



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 16

April 2011

Annual General Meeting

The Association's fourth AGM was held at Lambeth Academy, Elms Road, SW4, on Saturday 19 March; 11 members were 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 2012 are:

Chairman: (Vacancy)
Vice-Chairman: Brian Bloice
Secretary: Ted Hayward
Treasurer: Terry Lawlor

Entry-year representatives:
1930s/1940s: Brian Robinson
1950s: Chris Bishop
1960s: Peter Greenwood
1970s/1980s: (Vacancy).

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

- The statement of account for the year ended 31 December 2010, prepared by Terry Lawlor and examined by Robin Garrett, was adopted (copy attached).
- The following changes to the Constitution were agreed, on the recommendation of the Management Committee:
 - a. that the Constitution be amended to allow for the appointment of a Vice-President
 - b. that the Membership section be amended as follows:

Para 3.: add (after "...with the school.") *The Management Committee may at its discretion decline to accept applications for membership, including subsequent renewals*

Para 5.: add (after..."accepted its terms.") *All members must conduct themselves in a way that does not bring the Association into disrepute.*

These revisions have been incorporated in the online version. If you wish to have an updated paper copy please contact Ted Hayward.

- Review of Association's aims, work and funding: to be progressed by the Committee over the coming months

Pupil Honours Boards

At present the six boards are undergoing selective restoration by a specialist firm based in Brixton. Once this work is completed they will be found long-term homes and displayed as follows:

Lambeth Academy, Elms Road – five separate boards containing entries for 1918-1950 inclusive
Lambeth College, South Side – the remaining (composite) board, covering the years 1951 to 1968.

Henry Thornton Award

Lambeth Academy's initial presentation of the Association's award will be made at its "Foundation Year Celebration" to be held on Saturday 2 July 2011. (Further details of the award, including the similar presentation already made by Lambeth College, were given in issue 15)

Membership

Currently 107, including three Associates.

Chichester High School for Boys

OTs who were evacuated to Chichester during WW2 – and perhaps others – might like to know that Roger Wardale, an Old Cicestrian, has written a history of the school. Entitled *Chi High 1928-1958* it's a limited edition, priced at £12, including postage, and may be ordered from Roger at: 4 Trinity Way, Bognor Regis, PO21 5RQ; cheque only, payable to "Mr R Wardale". Ted Hayward has obtained a library/reference copy for the Association and will bring it to the next and subsequent reunions. The book has a number of references to HTS in, predictably, the "1938-45" chapter; he has a copy of these relevant extracts and would be glad to forward them to any members who might be interested but don't wish to commit to buying the book itself.

Other news: the High School plans to hold an "open day" on 22 September 2011, to which OTs are cordially invited. No further information is available about the event at the time of writing, but evacuee Les Garrett (1938-42) has kindly agreed to act as the Association's contact for anyone wishing to attend. Contact him at: 14 Sarisbury Close, Felpham, Bognor Regis, PO22 8JN; 01243 828904.

Graham Worley (1930-2009)

The Editor has received the following enquiry from Robert Worley (who has recently become an Associate member): "My elder brother, Graham, was a pupil at Henry Thornton and Chichester High School during the War – 1940-45 – after which he returned to Alleyns School, Dulwich. He became the youngest QC in Ontario. Does anyone by chance remember him?" If you do, please contact Ted Hayward, who will be glad to pass on any relevant information to Robert; he's also posted an appeal on the website Guest Book page.

Obituaries

R G J Wood (Bob, Woody – 1946-54). Here's the fuller report mentioned in the February newsletter. The attached sheet lists Bob's main HTS and subsequent higher education achievements, as recorded in *The Thorntonian* and obtained from other relevant sources; and three OTs – all of whom were at the school from 1946 until 1951 – have contributed the following recollections.

John Else: My memories include our efforts in the school lacrosse team and repairing and recycling the pre-war sticks so that there were enough to go round. Equipment was very difficult to obtain and Bob as goalkeeper needed protection in addition to the body pad. As he was unable to acquire a "box", as favoured by cricketers, he fashioned one from a brass pot and on at least one occasion the "dong" of hard rubber ball on metal signalled its effectiveness. Most of our games were against older and more experienced teams, and it was only Bob's outstanding goalkeeping that kept the scores to a reasonable level. I know that his ambition was to be a physicist and I expect that to have been achieved.

