



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 17

August 2011

2011 Reunion

Attached is the usual reminder/invitation for the next gathering at The Windmill. No reply is necessary if you're not planning to attend.

Pupil Honours Boards

Further to the reports in issues 15 and 16, the set of six boards has now been selectively restored. They are all being temporarily stored at Lambeth College, pending a decision on the locations for their long-term display, accompanied by an explanatory plaque, at both the College and the Lambeth Academy. The Management Committee has agreed that the College will keep the large, composite board containing the entries for 1951-68, with the Academy having the remaining individual boards for the earlier period back to 1918.

Henry Thornton Award

Lambeth Academy's initial presentation of the Association's award was made at its "Foundation Year Celebration" held on Saturday 2 July 2011. The event marked the completion of their studies by the first intake of pupils in 2004. Three OTs attended: Peter Lawson (1936-41), who spoke about the history of the school and its link with the Elms road site now occupied by the Academy; Mike Surridge (1947-52), who presented the award to the selected student, Gazmir Ujkaj; and Ted Hayward. A copy of the certificate appears on the Home page of the website.

Lambeth College is holding its next graduation ceremony on Saturday 22 October 2011. The programme includes presentation of the next Henry Thornton Award to a nominated student. Contact Ted Hayward for more information if you're interested in attending.

Membership

Currently 109, including Harold Noah, who taught Economics from 1949 until 1960, and three Associates.

Obituaries

John Flood (1949-58): died 9 April 2011. Prefect; member of magazine Editorial Board 1954-7; actively associated with running and stocking of the Library at South Lodge; winner, Clapham Rotary Club essay competition; film projectionist; awarded BSc at Nottingham Univ (1961) – his entry appears on the pupil honours board for that year; attended the "starter" OT reunion held at The Windmill in September 2005. Ted Hayward (1950-7) writes: Although John started a year before me, our paths crossed quite happily on several occasions. I particularly recall his endearing, quirky sense of humour, and also a gathering of The Gringe Club at his London home, aka Club HQ, attended by David Enoch, Alan Brown and myself. Please let Ted know if you'd like to share any reminiscences you may have of John, whether during his years at the school or later.

Carl Henry John Gauss (?1910-13): died 1 September 1997. Attended the "original" school, ie, Battersea Polytechnic Secondary, although it hasn't been possible to confirm the precise years. Awarded BSc degree in Physics at University College, London (recorded on the honours boards entries for 1920). Lecturer at Croydon Technical College, 1947-65.

Hubert Edward Gauss (1918-22): died 1 May 2005. Like his elder brother Carl, he obtained a BSc in Physics (his name appears on the honours board for 1925). Held various college lectureships in Electrical Engineering from the 1940s; Deputy Head of Science and Technology Department, Southall College, from 1968 until retirement in 1970; Fellow of Institute of Physics; Chartered Engineer; author of *Introduction to Physics*, published by Newnes. [This information on both OTs is extracted from fuller biographies kindly provided by Hubert's son, John.]

Philip George Wilkinson (1942-5): died 31 January 2011. Active member of Music Society.

Following up the item on **Jack Bailey** (1945-50, died 17 March 2011) in the previous issue, **Mike Overton** (same years) writes: My memories of Jack are almost entirely confined to the sports area. He was a ferocious centre-half and terrified even his own side with his “enthusiastic” tackling. I played alongside him, in various Old Boys’ teams, for a number of years and his appetite for the game never diminished. In the boxing ring he was equally frightening, but this aspect of his character was never evident off the field or out of the ring. He was kind, considerate, thoughtful and gently spoken.

Reminiscences

Wilf Finbow (1931-6) remembers a couple of bruising encounters in the gymnasium: I was a devotee of Bob Bramble. He had an annual check-up on his wounded leg and in his absence was a supply teacher, “Cordite” Conroy. He was one of that “circus” of all-in wrestlers in those days. No holds barred, they performed for the baying masses at the hall (much condemned by the Head Master) on the way to Clapham North Tube station. We presumed he took the name “Cordite” from the Navy’s 16in gun propellant, as he may have been an ex-matelot. Other opponents of this “circus” included Norman (“The Butcher”) Ansell and “Young Apollo” (said to be Sir Athole Oakley). My older siblings were friends of the “Butcher”, who in reality was a quiet, well-mannered car mechanic at his father-publican’s garage.

In gym one day I messed up a vault on the buck horse and gave “Cordite” a kick in the crutch. Spreadeagled on it, he gave me a really firm rabbit punch! Three years later he pitchforked me into the heavyweight boxing class versus F, a huge, powerful gymnast. He advised me not to worry as once you draw an opponent’s blood he folds. However, it turned out to be my blood; so, discreetly, I hit the canvas in the second round. Imagine such advice from teachers these days!

There was no parental complaining and “hot-footing” to the Head Master, Mr (Taffy) Evans. In fact, my parents never knew, and neither incident left indelible scars on my psyche, to quote the term used by “trick cyclists”.

