



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 24

November 2013

2013 Reunion

The ninth reunion was held at The Windmill on Saturday 5 October; total attendance was around 35. This year's event included a visit to Lambeth College, 45 South side, arranged with the kind permission of the Principal, Mark Silverman. The group were able to view the Association's rededicated war memorial and the later set of pupil honours boards (for 1951-68), together with other, selected rooms on the ground floor, and enjoyed a "memory lane" stroll around the grounds – including the remains of the original lawn between South Lodge and the school playground – to the rear of the College up to the boundary with the adjacent Lambeth Academy.

It is hoped to arrange a similar visit to Lambeth Academy as part of the programme for next year's reunion, scheduled for **Saturday 4 October**. The Academy houses the other set of honours boards, with entries from 1918 to 1950 inclusive.

Association Vice- President

Chairman Jeff Green was pleased to announce at the reunion that distinguished lawyer and OT Michael Caplan, QC (1964-71), had accepted the Management Committee's invitation to serve as our first Vice-President. This proposal will be submitted to the next AGM for formal ratification, enabling him to take up the appointment from 1 April 2014. Jimmy Hill continues to serve as President. (More information about Michael's legal career is given on his firm's website: <http://www.kingsleynapley.co.uk/about-us/our-people/michael-caplan-qc>).

Membership

The present tally is 115, including Mr Graeme (Jim) Allott, a recent joiner and welcome presence at the recent reunion. He succeeded Mr R S Bramble as PE master in 1958 and served continuously in that rôle until the school closed in 1986.

Annual subscriptions (due from 1 January 2014): a reminder/payment slip accompanies this newsletter, for your use if required.

Elms Road, Clapham – Proposed Commemorative Sign

As also reported at the reunion, the Committee has agreed that, if possible, a suitably worded sign, clearly visible to passers-by, should be displayed at the external (pavement) entrance to Lambeth Academy; fortuitously, this pathway also leads to the rear of Lambeth College. The sign, which it is hoped will receive the blessing of both the Academy authorities and Lambeth Council, will record the relocation of the school to this site in 1929 and include a brief reference to its earlier connection with Battersea. More information to follow on this project when it becomes available.

Reminiscences

A few random musings from **James Hiney** (1941-4):

I joined in the Third Form at Chichester in January 1941, having moved with my Mother to Nyetimber, outside Bognor, when my Father was sent abroad. "Better to go to a London school," my Mother thought. And it turned out well for me, with lots of good friends. HTS Chichester closed at the end of School Year

1942/3, and my folks decided I should join the school at Clapham, for the Sixth Form, because they (and I) were so impressed with the quality of the teaching staff. However, travelling daily during the “doodlebug” attacks became a nightmare, and I could never have passed “Highers”. So I joined the Royal Navy in August 1944, training with thousands of others, for the about-to-be-extended war in the Far East. I was never used in action, so wasn't called upon to be a hero.

I was in the Soccer and Cricket Teams at Chichester and thoroughly enjoyed both, but I was really pretty useless. You only had to be able to breathe and run to qualify, there being so few of us by then.

Post-war, I enjoyed one moment of sporting greatness, when the Old HTS Footballers turned up to play Hampton Grammar, near my home. They were a couple of players short and Terry Sharp hit on the bright idea of phoning me. I not only turned out (illegally, not being a paid-up member!), but also scored The Winning Goal. I still have a lovely photo of six old mates going out for a drink, probably in 1960 or soon after. One or two senior OTs may remember the names: . John (Granny) Briggs and Dave Gianotti, both sadly long dead, plus Michael Challons, Terry Sharp, Doug Ward and me. [*James has traced and kindly sent me a copy of a photo of this group, which he believes was taken at a pub in central London some time between 1961 and 1965. Contact me if you'd like to see it. Ed*]

From the Pages of *The Thorntonian*

Autumn 1945:

THE A.T.C.

A Unit of the Air Training Corps has been formed in the School. It is to be officially known as the 1351 (Henry Thornton School) Flight. 46 boys have joined and it is hoped that this number will increase and eventually justify the formation of a “Squadron”. Much organization has still to be done before the real work of “Training” can start. The transfer of equipment from the old 1351 (Clapham) Squadron, delivery of uniforms and the acquiring of suitable accommodation all take time, but we shall be in full operation by next term.

All Cadets will have the opportunity of completing the Proficiency Tests before the Summer months, so that they will then be qualified to attend Flying and Gliding Training. Considerable increases in these activities are coming, and we want to be ready to take full advantage of them. We feel sure that the boys who join the School Flight can look forward to many interesting and instructive experiences in 1946.