We did meet once after school times. I happened to be cycling through Oxford one Sunday when a figure stepped out in front of me, attracting my attention by flourishing an umbrella. It was Woody, newly installed in his college and most welcoming. In fact, he gave me a visiting card with a request to call when next passing. Regrettably, I didn't pass that way for several years. From the mid-70s I was often in the Oxford science laboratories and various nuclear sites and always half-expected to see or hear of him.

Norman de Ville: ...he was the most gifted, multi-talented pupil in my year and we were together in the Fifth. We played in the school lacrosse team, and also appeared in the 1950 school play *Antigone*, in which he was King Creon and I a humble soldier. I last saw him at a bus stop in Brixton in about 1957, when he told me that he was a physicist. In view of his Master's at Oxford I never doubted this and always imagined that he had achieved a grand position.

Eric Wilson: He came from a poor home located near the church behind Clapham Common tube station. The family was several in number in a residence that could be described as "cramped". The front door opened on to the street. There was no front garden, garage or carport.

We were swimming at Hampton Court when he got into difficulties, midstream of a tributary of the Thames. I swam to the shore and raised the alarm. A man removed his shoes and dived in to Woody. He got him to wrap his arms around his (the rescuer's) neck. He then deployed breaststroke to get Woody to safety. I vividly recall this incident: it may have been in the summer of 1948.

Another story comes to mind. We went camping in Surrey with a two-man tent and a couple of airgun pistols that belonged to Woody. We approached a farmer who let us camp on his property but incurred the ire of the farm manager, Karl. He mainly spoke in German and Woody and I came to the conclusion that he once was a guard at a prison camp! When he drove away, we used to fire shots at his van!

Jack Douglas Bailey (1945-50): died 17 March 2011. House Captain (Cook); Captain, Football First XI; prefect; member, Sketch Club; contributor to magazine. Son Sean writes that Jack, the eldest of three children, was evacuated during the war to Shropshire and returned to London to attend HTS, "an experience he often spoke about with great fondness over the years". He adds: "Dad was a keen sportsman, playing football and boxing to a high standard ... and even skiing, which was very unusual for a young man in the 1950s".

Reminiscences

Geoff Sloan (1948-53) writes: I was amused by Tim Gee's recollection of the production of *The Devil's Disciple* [issue 14, November 2010].

I played the hangman, and what happened was that the rope, which had been attached to the gallows with a piece of cotton for safety reasons, broke away when I took it to place the noose around Roger Smith's neck.

I made a loop at the top end of the rope and threaded it onto the horizontal part of the gallows, which meant that the noose was now about 2½ ft above where it should have been.

I remember having to put my left arm round Roger's waist and lift him so that I could put the noose over his head with my right hand.

Luckily, the cast member who announced Roger's reprieve (it may have been Tom Phillips) entered on cue, as my left arm was becoming tired. Had he been late, the final outcome might not have been what Bernard Shaw intended!

Ron Hercock (1935-40) on his comparatively short time at Chichester: The school was evacuated on (I believe) 1 September 1939; most schools did, although war was not declared until the 3rd. I didn't at that time go with the school as I had volunteered for service with the ARP. However, a week or so later the government decided that no one under the age of 16 was to be allowed to be involved with anything like that. My brother (23) said I should go back to school and take my exams, and he made all the arrangements.

I joined the school at a small village named Pagham, about six miles from Bognor Regis and a little farther from Chichester. There was no place where we could have any teaching, and so we had none. I was billeted over a mile from the village itself and therefore had little to do with anyone from the school except for one other lad from the school billeted with me. His name was Fritz Horn; I believe his family had escaped from Germany in about 1933.

We were moved to Chichester in January 1940. I was placed with a couple who had a boy of nine, so a 15-year-old wasn't really to their liking. After a couple of months I asked for permission to go back to the farm worker and his family in Pagham. It was granted, and I used to cycle to the school from there. I took the exams in May and then went home to London.

[My understanding is that] CHSB didn't want our school to be on their site. They gave our staff details of their use of the classrooms and facilities with the offer that HTS could use any they didn't need. I don't know how true that was, but I do recall that I was doing German and my tuition in the whole year consisted of 13 half-hour lessons given in our lunch-breaks. Strangely, I failed the exam!

