962-?)	Read, S W	Chemistry ((1932-68)
Donaldson, G	Mathematics (1961-?)	Rees, C G	Technology
Doolan, J	English	Robertson, T P	PE (1962- ?)
Downing, ...	?	Rose, Dr...	?
Dyer, D H	Economics/Gen Subjects	Rutherford, R I	? (?-1963)
Eastman, C A (Ms)	Mathematics (1966-)	Sandford, A G	Head of Latin (1963-?)
Edgeler, J D	Deputy Head	Shakespeare, R A	History (1962-3)
Elliott, ...	?	Smith, W H C	? (?-1962)
Evans, R E	Mathematics (1963-?)	Street, B J	Latin, French (1963-?)
Firth, B C	Senior Master	Taylor, F L	Music (1961-8; died 1972)
Fitch, ...	?	Thomas, P	Mathematics
Foster, E	Art and Design	Toes, ... [?Tose]	Geography
Gaweron, W F K	Business Studies	Trott, N	History
Haggard, B (Rev)	Religious Education (1962-?)	Wareham, W (Ms)	?English
Hammond, B (Rev)	Religious Education (1961-2)	Weeks, ...	?
Hearne, ... (Mrs)	Biology	West, D R M	French, Russian
Hems, G	Mathematics (1962-3)	Willerton, D A	French (1962-?)
Hofmann, W F	Physics (1947-1970s)	Williams, H	Head of Chemistry (1968-?)
Howard, F A	Technology (1962-3)	Wilson, ...	History
Hughes, F E	Religious Education	Woods, R G	Mathematics (1960-?)
Johncock, B K	Latin	Yorke, S V	Mathematics (1946-61)
Jones, A A	English (1959-62)		
Jones, B W	English (1962-?)		
Chapple, E W G	<i>School Secretary (1961-?; succeeded Mr Bennetton)</i>		