R.S. Bramble (Flying Officer), Commanding Officer

An amusing offering for the Francophiles:

Autumn 1952:

ENTENTE CORDIALE

Unless he is rashly opulent enough to venture abroad with an organised educational party, the English schoolboy can remain secure in his innate insularity from earliest infancy until that time when, having kept fifteen terms (as the University phrase has it), he is raised to that higher plane of existence which is the VIth form. There, his life blighted by the heavy onus of administrative responsibility that is forced upon all but the most unreliable individuals, he will have many problems with which to contend. The most harrowing experience for many is that of coming into contact with a real, flesh and blood foreigner – we allude, of course, to the French *Assistant*.

The *Assistant* can give a nasty jolt to a boy who previously has only dealt with mild-mannered Englishmen whose horizons in the subject were limited to the writings of the Whitmarsh school, the Dubonnet adverts, and visits – limited in number by the flint-heartedness of the Burnham Committee – to Studio One. Understandably, the *Assistant* prefers to speak in French – not, however, about the chapeau de la cousine du jardinier – but about much more complex topics: one's opinion (if any) of Proust, of Messieurs Thorez, Duclos, and those johnnies, and even of a new Piaf record.

The ignorance and gaucherie displayed by many boys on being left with the *Assistant* is quite unnecessary, as I hope to show in the ensuing notes. French *Assistants* can be dealt with – and disposed of – very easily. Incidentally, I have adopted a phonetic scheme for presenting French phrases – this for those who do not count the Gallic tongue their *forte*.

Firstly, one should encourage Monsieur to believe that one's spiritual home is France. To do this one should take to wearing a beret of strong, weather-proof material, and before each lesson one should chew a piece of garlic for about fifteen minutes. The more subtle will like to meet the Assistant with a dead frog's leg adhering to the chin.

Once in a classroom, Monsieur will expect to be able to carry on a French conversation. A great deal can be accomplished with smiles and shrugs, supplemented by what we call the essential homophone: this is a high-pitched nasal grunt which one's interlocutor can interpret as he wishes. An illusion of fluency can be

created early on by use of one of three Basic Phrases – although generally they are better held in reserve until a later stage. These phrases are as follows:-

Pah de Quoi
Mong bo-pare ay Shapayleeyay
Mong nom ay So and so...

Their meaning is of little practical importance; they can be introduced at any stage of the conversation. There are certain topics for which French *Assistants* have a marked predilection; something more than the conversational gambits specified above is needed when these subjects are raised.

1. FRANCE: the Essential Homophone and the Basic Phrases should be used until the name Paris (pron. Paree) is heard. At this one should utter the idiomatic exclamation “*Oo-La-La*” and dig Monsieur violently in the ribs with the enquiry “*Avay-voov veesitay ler Moolang Eoude, vous-rascal-vous?*” The *Assistant’s* reaction to this is always interesting.

2. POLITICS: any attempt of the *Assistant* to launch out on a description of the complicated French political scene can be effectually countered by producing a copy of Deville’s French translation of Marx’s “*Capital*” and opening it at the first page, whilst giving a long drawn-out version of the Essential Homophone, obviously meaning “We can occupy ourselves with this edifying volume for the next twelve months, can we not?”

3. LITERATURE: with the whole glorious vista of French letters in mind [presumably no racy pun intended! Ed], I am conscious that rather more discerning comments are called for when this subject is raised. To begin with the Essential Homophone (delivered in a thoughtful manner) should suffice, but later on one should find the opportunity to introduce some such observation as “*May wee, jay loo lah twah Muskydeers*”. This will rather show that one is intelligent of present literary trends in France (a rough translation of the phrase being: “But aren’t his books a little...well, I mean...”).

4. SPORT: this can be made the means of terminating the conversation. Having introduced the subject by producing a cricket bat, one should make several wild swings with it, all the time muttering the Basic Phrases. Then, carefully choosing the moment, one should deliver a scientifically placed blow with the bat under the *Assistant’s* left ear. The repetition of this manoeuvre with Monsieur’s successor (if any) will ensure that one’s school comes into bad odour with the Ministry of Instruction Public and that its VIth Formers are free from French *Assistant* trouble.

B.P.MIDDLETON

Magazines

Association members may like to know that the following copies of *The Thorntonian* are held in the Editor’s collection. He would be willing to research specific magazines, time and other commitments permitting, for any OTs interested in knowing more about a particular event, team, etc, which may have featured in any of them; or even, perhaps, to ascertain whether they are mentioned themselves!

1929 (March, July); 1931-2 (Spring, Summer Winter); 1933 (Spring, Summer); 1934 (Spring, Autumn); 1935-8 (Spring, Summer, Autumn); 1939 (Spring, Summer); 1943-4 (Autumn); 1945-6 (Summer, Autumn); 1950 (Spring, Autumn); 1951 (Summer); 1952 (Autumn); 1954 (Spring, Autumn); 1955-63 (Autumn, annually).

School Inspections

The Editor has obtained copies of the Board of Education/Ministry of Education reports on the inspections carried out in October 1929 and – probably of greater interest for current readers – March 1949. More information on the latter will be give in the next newsletter.

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