

# Old Bordenian Association



# Website Digest 2010

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## Bryan Short retires from OBA Committee



Members of the OBA committee gathered after the November meeting to pay tribute to former headmaster Bryan Short who retired from active association committee work at the last AGM.

The president, Harold Vafeas, said those present wished to record their thanks for Bryan's 41 years of continuous service to the school and the association and former vice-president Graham Barnes then presented Bryan with a gift of two books on behalf of the OBA. They included *A History of Christianity* by Diarmaid MacCulloch.

In response, Bryan said how much he had enjoyed all the committee meetings he had attended over the years but that he was now in the process of retiring from various organisations in which he had been closely involved throughout his life.

He praised the fellowship of the OBA and commended the members present for the kindness shown to him and others over the years. He then cut a commemorative cake.

C J Laming

## Borden Grammar School - the early years

While the history of the school is fairly well documented from the 1920's onwards, there is very little published information about the early years from its foundation to the end of the 1914-18 war. Bryan Short has spent a great deal of time delving into the archives, and is now in the process of writing about this little known period. It is our intention to post each instalment as it becomes available on the website - and here is the first one. The story which unfolds is full of fascinating and surprising details.

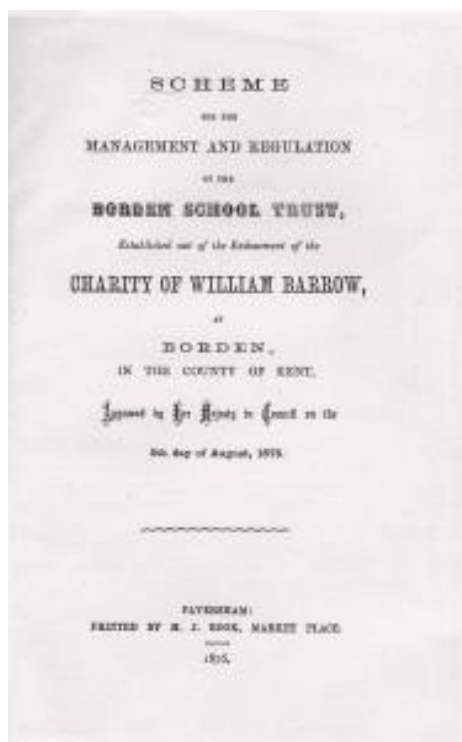
### **Part I : Founding a School in the 1870s**

The founding of Barrow's Boys School (as it was first called) began, continued and ended in controversy, culminating in the resignation of the entire Governing Body in 1880.

An Endowed Schools Act of 1869 permitted a charity to devote its accumulated funds to the foundation of a secondary school. There were numerous charitable foundations which had money to spare, and the Barrow Charity in Borden was one of them. William Barrow, a Borden farmer, had left money and property in his will of 1707, out of which financial help was given each year to the poor of the Parish. Income tended to exceed expenditure, but in the 1860s the Court of Chancery took an interest in the Trust's affairs and reduced the number of beneficiaries – the fear was that money was being given to those not strictly in need. The Charity was instructed to accumulate income in order to promote education. The Barrow Trust suggested hospital provision as a more fitting use of accumulated income, but the Court insisted upon education.

The Trust obeyed, and in 1874 the story broke that the Barrow Trust was arranging a Scheme with the Endowed Schools Commissioners for the establishment of a school (with boarders) for boys out of funds of the Charity. There followed a sustained campaign, at public meetings and in the East Kent Gazette, against what seemed to be the diversion of funds, intended for the poor, to the education of the better-off – and of boys not from the Parish. Letters to the press, public meetings in the Parish and petitions to the Barrow Trustees, the Charity Commissioners and the Endowed Schools Commissioners failed to stop the Scheme, or even to amend it significantly. The Parish of Borden was pretty well united in opposition, but the Scheme went ahead. The Vicar of Borden the Revd. F.E. Tuke, one of the Trustees, must have been very uncomfortable. The Governors went on their way, serenely launching the School ; there is no reference in their papers to the public controversy which raged.

In August 1875 the Privy Council issued a Scheme for the management and regulation of the Borden School Trust established out of the endowment of the Charity of William Barrow at Borden in the County of Kent, approved by Her Majesty in Council on the 5th day of August 1875". On 23rd August the Governors held their first meeting.



The Scheme goes into great detail, setting out how the School is to be set up and administered : 69 clauses, and Schedules A and B. It is to be printed, a copy to be given to every Governor and every member of staff, and sold "at a reasonable price to all persons who may wish to buy." But it fails to specify the name of the School. The title, 'Borden School Trust', suggests that 'Borden School' is the name. However, on his admission to office the Head Master is required to sign a declaration confirming that he will "discharge the duties of Head Master of Barrow's Boys' School at Borden, " So two names were possible, and for some years both were used.

The undertaking was ambitious. The buildings were to accommodate 130 boys (including 50 boarders), and were to be capable of convenient extension. Many 19th century schools, subsequently famous, were no bigger. The post of Head Master was attractive. His basic salary of £200, to which was added "head money" in respect of boarders and day boys, could exceed £900 a year – few in the neighbourhood could approach this. He determined the organisation of the School, and both appointed and dismissed teaching staff.

In some respects, the detailed scheme was carelessly drafted. The financial clauses were liable to misinterpretation. Schedule 23 mentions 'Trust' 5 times, but there were two Trusts : the 18th century Barrow Trust, and the new Borden School Trust. The latter drew its income from the surplus of the former. Schedule 23 does not specify which Trust is meant each time the term is used.

In the event of disagreement the last word rested with the Charity Commissioners. Lurking towards the end of the Schedule was Clause 66 : "If any doubt or question arises among the Governors as to the proper construction or application of any of the provisions of this Scheme, the Governors shall apply to the Charity Commissioners for their opinion and advice thereon, which opinion and advice when given shall be binding on the Governors."

The first Governors were drawn from the Barrow Trust itself (6) together with the Chairman of the Milton Board of Guardians for the Poor Law, the Vice-Chairman and 1 additional Guardian. They got down to business immediately. Mr Edward Leigh Pemberton, M.P., was elected Chairman. Mr. Henry Bathurst, a Faversham Solicitor, was appointed Clerk at £30 a year (he was already Clerk to the Barrow Trust itself). Messrs Vallance, a local bank in Sittingbourne, were appointed bankers. A site for the School was agreed – 7 acres in Riddles Road, owned by the Barrow Trust and part of the farm occupied by Edward Homewood. And advertisements were agreed to seek an architect.

Hay and Oliver, a London firm, were chosen as architects. They in turn advertised for builders and Richard Avard of Maidstone was the lowest bidder at £7,365. Immediately a snag arose. The Scheme stipulated £6,600. The Commissioners agreed to an additional sum of £800 being made available from the Barrow Trust's funds, so that the contract could be signed and the construction begun. This left £35 available for other purposes. The Charity Commissioners themselves pointed out that the Architect's fee had to be met, a clerk of works taken on to keep an eye on the building (£3 a week), and an access to be formed. The Governors had to lay on water and gas, to fence and lay out the grounds, and to furnish and equip the School. At this stage no one asked how £35 was to cover these unavoidable expenses!

There was brick earth on the School site, and early in the 1876 the Governors discussed making bricks on the spot as an economy measure. Mr Kemsley, a brickmaker of Key Street, was drawn into the discussions. He declared that "first-class bricks" could be made. The Commissioners agreed to the project. The contract was awarded to Mr Kemsley who went ahead promptly with the brick-making operation in March 1876. Mr Hay visited the site to check on progress. There followed a flurry of activity. He condemned the bricks as "a complete failure, in fact not so good a brick as the common stocks". There was a rush to buy in local bricks so as not to impede the building work, and to sell off the inferior stocks. There was a loss of £145 on the operation.

The construction of the School building was sufficiently advanced by February 1878 for the Governors to set about appointing a headmaster. Applications were invited for a day and boarding school – boarders were considered important as adding tone to a school. The buildings were intended for 130 scholars "or thereabouts", including at least 50 boarders. The curriculum, including Maths, Latin and at least one modern foreign language, was to include "Natural Sciences with special reference to Agriculture, Mensuration" (the art of finding by measurement

and calculation the length, area, volume, etc, of bodies) “and Land Surveying”. The salary was to be £200 with capitation payments in respect of the number of boys on roll with, in addition, payment for each boarder. The house provided was to be free of rates and rent. Altogether an attractive package.

There were two interesting conditions. Applicants were expressly warned not to approach any of the Governors individually. Very early on, soon after the Governing Body was constituted, the Revd. Henry Hilton of Milstead had produced a letter from the Headmaster of Clifton College, Bristol, urging the Governors to appoint a headmaster at the outset, who would tell them how to plan the School. He went on to explain that he had just the man and would make him available immediately, but rather spoilt the effect by mentioning naively that the man was in any case having to give up his post at Clifton and had nowhere to go. Mr Leigh Pemberton resisted the suggestion, and nothing more was said, but it may have given rise to this condition.

The second condition applied to ordained applicants. At that time, schoolmasters were often Church of England clergymen, and the Governors recognised that they might well appoint one. They feared that an ordained headmaster might combine the headship with a post as vicar or curate of a nearby parish. They therefore forbade the headmaster from accepting a care of souls while still headmaster. (When I came to Borden, this condition still featured in the copy of the School's Articles of Government which my predecessor presented to me)

There were 66 applicants for the headship. Along with their applications, they sent in testimonials, open statements supplied by those who knew them in which their qualities were set out. (Oddly enough to us today, confidential references were not used). Printing must have been cheap : an applicant from Hereford sent a printed book of testimonials supplied by everyone of note in the City, including the Governor of Hereford Gaol.

A Committee of Governors reduced the 66 to 6, and the whole Governing Body selected the final 3. These were called for interview, and the Revd. William Henry Bond, a Cambridge graduate in his twenties, was successful. It was not a unanimous decision, and one of the other two was from Clifton College. Bond had taught for only a few years at St. Bees School, near Carnforth. The Governors' Minutes record only the decision, and give no clue as to the reason for his success.

Two of the original Governors stand out. Pre-eminent was Mr. Edward Leigh Pemberton of Torry Hill, landowner, barrister and Member of Parliament. He was invariably elected Chairman. Even when he left the Board and missed several meetings, he was immediately elected Chairman when he resumed attendance and all continued as though nothing had happened. The Revd. Henry Hilton, Vicar of Milstead, had educational connections and sometimes dared to oppose Mr. Leigh Pemberton . When the Clerk provided a statement of accounts in November 1879 for submission to the Charity Commissioners, Hilton opposed them, and confessed that he had sent his own version which differed from that of the Clerk. Since the other Governors accepted the figures compiled by the Clerk, Hilton resigned and could not be persuaded to return. He did not, therefore, take part in the final showdown with the Charity Commissioners.

The unsung hero of the founding of the School was Henry Bathurst, the Faversham Solicitor who served as Clerk. He operated at the centre of all the activity involved in setting up the School. He wrote hundreds of letters – to the Charity Commissioners, to Governors, to Architects and Builders. When the Commissioners were slow to reply, he wrote reminders and even travelled to London, alone or with one or two Governors, to gain answers in person. He had other work to do – he was also Clerk to the Barrow Trust, he helped to re-establish Faversham Grammar School, and he had private clients. He was well into his seventies and sometimes too ill to attend his office.



B 8722 BORDEN GRAMMAR SCHOOL, SITTINGBOURNE.

In the very early stages, he was punctilious in obtaining written consent from the Commissioners for all the Governors did. Later on, especially when staff from the Charity Commissioners suggested work, he relied on oral approval. A second fault was not to keep detailed accounts of expenditure as the work progressed. Month after month, he paid the bills, especially when the Builder produced an Architects' Certificate for a stage payment. At regular intervals the Commissioners were asked to release money to the School account, and they did.

The School opened in October 1878 with 23 pupils of whom 9 were from Borden. But the buildings were not complete, and the Governors envisaged more – a cottage and stable. Nor were the bills all paid. Early in 1879 the Governors applied for more money to be released, and received a refusal together with a charge they were guilty of “grave irregularities”. Their efforts thus far were as nothing compared with their struggle against the Charity Commissioners.

Bryan Short

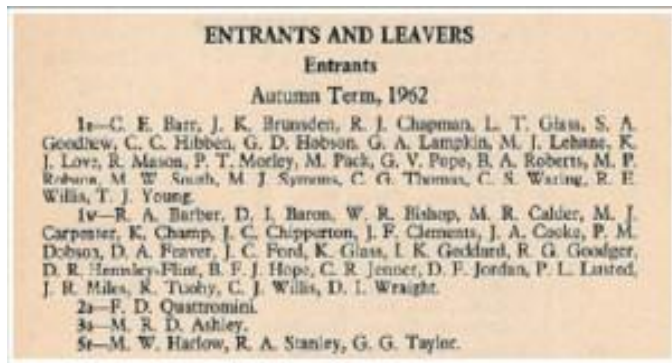
## Where are you now? [1962-69]

Old Boys move far and wide after leaving Borden. Many keep in touch, others seem to disappear – did someone forget to let them out of detention? Now is the chance to give your colleagues from the past a bit of an update. How often have we asked ourselves “ I wonder what happened to old....”

To get the ball rolling Mike Pack and Peter Lusted have put together a brief summary of most of their colleagues obtained following two reunions since leaving Borden – one at 25 years and the other at 40 years. Some details are more current than others. A picture of the 25 year reunion is alongside the Entrants and Leavers below, with two pictures of the 40 year reunion at the end of the article.

Why not take a few minutes to send your news or indeed updates of Old Boy colleagues.

**1962 to 1969** – this is where it all started. If anyone mentioned below would like to expand their details we look forward to hearing from you.



### 1 East

**Chris Barr** – no news

**John Brunssen** – no news

**Bob Chapman** – after obtaining his engineering degree, he became Mill manager with Kimberley Clark in Maidstone and is now retired living near Maidstone. Has attended some recent Dinners.

**Les Glass** – got a BSc in Applied Biology and last contact saw him living in Hampshire and working as an Environmental Health Officer in that area.

**Steve Goodhew** – living in Leicestershire. After his degree has spent his life in IT and still a very keen fisherman and a regular at the Old Boys Dinner.

**Chris Hibben** – after a BA Hons History moved into the world of Public Accountancy, Audit and Regulation and now lives in Surrey.

**Geoff Hobson** – after a BSc Hons Computer Science & Mathematics became a lecturer in Computer Science and Software Engineering. Made one of the reunions and a recent Dinner and now living in Scotland.

**Graham Lampkin** – made the 25 year reunion when he was running his own Civil Engineering/Building company.

**Mick Lehane** – after his BSc in Zoology, five years research at the `London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine he became a Senior Lecturer at the School of Biological Sciences, University of Wales, and is now based at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine as the Professor of Molecular Entomology and Parasitology.

