



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 28

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Tenth Reunion – Saturday 4 October

Around 35 OTs were present at The Windmill, where the usual convivial ambience prevailed. A particularly warm welcome was extended to Associate member – and, indeed, "guest of honour" – Mrs Adele Wright, daughter of Mr C W Gribble.

The Management Committee has agreed that next year's reunion will be held on **Saturday 3 October**.

Tour of Lambeth Academy, Elms Road

A post-reunion message from Ted Hayward for those members who have already expressed interest in this visit, as well as any others who may like to participate: I am now able to let you know that the Academy has offered **2pm on Monday 23 February 2015** (the starting time may be flexible).

If you would like to join the group and the date is, or is likely to be, convenient, it would be helpful if you could confirm/let me know by 5 December. My telephone number is 01494 762838, and other contact details are given at the foot of page 4. I will advise on the suggested meeting point nearer the time.

Elms Road Plaque

At its last meeting the Committee finalised plans for the erection, on the outer wall of the entrance to Lambeth Academy, of a circular plaque marking the school's occupation of the site following its relocation from Battersea. The text, surmounted by the school crest, is:

This site was occupied from 1929 to 1986 by Henry Thornton Grammar School.
It was named after Henry Thornton (1760-815), MP, anti-slavery reformer and member of the Clapham Sect.

Commemorative plaque donated by the Old Thorntonians Association (Clapham)

Further information, including the date of a possible formal unveiling ceremony, will be circulated to members as soon as it is available.

Reminiscences

Barry Evans (1943-8) recalls **Keeble Wilgress Pipe** (1942-50; died 3 August 2013, as reported in issue no 25): "Joe was a contemporary of mine in the sixth form in the 1940s, when we were both studying Zoology, Botany, Chemistry and Physics. At that time HTS had no teachers for the first two subjects, so it was necessary for us to go over to Battersea Grammar School for lessons. At first, there were four of us, with Gerald Cooper and John Baber, when we joined by Don Pashley [*obit: issue 10, July/August*]

2009 Ed]. We went to Battersea Grammar several times a week, using our bikes, and I remember the journeys were always fun. The Botany master was a Dr Druce, and Zoology was taught by a very suave master whose name escapes me. We had great freedom during such trips and I am sure we took longer than was absolutely necessary. Joe was a competitive sports player, and I remember his fast bowling in makeshift games in the playground. He was a dedicated table tennis player and I rarely managed to beat him. I am in touch with John Baber still but it would be good to hear from Gerald Cooper. I have fond memories of my time at Henry Thornton and am still in touch with one other sixth-form pupil, Bert Lanham.

Editor's additional notes: unfortunately I have no information on either Bert or Gerald. Barry has provided a photo – now in the Pupils (2) gallery of the website – of Joe and himself taken in the Chemistry laboratory, probably in the early 1940s.

Obituaries

Robert William (Bob) Foster (1930-7): died 31 July 2014. The Editor is grateful to near-contemporary Wilf Finbow (1931-6), who remembers Bob, for sending him a copy of the obituary notice which appeared in *The Daily Telegraph*. Bob, who was born in Battersea on 14 May 1920, excelled at sport, particularly Fives and also Boxing and Lacrosse, during his latter years at HTS; his achievements culminated in the Victor Ludorum award in summer, 1936. He was also House Captain for Wilberforce.

After leaving school he worked for Shell-Mex and BP, and in March 1939 joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve to train as a pilot. His first posting was to 605 Squadron in Scotland. He flew Hurricane fighters during the Battle of Britain, and was awarded a DFC in 1943 for destroying at least five Japanese aircraft while flying his Spitfire from airfields in northern Australia. (The award is included in his Roll of Honour entry in that year's copy of *The Thorntonian* giving the names of all former pupils known at that time to have been serving in HM Forces; coincidentally, it appears immediately after Wilf's.) After the war, having achieved the rank of wing commander, he rejoined Shell-Mex and BP, where he worked as a marketing executive until his retirement in 1975.

A copy of the full obituary is available, on request, from the Editor.

Robert (Bob) Aspinall (1953-?8/9): died 31 July 2014. Peter Hunt (1953-8) writes: "My own memories of Bob are mainly of the many times we were paired by Mr Bramble in the boxing ring. This was usually a bruising experience for me because he towered over me by a good six inches and just steadily jabbed away with his much longer reach! He was a very keen cricketer, and a good slow bowler. Our paths went different ways when we left school, and it was only by chance that I met him again in 2006, when I read of a Robert Aspinall having retired from the Port of London Authority (as librarian). To my great pleasure it was indeed him."

