



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 2

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In the absence of adverse comment to date, the Editor in his wisdom has decided to retain the title and format of the launch issue. Provided sufficient material is forthcoming it is hoped to publish the newsletter three times a year, the approximate dates being January/February, April/May and September/October.

Management Committee Membership

John Simmons, Vice-Chairman, has tendered his resignation owing to ill-health but remains an active member of the Association. The vacancy will, it is hoped, be filled at the AGM, to be held in early 2008, but any registered members of the Association interested in being co-opted to serve in this capacity in the meantime should contact the Secretary, Ted Hayward.

Association Tie

As already advised, the tie is now available, the purchase price (including postage) being £9. Orders should be sent to Ted Hayward at the address at the foot of page 4; cheques only, please, payable to "Old Thorntonians Association". The design consists of broad black and silver bands, interspersed with narrower maroon/blue stripes, with a single underknot logo representing the school's crest and encircled by the full title of the Association.

Membership

The present tally is 85, including two Associates.

2007 Reunion

The Management Committee has agreed that the following be invited, as its guests, to attend this year's event: Richard Chambers (Principal, Lambeth College); Peter Foster (Principal, Lambeth Academy); Ruth Ling (local Ward councillor, and governor of Lambeth Academy); and Alyson Wilson (responsible for the newsletter and other publications of The Clapham Society - see also final item).

War Memorial Plaque

As there seems to be little hope of tracing the original plaque (see fuller report in issue no 1), the Committee has agreed that the membership generally might wish to have a replica made; this proposal, with an indication of the likely cost, will be formally submitted to the next AGM.

Obituaries

Leonard Bruce Archer, CBE (c1937-9): died on 16 May 2005. Bruce Archer studied Mechanical Engineering at Twickenham Technical College, and later Northampton Polytechnic, in the late 1940s, after war service with the Scots Guards. In 1961 took up a post as research leader at the Royal College of Art, where he spent the rest of his working life, first as Professor and later director of Design Research and member of Council. Miranda Newton, his daughter, writes: "...as the son of an army family, he moved around a lot in his childhood, but spoke very positively of his experiences at Henry Thornton. ... At the RCA, he developed his subject both theoretically and through practical projects. He will be remembered for the specification and design of the hospital bedstead which is still in common use today, and for development of the use of computer in design. Generous and kind-hearted, he encouraged and inspired students, colleagues and employees. He loved his work, and had no other hobby or distractions, except perhaps the theatre and the ballet. Despite his serious, sometimes forbidding, exterior, he had a warm sense of humour and a very soft heart."

David Enoch (1948-56): died in 1989. School Captain; Cricket Captain; House Captain (Macaulay), 1957; winner of Clapham Rotary Club essay competition prize, 1957; BSc, Nottingham University, 1960, MSc, 1962. Brian Thompson (also 1948-56) writes: "After University he worked for the old Post Office Research Centre in North London. He moved to Ipswich when the Post Office built its new research

centre at Martlesham. This became British Telecom, and David worked there until he died. He was a Section Head, did research, and was an expert on magnetic materials and electrostatic discharge. He was always a keen cricketer, but stopped playing in his later years and took up golf and squash."

Eric Gilder (1926-31): died on 1 June 2000. Composer of the original school song (see also final paragraph of extract, below, from the 1929 issue of *The Thorntonian*). Began his career at a London music college which was later renamed the Eric Gilder School of Music. Trained at the Royal College of Music, where he studied under Sir Malcolm Sargent and others. A talented pianist, he composed extensively for the orchestra, theatre and television, and was also a prominent lecturer.

Arlton Rose (?1953-8): died in ?2000. "Arly" played Jennet Jourdemayne in school production of "The Lady's Not For Burning", Christmas 1955, and the title rôle in "Julius Caesar", December 1956; First XI Cricket; Secretary, Cricket Club, 1958; Secretary, Lacrosse Club. Jack Lester (1951-8) and Bob Hay (1950-6) add: [JL] "He was a real larger-than-life character and a tremendous enthusiast in anything he did"; [BH, who had met him in 2004] "...we were talking about our sporting interests, and he mentioned Lacrosse [when] the penny dropped. ... There is a sad footnote to this story because about 4 years ago he had a massive heart attack from which he made some sort of recovery. He was put on the list for a heart transplant which he duly had at St George's in Tooting but unfortunately contracted an infection and died. He was only 58."