**Ken Love** – no news.

**Bob Mason** – went to the Royal College of Art before starting a freelance illustrating career. He taught part time in many art schools before running art at East Anglia University.

**Pete Morley** – no news

**Mike Pack** – spent his career in banking. Having retired has now taken up the mantle of the local postie. One of the founders of the Old Boys Sunday Football Club and a player for numerous years. Old Boys Committee member and a regular at the Dinner.

**Greg Pope** – having spent many years in Sittingbourne in his own solicitor's practice, following his Law degree, has now moved to Cromer where he now lives and continues to practice. One of the founders of the Old Boys Sunday Football Club and a player for many years. A regular at the Dinner.

**Barry Roberts** – taught at Kings School Rochester until his recent retirement. Thoroughly enjoyed his first Old Boys Dinner in 2009.

**Mike Robson** – last contact 15 years ago when after farming in Sheppey and Kemsley he had moved to his own farm in Gloucestershire.

**Sean Roche** – has spent his life in the Insurance Broking world. Living in the Sittingbourne area is often at the Dinner.

**Brian Scharneck** – last contact 15 years ago when he had moved from a life in Building Societies to the IT world and was living near Swindon.

**Mick South** – no news

**Roger Stedman** – last news was 15 years ago when after working at Bowaters and other Paper Merchants he had moved to a paper group in Plymouth.

**Mike Symons** – having retired from his role with ICI with whom he spent some time in the USA, now runs his own Sign franchise in Yorkshire.

**Chris Thomas** - retired from teaching languages in Hampshire but still does some translation work.

**Chris Waring** – started life in insurance in London before moving into teaching where he is currently a Deputy Headmaster in SE London.

**Bob Willis** – sadly no longer with us

**Tony Young** – started as a Mathematician at Shell Research, before leaving the UK for Germany, Holland and New Guinea in IT. Finally settled in Cairns, Australia, where he has been for many years and came across to the 2009 40 year Reunion Dinner. Now retired and building his own house.

## 1 West

**Roger Barber** – tried banking, engineering and sang with the d'Oyly Carte Opera Company. Currently runs an engineering magazine with his sons and lives in South London. Still a freelance opera singer and attended the 25 and 40 year Reunions.

**Ian Baron** – gained a HND in Mechanical Engineering and worked locally in engineering. Still lives in the Sittingbourne area. Retired but spends many hours teaching sailing.

**Bill Bishop** – at the 25 year Reunion but sadly no longer with us.

**Martyn Calder** – got a BSc in Cybernetics and Psychology before turning to the world of property where he became a Fellow of RICS. Has been a freelance property consultant for many years. Living in Surrey he is a regular at the Dinner.

**Michael Carpenter** – last heard to be in Cornwall.

**Keith Champ** – took an Electrical Engineering degree but when last contacted was the Group Accountant for the Borough of Hounslow and living in Middlesex.

**John Chipperton** – no recent contact but appeared in the East Kent Gazette's "The way we were" column in January 2009 in a photo taken in 1983 as the Personnel Manager at Bowaters.

**John Clements** – got a BSc in Mechanical Engineering and is now living near Maidstone and running his own Heating company.

**John Cooke** – sadly no longer with us

**Nigel Dalby** – last seen at the 25 year reunion, he had worked everywhere and lived everywhere, being at that time a GB and European coach driver.

**Paul Dobson** – lecturing at a London Business school.

**Dave Feaver** – after military service, has just retired from a life of travelling the world as a haulage driver. Still lives in Sittingbourne.

**John Ford** – qualified as a teacher, became an educational consultant, a Retreat Leader and a Spiritual Director. A Dinner regular.

**Keith Glass** – last contacted at the 25 year reunion. Started in the Merchant Navy, followed by a variety of jobs which at that time saw him working in London as a Bureau Manager.

**Ian Goddard** – joined the Navy from school and has just retired as a Captain. Spends many a happy hour on his boat in the Portsmouth area where he lives. A regular at the Dinner.

**Roger Goodger** – moved to the Midlands where he has been involved in the Logistics industry. A stalwart of the Old Boys Sunday Football Club and often at the Dinner.

**Brian Hemsley Flint** – after university joined Yorkshire Water Authority as a biologist and was last known to be the Senior Ecologist for South Yorkshire.

**Brian Hope** – after a mechanical engineering apprenticeship, set up a motor repair business with his brother but is now very serious about flying his own light aircraft. Still on the Isle of Sheppey.

**Chris Jenner** – sadly no longer with us

**Dave Jordan** – no news

**Peter Lusted** – spent 30 years in underwriting management in the insurance world before setting up his own underwriting agency. Now retired and living in Chilham. One of the founders of the Old Boys Sunday Football Club and a player for many years. An Old Boys committee member and regular at the Dinner.

**John Miles** – after his Geography degree travelled to Australia on a motorbike, married an Australian, lived for spells in the UK and Australia and is now settled with his own Hardware business not far from Adelaide. Will be at the 2010 Dinner.

**Keith Tuohy** – no contact but believed to be in the Sittingbourne area.

**Barry Whiting** – no real contact but last known to be in the Sittingbourne area.

**Chris Willis** – after his Electrical Engineering degree, found subsequent employment uninteresting, travelled India and Asia before moving to IT and Germany. At the 25 year Reunion and believed to still be in Germany.

**Dave Wraight** – after college in Greenock and cadetship worked for BP Tanker Company. Then moved into Retail management and finally IT on the Isle of Sheppey where he still lives. Was also a retained Firefighter in the Kent Fire Brigade.

#### **Joining us in later years:-**

**Roger Abrahams** – after many years in insurance, owns and runs his own brewery in Norfolk.

**Rod Ballard** – went into banking in Hong Kong, The Middle East and Central America. Finally back in the UK and working in developing Islamic financing in Europe. See his more detailed summary on the website (<http://www.oldbordenians.co.uk/guest-posts/forty-years-since-leaving-borden/>).

**Dave Barney** – sadly no longer with us.

**Martin Chamberlain** – at the 25 year Reunion and when last seen was still teaching at a local secondary school.

**Roger Godden** – at the 25 year reunion he had tried a range of careers ending with a partnership in a publishing firm.

**Gwilym Griffiths** – became a Head of Economics and Business Studies in a sixth form college, but was last heard as being in retirement en route back to Wales.

**Dave Holmes** – although now retired from his management job in the food industry he still works as a part time consultant for his former employer from his home in France. Came to the 2009 Reunion Dinner.

**Gary King** – joined the school when his father became manager of Sittingbourne Football Club. No news since they moved on.

**Tony Llewellyn** – after a degree in Engineering and Economics, working in Germany and India, he moved to Glasgow where he became a director/shareholder in an electronic engineering company. Now retired.

**Andy Passey** – after his BSc in Botany/Zoology and a few temporary jobs settled in Horticultural Research. Last known to still be in Sittingbourne.

**Roger Parfitt** – no details

**Ian Pierson** – made the 25 year reunion. Established, and still believed to be running a very successful Heating company based in Sittingbourne.

**Bob Radford** – no details

**Brian Thomsett** – went into town and country planning and became Principal Planning Officer with East Hertfordshire. Made the 25 year reunion and a dinner a few years ago.

**Les Wilding** – Living in Berkshire and working in banking. He came to last year's Dinner and so made the 40 year reunion.



**Peter Wood** – was at the 25 year reunion but no incriminating details were revealed!



## **John H Weekes (3 Aug 1924 – 8 Jan 2010) – Obituary**

### **Borden's John inspired the boys**



John Weekes, who worked at Borden Grammar School for 39 years, has died aged 85.

John suffered with ill health, mainly due to Parkinson's disease, for the past few years.

He grew up in Cliffe, near Rochester, and joined the Royal Air Force during the Second World War, qualifying as a pilot in 1944. He flew Tiger Moths, Spitfires and Hurricanes among others and maintained a keen interest in flying until his death. He flew a Tiger Moth for the first time in more than 60 years as part of his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations.

After the war, he began work as a teacher at Borden Grammar School, becoming a much respected teacher of PE and woodwork, technical drawing and mathematics. In 1974

he was one of the first to obtain an Open University degree in mathematics.

By the time he retired in 1986, he was head of the sixth form.



In a testimonial given to John, George Hardy, the late former head teacher of Borden Grammar, wrote: "Mr Weekes understands boys, he can draw them out, he can work with them ...; he is a popular member of the common room, friendly and witty – liked and respected by all.

"Mr Weekes is the master every head welcomes on his staff – a professional, man of dignity, a friendly person, a man you can turn to for help."

John loved trains and ran the school's model railway club. He had kept his boyhood train set and after retirement set it up in the attic of his bungalow, making new tracks himself and fashioning very realistic Pullman carriages out of old oil cans. His years of flying and navigation gave him a passion for astronomy and in the early 60s he built his own telescope grinding the 6in mirror himself in his spare room.

Later he built an observatory in the garden which housed a bigger 12in reflecting telescope. This enabled him to make more detailed observations and drawings of the planets, particularly the moon. Some of his drawings were published in the British Astronomical Association Magazine.



He inspired pupils at school and many became enthusiastic about astronomy and would come to look through the telescope. At one time he interviewed Patrick Moore at his home for Radio Kent.

After he retired he enjoyed golf, holidays with his late wife, Ceinwen and spending time with his family and friends. He will be sadly missed by his two daughters, six grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

The funeral took place at the Garden of England Crematorium, Bobbing at noon on Friday 22 January 2010.

**Article reproduced by kind permission of Christine Rayner, editor East Kent Gazette. Pictures supplied to the EKG by John's family.**

## Old Bordenian Tie Challenge



To be photographed wearing an Old Boys tie:-

- a) In an alcoholic establishment
- b) In an unusual or bizarre situation (we will exercise censorship controls!)

Have Old Boys drunk in all corners of the world? Let's see the evidence.

**What:** The current (on the left) or earlier Old Boys tie

**Where:** Anywhere – the further away the better

**Who:** Old Bordenians around the world. Young Technos, old non technos. Will the Facebook crowd put in an appearance?

**How:** Send your photo with your name, when you were at school, and what you have been up to since leaving to :- [admin@oldbordenians.co.uk](mailto:admin@oldbordenians.co.uk)



The first entry in the Tie Challenge has come in from two Old Boys Committee members – Alan Snelling and Peter Lusted.

They felt the challenge should start in the Sittingbourne area, home of the school, so raced to the Fruiterers Arms in Rodmersham for the photo. Note that they made it to the



serious side of the bar and that both versions of the tie have put in an appearance.

We look forward to photos of Old Boys from further afield.

Ties – current version only – can be bought from the Association for only £8 (including postage). Just send a cheque to Barry Gilbert, 7 Dove Croft, Tunstall, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8LQ.

## A Police Odyssey: January 1957 – August 1992

Barry Gilbert, a member of the OBA Committee, attended the school from 1949 to 1956. This is the beginning of his story of life in the Police Force.

In January 1957 I journeyed to London and enrolled at the age of 18 on a Senior Cadet course at the Metropolitan Police Training Centre at Hendon. The 13 week course was the same as that taken by police constable entries but on passing out we were transferred as trainees until our 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. My first posting was to Notting Hill – a bit of a culture shock for a lad from Kent. Two months later the Met had an accommodation crisis and our cadet section at Ravenscourt Section House was dispersed to various parts of the MPD. I was transferred to Eltham but at least it was on the Kent side of the Metropolis and closer to home. My billet was above the police station at Woolwich a bit noisy at nights and weekends when the locals had had a few drinks.

Cadets were called 'inky boys' because we were mainly employed as clerks to the Station Officer. However we did patrol with the beat PC's and with the Area car. In those days there were two per division covering about four or five station areas. We also spent a week on the Traffic Patrol cars – all exciting stuff. We were also gaining experience of all types of street duty which stood us in good stead when we were eventually let loose on our own.

During my stay at Eltham, Princess Margaret performed the opening ceremony of The Cutty Sark which was restored and displayed at Greenwich. I was one of the cadets in the Guard of Honour on that day and I was reminded of that when the fire gutted the ship recently.

One of the Inspectors at the station discovered that I played tennis and cricket and asked (ordered) me to make up a four at the sports club at Hayes once a week, I was very happy to oblige.

This began my association with sport in the Met and especially at the sports club at Hayes. It is situated to the south of Bromley on the edge of Hayes Common not far from Biggin Hill. The clubhouse is a beautiful country house which was owned by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and donated to the Met. It has changed somewhat, having been extended over the years but in those days it seemed idyllic. The cricket pitches were bordered on three sides by rhododendrons – a rare sight in early summer.



My nineteenth birthday arrived in August of that year and I was whisked off to Scotland Yard to be sworn in as a Constable.

My first posting as a PC was to Kennington Road Police Station, a sub-division of M Division. The station area stretched along the Thames between Vauxhall Bridge and Waterloo Bridge and extended southwards to The Elephant and Castle. The west of the area took in The Oval Cricket Ground and the eastern boundary was Waterloo Station. In between were the South Bank site of the Festival of Britain, The Festival Hall, County Hall, St.Thomas's Hospital and Lambeth Palace. I always enjoyed being posted to 7 Beat because it took in the riverside walk fronted by St. Thomas's and the view across the river to the Houses of Parliament takes a lot of beating.

*Police colleagues, John and Barry, on duty at Westminster Bridge in 1959. The picture was taken by an itinerant street photographer.*

John was a colleague of mine working on the same relief. We were posted to Kennington at the same time, both living at Gilmour House and have remained friends. He retired to a 15C farmhouse in Devon and raises Ruby Red Devon cattle and Devon Horned sheep, two rare breeds. We keep in touch and meet regularly.

Take note of the uniform. We were sent out to patrol our beat armed with a whistle, a truncheon (wooden) and a pocket book and pencil. A far cry from today with their body armour, metal retractable truncheon, radio, mace gas, handcuffs and some firearms. Our firearms were locked in the Station Officer's safe and could only be issued to authorised officers on a directive from above. As a foot duty PC I never saw them leave the safe other than to be checked periodically.

There was a tale that came from Cannon Row Police Station on the other side of Westminster Bridge, where they had armed protection posts, Downing Street etc. On this occasion the firearm was being issued or handed over to the relieving PC when it was discharged resulting in a hole in the charge room ceiling and a lot of paper work.

The Elephant and Castle area was home to a few choice villains but any violence was usually fisticuffs and drunken brawls. The first few hours on night duty were spent clearing the streets after the pubs turned out and arrests were made and the cells filled. The early hours of the morning were quiet and walking round your beat the big city has a certain charm when all the hustle and bustle has died down.

Our duties times consisted of six weeks of alternate shifts 6am-2pm and 2pm-10pm and then three weeks continuous night duty. There was certain logic to the long night duty stint, allowing you to accustom yourself to sleeping during the day. The downside was the fact that the courts sat at 10am which meant coming off duty at 6am and then being woken up to attend court.