Geoff Sloan (1948-53) asks: Does anyone remember Mr Lawrence, who was one of our school-keepers in the 1950s? He had a flat on the top floor of South Lodge, and was a cheerful, friendly person. Each autumn he raked the leaves scattered on the lawn behind South Lodge and then set fire to them, resulting in a slow burn which gave off a pleasing aroma for several days. Mr Lawrence came to mind when I saw his colleague, the ever-miserable Mr Field, mentioned in an *earlier newsletter [*John Jones’s piece in issue 12, March 2012, with additional comments from Derek Yandell in no 15, January 2011].

From the Pages of *The Thorntonian*

Autumn 1955:

VALETE

The School has this year had the misfortune to lose two of its oldest Masters, Mr. H.G.Rawlings and Mr. S.A.Owen. To the sincere regret of colleagues and boys they retired in April and July respectively, after a lifetime of service in education.

Mr. Rawlings joined the Staff in April, 1936, as Handicraft Master [succeeding Mr W S Williamson, 1916-36 Ed]. To the teaching of this subject, and its recently added companion, Technical Drawing, he brought expert knowledge, great enthusiasm and an insistence upon accuracy and honesty of endeavour which was a natural reflection of the integrity of his own character. The high standard of craftsmanship achieved under his direction was amply proved by the annual exhibition of Woodwork, which was one of the chief features of Open Day. After the War he took charge of the financial organisation of school dinners. Here his efficiency was such as to suggest that he would have won great success in the Inland Revenue Department, for he developed an uncanny skill at detecting the boys whose hunger had weakened their memory over the small matter of payment. A robust advocate of strict discipline, he practised what he preached, but although his criticisms were on occasion devastatingly caustic they left no ill-will, for boys and men could discern beneath the apparent severity a kindly and genial nature.

Mr. Owen became a permanent member of the Staff in September 1946, and immediately won a reputation as a most valuable “all-rounder”. He taught junior and middle-school boys a variety of subjects with a success that owed much to his knowledge and long experience, but even more to his sympathetic understanding of boys. Teachers are sometimes accused of taking an interest only in clever boys. Whether this charge is in general true or not, it could not be laid against Mr. Owen. He devoted as much attention to the weak as to the more promising pupils and his generosity of mind was shown in his efforts to palliate their shortcomings. For some years he was in charge of the School National Savings Movement and of the organisation of Lacrosse; and such was his physical ability that up to the end he represented the Staff against the School at Cricket and Tennis.

To both of these Masters we offer our sincere gratitude and our cordial wishes for a happy retirement.

C.E.J[eremy]

Winter 1932:

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of "The Thorntonian"

Henry Thornton School, 11/11/32

Dear Sir

I think it would be a good idea if we had a "School Flag". Say, for example, a black and silver flag, with either the School Crest or the initials H.T.S. engraved upon the centre. The School flag could then be flown upon School celebration days. Whilst at National Remembrances the Union Jack could be flown. The School flag could also be flown in miniature at the corners of football pitches.

Yours, etc.,

"OBSERVANT" 2L.

EDITOR'S NOTE. – The idea of having a School flag is certainly a novel one. But the occasions on which it could be used would be very rare. The phrase "School celebration days" is rather vague. Possibly the writer has in mind the occasions: end (not beginning) of term, and those when the first football eleven records a victory. It should interest "Observant" to know that if he looks round the sides of the School pitch at Roehampton he may see (when the School is playing) six School flags indicating the corners and half-way line.

(A later) editor's note: although it is evident that no general flag was ever adopted, does anyone recall whether the "Roehampton six", or similar pennants, ever made a subsequent appearance at Clapham or Rose Hill?

Autumn 1952:

OBITUARY

LEN

Old Boys and the older boys still at school will have been saddened to hear of the death of Mr. Leonard B. Cundall. After his retirement from the post of Geography Master (1921-1948), he had worked for the Wool Marketing Board and for a short while was Head Master of a school in Manchester, but his health was rapidly failing and his friends were grieved, but not surprised, to hear that he had been admitted to St. Helier Hospital. Here he passed away on October 10th. We desire to express our deep sympathy with Mrs. Cundall and her family in their bereavement.

Mr. Cundall brought to the study and teaching of Geography not only a well-stocked mind but also a most lively intelligence which ranged far beyond the boundaries of his already wide subject. He wrote several books on Geography and was constantly engaged in reading, reviewing or arguing about latest theories. Like most Yorkshiremen he loved controversy, yet so humorously were his opinions expressed that no one could take offence at them. During the war he had to teach Economics and I am reminded that one of his pupils remarked, "Our Economics is a mixture of Ethics and Politics". The same discursiveness characterised his conversation and probably his Geography lessons also; yet few boys can fail to have been stimulated by his fertile mind.

Intellectual gifts may elicit our admiration but it is qualities of character that endear a man to us. "Len" (the diminutive was evidence of his popularity) inspired affection among all who knew him because, as one of his friends writes, "He had a heart of gold". His generosity was proverbial and it arose out of his fundamental humanity. No one in need of help looked to him in vain. Even sick animals seemed to know instinctively that in his house they would find comfort. One of the last things he said to me, when he was very near the end, was, "Is there anything I can do for you?" He spent most of his time doing things for others and we are the poorer for his going.