From **Jim Humphrey** (1950-7): I can remember my first day at Henry Thornton. It seemed such a long walk from South Side, past the bike sheds and South Lodge, along past the fives court and lovely lawn, then to the playground (parade ground) to stand in groups outside the Head Master's study. Thank goodness it was a dry day. We all looked resplendent in our new uniforms, with some wearing long trousers for the first time.

Eventually we were sorted into various classes and into Houses. I was placed in 1B under Mr Cooper, and into Macaulay House. Over the following weeks there were many masters who were friendly, stern or aggressive, but we respected all of them. Solly May used to fly along the corridors with his gown flying out behind, like a marauding bat; *another master would teach from the window sill – he used to perch on it as he passed out his wisdom; Mr Phillips, a quiet, white-haired gentleman, who eventually got his own lab at the side of the school for his Biology classes; , plus the "mad professor" type, Mr Hofmann. [**From my own recollection – my years were the same as Jim's – this would have been Mr J I Morris, a small, bespectacled chap who taught English. See also Valette item on page 4. Ed*].

I joined the ATC when I reached the appropriate age and loved the whole time with gliding at Detling, camps at RAF Halton, the link trainer, at which I became fairly efficient, and eventually reaching the rank of Flt-Sergeant. It was here that I became friendly with Stan Hill, a friendship that lasts to this day. I ran dances for the ATC: they were held in the main hall, where we raised a few bob to spend on the ATC activities. Quite a number of the students brought along their girl friends to enjoy the beat.

I can remember the day when sweet rationing ended and staff from Batger's, the confectionery factory next door, came around with bags of Silmos lollies for every boy.

I recall the time I took part in John Galsworthy's play *Strife*, in which I played an old, bent, chapel-going Welshman –and got good reviews too! Donald Durbridge played the lead, but he didn't stay at the school for long.

My boxing experience at the hands of Mr Bramble was a once-only affair, with me flying off with all fists at the sound of the bell against a much taller and experienced boy, David Enoch, who waited for the flurry to finish, then with one punch ended my boxing career. Stan Hill took on Sammy Paton (who now owns a golf course), and lasted even less time than I did, ending with a KO in about 90 seconds.

I can remember with a certain amount of glee the day the school closed, as someone (who shall remain nameless) had created a huge amount of sulphur dioxide, which literally stank the school out.

I wonder if there are brown rings still on the ceiling of the Chemistry Lab, where one used to stick a burning taper in to bubbles of gas and Teepol, with the flames floating to the ceiling, and leaving a circular burn mark. Poor Mr Howells, often rushed off his feet keeping the more adventurous of us under control.

I enjoyed my time at HTS, but never really shone in any aspect of school life, eventually leaving after six months in the Upper VI to join the Meteorology Office at RAF Hendon, and later at RAF Waddington where the huge Delta wing Avro Vulcan was based.

I now live in Australia with four children and nine grandchildren, in the most beautiful if fire-prone area of the Dandenongs in Victoria.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Jim Humphrey concludes his memoir with an appeal for any information about the following:

Arthur Homshaw, aka Bomb Head, who lived at Herne Hill and later married a lovely girl called Pat, and **Graeme 'Wally' Sutton** who I believe lived towards Clapham South; **Tony Quintiliani**, who lived near Lambert Road, Brixton; and **Peter Schiefelbein**, who was not at the school very long. There was also the impeccable and very correct Polish lad, **Skarpplik**, who when introduced to any young lady would click his heels together.

From the Pages of *The Thorntonian*

Autumn 1958:

DR. E. AUFRICHT AND MR. J. I. MORRIS

It is with regret that we say goodbye to two of our senior members of staff, Dr. E. Aufricht and Mr. J. I. Morris.

Dr. E. Aufricht, a Doctor of Laws of Vienna University, came to the School in 1948 to take charge of the teaching of German. His interests have not been limited to his class work, for he has taken a quiet yet important part in out-of-school activities. A keen philatelist, he has given the Stamp Club valuable advice; and the Chess Club, too, are grateful for his encouragement and support. Dr. Aufricht's cheerful good temper, despite the increasing ill health which has enforced his early retirement, will be missed by both Staff and Boys. We wish him a happy and long retirement.