Single officers lived in a Section House. Gilmour House was situated in Renfrew Road and Lambeth Court was on the opposite side of the road. We became very adept at timing it to the last minute from when we had a wake call to reporting to the Court Inspector. Magistrates were very quick in dispensing justice at the time and if you were lucky, when your prisoner's name was called and he was a 'drunk and incapable', there was no time to get into the witness box before the Magistrate said, "Any trouble officer?" and the reply was – "No trouble Your Worship!" from the well of the court. He or she was fined 5 shillings and released. The court card was signed by the Inspector and you were across the road and back in bed before 10-30. We were credited with four hours overtime which could be used to take a day off when required. I was able to play many games of hockey for The Old Boys under that system!!

Sport at station level was encouraged and Kennington was no exception. I played in goal for the station and M division. Both were good sides and we won a few of the trophies on offer. In the summer I played cricket for station and division and again we performed well in all the competitions. Playing two or sometimes three games a week as well as walking the beat kept us very fit and so the Met gained as well.

I was stationed at Kennington for six years and enjoyed the comradeship of the work as part of team on the relief. However it was time to move on and I decided to apply for duty on the Central Traffic Squad, which begins another chapter in The Odyssey to be continued later.

Barry Gilbert

## John Lifton – Obituary

We very much regret to announce the death on 13th March 2010 of John Lifton. He was at Borden from 1939 to 1945, and spent much of his life in New Zealand where, despite the geographical handicap, he remained an enthusiastic Member of the Association.



Some Members may remember that he made a special point of attending the 2008 Annual Dinner, where this photograph was taken.

We also show here a letter which appeared in the 2004 Maroon, and which mentions some of his interests and achievements. Our sincere sympathies go to his widow, Wendy, and two daughters.

### **Extracts from a letter written by John Lifton which appeared in the 2004 Maroon:**

As obituaries of school friends appear in each edition of the Maroon, I suddenly realise that I have become a genuine old boy of the School. I count myself very fortunate to have been educated at Borden Grammar School and will always be grateful for the wise education that I received from a range of

dedicated and gifted teachers.

Although my career as a veterinary surgeon had a fairly narrow focus, the wide range of subjects taught to me encouraged a broad interest in later life. I am still a francophone and francophile – thanks in no small measure to Jimmy Howard. I have also retained a great interest in history – thanks to Herbie Highton.

Although I did fairly well in the school certificate examination, with credits in eight out of nine subjects, I did not mature until I had gained farm experience at the Kent Farm Institute (the original BGS), and had two years abroad in the RAMC (I couldn't get into the RAVC). I could have entered the Royal Veterinary College in 1945 had a place been available. As it was, I finally gained a place (without an interview), after worrying the life out of the registrar!

I had nursed a burning ambition to become a veterinary surgeon from eight years of age. I was fortunate enough to be granted a "special exhibition" by the KEC – as a result of gaining honours in the first professional examination at the RVC at the end of the first year, which sustained me for the rest of the course. George Hardy wrote a testimonial for me, saying "He does not appear to have wavered from his intention in the slightest" – although in all honesty he could not praise my academic record in the sixth form!

I worked in a mixed practice in Gloucester for five years before accepting a position in New Zealand to look after 10,000 dairy cows in the Waikato, the dairy centre of the Country. After my contract expired, I set up in private practice in West Auckland where I eventually employed two other veterinarians. I changed to exclusive companion-animal practice as urbanisation excluded farm animals.

During my career, I was elected member of the Council of the New Zealand Veterinary Association, for two stints of four years and became president of both the Auckland Branch and the National Companion Animal Society. I was also appointed liaison officer with the RSPCA. In 1971 I was honoured by being granted foundation membership of a specialist group, the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists.

My interest in amateur dramatics has persisted. I was never good at team sports at School. Frank Horlock in my one of my school reports said I had "average ability but was rather tiresome". However, I have since maintained fitness with jogging, bash tramping (sic) and scuba diving.

Wendy and I travelled to New Zealand by sea with two and a half children on a six-week voyage before the advent of routine air travel. Emigration was a difficult enterprise for us, but how much worse it must have been for those early settlers. I still regard the Isle of Sheppey as my home and BGS as the school which gave me my values and skills to enjoy a worthwhile life and professional career.

John Lifton

## Terry Veal (1936 - 2010) - Obituary

It is with very great regret that we announce the death of Terry Veal on Saturday 3rd April, after a long and courageous fight against cancer. Borden was his first – and last – job as a teacher ; he joined the staff in 1958, and stayed there until his retirement 42 years later, by which time he was a very able and well-liked Deputy Headmaster. The funeral took place at the Garden of England Crematorium, Bobbing, at 4pm on Friday 16th April 2010. Our deepest sympathy goes to Terry's wife, Yvonne, and the rest of his family.

This is a summary of what Bryan Short said at Terry Veal's funeral:

"I often think that people fall into two categories : those who seek to achieve fame as an end in itself (a good example is Disraeli), and those who want to do something in this world. Without doubt, Terry belonged to the second category.

He was an activist in the most modern of ways, and he showed this right from the beginning. He was captain of his school, and a sergeant-major in the cadet corps, in which role he made the boys jump! He was a fast mover ; whenever there was a problem, you knew Terry was either there or on his way there to sort things out. In his Methodist Church, he held almost every office except that of Minister. There are two kinds of Methodists: Cornish Methodists, and the rest! Any preacher who is invited to speak to Cornish Methodists had better be good! Terry remained very loyal to Cornwall and he never lost his soft, Cornish accent. At the same time, he took a keen and detailed interest in Kent history – he knew a great deal, for instance, about the Sheppey Light Railway.



'I worked closely with him for over 30 years, for 29 of which he was Deputy Headmaster. We never quarrelled. He was not a confrontational sort of person – he always remained reasonable and composed – but he was a deep thinker. He invariably came up with points that others hadn't thought of, and that was partly because he was so thorough. George Hardy told me that, well before I arrived, KCC engineers produced a plan for rewiring the School. Terry examined it in painstaking detail and produced several suggestions for improvements which the experts readily accepted. He was good at everything he set out to do.

Apart from his intelligence, he was a splendid sounding-board for the ideas of others. And he was intensely loyal. Schools are often a hotbed of gossip and rumours, but they never started with Terry as the staff discovered if they tried to extract information from him, he never betrayed a confidence.

While he continued to return to his Cornish roots, over the last 20 years or so, he and his wife developed a great affection for France. They often stayed at our cottage in the Vendee, and even when he was no longer able to make the journey, he frequently

visited the town's website – and only recently gave me a picture which he had downloaded showing the local beach, a beach full of happy memories for us, covered in snow. I shall cherish this. Terry was one of my best friends. His wife, Yvonne, and all his family are assured of our love, in their efforts to deal with this terrible loss”.

Terry Veal came to Borden in 1958 and stayed there until his retirement in 2000. I left the School as a pupil long before he arrived, so I must make way for others to bear testimony to his legendary gifts as a teacher. I had the great good fortune, however, and the privilege (and it certainly was a privilege) of working quite closely with him for several years when I was Chairman of the Governors' Finance Committee, and he was, in effect, the financial director of the School. I was going to say that he was the Vince Cable of Borden, but that would be to sell him short. He had a huge fund of common sense, and a complete grasp of the financial problems of what was, in practice, a medium-sized business. Unsurprisingly perhaps, he had a great 'feel' for figures, the sort of gift that becomes increasingly rare the more we rely on calculators. He knew instinctively when something wasn't quite right, and it was impossible to fault his forecasting abilities or the way in which he exercised financial control. If only he had been Chancellor or the Exchequer for the past ten years....

He always made a point of attending our Annual Reunion Dinners, where the affection in which he was held by generations of Old Bordenians was obvious. In all the time I knew him, I never heard Terry say a bad word about anybody, nor did I ever hear anyone speak other than warmly about him. He was a gentle man in every sense, and we are all the richer for having known him.

Graham Barnes

## So I Started a Newspaper

Old Bordenian Dennis Fowle, now of East Farleigh (Maidstone), tells the story of his life in journalism and newspapers in a book published last September. He recalls his years at Borden (1945-51) and how headmaster George Hardy helped and encouraged him so much in the sixth form before he was offered a chance as a junior reporter in Sittingbourne office of the Kent Messenger in Crown Quay Lane.

Dennis became manager of the Gillingham office at 21 and when he was 26 was appointed news editor of the county-wide Kent Messenger, based at Maidstone. He was there for about 10 years before he left and started a publishing company in London with two journalist friends, producing books, magazines, posters and specialist newsletters.

When he retired from London in his early 60s he started, in 1997, the Downs Mail local newspaper in Maidstone. It began as an eight-pager reaching 12,000 houses around Bearsted. Now it has grown to cover more than 88,000 houses in and around the County Town in four geographical editions and most issues have 56 or more pages. Dennis retired as Editor in Chief at Christmas and there is now a team of 15 working on the newspaper with his daughter Claire in the chair.

His 132-page A4-size book is titled 'So I Started a Newspaper' and tells the story of how he developed a unique newspaper which has successfully run major campaigns – including preservation of core services in Maidstone Hospital and the pedestrian bridge over the A249 at Detling (Jade's Crossing) after an eight-year-old girl and her gran were killed crossing this busy road.

The book includes 24 pages of colour photos showing how the Downs Mail reflects the news and beauty of Maidstone. It is on sale in Maidstone area and available from Dennis at Dalbury, Lower Road, East Farleigh, Maidstone, ME15 OEX at £15 (p/p £2 extra), or email him at [atdfowle2011@aol.com](mailto:atdfowle2011@aol.com).



## Bob Jenkins – Obituary

It is with great regret that we announce the death of a former long-serving Old Bordenian Association Committee Member and Editor of The Maroon, Bob Jenkins, on Wednesday 5th May, after a long illness. He was 80 years of age. The funeral service, to be conducted by Stanley Evans, took place at 3pm on Friday 21st May at Tunstall Parish Church.

## Lest We Forget

In establishing a Remembrance section of the website, the Association pays tribute to those pupils of Borden Grammar School who made the ultimate sacrifice to ensure the many freedoms we enjoy today, not least the freedom from tyranny. All of us will have glanced up at the names listed on the school's war memorial boards but how much do we know about the men themselves? When, for example, did they attend the school and what were the circumstances of their deaths?

As Old Bordenian Denis Jarrett MBE puts it: "These are not just names and numbers. These were individuals, each with a promising life cut short in the cause of securing our freedom. We must never forget them."

Records in the Remembrance section (<http://www.oldbordenians.co.uk/remembrance/>) have been compiled separately by Marc Stewart, an Old Bordenian, and Keith Lainton and John Masters of the Borden Heritage Group (from the village of Borden) to whom we are indebted.

Marc Stewart (BGS, 1997- 2004) is researching the lives of those men commemorated on the school memorial boards and has already uncovered details of an additional seven Old Bordenians who were killed during the First World War and whose names were previously unrecorded by the school. Marc's eventual aim is to produce a short booklet that provides biographical details of those Old Boys who lost their lives during the First and Second World Wars, and a copy of this work will be placed in the school library as a further memorial to these gallant men.

If you have any information relating to the men commemorated on the school memorial boards, please contact Marc Stewart via [admin@oldbordenians.co.uk](mailto:admin@oldbordenians.co.uk).

## Old Boys Dinner 2010 – Report

Despite a lower than normal attendance of 75, Old Boys of all ages again enjoyed a convivial evening. Graham Barnes, our MC, asked us to remember those Old Boys who we had lost during the year – John Watson, John Johnstone, John Lifton, Bob Jenkins, Len Grice, John Weekes and Terry Veal – the latter two having contributed 80 years of teaching between them at the school. Various apologies were heard as well as a welcome to those who had travelled a great distance – John Miles from Australia, John Faulkner from California and indeed some from the Isle of Sheppey. (It transpired that Phil Nye was also over from Hong Kong and Nigel Balm from Australia). Graham praised the web site and especially thanked Ryan Jarrett and Dave Palmer for all the work that they had put in. He also thanked the organisers of the Dinner – Alan Snelling, Mike Pack and Peter Lusted.

Having feasted on roast beef, apple pie and cheese and biscuits Chris Laming, our new vice president, made a presentation to Rick Harris for all his hard work as Membership Secretary, a post from which he had now retired.

Our guest speaker, Robert Dammers, then spoke of the influences on his life from before Borden through to his current role at Shell. His Dutch parents had introduced him to the world of music (his mother) and the world of Shell (his father). He went to Tunstall school which was fed by many a "Shell" child and then joined Borden in form 1X, a new class due to the growing school intake. He had taken part in many musical productions, many in conjunction with Highsted, and had recently visited Frank Nichols, a former English master at Borden who was now 92. Having joined Shell in their agri-chemical research at Sittingbourne, he moved to Amsterdam and Aberdeen with them before being nominally based in London for the last 10 years. In concluding he asked everyone to raise their glasses to Borden for the important influences it had made on all our lives.

In response Harold Vafeas, our President, said that Sittingbourne had benefited from the presence of Shell which had brought a mix of people to the town as well as many with a university education. In school life it continued to be difficult to convince 15 and 16 year olds that an academic education was important, but the 2009 "A" level results showed Borden 7th out of 39 for average points gained. There was now the green shoots of a music/drama revival in the school, an annual panto and the Battle of the Bands event where he felt there were too many bands now taking part. The Old Boys Association was an important part of the school community and invited 6th formers had especially been grateful for the privilege of attending the Memorial Service in September. He was grateful for the donation of funds from the Old Boys and mentioned the examples of the new play area, the library and the 6th form common room to which they had contributed. With the recent introduction of seating contemporaries of the speaker on the top table he had the opportunity to meet more Old Boys, and was pleased to also see a former Head and three governors of the school present.

Thanks as always are due to Tim, our caretaker, for all his hard work, Barry Gilbert for his help in the morning, Cliff Cork for organising the bar and Graham Barnes for being our MC. Next year's Dinner is on 14 May 2011 – make a note and spread the word!