Maurice ("Mogg") Taylor (1945-50): died on 31 December 2006. From Mike Overton (same years): "Maurice had enjoyed a long and distinguished career in the police, ending up as a Commander at Scotland Yard, and at one stage he was the senior officer at Paddington Green station. After leaving the force he landed a key job at the Bar Council, where as he confided, in his inimitable style, to friends that his remit was simply to 'nick bent briefs'. Maurice kept in touch with a number of HT class contemporaries, including John Thurston, Alan Jones and Mike Overton, and he will be particularly missed by them". [Editor's note: I have a fuller obituary, which appeared in the local press, and would be glad to send a copy to anyone interested.]

Peter Waterman (1945-8): died in 1986, aged 52. Brother Ken, also a pupil from 1945 to 1948, writes: "While at HT he boxed and won his weight, and also won the National Association of Boys Clubs title. He joined Caius Boxing Club, which was then in Battersea. In 1952 he boxed for England at the Helsinki Olympics and after turning professional won the British Welterweight Championship. Subsequently he also won the European Welterweight Championship." In all Peter had 46 bouts; he won 41 (including 33 knock-outs), with two draws and three defeats.

From the Pages of *The Thorntonian*

Fittingly perhaps, this first extract is from the July 1929 issue:

Opening of the School by Lord Monk Bretton (With acknowledgements to the "Clapham Observer.")

The School was formally opened by Lord Monk Bretton (Chairman of the London County Council) on Friday, June 28th, in the presence of a large gathering of parents and friends; Sir John Gilbert (Chairman of the Education Committee of the L.C.C.) presided, and others present included the Mayor of Wandsworth, the Bishop of Southwark, the Rev. Canon J. Durell, our old friend Sir Henry Stephens, Mr. W. F. Marchant (Chairman of the Governors), and Mr. J. R. Battley.

Addressing the large audience, the Chairman said he had great pleasure in presiding over the opening of our School, the successor of the Battersea County School, which had done such efficient work in Battersea. Introducing Lord Monk Bretton as the Chairman of the London County Council, Sir John congratulated him on the pleasing task he had to perform in opening the School, which, it was hoped, was going to accomplish great work in that particular district.

As Chairman of the Education Committee, he wanted to explain that the erection of this new Secondary School...was part of the educational programme of the London Educational Authority... In order to give some idea of the extensive character of this programme, Sir John said that the London County Council provided for the secondary schools of London in two ways: it had its own schools, like Henry Thornton School, which it built and maintained, and also aided a number of voluntary secondary schools. ... But the recreative side of the schools had not been forgotten, for new playing fields had been acquired and sites for future work had also been purchased. ...

Lord Monk Breton...said that the Thorntons had, he believed, been connected with Clapham for 200 years. Henry Thornton, after whom the School was named, was the founder of what made Clapham first famous, the Clapham Sect, and he was associated with Lord Macaulay and Wilberforce, and, curiously enough, or, perhaps, properly enough, he believed that the Thorntons occupied the house next door to the site on which the School was situated. ...

The School was an old one, not a new building: it was formerly a branch of the Battersea Polytechnic; it then became the Battersea County School, and from there it came to its present site. ...

"This is a competitive age," he continued. "It is a fast changing age," and it seemed to him that he was getting old-fashioned; he

read of aeroplanes and of airships, and he saw that people were going to mix with a great many more people, people of different races and of different kinds. ...The world was smaller, and [the pupils] should adopt the Boy Scouts' motto, "Be prepared"; that School was going to help them do it. ...