William David Evans (Head Master, 1927-51): died 17 September 1970. The obituary notice obtained from the archives of King's College, Cambridge, and reproduced with its permission, was enclosed with Ted Hayward's e-mail of 14 October. A copy is attached for those members without internet access.

1949 School Inspection

SUBJECTS OF INSTRUCTION

Handicraft

The Handicraft room is of good size and well lighted, with the fittings and furniture suitably arranged; some framed illustrations of exhibition pieces of craftwork are exceptionally well displayed. Cupboard provision and general storage facilities are generous, and with the carved oak panelling on some of the walls an agreeable impression is made of the whole workshop. A few books of reference are kept in a cupboard; more books dealing with craft and hobbies might be acquired, of a style likely to interest and stimulate the boys, and the Master [*Mr H G Rawlings, 1936-55*] is to be complimented on his efficient maintenance of the plant. A few books of reference are kept in a cupboard; more books dealing with craft and hobbies might be acquired, of a style likely to interest and stimulate the boys, and such books should be more easily accessible.

Handicraft is taken by full Forms of the second, third and fourth years, and by the appropriate set of the fifth year, when about 12 boys successfully offer the subject for examination. The Master is keen and competent; he also teaches part of the Mathematics in the first year, framing the work around geometry, the associated drawing being useful in the preparation of necessary workshop drawings. There is no specific course in technical drawing, and examination requirements have to be met in the workshop time.

Work seen during the Inspection was disappointing. The pieces in hand were small and of little significance, and much of the wood was unsuitable, being brought by the boys from home and consisting of pieces of orange boxes. From evidence available at the School there seems to have been a breakdown in normal supplies [*possibly caused or aggravated by post-war shortages? Ed*], and the work is suffering in consequence.

More extracts from this section of the report will appear in subsequent newsletters.

The "New" School

The following is a transcript of an article which appeared in *The Balham Times* of 28 June 1929:

HENRY THORNTON SCHOOL.

Last Word in Secondary Education.

TO BE OPENED TO-DAY.

The fine new Henry Thornton School, Clapham, will be opened to-day (Friday) by Lord Monk Bretton. It is most appropriate that the ceremony should be performed by Lord Monk Bretton, for he is a Clapham representative on the L.C.C. as well as being its chairman.

The Henry Thornton School is a secondary school maintained by the London County Council. It replaces an older school in Latchmere-road, formerly known as Battersea County School.

The name, "Henry Thornton," perpetuates the memory of a well-known banker and philanthropist (1760-1815) who lived a few yards away from where is now the school entrance. Henry Thornton was associated with his more celebrated friend, Wilberforce, in the anti-slavery movement, which centred largely round Clapham.

DELIGHTFUL SITUATION.

The school buildings have no frontage to any public road, but are delightfully situated in a large garden adjoining the south side of Clapham Common. They are of typical modern design, and are grouped round a central quadrangle. They provide accommodation for 450 boys, and include a galleried assembly hall, which can be used as a gymnasium, spacious laboratories, a large handicraft room, an art room, and a geography room.

South Lodge, the old house on the site, has been reconstructed, and now contains the school library, a dining-room for the boys, a large kitchen, and the schoolkeeper's quarters. The new building has been designed to harmonise with the old house, and also with the characteristic dwellings erected in the neighbourhood a century ago.

There is a playing-field behind the school, and there are tennis-courts in the garden. Special features are the fives-courts, the concrete wicket for cricket net practice, and a sunk shower bath.

LIBERAL EDUCATION.

The school will provide a liberal education for boys between the ages of 10 and 19. All furniture and apparatus is the latest and best of its kind, and every facility exists for the free and harmonious development of the mental and physical life of the growing boy.

There is a broad cultural education in English, mathematics, Latin and modern languages, as well as in art and craft work, and in science, geography, history, and economics.

There are two advanced courses – one in economics and one in science and mathematics. The advanced course in economics provides a most valuable training for boys who aspire to responsible positions in the business world; many boys who take this course will find posts with important firms immediately they leave school; others will go on to the London School of Economics for further training.

From the Pages of *The Thorntonian*

Further extracts will appear in the next newsletter.

Website

A reminder, for members with internet access and wishing to view online back numbers of the newsletter: the current password is "Clarkson53" (without the quotation marks).

The Editor welcomes contributions for future issues. Please post or e-mail them to:
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