At the Dinner were:-

Harold Vafeas, President

Robert Dammers, Guest Speaker

Phil Bromwich, Nick Verrall, School Governors

**1940's** - Bob Doucy, John Bishop, Brian Tyler, Denis Jarrett, Ken Heaver, Ray Hill, Derek Munson, Graham Barnes, Ken Sears, Stanley Evans, Frank Cassell, Peter Bedelle

**1950's** - Andrew Edney, Alan Hill, Barry Gilbert, John Faulkner, Brian Pope, Will Cassell, Ian Hazell, Terry Saunders, Ivor Jones, Neil Hancock

**1960's** - Rick Harris, Ken West, Clive Eglinton, Peter Taylor, Dave Carey, Alan Snelling, Martyn Calder, John Miles, Steve Goodhew, Greg Pope, Barry Roberts, Mike Pack, Peter Lusted

**1970's** – David Highton, Cliff Cork, Lee Harding, Keith Shea, Andy Bushell, Dave Palmer, Dave Spicer, Bob Field, Steve Crick, Robert Kemsley, Nigel Dickson, Chris Laming, Nigel Balm, Ken Beach, Phil Nye, Stuart Gay, Paul Bedelle, Stephen Bedelle, Greg Barry, Peter Vujacovic, Terry Whitehead, Nick Lee, Andrew Newman,

**1980's** – Trevor Ottoway, Duncan Reed, Chris Terry, Tim Chandler

**1990's** – Richard Parkin, Peter Parkin

**2000's** – John Friday, Anthony Eldridge, Matthew Freeman, Sam Barnes, Paul Hayler

Alan Snelling, Mike Pack and Peter Lusted

Below are photos taken by Alan Snelling at the Dinner. Please share your photos of the evening by sending to [Webmaster@Oldbordenians.Co.Uk](mailto:Webmaster@Oldbordenians.Co.Uk). Names have been added where available.



*Mick Pack, John Miles, Dave Carey, Peter Taylor.....Barry Roberts, Steve Goodhew, Peter Lusted*



*Nick Verrall, Alan Snelling, Barry Roberts.....Mick Pack, John Miles, Martyn Calder, Dave Carey, Peter Taylor, Phil Bromwich*



*Barry Gilbert, John Faulkner .....Ian Hazell*



*Clive Eglinton, Rick Harris, ....., Ken West*





Not easy to identify from the small picture – go to the website and click to expand for a larger picture! I'll attempt to describe who is where! From the back of the picture, underneath the left hand honours board, scratching his head – Andy Bushell; to the left of the right hand honours board, back to the camera, is Bob Field, with Nigel Dickson just under the bottom left corner of the Board; Cliff Cork is facing the camera, adjusting his tie. On the next table nearer the camera (and facing the camera) from right to left is Bryan Short, Marc Stewart, Ken Sears and Stanley Evans. In the foreground on the far right is Graham Barnes; seated at the table nearest the camera on the right is Greg Pope; standing on the far left, back to the camera, hands clasped behind his back is the Headmaster, Harold Vafeas. All others either unclear or unknown.

## A Police Odyssey – part 2

This continues Barry Gilbert's story of life in the Police Force. While I was stationed at Kennington I decided that I needed some form of transport and purchased the cheapest form available – an NSU scooter. It set me free from public transport and I was able to trundle back to Sittingbourne along the A2 when I had a weekend leave. The M2 had not been constructed then and so it was a long slog through the Medway Towns. In the summer I was playing cricket for Murston and in the winter continued to play hockey for the Old Boys.

I progressed from a scooter to a more powerful machine, a Matchless 600 and I was hooked on motorcycling and tinkering with engines.



This was my Matchless at Burrator in Devon 1960. Anne and I married in 1964.

In 1963 the Met were expanding the traffic section of the force and I decided to apply for a transfer to the Central Traffic Squad which was formed to police the Central London area. The area covered was from the Thames northwards to Hampstead and from The City boundary in the east to Hammersmith in the west. The Squad was based at the rear of Southwark Police Station.

I had an interview and was accepted and in May was off to the Motor Driving School at Hendon for my first motorcycle course.

Like most pupils on the course I thought I could handle a motor cycle but soon discovered that we had a great deal to learn. The first week was spent mainly in the classroom where we were taught basic mechanics, roadcraft and road traffic law.

The school was built on land that was part of Hendon Aerodrome and which now houses the RAF Museum. Our first outing with the bikes was a ride around one of the runways, that was still in place, to assess whether we were safe to be let loose on the roads. There was also an obstacle course to test your handling skills. The motorcycles were 650cc Triumph Thunderbirds.

We had all been issued with our motorcycle kit which comprised of a Corker helmet, gauntlets with white leather cuffs (hand signals were essential), jodhpurs, gaiters (farmer Giles type) and topped off by a rubberised gaberdine raincoat very much like the one I am wearing in the photograph. We thought we were the 'bees knees' but by today's standards they were rather cumbersome.

We were six in number on the course and were split into two groups of three with two instructors. For the next two weeks we toured the Home Counties and the instructors passed on their expertise and taught us how to ride safely in all conditions. There were some hairy moments but it was enjoyable and not a bit like work and a great camaraderie was established which lasted throughout my service.

I returned to the Driving School many times for courses, which became progressively more advanced and we were taught to drive fast but safely under all conditions. Incorporated in the car courses there were always sessions on the skid pan where we learnt a great deal about car control under trying conditions. The mechanical theory courses also became more advanced in examining vehicles for defects and when we were fully trained we were classified as Vehicle Examiners. This enabled us to carry out checks on vehicles involved in fatal accidents and to present our findings at any resulting court proceedings.

I was based at Southwark for 2 years and in that time gained an intimate knowledge of the centre of London and the workings of the Magistrates Courts, which were presided over by Stipendiary Magistrates sitting alone. I suppose one court that most people will be familiar with is Bow Street where the presiding Magistrate in those days was Mr Robey. He was the son of the music hall artist Sir George Robey and a great character.

One date that I remember from that time is November 22 1963. I was sitting on my police solo, with a colleague, at Marble Arch when a call came over the radio that 'police required assistance' in Chelsea. This was usually a call that required immediate response and as we were quite close to the location we set off through Hyde Park and then in to Exhibition Road. I was in the lead and as I was passing the Natural History Museum a motorist pulled away from the nearside kerb and turned right across my path. I was confronted by a Ford 100E with nowhere to go. I torpedoed his rear door and did a 'three and a half with pike' over the car and landed in a heap in the road. An ambulance was called and I was taken to Mary Abbots Hospital in Kensington. I suffered a few horrendous bruises but luckily no broken bones. Being a goalkeeper I probably had learnt how to fall.

The reason why the date is recalled so easily is that while I was being treated in casualty a sister came into the cubicle and said that she had just heard a news flash that President Kennedy had been shot in Dallas!! Our stars had converged but I had been lucky – it was one of lives coincidences.

In 1965 the administration in London changed with the demise of the London County Council and the formation of the Greater London Council. At the same time the Metropolitan Police area was reorganised and with it a new Traffic Division was formed and I was transferred to a police garage at Bromley – by – Bow. Another chapter in my service had started.

Barry Gilbert (BGS 1949-1956)

## Old Bordenian Football Club – Report 2009/10 season

The season finished in May with an upturn in our fortunes. Disappointingly we couldn't muster enough players to field a team on two of the last three weeks resulting in four 0-4 defeats in the record book, however, the last third of the season saw us win most of our games lifting us from a very poor 9<sup>th</sup> place to a much more respectable 7<sup>th</sup>.

This was the first season that the Sittingbourne 5 a side league comprised just one division and this pitted us against stronger teams than we had previously faced in the old Second Division. Even so we took points off of every team except for the league champions and, as you will see from the final league table below, they lost just 2 games all season.

### Sittingbourne Indoor 5-a-side League

FINAL DIVISION 1 POSITIONS Up to and including 29<sup>th</sup> April

Division 1 - Season 2009/2010									
pos	team	pld	win	drw	lst	for	agt	gdf	pts
1	Stat Shop	27	24	1	2	99	37	62	73
2	Fulston Zebras	27	19	2	6	109	52	57	59
3	Kestrels	27	15	4	8	65	53	12	49
4	Faversham Athletic	27	15	3	9	70	51	19	48
5	The Old Kings	27	12	4	11	68	56	12	40
6	Thamesford	27	10	5	12	73	78	-5	35
7	Old Bordenians	27	8	3	16	41	77	-36	27
8	Kestrels 2	27	7	3	17	48	76	-28	24
9	Wasfield United	27	5	7	15	45	66	-20	22
10	Fulston Zebras 2	27	3	2	22	32	105	-73	11

Our winning run coincided with a few weeks of a relatively settled side and we did play some simple but effective football. We even had the league champions rattled before conceding two very late goals to lose a feisty game 3-0. So rattled in fact that they had two players booked, but with age comes experience and the referee didn't spot our misdemeanours!

We were also runners up in one of the cup competitions but considering our recent good form, we were disappointed to lose the final, especially as we had beaten the eventual winners in an earlier round.

Old Bordenians FC has entered the league again for next season and we hope to add a couple of Old Boys who have recently finished university. With a committed squad of 9 or 10,

some with legs still in their 20s, we can look forward to a better season. Incidentally there is a vacancy for a further team so if there is a budding OBA 5 a side team out there then send me an e-mail (toshea@live.co.uk).

With most Old Bordenians footballers now in their 50s and 60s it means that we struggle to find 'appropriate opposition'. Thursdays are out because that's pension day and during the normal football season many of the mobility scooters can't cope with muddy bobbly pitches. Consequently, we don't get together very often to the detriment of a very enjoyable social side to the OBFC. To resurrect that social side we plan to hire a hall, say once a month for an hour or so, and play some 5 a side before retiring to a pub. I was going to suggest we play some 'gentle' 5 a side etc but knowing how competitive OB footballers are I can't see that happening. We will need around 15 committed players and I'll send out details by e-mail soon. A straw poll of OB footballers taken at the

Dinner suggested there is already considerable interest. Indeed, as the evening progressed, interest grew at a rate that was proven to be inversely proportional to the rate of beer flowing down the collective necks.

That Leyton Orient reserve kit will soon see the light of day again. I'd better wash it.

Keith Shea.

## **Brian Ager (1936-2010) – Obituary**

It is with deep regret that we report the death on 16th June of Brian Ager, who was a pupil at the School from 1947 until 1954 and a loyal Member of the Association. By a tragic coincidence, he was a brother-in-law of Bob Jenkins who also died recently. After leaving Borden, Brian enjoyed a successful academic career – as a College Lecturer in Physics – and had lived for many years in Lancashire, where he will be deeply missed by his many friends as well as his family.

The funeral took place on Thursday 24th June at 1.30 pm at Silverdale Church, Silverdale, Lancs. Donations if wished to either the Westmorland General Cardiac Centre or to Lonsdale Scouts, c/o of the Funeral Directors, Alan M. Fawcett, 71 Main Road, Bolton Le Sands, Carnforth LA5 8DL.

## **A peripatetic Old Bordenian**

Recently, a very remarkable Old Boy got in touch with us. There is nothing especially remarkable about his career: teaching. What is completely out-of-the-ordinary is where his career has taken him. He has taught (English) for 5½ years in Saudi Arabia, for 2 years in Spain, for 2½ years in China, for a year in the Sudan, for 5 years in Mozambique and for a brief period in Afghanistan. For the past 13 years he has been living in Vietnam with his wife and two daughters. It was Aristotle who paced up and down in the Peripatus at the Lyceum while he was teaching and created the generic name for an itinerant teacher. Well, Aristotle – eat your heart out!

His name is Philip Spencer Drury and he was at School from 1966 to 1973, which makes him a contemporary of Chris Laming, to mention just one. Philip has especially fond memories of Mr Nicholls who, he recalls, umpired that famous 12-0 hockey defeat and directed School plays, including Willis Hall's war comedy "The Long and the Short and the Tall", in which he played the part of cockney-speaking Bamforth. For five years, Mr Nicholls was his English teacher and, he says, improved the standard of his written English – to such an extent that he has been able to supplement his salary through contributing to magazines, sometimes written under pseudonyms when anonymity seemed prudent! For instance, in Arab countries he was known as Abu Diggin ('father of the beard') and in Spain as El Conquistador Ingles. In a later posting, we hope to reproduce at least one of these magazine articles.

It occurred to us that during such an extraordinary career, Philip must have accumulated a fund of amusing/interesting/frightening experiences, and we are pleased to say he has agreed to share them with us. He has even gone so far as to share them with his father who came to Vietnam for the first time two months ago! While they were visiting Monkey Island, a cowardly primate had the temerity to steal his father's hotel key and a sum of money. After a chase across a mangrove swamp, the monkey was apprehended and most of the purloined goods recovered. To whet your appetite, here is the first of Philip's adventures ; he calls it his 'most exhilarating' experience!

"The little town of Kadugli, set in the Nuba Mountains of the Sudan where I spent much of 2006 and 2007, has no industry and continues to serve the purpose for which the British originally founded it : an administrative centre for a region of agriculturalists and pastoralists. It is an extremely quiet place. That is, except for one particular day.

We were just ten minutes into an early morning class when the janitor came rushing in advising us to leave at once as a riot had broken out. The class of young government officials disbanded immediately. I made my way back to the safety of the UNDP living quarters accompanied by Adam, a student concerned for my safety, wheeling his bicycle across an open field. We heard the sound of nearby gunfire, and very soon afterwards our eyes began stinging and streaming through the effects of tear gas. We made it through the narrow streets and to the high-walled compound previously occupied by an extended Islamic family. I washed my eyes and sat out the siege in the Spartan haven of my room.

The gunfire went on sporadically for several more hours, and a huge plume of smoke rose up above us where it lingered for much of the morning. We subsequently learned the rioters had set fire to the tax office in the next street. The cause of the disturbance had been simmering discontent with the central government in Khartoum for not having paid salaries for several months. Now the lid had finally blown off. This being a purely internal matter, with no element of resentment of foreigners, I can honestly say I felt little fear throughout the proceedings.

Furthermore, the firing was all one way – from the police. At around five in the afternoon the all-clear was finally given.

We were right to evacuate the old courtroom that housed our class room. It was targeted. They did not succeed in breaking in, but 90 per cent of the windows were smashed, and I taught in that room with broken glass on the floor until it was eventually cleared away around a month later. A smaller building to the side was burned down. Several cars around town had also been torched. Some of the firing had been live rounds, as a death toll of eight was reported”.

Watch this space for the tale of the exploding umbrella!

## Bob Jenkins (1930 – 2010) – Obituary

Bob was a pupil at Borden Grammar School from 1941 until 1948, after which he did his national service in the Army, and then went on to Cheltenham College for teacher training. His teaching career began at Borden Village School, followed by a spell at Middletune School and ending with roughly 20 years at Holy Trinity Primary School, where he was Deputy Head.

### Robert William Jenkins

'Bob'



24<sup>th</sup> February 1930 - 5<sup>th</sup> May 2010

activity was going on – fairs, fetes, plays and social events, and so on.

Finally, Bob was above all a dedicated family man. He married Ann in 1961, and had a daughter, two sons and three grandchildren.

At his funeral on 21<sup>st</sup> May, his son, Tim, himself an Old Bordenian, paid an eloquent and moving tribute on behalf of all the family, during which he quoted many examples of the care, love and devotion which his father had shown throughout their lives.

Blessed with a healthy sense of humour and an outgoing nature, Bob was the one of the most companionable of men, a prominent and popular member of the whole community. His death has left a huge void in the lives of his family and countless friends.