The Headmaster (Mr. W. D. Evans, M.A.) said: It is the custom to condemn those who are assembled together on these inaugural occasions to listen to a speech by the Headmaster, and I am personally very pleased to have the opportunity of telling the parents something about the work of the School. But before I come to this, I should like to refer to a letter which I have received from Mr. Henry Grey Thornton, who is now the chief direct descendant of the Henry Thornton after whom our School is named. Mr. Thornton says:-

"I am sorry I shall not be able to attend your opening ceremony. ... I wish the School every success, which it should have as it is starting under such good auspices."

The connection of the Thornton family with Clapham has been a long and distinguished one, and many boys here will remember Mr. Percy Thornton, who represented Clapham in Parliament for many years, and long continued an old custom of riding on horseback from his house at Battersea Rise to the House of Commons. ...

Now I come to the School. It would be superfluous of me to praise the architect, for of his work you can judge for yourselves. You can also admire, without my help, the way in which the grounds have been laid out and...see how well [the School] has been equipped. ...

The type of school of which this is so fine an example marks a new era in the history of English education. ...it is my pride and privilege to tell you that you will find in this School...a broad general education which will bear comparison with any in the country...

There are two things which I should like to stress. One is the importance of the study of Latin, a subject which, when properly taught, is richer than any other in its gifts of culture and mental agility and discipline. You may say that Latin hasn't much to do with modern life. But if it contributes to a man's general education, surely it must be credited with part of the power which that education gives him...

Lastly, I come to the other thing I wanted to emphasise, and that is the enormous difference it makes to a boy's education, to the development of his mind in after life, if he can stay at school for the two years from 16 to 18. It is at this vitally important period, when he is turning from boy into young man, that training and environment produce such momentous results. We have two advanced courses for boys of 16 who have passed their Matriculation Examination, one in economics, which is an invaluable preparation for any boy ambitious to rise to a high place in the business world, and one in science, which opens the way to a wide field in present and future development of our industries. I would appeal to all parents who are able to keep their boys at school till 18 to give the matter their very serious consideration.

I should say that outside the grounds here, we have access to large playing fields at Roehampton. Our games are flourishing; this year the cricket team has so far won every match they have played. We do not want to make games the object of life., as is perhaps too much the case in some schools, but we want them to play their proper part in a well-balanced education. ...

During the evening E. Gilder and H. L. Briant played the duet "Danse Fantastique", composed by E. Gilder.

Followed by the full text of a contribution from our President over 30 years later (Autumn, 1961):

From an Old Thorntonian
by JIMMY HILL
*(Mr. Hill, an Old Thorntonian, is Chairman of the
Professional Footballers' Association)*

Writing an article for an Old Boys' magazine is surely an awesome project. I can imagine my enemies of memory-fading years – the masters, of course – poring over the manuscript, scornfully saying, "He never could write two decent consecutive sentences", or, "I can see he has become the wastrel I always thought he would". Perhaps, even worse, my name does not stimulate them to read the particular article because it has dissolved into an obscure mist of former pupils.

I am a poor specimen of an Old Boy, never yet having arrived for any function. There is, I think, a valid reason for this arising from the War years. My first term at Thornton's was to have started in September, 1939, but Hitler plotted a war and my mother and father schemed my evacuation to Chichester without my knowledge. I was marooned with boys from Chichester High School, but six months later, as soon as South-West London Emergency Secondary School opened, I was able, by subtle argument and more effective tearful demonstration, to force my way back to London.

The years I should have been attending Henry Thornton School, there was I in the building at least, but mixed up with refugees from Strand, Clapham College, Bec, Westminster City, Tennyson's, Battersea Grammar and other schools. It would give me great pleasure to meet my old class mates: to see how Boddington has developed, Ellie's brain (he was a genius, or a swot, and I suspect both) has made him a millionaire, whether Finkle Hasser has been found out or become a minister of a Mid-European State. I shall never know. Such is the dilemma of all "Swlessors".