C.E. JEREMY

Autumn 1944:

ADVICE ON CAREERS

This term two talks have been given to the Fifth Forms at the school, which form part of a series of addresses on careers. Mr F. S. Bryson, M.B.E., M.A., B.Sc., of the L.C.C. School of Building, Brixton, spoke on "The Building and Allied Trades". The nature of the different branches of building, the qualifications a boy should seek to obtain, and the prospects were clearly explained by Mr. Bryson. The many questions put to the speaker showed the keen interest of the boys.

Mr. Arthur Milroy, an officer of H.M. Inland Revenue Department, spoke on the work in the Customs and Excise.

The parents of boys who will be leaving school next July will be pleased to hear that arrangements have been made by which information and personal advice may be obtained regarding particular professions and businesses, which parents may be considering as careers for their sons. The organization of this Advisory Bureau has been made possible through the most generous offer of their services by the members of the Clapham Rotary Club. The field of vocations on which expert personal advice may be obtained includes Architecture, Banking, Building, Ministry, Dentistry, Engineering, Law, Printing, Insurance, General commerce.

Parents who would desire such personal advice should write to the Head Master.

W.R.J[ohn]

From the Pages of *The Bat*

Also from the prewar era, these extracts appeared in the final issue, dated December 1928, of the magazine for the (predecessor) Battersea County School.

Letter from the Head Master

To the Editor of "The Bat".

Sir,

Next January we hope to take possession of our new buildings on South Side, Clapham Common; at the same time we shall assume the new name of "Henry Thornton School". We shall find our new home an excellent, well-lighted, well-provided and spacious modern School, with a fine hall, four large laboratories and sixteen class-rooms, besides the Art and Handicraft rooms. South Lodge is being reconstructed internally, and will provide dining-room accommodation on the ground floor, and a large library above. The two fives-courts which are being built in the garden will give the boys the opportunity of making acquaintance with a new game. A large playground is being laid out near the School building, and there will be hard and grass tennis courts. The official entrance to the new School will be in Elms Road, but boys with cycles will use the present entrance on South Side, near which the new cycle-shed is situated.

Our move to new buildings and assumption of a new name will involve other changes. There will be a new School cap and badge, and new colours – black and silver. [Those for BCS were maroon and blue. Ed] The badge and colours are those of the Thornton family, which we have received special permission to use. Another important innovation will be the addition of a new House to the five already in existence. When there are six Houses, it will be possible for them all to be playing at once, whereas at present one House has always to be "resting".

We all feel that we are approaching an epoch of the greatest importance in the life of our School, and assuming a great responsibility, but pride in our past gives us confidence for our future.

“ 'Tis not in mortals to command success,
But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it.”

I am, Sir,
Yours faithfully,
W. D. EVANS

Arnold Smith Memorial Prize

A year ago an anonymous donor offered to the School an annual prize of £2. 2s. 0d. for the best original English poem, short story or one-act play. He gave the prize in memory of our late Head Master [1918-27], and wished it to be known as the Arnold Smith Memorial Prize. The School made an excellent response to this generous offer, for during the School year 1927-8 no fewer than forty-seven boys competed for the honour of being the first winner. In all thirty-four Short Stories, five One-Act plays and eight Poems were submitted, and of these the best were:—

“The Murder”, by E.S.Tucker (VI)
“Safety”, by A.F. Anderson (VI)
“The Awakening”, by A. Emanuel (IVa)
“Honesty is the...”, by F.A.Noyes (IVa)
“The Amateur Burglar”, by G. Smith (IVa).

Each of these stories was considered good enough for the prize, but quite the best was E.S.Tucker's "The Murder". We heartily congratulate the prize-winner and the runners-up.

Former Member of Staff

Does anyone remember Mrs Rose Pattison ("Pat"), who worked as a dinner lady at the school, and the (also now closed) St Alphonsus Boys' School, from the mid-1950s until the early 1970s? Alyson Wilson, of The Clapham Society, has received a letter with this enquiry from her daughter, Mrs Yvonne McCulloch. If you can help in any way contact the Editor.

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



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

SEVENTH REUNION – 2011

Date

Saturday 24 September, from 1pm until about 6pm.

Venue

The Windmill, South Side, Clapham Common, SW4 9DE (main dining-room).

Catering

No prepaid lunches will be provided. You should therefore order your meal, if required, from the bar menu, which can be viewed on The Windmill's website: www.windmillclapham.co.uk (Click on the "DINING" tab on the Home page, and then "Bar Menu".)

Parking

There is a limited number of designated parking spaces in the immediate vicinity of The Windmill; all, however, are free at weekends.

Attendance

If you're planning to come to the reunion please let me know by completing and returning the slip below, preferably by **17 September**, to enable me to prepare the name badges and attendance list. You can also e-mail me: ted.hayward@btinternet.com, or call on 01494 762838.

Kind regards.

Ted Hayward

To: Ted Hayward, 31 Linfields, Little Chalfont, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 9QH

I shall be at the next reunion on 24 September 2011.

From (PLEASE PRINT):