Bob had a great many interests in his life, but perhaps four stand out above the rest. Firstly he was a dedicated Member of the Association. A very modest man, he always felt grateful for what he thought the School had done for him, and more than repaid that debt by serving on the Committee for no fewer than 52 years! In that time he was variously the Hockey Club Representative, Membership Secretary and finally Editor of the Maroon, where his School and wide Sittingbourne connections helped him to produce a particularly friendly, 'newsy' type of magazine.

Secondly, he was a passionate sportsman – an accomplished hockey player and cricketer, and a keen supporter and follower of both games later in life. And when he was no longer able to participate, he was often seen devouring the pages of Wisden! His sporting exploits have given his many friends and his family a rich legacy of happy memories.

Thirdly, there was his commitment to the Church, especially to Holy Trinity, where he served as a church warden, PCC Member, Hall Trustee and, of course, as a teacher at the School. Worship was very important to him, not least through the Choir, which he joined as a boy-chorister in 1939 and in which he sang as a tenor for over 50 years. He always threw himself wholeheartedly into whatever



## Being a Borden Grammar School Governor – the inside story by Alan Snelling

When I was at School in the 1960's it seemed that you had to be over 60 and have grey hair to be a Governor – well it seems I now qualify on both counts. I have been a Governor for BGS for 10 years now, 3 of them as the Old Bordenian Association Governor. It started because my son was at the School and I applied to become a Parent Governor. There were several others also applying and the process had to go to a vote among Parents and each applicant had to produce a paragraph or so about themselves. I noticed from the other parents that I was the only one from the Isle of Sheppey so I prominently mentioned this in my statement and I think I got most of the votes from the Island which catapulted me to stardom as a Governor – a sort of 'Sheppey's got talent'?

There are now 18 Governors – Five Foundation Governors, Two County Council Nominees, Six elected parents, Two elected Teacher Governors, One Elected Staff Governor, Two co-opted Governors. You will be interested to

know that there are 5 Old Bordenians on the Governing body (Denis Jarrett, John Shepherd, Robert Hough, Alan Wilson and myself, and 6 if you include Giles Ford, the Clerk to the Governors. So you can be sure that the interests of the School are being given extra attention by these six former pupils.

The Governing body has 4 sub-Committees: Finance, Staff and Personnel, Premises, and Pastoral & Curriculum(which also includes the Disciplinary committee). Each year there are 3 Full Governors meetings, plus at least 4 sub-committee meetings. All Governors are allocated to a particular sub-committee mostly according to their choice and field of expertise. I am in the Pastoral & Curriculum committee, and also on the Disciplinary committee. I don't really know how I ended up there because I thought Pastoral was something to do with the countryside and I cannot usually spell **curriculum**. The P&C committee deals with all aspects of teaching, assessing results and reviewing relevant policies such as anti-bullying, or bullying as it used to be called when I was at School. The Disciplinary committee deals with the very serious issues that arise from time to time between pupils, and occasionally with staff. There are very strict guidelines laid down for these hearings because there can be significant legal consequences. It is not just a question of waving a red or yellow card.

Now most of you are thinking that I am writing this during a long and boring meeting, well you are wrong. There is plenty of business to discuss, much of it being of critical importance to the running of the School and in particular, planning for the future – and I do find it very interesting. My background has always been in sales and marketing, so I look at the School as a business model which produces the best education within the constraints of its budget, while adapting to the challenges of the future. The UK education system does have a language of its own and it takes some getting used to, especially its acronyms. For example, here is an extract from a recent report....

**“At GCSE the CVA for 2008 was 1005.2. The APS per student of 478.9 met FFT model B, and the figure of 97.3% of pupils gaining 5 A\*-C met FFT model D. 95.6% of pupils gained 5 A\*-C including English and Maths and 92.9% gained 2 or more A\*-C grades in Sciences. 2009 GCSE results again met FFT B for aps per student(488 compared with FFT B 483) but were slightly lower than FFT B for 5A\*-C including English and Maths(88% compared with 90% FFT B). “**

A Governor has to understand what goes on in the School without getting involved in the detail which is not as easy as it sounds. A broad overview is needed on all issues. The phrase “ a critical friend” is often applied to a Governor and this is quite correct in my opinion. There is indeed a National Strategy for Governor Support and Training, and a national annual Governor Conference. You can even get a BTEC Advanced Certificate in School Governance. So if any of you out there have the opportunity to become a Governor of any school, I challenge you to take it – you will enjoy it, even if you are under 60 and do not have grey hair.

## Old Bordenian Football Club – History

As early as 1926 it was hoped to start an Old Bordenian Football Club, but nothing materialised. The first match (apart from the annual game against the School) was played against the Old Anchorians (Gillingham County School Old Boys) on November 5<sup>th</sup> 1927, and the return game in March 1928. The next effort was in the spring of 1930 when three friendly matches were played.

During the 1930-31 season three friendly matches were played against the Kent Farm Institute and two against the “East Kent Gazette” F.C. At the Annual Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1931, it was confirmed that an Old Boys F.C. had been formed at a special meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> June when H .E. Smith was elected secretary and Ango Ponton captain.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Old Bordenians	18	17	0	1	82	16	34
Sheppey Res	18	15	0	3	55	17	30
Minerva	18	10	3	5	48	42	23
Lloyds 3 <sup>rd</sup> XI	18	10	2	6	40	33	22
Minster Hills	18	9	4	5	51	39	22
Milton Athletic	18	7	4	7	56	48	18
Sheerness Garrison	18	5	2	11	41	61	12
S.E.E.D	18	5	1	12	36	53	11
C.T.G.W. Res	18	4	2	12	42	73	10
Junior Invicta	18	0	2	16	21	87	2

The first minutes available are of a meeting held at the School on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1931. There was an attendance of six and various propositions were made which put the Club on a competitive footing. A further meeting held at the George Hotel on August 21<sup>st</sup> and attended by eleven members really got the Club moving and from that point it was an active member of local football. At the 1932 Annual Meeting Roy Cole was elected captain, a position he held until 1958. In 1935 Roy became secretary and from then on was the main prop of the Football Club.

Throughout these years the playing record of the Club had gradually improved and the 1936-37 season was the most successful the Club had had. They won Division II of the new Brompton and District League, the East Kent Secondary Schools Old Boys' League and the Sittingbourne Charity Cup. The full playing record was Played 35, won 27, drawn 6, lost 2. The New Brompton League table is reproduced here.

The East Kent Gazette of May 8<sup>th</sup> 1937 carried a three column spread of a report of the Sittingbourne Charity Cup final when the Old Boys beat Minerva 4-1 together with details of the season and the photograph which appears below.



*The 1937 Team. Standing: S.Callaway, J.G.Overy, K.C. Foster, E.L. Bush. E.J. Bush, C.W. Harris. Sitting:L.Luscombe, F. Knowles, R.G. Cole, L. Lukehurst, W.G. Taylor.*

A regular player missing from the photo was C.G. Cole who was playing cricket for Kent, the first time in the Club's history that it had been honoured in this way.

The following season the Old Boys won the Sittingbourne Charity Cup and this proved to be the last pre-war effort of the Club as hostilities put paid to football as an organised Club until 1946-47 when the Cup was again won.

For the next few years the playing record was just average until in 1952-53 the East Kent Old Boys Cup was won to be followed with the Sittingbourne and Milton District League Championship in 1953-54. This successful run was maintained in the following season when the Old Boys were runners-up in the Sittingbourne and Milton District League and the New Brompton League. This season saw the Club awarded the New Brompton League Sportsmanship Cup.

The 1960-61 season was also reasonably successful, winning the East Kent Old Boys' Cup, reaching the final of the Sittingbourne League Cup and being awarded the Sheppey League Sportsmanship Cup.

At the annual meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1961 Roy Cole relinquished the office of secretary after 25 years. Jeff Spice was appointed and carried out the duties until 1967 when he was succeeded by John Collins. From 1961 onwards fortunes were of a varying nature with the Club awarded the Sittingbourne and Sheppey Combination Sportsmanship Cup in 1965-66. From this point on difficulties in keeping the team going gradually increased until at the annual meeting in 1971 it was decided to call it a day and after 40 years of varying fortunes the Football Club closed a very interesting chapter of Old Bordenian history.

Much of the early success of the Football Club was mainly due to Roy Cole as Hon. Secretary, player and captain for over thirty years – a truly wonderful record. The Club was also fortunate to have had several players who turned out regularly for periods of from ten to twenty years.

Only two years passed before the efforts of Mike Pack, Greg Pope and Peter Lusted saw the Club reformed and entering the Combination division of the Medway Area Sunday League in 1973. The squad consisted of mainly Old Boys, a couple of boys from the School and a few friends. Finishing third in the division the Club was promoted and within a couple of years a second team, under Roger Goodger, was started which played in the Sheppey Sunday League. Many memories exist including one game where due to a car breakdown the opposition started with only seven men. Almost immediately an Alan Snelling tackle reduced them to six and we went into a quick 5-0 lead. The missing players arrived and we hung on to win 5-4.

The first team continued moving up through another four divisions before winning Divisions 3 and 2 in consecutive seasons, remaining unbeaten in the League for both those years. As a result of this success the team was promoted to the Premier Division. After several years finishing in the top half of the Division the second team also moved across to the Medway Area Sunday League to seek new challenges. We were grateful to Bryan Short for allowing us to use the School pitch and for some of us it brought back memories of school and those early Latin lessons from Ken Booth where we learnt those important football verbs – vasto, vastare, vastavi, vastatum, and jingo, jingere, squeaksi, smackbum. The first, often used by the Julius Caesar First XI, meant to "lay waste", whilst the second loosely translated meant "the half back passed the ball to the winger who rounded the full back, centred and the centre forward rose in the air and nodded home". Whilst we were not averse to following Caesar's tactics on occasions, we preferred the more poetic route to goal.

Local football is very dependent on referees giving their time in what appears an often thankless task. We generally enjoyed good relations with our refs who ranged from bad to excellent. One did leave us lost for words however after a particularly physical affair in the Kent Cup against one of our former mining villages. In the very first minute our goalie, Andy Mattocks, comfortably collected a cross only to have an opposing forward throw himself at him a good ten seconds later, leaving him requiring attention. This set the scene for the match and we eventually lost by one goal. In the changing rooms afterwards the referee said to us "you were doing really well until they started kicking you about". Was this the start of the current "Respect" policy being preached by the FA? Clubs were expected to provide their own reports of matches to the local press although the League Secretary always provided full scores and league tables. They were not without the odd misprint, and one away game which ended 0-0 although we did everything but score, was reported in the paper as 0-1/8, a meagre return for our efforts!

Near the end of the season, previously postponed matches had to be played mid week, and it was not unusual to find a group of smart, refined young men in suits assembled at a changing room in the backwater of the Medway area, having made all sorts of excuses for leaving work early so that they could embark on a mystery adventure with British Rail from London or elsewhere. Changing into football kit saw changes in character akin to Clark Kent into Superman, and no doubt also fuelled by often being greeted by the opposition as "Old Bordonians", many points were won in these encounters. The young men never looked so refined in their suits afterwards!



*The 1976 squad. Rear: Nigel Snelling, Alan Snelling, Colin Hills, Lee Orgill, Brian Nottle, Steve Jarman, John Jonstone, Peter Webb.*

*Front: John Keys, Mike Pack, Greg Pope, Jamie Henley, Rob Wiberg, Peter Lusted*

Over the years, natural turnover in players occurred with boys going to University or job changes meaning moves away. It was rare however for players to move to other local clubs and many remained with the Club for their entire playing career. Fortunately agents had not made an appearance at this level and no unreasonable demands were therefore made on players to open boutiques, write biographies or be caught in flagrante delicto. The main concerns were trying to get up on a Sunday morning after a lively Saturday evening, paying the match fee and putting up the goalposts! We actually started one away match and after ten minutes had to stop and dismantle our goals, as apparently the several sets of posts and bars had become mixed up and the teams on one of the other pitches had just been unable to assemble the remaining pieces into real football goals. Clearly MFI produced more than just household furniture.

Unfortunately an influx of new players had seen the percentage of Old Boys in the first team drop and success had been to the detriment of club atmosphere and team spirit. It was felt that this needed to be resolved so it was decided in 1981 that the Club would continue as one team only in Division 6, leaving those players that wished to continue in the Premier Division under another name. The move was the right one and the team, comprising mainly Old Boys with other long standing club members won Division 6 that year.

In 1983 a friendly match was arranged between two teams of players who had played for the Club. On this occasion it was "Young" Old Boys against "Old" Old Boys, but the concept of a reunion match continued for many years, usually on Boxing Day. In this same year, after running the Club since its reformation Peter Lusted handed over the reins to Martin Graham, but had to step in again as Martin's work took him out of the area.

Paul Chappell then took on this role for three years before Nick Gimson stepped into the firing line for the next five years. The team again moved through the divisions and having finished second in Division 1 was promoted to the Premier Division once more. The next few years were tough and relegation was only just avoided twice. Phil Griffiths then took the hot seat in 1992 and the team had some good finishes only missing out on promotion to the Senior Section by 4 points in 1995. Phil stayed in charge for 5 years before Kevin Irwin took over for a short while but problems attracting sufficient players were causing difficulties on the field and the Club again finally came to an end just before the new millennium.

You will be forgiven for imagining that the story ends here, but although you cannot teach old dogs new tricks they can certainly put on football boots and race, well OK amble, around a football pitch. Due to the efforts of Alan Snelling, the Old Boys played occasional games as a veteran team and although an old copy of the Maroon indicates that these were to end in 2001, enthusiasm dictated otherwise and the latest one was played on the school pitch in September 2008, involving just former players in both teams. Tony Clayton who had taught PE to many of the players came down to watch and claimed credit for the quality and longevity of his "boys". We recall that he was less complimentary during lessons! Keith Shea is equally responsible for refusing to let players hang up their boots by organising 5-a-side teams, which included Old Boys, in the Faversham and Sittingbourne leagues during the last 20 years. In more recent years these teams have taken on the name of Old Bordenians so the Club still lives on.

Throughout the last 35 years the Club has reached high levels of football winning various trophies but readers will be pleased to know that it equally won the Sportsmanship Trophy many times showing that success and sportsmanship can go hand in hand. No doubt the obligatory after-the-match analysis at the nearest hostelry also paid dividends.

Thanks are due to far too many people to name in full but mention should be made of everyone who took on the role of running the Club, Bryan Short for his support and allowing us to play again on the School field, the School

staff who helped us with access to the School, pointing schoolboys our way, or by playing, particularly John Weekes, John Macrae and Neil Redmond.