I would enjoy enormously a pint of bitter with my contemporaries. To talk over, for instance, the time when our Maths master, who was adept at drawing perfect blackboard circles in geometry, exclaimed one day to the hysterical class, "I have split an atom", as the chalk appeared to catch fire in mid-circle, having been carefully primed (by a nameless boy) with an inverted, invisible, red-topped match. Or perhaps the time when a History master with a penchant for drama, who had a habit of laying his hands on the head of a boy before giving him a swipe, caught four boys singing in close harmony in a deserted Form room about exam time. As he laid his hands on the head of Patterson, who apart from singing was more out of tune than the rest, Patterson

chirped, “Short, back and sides, please!” Yes, it is wonderful to remember those days, though my class-mates are scattered through the ranks of eight Old Boys’ Societies. But I am still an Old Thorntonian and proud of it.

One of these days I should like to play soccer again for Old Thorntonians, as I imagine is my right as a *bona fide* Old Boy. Perhaps some would enjoy playing with me, and more would relish playing against me, but the A.F.A would never hear of it. To some people soccer is more than a game to be played and enjoyed, irrespective of colour, crowd appeal, number a side, play-ground or field, or even player status. They use soccer as a means of up-holding the great tradition of games snobbery, against the weight of opinion in our changing society. It is tragic that so often the real spirit of soccer has to be saved from its well-meaning but misguided older administrators and I am afraid sometimes from its equally misguided but younger players. Still, there have been changes for the better and there will be more, I hope.

I believe the School founders were in some way or other linked with the freeing of slaves in the nineteenth century. I could claim to have carried on in some small way the illustrious traditions of these men by playing a part in releasing the last bonded slaves of Great Britain – 2,700 Professional Footballers. So let it be said the magic of Henry Thornton has worked in a strange way.

THE CLAPHAM SECT

The concluding paragraph of Jimmy’s article serves as a useful reminder of the aims and membership of the Clapham Sect, particularly as 2007 is the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade, both in the British Isles and the Empire. (The Abolition of the Slave Trade Act was passed on 25 March that year with a majority of 114 votes to 15 in the Commons and 41 to 20 in the Lords.)

The Sect was an influential group of like-minded social reformers in England, active during the period 1790-1830. Its members, four of whom (their names being particularly remembered by OTs) are listed below, were mainly prominent and wealthy evangelical Anglicans who shared common political views concerning the liberation of slaves, and reform of the penal system:

- Zachary Macaulay (1768-1838) – estate manager, colonial governor (Sierra Leone), settled with family at 5 The Pavement, Clapham in the early 1800s, established a school for African children at 8 Rectory Grove
- James Stephen (1758-1832) – lawyer, (practised in the West Indies), returned to England in 1794 and moved to South Side, Clapham Common, to be near Wilberforce and other Sect members
- Henry Thornton (1760-1815) – economist, banker, philanthropist, Member of Parliament for Southwark, lived at Battersea Rise House, West Side, Clapham Common (the Sect’s headquarters, also Wilberforce’s residence)
- William Wilberforce (1759-1833) – parliamentarian, leading abolitionist (made first speech on this subject in the House of Commons in 1789), Henry Thornton’s cousin.

Devout Christians, the group published a journal, the *Christian Observer*, and was also credited with the foundation of several missionary and tract societies, including the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Church Missionary Society.

The 1807 Act did not per se abolish slavery: this was achieved through further legislation enacted in 1833.

(A blue GLC plaque commemorating the campaigning work of the Sect – particularly Wilberforce – is displayed at Holy Trinity Church, North Side; it also notes that they worshipped here. As some OTs may recall, for a number of years pupils and staff attended a service here on 10 March, to mark Henry Thornton’s birthday.)

THE CLAPHAM SOCIETY

If you’re interested in Clapham, past and present, you may wish to find out more about the Society, a registered charity involved in a wide range of local issues, including planning, roads and transport, and conservation (particularly the Common). Its newsletter has featured articles on the history of HTS and the 2005 OT reunion, and the Society’s publications include *The Story of Clapham Common*, *The Clapham Sect* and a new, lavishly illustrated book entitled *Discovering Clapham*. Individual membership is currently £6. For further information visit the website: www.outlines.org.uk/claphamsociety, or contact the Membership Secretary: Jennifer Everett, 30 Trinity Close, London, SW4 0JD (020 7627 4770).

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