Mr. J. I. Morris, M.A (Oxon.), came to the School in September, 1952, as Senior English Master, and immediately began to play a vital role in the life of the School. The Dramatic Society has flourished under his direction. Two of its most successful productions, "Strife" and "Julius Caesar", were produced by Mr. Morris. The Society's stage equipment has been transformed and multiplied largely as a result of his determination that the School should have a worthwhile stage. The School magazine has been refurbished. Mr. Morris's efforts to spread to us his interest in film was regrettably foiled by rising costs which the Film Society was incapable of meeting. Certainly we shall miss his drive and energy, to which we owe the excellence of our Library, along with so much else. We wish him success in his new post as Senior English Master at the Stationers' Company's School.

J.R.C[arr]

A more extensive selection of extracts will feature in the next issue. Ed.

The Editor welcomes contributions for future issues. Please post or e-mail them to Ted Hayward, 31 Linfields, Little Chalfont, Amersham, HP7 9QH; ted.hayward@btinternet.com
Association President: Jimmy Hill OBE Website: www.oldthorntoniansclapham.org.uk



R G J WOOD (BOB)
10.8.35-14.8.92

HENRY THORNTON SCHOOL

Attendance: 1946-54

Captain of School: 1952-3

Prefect

Flight-Sergeant (and senior NCO), 1351 Squadron, ATC

House Captain, Clarkson

Major County Scholarship: 1954

Form prizes: IIA, IIIA, IVA

GCE prize (7 "O" levels): 1951

Subject prizes (English Literature and German): 1951

Four "A" level passes in VIS: 1953.

*W D Evans prize: 1953

Lacrosse team; awarded colours: 1951

Co-editor of and contributor to *The Thorntonian*:

- "Woes of an ex-Juvenile Delinquent" (poem, Spring 1950 issue)
- Suggested update of lyrics of second verse of school song (Autumn 1952)
- Short biography of Thomas Clarkson (Autumn 1952)

#School productions:

- a Aunt Gertrud in "Einer Muss Heiraten", Dr Aufrecht's adaptation of an old comedy (Autumn, 1950)
- b. King Creon in "Antigone" (15-16 March 1951)
- c. Lord Duberley in "Heir-at-Law", by George Colman the younger (Easter, 1952)
- d. Journalist in Sullivan's "Cox and Box" at concert (17 July 1954)

As VA pupil: Voice of "robot" (English, French and German) in Science Conversazione: July 1950

OXFORD UNIVERSITY

BA degree, Physics (New College): 1956

MA (Oxon): 1963

Notes

*Head Master, 1927-51

#Relevant extracts from reviews:

- "As the scheming aunt whose plan goes but slightly aghy, Wood was excellent, and thoroughly merited the applause which the audience unstintingly gave him. If he can check a slight tendency to over-act, he should develop into a comic actor of no small stature."
- "Smith and Wood must be named as the stars of a well-picked cast... Wood we remembered from last summer, but the family tyrant, comic Aunt Gertrud, had become the iron-hard tyrant, tragic King Creon. He showed us that he could be as angry now as he was funny before. His powerful voice was used to advantage in a good portrayal of the gradual loss of grandeur by an unsensitive [sic] character."
- "The suddenly elevated Lord Duberley was in the robust care of Wood, who was at his best when taking the audience into his confidence."
- "The comedy came over admirably and the performance with its zest and pace delighted the packed Hall."

Compiled by Ted Hayward, March 2010



THE OLD THORNTONIANS ASSOCIATION (CLAPHAM)
President: Jimmy Hill OBE

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010

INCOME	£	EXPENDITURE	£
Membership subscriptions:		"Henry Thornton Award" (book tokens) – Lambeth College	100.00
• Full (89 x £10.00)	890.00		
• Associate (1 x £6.00)	6.00		
Donations (general)	45.00	Expenses:	
		• Website program – Renewal	56.88
		• Postage and stationery (Secretary)	61.79
Sale of ties (11 @ £9.00)	99.00		
TOTAL	1040.00	TOTAL	218.67
BALANCE	821.33		
CARRIED FWD (Surplus 2009)	1682.39		
IN HAND	2503.72		

E J Lawlor, Treasurer

February 2011

This account has been examined after full disclosure of the General Books etc. 2010
19th MAR 2011
www.oldthorntoniansclapham.org.uk
R. Powell - Clerk / Treasurer