2008 Veterans. Rear: Paul Bedelle, Matt Morris, Kevin Cope, John Kingsnorth, Andy Bushell, Alan Aberly, Cliff Cork, Peter Thompson, Peter Lusted. Front: Alan Irvine, Mark Spree, Keith Shea, Neil Redmond, Alan Snelling, Mike Pack, Rob Kemsley, Jamie Henley

This is only a short factual report of the Old Bordenian Football Club and it is the intention to add more details, names and photos to the website so that these records and memories

are there for posterity. The early years of the Club are taken from an article by Charles Harris in a previous Maroon, and the details after that have been compiled by Peter Lusted, Alan Snelling and Keith Shea. We do however encourage everyone who played for, or had involvement with, the Club to send in your memoirs and photos – remember the performances get better with each telling of the story! As a starter we have added a few thoughts of our own.

Peter Lusted's comments – I feel privileged to have played firstly with the Saturday team from 1968 and then to have been involved in reforming the Club in 1973. Particularly pleasing is that I know and have played with Old Boys from all the different eras right up to the last veterans game in 2008, and likewise all the Club secretaries from Jeff Spice's time in charge. The camaraderie of all the different age groups has been exceptional which is why we can still organise such games and get such a good response from former players of all ages. We are in the process of asking the FA to allow zimmer frames to be used in football matches!

Alan Snelling's comments – The best thing about playing for the Old Boys was the use of the large School pitch. Most of the team had grown up with the pitch from schooldays in the 1960's. The pitch was always in excellent condition (I spent a lot of time sliding along it) and in the 1970's it was one of the largest pitches around and visiting teams were surprised at the size and also the slope. We were never the fittest nor the most skilful of teams but we had a terrific spirit. In the late 1970's most players were roughly the same age and there was a real competition for places and the outcome of team selection meetings on a Tuesday (after training) was eagerly awaited. I have discovered some old photos and will be putting them on the website soon.

## The lost chords – help wanted!

While rummaging through the Archives recently, Denis Jarrett came across a letter written by an Old Boy, who was at the School from 1933 to 1939, in which there was a mysterious reference to a School Song. Among the many innovations introduced by the redoubtable W.A.C. Claydon ('Wacker' in initials and 'Wacker' by habit!) when he was appointed Headmaster was the adoption of the Harrow School Song, "Forty Years on".

There are still several Old Bordenians alive today who remember singing this lustily on Speech Day and other special occasions, even if they didn't fully understand all the words ("Oh, the tramp of the twenty-two men", for instance, which Graham Barnes says he thought was a reference to one of his classmates who turned up on the cricket field in grey trousers).

What is intriguing, however, is that the Old Boy concerned says it replaced the existing School Song which began with the immortal couplet :

"Borden, you merit all our praise,

Our home through countless happy days"

This is the first any of us have heard of such a song. It is news even to Denis Jarrett, who was at Borden under the previous Headmaster William Murdoch as well as Claydon. And we should be very interested to find out more about it. In particular, we should like to know :-

- Who wrote the Song? (Probably an ancestor of the chap who writes the verses in several Clinton Greetings Cards, to judge by its literary quality!)

- To what tune was it sung?

- What are the rest of the words?

Is there anyone out there who can throw light on any of these questions?



## The Tale of the Exploding Umbrella

Here is the second of the reminiscences of our peripatetic Old Bordenian, Philip Spencer Drury, who has spent most of his teaching career in improbable places! This story relates to an incident in Vietnam where he now lives.

“In the mad dash to modernity, much of Saigon’s French heritage has been demolished. One gem, however, remains – the Le Quy Don State Secondary School, which is one of the city’s most prestigious, having been built in the early years of the last century. The two-tiered classrooms surround a central courtyard to which children are summoned to assembly not by bells but drums!

Such was the setting for one of the most bizarre incidents of my teaching career.

The class of 55 boys and girls (single-sex schools are practically non-existent in Vietnam) was a huge challenge not merely because of its size but also due to the unsuitability of the room to modern language teaching methods.

Uncannily, like some of the classrooms in Borden of the Sixties, pupils sat in rows of pews rivetted to the floor. The smell of the benches was also redolent of my own school days. And as Arnoldian as Borden itself, the teacher and his desk stood on a dais.

I used to begin my lesson there with a technique called “Model Action, Talk”, whereby students mimic the actions of the teacher and repeat words and phrases. In this way one can teach or review, for example, the English for early morning routines – “wake up”, “rub your eyes”, “clean your teeth”, “wash your face”, “brush your hair” etc.

Now I always carry an umbrella into class. It serves a multitude of purposes. For example, I use it as a pointing stick or to rap for attention. Umbrellas are rare in Vietnam ; the locals prefer to don plastic ponchos when the downpours come. Every teacher must have a nickname and inevitably mine is Ong cai du or ‘Mr Umbrella’ in English.

That morning, my umbrella became even more famous. Forty years on it, it will be recalled just as Old Bordenians in their fifties now remember the exploding dustbin lid. We were early into routine. I gave the command “Raise your arms” and naturally, to illustrate this, I raised my umbrella. A loud crack sounded out like a pistol shot. I was left holding just the umbrella

handle, and for a split second I thought the Taleban had arrived. Stunned silence ensued. Then teacher and fifty five children burst out laughing as we realised what had happened. The umbrella had hit a low-hanging ceiling fan which was in full action. Luckily, no human contact had been made, and the main part of the brolly was found in the corridor, the door having been left open to ease the heat”.

This cartoon is reproduced here by the kind permission of the artist, Albert Barber

Philip Spencer Drury

## Belles-lettres or French rural life observed by Edwin Westacott

After a career in teaching and a long flirtation with the French way of life through a house in the Perigord, Edwin Westacott (Borden 1940-45), together with his wife, Jan, went to live permanently in 2004 in a small village named Pointis-Inard, deep in the South of France not far from the Spanish border. Readers of The Maroon will be familiar with a number of articles which he contributed over the years, and which were memorable not only for their content but for their style. They were full of self-deprecating humour and keen observation.

Over the past two years or so, he and Graham Barnes have exchanged sporadic emails – usually commenting on all the trivial things which now fill their lives. Graham thinks that Edwin’s stories and anecdotes deserve a much wider audience and has persuaded Edwin, very reluctantly, to agree to the publication on the Website of a few of the choicest examples. They are not only very funny but detail experiences with which many of us can identify, despite not living in France.

It is our intention to publish a couple of these analecta, grouped under broad headings. Here is the first of them :

### Visiting the dentist

Probably the most exciting episode in the past few weeks has been a visit to my dentist, carrying in a small container the fragments of a broken tooth. I must explain that my dentist and her dental nurse are both exquisitely beautiful with long black hair and deep brown eyes which regard me with obvious sympathy over the tops of their surgical yashmaks. They have now constructed for me a porcelain tooth, and, after the dentist had fitted it, she told me that she had made it so that it fitted in line with its neighbours rather than cowering out of sight and going

black. "It will make your smile 'beaucoup plus harmonieux,'" she explained. I can't bear to pass a mirror now without smiling at myself and thinking how harmonious I look. Or did she mean that I have a smile like a harmonica? Whatever, it's an improvement on the comment made by an Australian dentist in Braintree when I first opened my mouth to reveal to him the wonders that lay within. He stepped back aghast and said, "My God! I've never seen a bite like that before, not in the whole of my life!"

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**(Written 15 months ago).** It's been time for my six-monthly dental check. We've been moved on from the Head of Practice to his newest recruit, just out of dental school, who has in fact been doing fillings for me for about six months. She's a dear little soul – huge brown eyes and a deeply concerned expression. She looks about fourteen and I wonder whether she shouldn't really be at school instead of grinding away at my yellowing molars, clinging for dear life to their receding gums. Anyway, the debate for the past six months has been whether or not I should have the nerve removed from one of them. She says that I should keep it. Under her gaze, I agree until, in the middle of the night, the tooth starts to extract revenge for all the years of mistreatment. Then I'm off next day, whining and snivelling at the surgery for an immediate appointment. She tells me again that I really should endure the agony, even if it only gives the tooth another six months. And I, overwhelmed by her sincerity, go away yet again. The time before last, she told me that she knew that it was very painful but was convinced that the Head of Practice would be very pleased with my powers of endurance. So last time, when we had gone through the same debate, I asked her very seriously if she had mentioned to her boss my great courage in following her advice. "Oh yes," she said, very solemnly, "I told him how brave you were", and I suffer qualms of guilt because she doesn't realise that I'm indulging in what the French refer to as "L'humeur anglaise", and her boss must think I'm a raving idiot. Unless – and this has only just occurred to me – she is out-humeur-anglaising me. Could this be?

### **Local events and customs**

The Pointis Inard Old Folks' Party took place yesterday. We arrived somewhat late, so were unable to sit with the usual people, but found places with a very old lady and a Tunisian woman, both of whom proved to be very interesting company. The dentures of the old lady needed some adjustment, and this, combined with a liking for crisps, resulted in my ending the meal with my left side lightly pebble-dashed. She has lived in the Village since 1940 and was a marvellous source of information. "That's so-and-so's new concubine, the dark one on his right." "I thought he was married." "No, divorced." "But I saw him with a blonde lady last summer." "That was number two after the divorce." "This is his third, isn't it?" "No," said the Tunisian lady, and counted on her fingers. "This is the fourth." They seemed an unlikely couple, but were obviously the closest of friends.

And so it went on all afternoon. There were only four of us at the table, so we were able to share two bottles of wine and a bottle of champagne. Jan and the Tunisian lady don't drink wine, so the old lady took on the rose while I took care of the red. "Les Faintaisistes" interrupted our conversation with a little light patter and a song or two. They were awful. They don't know this but they start with a distinct advantage when I'm in the audience. I am ready and willing to be entertained ; tears are building up to stream down my cheeks as soon as they start, even though I don't understand more than a third – a third!!! – of what they are saying, especially when they get on to local allusions. Fortunately there was a wag in the audience and he kept them moving.

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This morning, I had to go into our local pharmacy, and was given my Christmas gift, a long square package, probably about a foot in length. "It's a suppository," said the lady. "Is it ?" I said. "I always have job swallowing them." "Oh, you don't ..... Well, it isn't actually a suppository."

### **Local expeditions**

We took a trip into Spain the other day where normally it is several degrees warmer than at home – forty-five minutes away – but not this time. No longer the bobble-brimmed sombrero that I normally affect, but good, solid Marks and Sparks wool. We had our lunch at the little restaurant where we usually go and this justified the trip. And, of course, fuel is cheaper than in France, and this time, having filled the tank, I reckon I saved us a good eighty centimes in all. Not to be dismissed when the Pound is nosediving against the Euro. It used to be a saving of 14 centimes per litre, but not any more. Mind you, I always leave the cost of getting there out of the equation.

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Two of our neighbours invited us to join them on an expedition to the nearby Pic du Bigorre where they assured us we would enjoy sights of unrivalled splendour and drink in air as heady as the finest wine. Boots tightly laced, crampons jingling and our ice-axes lashed tightly to our belts, we went to the little spa town where our neighbour's wife was enjoying a fortnight of massage, sulphur baths and mud treatment – all on the French version of the National Health! From there to La Mongie where we looked upwards at the peak that we were about to conquer, checked our equipment and stepped into the cable car which was crammed with hundreds of small children all contributing to the rich soup of germs that enveloped us. It's not easy holding one's breath for twenty-five minutes

in an ascending cable car. At the top – or ‘summit’ as we like to call it – we looked out over the sharp outlines of mountain peaks for all of two minutes before we were overwhelmed by thick fog. Believe me, ‘impenetrable’ just about begins to describe it. We could have walked down on it.

Our neighbours took this to be entirely their fault and began to apologise for the disappointing climax to our journey and went on apologising until we came down. They suggested that we might go into the display rooms and read about what we might have seen had the mists not come ; then, by the time we came out, everything would be clear. There was an excellent film describing the building of the observatory, they assured us, so we went along to the cinema which had already been overrun by the school children from the cable car. They were tiny. Probably about eight or nine and all totally exhausted ; every one of them was slumped in a chair, sound asleep and snoring gently, jam sandwiches clamped in their tiny fists.

After the films, we went to the restaurant. The mist was even thicker, so we decided we would go down, Jan and I back to Pointis Inard and the neighbours to the thermal baths to be wrapped once again in mud and clingfilm. Their apologies followed us down the mountain road, but I have to say I quite enjoyed our outing, even the mountain road which was narrow, twisting and almost vertical. I’m all right. We still have an English car so I’m on the inside, but Jan sits on the left-hand side with no wheel to cling to and cursing the day she agreed to come on this terrifying journey.

**Edwin Westacott**

### **A Police Odyssey – Part 3**

This continues Barry Gilbert’s story of life in the Police Force.

My next period of service began with a move in April 1965 to the newly formed Traffic Division Garage in Bow Road in the East End of London, within the sound of Bow Bells.

The area has a very colourful history and a drive along Bow Road and Mile End Road through Stepney and Whitechapel towards the City of London was a history lesson in itself.

Stepney had its association with The Sidney Street siege in 1911, Sir Oswald Moseley’s ‘Black Shirts’ in the 1930’s and in my time the Kray Twins and their associates.

Whitechapel of course brought back memories of ‘Jack the Ripper’ in Victorian London and the back streets in the area could be very eerie at night and I am sure some of the ghosts still lingered there. It was a thriving commercial centre then, mainly Jewish, in the ‘rag trade’ and cabinet making, Kosher butchers and a number of breweries. I had a great fondness for the Jewish bakeries and at the end of a night shift would often call in and collect a bag of bagels. The ones we get in the supermarkets do not taste the same.

The years at Bow seemed to flash by very quickly I suppose because I enjoyed working in that part of London. The vehicles that we drove were being continually updated and we were, at that time, supplied with Rover 3500 and 2000’s, Jaguars and Land Rovers which were fully equipped traffic accident vehicles. The ‘Breathalisher’ and Vehicle Removal Regulations had been introduced and so we were kept busy but not very popular.

At the end of the sixties I did come into contact with members of the Kray gang , who by then had been convicted and imprisoned. I arrived at the garage one morning to begin my shift, when I and my colleague, who was my regular partner on the traffic car, were told to report to Scotland Yard at 10am. We were not given any explanation. We duly arrived at the appointed time with PC’s from other garages in the Met and some CID. We were then briefed that we were to go to Brixton Prison to pick up three members of the Kray Gang and transport them to Leicester Prison. We delivered them under armed escort to their destination – not the sharp end of policing but an interesting change to our normal routine.

In 1970 I was presented with another chance to change my regular routine.

In 1969 there was a problem on the little island of Anguilla in the West Indian Leeward Islands. The Government at the time sent an invasion force to quell the troubles and then a small contingent of Met police officers to keep the peace. A request for volunteers to serve for a period of three months was sent to all stations and after discussing it with Anne, I decided that it was too good an opportunity to miss and sent off my application.

In September 1970 I found myself with a group of fellow volunteers at an army barracks near Regent’s Park being supplied with my tropical kit – police for the use of. A trip to the medical officer followed and we were given the standard inoculations.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of September we all assembled at Heathrow and boarded a BOAC – as it was then – flight bound for Antigua. We were lucky as this was a scheduled flight and we were the first group to use this route. The previous groups had been flown by RAF Hercules which was noisy and not very comfortable. We had a very good trip,

stopping off in Bermuda where we were allowed to disembark, but only onto the runway which was on a spit of land jutting out into the sea – it was our first taste of the sunny Caribbean.

We arrived in Antigua and again didn't leave the airport but were taken to a section where an RAF Andover was waiting to ferry us to Anguilla. However, there was a slight change of plan because apparently we were a larger group than normal and the plane could not take us all. Four of us were directed to a six seater Piper from Seagreen Airways and told that that was our transport to the island. We left before the Andover and as we had some time to spare the pilot took us on a trip around the group of islands before landing on Anguilla. It was a great flight and we had a chance to see the island from the air.

We watched the Andover, with our colleagues on board, land at the airport and this was no mean feat. The pilot had only 200 yards of tarmac to land on before he was on the dirt and so the approach had to be spot on. The RAF flew a Hercules Transport into Anguilla once or twice a week keeping the 'occupying' force on the island supplied with food and equipment. It was quite a sight watching such a large aircraft land on such a small runway.

Anguilla is a small island with an area of 35 square miles just about the same size as the Isle of Sheppey. The land was not very fertile with a few small patches of sugar cane and the rest was scrub land – not a bit like Kent. There were beautiful sandy beaches all round the island.



*Our transport to the island and ..... the Andover touching down with our colleagues on board.*

Our police headquarters was housed in what was the administrative centre which boasted a few offices, a tiny police station with one cell and a library. The police contingent was based in three houses which served as accommodation and police station at strategic points on the island. I was attached to the central area with other traffic patrol officers and our job was to keep the police vehicles on the road. I would like to say roadworthy but they were very old, tarmac road were non-existent and spares were at a premium. Volcanic rock plays havoc with tyres and suspensions.



*Outside our 'hotel'*

The house we were allocated had been a hotel but the washing facilities consisted of water, hand-pumped from a tank in the garden which collected rain water from the roof. A generator was supplied by the Army so that we did have lighting. Our main meals were supplied by the Army where we ate in the Sergeants mess.



*The road to the Commissioner's Residence*

I was attached to the Transport Section and acted as a quartermaster supplying the outlying stations with stores supplied by the Army. I also collected large slabs of ice from an ice making plant on the island – an essential for their cool cabinets. I also made purchases which were not available from the Army at the local stores and came into contact with the islander shopkeepers who were happy friendly people who called me 'Barree'.

The Island was very peaceful during our tour of duty and in the afternoons we were usually free to go off to our favourite beaches and explore the coral reefs that ringed the island. Most of us had taken snorkels, mask and flippers with us on the advice of returning officers. The waters were crystal clear and we spent hours in water

searching for conche shells and became quite adept at diving to some depth to retrieve them. They did have occupants, but one of the islanders showed us how to clean them. I brought home some beautiful shells which I still have as a reminder of those days.



*Above the beautiful Crocus Bay and ..... a shell cleaning operation*

The group that I was with were quite a sporting crowd and we could rustle up a good cricket team and football



team. We had a number of games against the islanders and these were a bit competitive. The playing area was a trifle uneven as grass was in short supply. The wicket was a rolled patch of clay and the local lads were typical West Indians bowling as fast as they could and they hit everything in the air, a good tactic considering the state of the outfield. There was another hazard. It always paid to look at the ball when picking it up in the field as I found when I saw an angry tarantula pop out of its hole.

We had a great time on that beautiful island and when I look back I think how lucky we were. Who would have thought that when joining the Met that we would get the chance to spend three months in the West Indies.

All too soon it was time for us to say goodbye to Anguilla and my friends and I in the MT section returned home to continue our service in London.

Barry Gilbert (BGS 1949-1956)

## **The Class of '68!**

### Free Beer.

Did you join the school as a first year in 1968, the year that it became necessary to have three classes for the new intake because we were, collectively, brighter than all those who had joined the school before? If you did then, not only will you be well into your 50s, but you will also want to get yourself down to The Red Lion in Sittingbourne High Street at 9.00 on the first Wednesday of each month and join the good looking bunch in the photo below.

We've been meeting up each month for the past 10 years and over 20 of our former school friends have come along at one time or another, although generally around 6-8 of us turn up each month. We also attend the Old



Boys Dinner en masse when our numbers are further swollen by some of those who live too far away to make the monthly reunions. You have probably already noticed, if you have studied the photo that, astonishingly, we all look much the same as we did all those years ago; but then we did endure middle-aged spread, grey hair and sallow complexions even as school boys. Too many steamed milky coffees and No 6 in Pelosi's I reckon.

*l-r: Phil Bryant, Keith Shea, Bob Field, Dave Palmer, Dave Spicer, Lee Harding, Andy Bushell and Stewart Jarrett.*

PS There isn't any free beer!

Keith Shea

## Prize Evening 16 September 2010

Harold Vafeas, Headmaster, has provided his speech from the recent Prize evening at the school, which gives a good summary of the school's achievements over the past 12 months. This is reproduced below.

This evening we congratulate our students on their progress and achievement and also recognise the contributions many have made to the life of the school and the wider community .

In Year 11 excellent GCSE results were achieved by a number of boys. 28 attained 8 or more A/A\*s while 66/129 achieved 5 or more. This resulted in 40% of all grades at A\*/A. In terms of the quality of grades at GCSE this is the best that Year 11 students have achieved and moves attainment standards to a new level. We expect great things from this year group in the Sixth Form. The challenge for current Year 11 is to keep this up so that these higher standards become consistent and sustained.

A number of Year 12 students achieved encouraging results at AS level. They have the talent to achieve outstanding results and now need to be ambitious and disciplined in seeking to achieve this. It will, at the same time, need consistent improved effort from many in the year group to achieve their potential in 2011.

Last month, Year 13 students celebrated their A level results. There were outstanding individual and departmental achievements. The quality of grades, overall, was not as strong as we have come to expect over the past few years. This reflected lost opportunities in Year 12 when some students stubbornly believed that having achieved respectable GCSE results by improved commitment in the latter half of Year 11, this was a process that could be repeated at A level.

Part of growing up successfully is learning how to deal with situations when they go wrong. Students and staff worked really well together in Year 13 so that there were substantial improvements in grades and a real sense of common purpose. Overall, as a school, we were short of A grades and the new A\*, but the improvement in B and C grades for individual students meant that they were able to obtain the courses and universities they had hoped for. It was also notable that Year 13's last day on timetable was unblemished, with no silliness, many 'thank yous', lots of genial good humour and a very good example set by our senior year group to other pupils of how to celebrate in a way all could enjoy.

One discovery on that day was that Mr Paine, who was on the eve of retirement, had achieved cult status within the year group not only for his Maths teaching, musicianship and motivational talks over the years (usually when individuals had done something wrong) but also for his uncanny resemblance to an American action hero.

I do hope that the successful experience of last academic year has helped our students to gain the necessary learning and life skills to cope and thrive in their University environment.

At A level, there were particularly strong results in Economics, Geography, History and Spanish where the proportion of A\*/B grades ranged from 63 to 85%. At GCSE more than 60% of History and Statistics students achieved A/A\*s and more than 50% in English Literature and Mathematics.

As part of this report I would like to give a few examples of the wide range of activities and achievements of our students beyond their studies.

In sport Year 8 had a very successful year winning the U13 Kent Cricket Cup and the U13 Kent School Games Basketball Regional competition. The U15 team won the Kent School Games Hockey Regional competition.

A number of students represent Kent in their chosen sport, and several also compete at regional or national level. They include Mark Cryer and Tom Moore. Mark is competing in the national schools athletics championships this weekend while Tom has won representative honours beyond Kent for hockey. Tom is one of the many boys and girls who have flourished as members of the Old Bordenian Hockey Club.

In the British Land UK Chess Challenge Alastair Thomas went through to the Gigafinal and also played for Kent. Robert Gower and Divyansh Manocha also went through to the Gigafinal and each was Supremo for his age group.

Year 11 students reached the final of the Kent County Council Drugs Awareness Project and performed their piece on stage at the Orchard Theatre in Dartford to an audience of 650. One of our pupils Tobias Illingworth won the best actor award. Year 11 Drama students put on a production of John Godber's 'Teachers' which was well attended and enjoyed by the middle school pupils, as shown by the excellent standard of entries into the review writing competition. This competition was won by Robert Cooper.

Students and teachers produced a very successful talent show at the end of the year which raised funds for the Haiti Earthquake Appeal. Most notable for their efforts and endeavours were members of 9KB who participated in the choir, choreographed a dance routine and created a very impressive and entertaining film parodying life at Borden. Two Sixth forms students Ben Jones and Jason Williams won the audience vote for their comic musical performance.

Sixth Form students took part in World Challenge their fundraising and team work culminating in an expedition to climb Mount Kilimanjaro and project work in a Tanzanian school.

Continued links with primary schools provide curriculum enrichment for younger pupils in modern foreign languages, sport and other subjects. The Aim Higher Club, run by a team of staff, provides interesting learning activities for Year 5 and 6 boys for a significant part of each school year. Student Sports Leaders help in the running tournaments.

Y9 Fair Trade projects, education and fund raising activities are having an impact on the school community. This was in addition to money raised for Breast Cancer and Shelterbox through non-uniform days. A team of Year 8 students enjoyed the fierce legal arguments of a mock trial.

The Christmas Fair, the Pantomime, visits abroad, exhibitions of students work and numerous lunchtime and after school clubs all add to the richness of school life and broaden experiences for students.

In July we thanked and said goodbye to number of staff.

Mr M Robbins our Graduate Trainee in Physical Education contributed a great deal in a short time and coached the Year 8 cricket team to victory in the U13 Kent Cup. We wish him every success in his new post at Fulston Manor School.

Mr Foster our PE Technician will take up a place at Liverpool John Moores University to study Applied Sport Psychology.

Mr Tanton worked in the Art Department during Mrs Nyemann's maternity leave. The quality of GCSE and A level Art exhibitions demonstrated the way in which he seamlessly fitted in and taught to a high standard. We wish him well for the future.

Miss Simpson left Borden to become Head of Humanities at Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College in Leicester. She has had an enormously positive influence on good practice in teaching and learning in the school. Students have rightly acknowledged her care for their progress and achievement. GCSE results, in particular, have regularly outperformed those of most grammar school History Departments in Kent and Medway. We wish her every success in her new post.

Mr Paine retired last month after 33 years at Borden. During this time he headed the Computing and Mathematics Departments and has been a member of the school's leadership group since 2000, with responsibility as Deputy Headteacher for the past 7 years. Throughout his career he has been passionate about standards, pupil welfare and the moral purpose of education. His calm and well considered handling of demanding situations and wise counsel to colleagues have been greatly appreciated. He will be greatly missed. We wish him every happiness in the next phase of his life.

Last year I said that good learning and positive relationships are at the core of school life. Much has been achieved in the past few years by students, staff, parents and governors working together. There is always room for improvement, and this year we will be seeking ways to move both academic standards and pupil welfare and development on to the next level. In terms of consultation we have parent and student views from surveys in 2009 and parent comments from throughout the past year to draw upon. Student representative bodies are being reorganised and revitalised this term. Staff have taken part in developmental working parties and governors continuously act as critical friends of the school. There is a strong sense of working together.

Before concluding I wish to register my thanks to staff and governors. I count myself very fortunate as a Headteacher to have the support and dedication that I have experienced from both groups throughout this past year.

It is now time for our students to be centre stage and so, Mr. Chairman, I turn to Professor Peter Vujakovic to present the awards.

Harold Vafeas

## **John Macrae**

John Macrae died on Monday 27th September 2010 after a long battle with cancer. His funeral took place at St. Michael's Church, Sittingbourne, at 11 a.m. on Friday 8th October, followed by a private cremation. The family expressed a preference for donations, rather than flowers, to either of two charities : MacMillan Cancer Support or the Wisdom Hospice (both c/o R. High & Sons, 1 Bayford Road, Sittingbourne, MR10 3AD).

Bryan Short and Graham Barnes have provided the following tributes to John, his life and his association with the school.



**Bryan Short** writes: John joined the School aged 11, and spent most of the rest of his life there. He did his Physics Degree at Reading University (and a part-time M. Ed. there while teaching at Borden) and taught for two years at Maidstone Grammar School as his first job. He then returned to Borden as Head of Physics, and never left.

He was an effortless classroom teacher, but much more. He was a genial and caring form master, looked after junior hockey, and blossomed as a senior house master. He never seemed hurried and had a ready smile. Physics was the strongest of the sciences, with a strong flow to university courses in Physics and Engineering. His pupils liked him at School and returned later to look him up. He was conscious of the Borden Physics tradition. He had been taught by George Dawkins, and groomed one of his own pupils to succeed him as Head of Physics (later Science), David Jenkins.

John wisely developed interests out of school. Jaguar cars was one. Another was amateur radio. He contacted people all over the world, drawing particular pleasure from conversations with Old Boys. And when neighbours accused him of interfering with their televisions, he was carefully briefed to be able to rebut the charges! His daughter, Karen, caught meningitis, and this sparked off an interest in the health service. John became involved and eventually became

Chairman of the Local Health Committee.

He coped with so many interests, in and out of School, partly because he was so well-organised. When the School qualified for a second Deputy, he was the obvious candidate for the post. But he might have left us. In the 1970s it was a recognised move for senior men to move from grammar schools to colleges of education as lecturers. John was tempted. I told him he was a natural schoolmaster, and should not be seduced into the college route. He applied, I wrote the appropriate references, and he went for interviews. He then decided that his place was in a grammar school, and he settled down at Borden. To my great pleasure and relief – and I think to his.

**Graham Barnes** writes: John's name appears for the first time on the list of OBA Committee Members in 1980. In those days we had somebody called a 'School Liaison Officer', and that was when he took over the post from John Weekes. He wasn't allowed to get away with such a low-key role for long! He quickly became Membership Secretary and then, in 1986, succeeded Greg Pope as Secretary of the Association, a job which he performed right up until the time his illness kept him away from Committee Meetings. For a number of years, too, he was the Association's representative on the School Governing body.

It is no exaggeration to say that John was the heart and soul of the Association. He did so much more than perform the Secretary's job with great enthusiasm, cheerfulness, tact and skill ; he really cared about the Association's health and the direction in which it was going. And he lost no opportunity to promote its virtues to non-Members and to those leaving School, whom he always addressed at the end of the Summer Term.

His prodigious memory was invaluable to the Committee. Calling on a lifetime's knowledge of the School as a pupil and as a teacher from 1964 until 2001, he was always able to explain the circumstances which led up to an event or a past decision, and it was almost impossible for anyone to mention the name of an Old Bordenian without John saying "Oh, I remember him. He was a bit of a tearaway – unlike his brother who...." That special relationship he had with the boys whom he taught was evident at the Annual Dinners, which – until last year – he attended without fail ; there were usually queues waiting to talk to him!

It is a cliché to say about the departed that they will be sorely missed, but in this instance it is absolutely true. John leaves behind a void which it will be virtually impossible to fill but also a rich legacy of abiding memories. For countless people, it was a huge privilege to have known him.

## More belles-lettres

Continuing our series of "the collected observations" on life in rural France, written by Edwin Westacott, Old Bordenian 1940-1945. These have been extracted from emails sent by Edwin over the past couple of years to Graham Barnes, who thinks they deserve a wider audience.

### Local tradesmen

We have had the electricians in. If I haven't already told you, and I think, if I haven't, you must be the only one I've missed, our central heating went on the blink for the fifth successive Winter. In came the electricians and proceeded to divert wires and install all sorts of things to make everything work. We have a Starbox, a magical device which supposedly keeps eternal vigilance over all the radiators in the house and decides on the basis of a



multitude of computed facts whether this or that “Zone” should be on, or in our case, none. The whole face of our electrical gear was given a new look, during which I was made to confront the knowledge that my French is going backwards. Technical terms were flung at me willy-nilly. One item was a “Boite de Gestion” which I referred to in a conversation with my daughter as a “Boite de Gestation”, and had no idea why she had gone into hysterics.

The chief fitter, whose dense black moustache made him difficult to comprehend anyway, insisted that because I was the male, on reporting to me, and never to Jan. She and I have this arrangement : I am garrulous and very deaf while she is quiet, but understands everything that is said to her, so I talk and she listens. The electrician refused to accept that a mere woman could be perfectly capable of understanding what he was saying – she is also much more hair-trigger than I and doesn’t let patronising flannel go by without questioning it ; he had recognised this, and was justifiably nervous. (Think Sibyl Fawltly and the Irish builder). Anyway, he would corner me and start telling me about thermostats and wi-fi and shunts ; I would shriek for Jan ; and he would refuse to acknowledge her presence and continue to address me ; and I would drop into my accustomed role, by mumbling over and over again “Whadesay? Whadesay?”, at which Jan would give me a brief translation.

At one stage, he packed up for the evening by announcing that he wouldn’t be back for a while but that everything was working. “The hot water?” I asked. “Oh, yes.” Next day, no hot water, so I put the three-way switch into all of its positions several times but with no success. A week later, after several phone calls, he was back. No mention of the hot water, so, as he was leaving, I asked him if it was working now. His moustache swivelled to thirty degrees out of the horizontal, and I knew I was in for an ironic remark – poor dumb Englishman. “Works better when the switch is in the On position. **Somebody** put it to Off.” “Probably me.....” (Forty-five degrees of tilt). “Well, it wasn’t me.” “.....but only after if I found that there was no hot water and was trying different switch positions to get it to work.” No good. My fault. But, whatever, we’re warm and bathed once more.

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I’ve never admitted this to you before, but we do, in fact, have a swimming pool. It seemed a good idea when we bought the house and had visions of grandchildren splashing happily while the adults sprawled casually on the rim, sipping something cool. Then the family moved away, far enough to make regular visits a near impossibility. My wife and I don’t use it all that much, but we have, however, found it very useful for shovelling our money into, as a quick and easy way to poverty. It consumes chemicals needed to balance the pH and Chlore – whatever they are – and it goes through pumps quite casually. Frost, weeds and I managed to destroy a number of tiles, and the man we invited to look at the job of repairing them sent us an estimate of 5500 Euros, plus the cost of the tiles that we should be required to supply.

At this point, I felt that somewhere within me there was a tiler, so I bought a wide chisel, dusted off a large hammer, bought some tiling cement and set to. It’s time-consuming, but really quite restful. I lie down beside the tile to be refixed or replaced, prop myself on one elbow, then chip out the old cement. About twenty minutes per tile. Then I mix up a little cement and curse the tile into place. After this, I haul myself painfully to my feet, wait until all of my bones have cracked back into place, and think about the next one. When my mind has fully adjusted, I lie down, etc.

We had several days of bad weather which put back the whole process, and I’ve only just managed to get them all back into position, apart from the more tricky ones which require holes to be drilled in them. During this process, the water turned bright green, so this meant consulting the chemical supplier, who forced on me several tubs and packets of stuff and told me that I should probably have to drain a third of the pool. If only we liked swimming! If only the weather were settled enough to contemplate swimming! At one point, the outside temperature went up to 37, but, since the pool temperature was 34, it hardly seemed worth going in.

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I am waiting for a telephone call from an Orange engineer – that is to say, an engineer employed by Orange, my internet supplier or something. The latest hiccup was in an email from my daughter-in-law to which she added some Christmas photographs. So I go through the procedures and what do I get? – a letter in Chinese script, thirteen pages of it. My daughter-in-law is, in fact, Korean and, had this not happened before, I might have taken it as a wrongly-addressed email or a little joke on her part. But some months ago, I had what was supposed to be an insurance form to complete, again entirely in Chinese.

I’m also getting strange letters from somebody who calls himself my “postmaster”, telling me that my email has been refused and, in one case, that I had been blacklisted, so finally I decided to face up to Orange and see what they can do.

I always open proceedings by admitting to being English and making it clear that I can cope to a certain extent but they need to take it slowly. I keep quiet about the technical terms, although this time I shall be operating on a computer which refuses to speak any English, so it might be easier to find out what they are talking about.

Edwin Westacott

## A Pickwickian Model

Following on from the previous posting, here is another article from an Old Bordenian abroad! This article, written by the peripatetic Philip Spencer Drury, first appeared in 2009 in a Vietnamese Magazine, "Guide"

### A Pickwickian model for your very own breakfast club

At any Wednesday breakfast time, if you should peek into the deeper recesses of the Cay Tie (Bamboo Tree) restaurant at the end of Le Quy don Street, just before it fizzles out into Vo Thi Sau, you would spot a select band of Vietnamese and western folk engaged in conversation. This is the current venue of our English Speaking Club, a diverse melee of business people, English and Yoga teachers, war veterans and the occasional casual visitor to Vietnam. Their convivial aim is to enjoy cultural exchange and discussion in the English language in a relaxing atmosphere in Saigon, over a great Vietnamese coffee to inspire the talk.

Location, location, location is an essential for every successful enterprise. There are few eateries in our City without blaring music, traffic noise or other auditory obstacles. Cae Tie, however, is one place you may hear and be heard by your interlocutor at a distance of one metre. Moreover, at our Club, Rule number one is that smoking is strictly 'verboden'. The tables here are well spaced-out in an airy and leafy setting, so that lit cancer-sticks are held firmly at bay. The fare available is of a high standard and, befitting this troupe, is beyond the usual array of noodle soups ; a few of the westernised dishes that have made their way into the vast gamut of Vietnamese cuisine are on the menu – omelettes, breakfast steak on a sizzling plate and **bamb la op na** (fried eggs and baguettes). The service is a little quirky. The table is usually erratically set and one finds oneself calling for fish sauce or soya sauce. As well as the condiments, the waiters themselves are often in need of a little shaking and stirring. This, however, all adds to the charm of the place.

All units of society require a guiding force to ensure their smooth running – to navigate the rapids and snags, and avoid the rocks early on in their course. Our luminary and most Pickwickian founder is 65-year-old Mr Lanh. This father of the Club, however, had an early history that more closely resembles that of another Dickensian character – David Copperfield. At the most tender age of 10, in 1945, his family managed to send him to safety in the South. Like Copperfield, Lanh eventually overcame the loneliness and hardships, and eventually triumphed – learning English the hard way with very limited resources, graduating from university and suffering greatly again after being on the wrong side in the upheavals of 1975. He ultimately secured a post with the Ministry of Education and had a highly successful career, ending as head of Audio Visuals for English. Lanh has extraordinary skills in management and education. He understands the psychology of East and West, and his co-ordination skills navigate the obsession for punctuality of the latter and the rubber time-keeping of the former. He telephones members ahead of events to ensure participation. He documents everything with his camera and motivates us all by giving us copies of his photographic excellence. Without this Pickwickian force, we would have floundered long ago. You may ask what do we find to natter about in the language of Michael Jackson and Shakespeare.

Without ever becoming a formal lesson, points about the English language are always discussed. Idioms and proverbs are explained so that it becomes a learning experience for both sides. For instance, I have learned the Vietnamese expression 'The dog is barking but the camel is still running'. How did a camel get into a Vietnamese idiom? English-speakers from both sides of the Atlantic also learn from each other. I have picked up some American dining slang – 'Zeppelins in a fog' corresponds with what I have always called bangers and mash. Explanations and demonstrations of the English boyhood game of conkers were novel to both Vietnamese and Americans, and likewise I and the locals have had baseball demystified. Several western members have contributed to the gene pool of this country, so children and their development are another topic for prattle. Some are eager to discuss the aches and pains of advancing age, leaving a sprightly youngster in his mid-fifties like me in shock and awe at the surgeries and medications I have to look forward to.

I would exhort all of you businessmen and human-resource managers, and all those interested in promoting multicultural co-operation and understanding, to consider seriously breakfast as the prime time for meetings in which fruitful socialising can take place. At lunch and dinner in this land, much beer is imbibed. This is conducive neither to coherent speech nor to the forging of cohesive social ties. Few Vietnamese are aware that westerners simply do not feel comfortable drinking the Vietnamese way. We love to sip and savour the 'wet air' which usually passes for beer in this part of the world. We do not feel at home with the constant clinking of glasses and what to us is the puerile and unhealthy game of **mot trum phan tram** (100 per cent). It is surely a given that the early hours are the time when common ground is found more easily. And it is surely a given that coffee and tea, with which Vietnam is so superbly blessed, are the drinks of preference to aid the smooth flow of conversation.

To sum up, the establishment of a viable and long-lasting breakfast club requires the same strategy as that needed for any successful business venture – clear leadership, a good location and well-defined aims. I hope that many a reader will be inspired by this article to establish his very own breakfast club in order to reap the same benefits of improved business and social ties which ours, together with the promotion of English conversation, has undoubtedly achieved.

## Old Bordenian Boer War Casualty – Nigel Locke

During his extensive research into Old Bordenian war casualties, OBA committee member Marc Stewart has discovered a casualty of the Boer War. He has produced the following article on Nigel Locke. A further article about Nigel Locke's brother, Harold, who was a casualty of the First World War, will be published in the near future.

### **Sergeant Nigel Locke, Natal Mounted Police**

**Nigel Locke** was born on 2 January 1871, the sixth son of Frederick Locke, DL, JP, of Dane House, Hartlip. Educated at Borden Grammar School and Lancing College, he was a keen sportsman, being a member of both the Lancing College cricket and football elevens, and was described as having a "powerful physique." After leaving Lancing in July 1890, he travelled to South Africa and joined the Natal Mounted Police in 1892. He saw considerable action with this unit during the Second Boer War, and participated in the celebrated defence of the magistracy at Mahlabatini, Zululand on 28 April 1901.

As the history of the Natal Mounted Police relates, a score of police under Sergeant Locke had been attached to the Natal Volunteers for several months when they received orders to proceed from Dundee, Natal to Zululand. They rode from the Tugela River up to Melmoth, and remained there for several weeks until ordered to go on a four-day patrol to Mahlabatini. After establishing a camp near the town's magistracy, a patrol was sent out each morning before dawn, riding down the road towards Emtonjneni, and this patrol went out as usual on 28 April 1901. As the men rode past a mealie patch about two miles from Mahlabatini, a shot was fired and one of the policemen quickly galloped back to report the incident. A force of nineteen troopers and three non-commissioned officers was assembled under Sergeant Locke, and they set out accompanied by Mr. Wheelwright, the magistrate, and Colonel Bottomley, a regular army officer. The men rode down the road and made a thorough search of the mealie patch but, on finding nothing, went along the veldt towards the Emtonjneni store, about three miles away, until they reached a place where the road divided in two (the main track passing to the left, with another path going straight on through some wattle trees). Followed by four men, Wheelwright went along the main track and galloped to the top of a ridge, whereupon they came under a hail of enemy bullets – the rising sun clearly illuminated the men on the skyline, making them an easy target for the Boers concealed nearby. Upon hearing these shots, the advance party of those men that had gone along the path formed into skirmishing order and entered a patch of trees where the Boers were hiding. The policemen were almost immediately ambushed, however, and every man was killed. The rest of the police detachment then rushed to the scene, at which point a Boer named van Neikerk, "more courageous than the others", emerged from the trees and called upon the remaining policemen to surrender. They refused and van Neikerk responded by opening fire on the troopers, killing one of their horses, but was quickly shot down. The policemen then dismounted and took cover, spreading well out and opening fire whenever they saw the slightest enemy movement. Some six hours after the first shots had been fired, the Boers were finally driven off and the dead and wounded troopers were loaded onto a wagon.

Sergeant Locke had been seriously wounded in the opening stages of the engagement, and was found lying on the ground with his head resting on his saddle. He was, with difficulty, placed on the wagon, but the jolting proved so bad that a stretcher had to be improvised. Most of the troopers had, however, returned to their camp at Mahlabatini by this stage, and there were not enough men to carry Locke's stretcher. Fortunately, a group of thirty natives then appeared and, as the history of the Natal Mounted Police recounts, "[t]hey were told to carry the stretcher in which Sergeant Locke was lying, but they were in a violent frame of mind. 'We cannot do it, we want to fight', they replied emphatically. It was only when the barrel of a revolver was held close to the Induna's [native leader's] head that he ordered eight of his men to act as bearers, and this they did with reluctance." Locke was, however, mortally wounded and died that same evening. He was buried with four of his troopers the following morning and, as nothing better could be found, their graves were marked with rough crosses made from biscuit boxes. It was later ascertained that the Boer force had numbered about 150, eleven of whom were killed by the Natal Mounted Police. The remainder of the enemy fell back and, convinced that they had been opposed by an entire regiment, killed their native spies who had told them that there were only a few policemen in the area. When the Boers eventually discovered how many troopers had been defending Mahlabatini, they sent along "a rather disconcerting message" to the effect that they would visit the camp on the first moonlit night and kill every man there, a threat that was never carried out.

Tributes to the bravery of the Natal Mounted Police poured in, and Lord Kitchener, the commander-in-chief, issued the following telegram immediately after the engagement:

"Please express to the chief magistrate and civil commissioner, Zululand, and to [the] Natal Police, my appreciation of the gallant defence of the Mahlabatini magistracy, by the magistrate and staff and field force of the Natal Police. I greatly regret their heavy loss, but in such a brilliant action losses are inevitable. Please send [the] names of any men who have distinguished themselves."

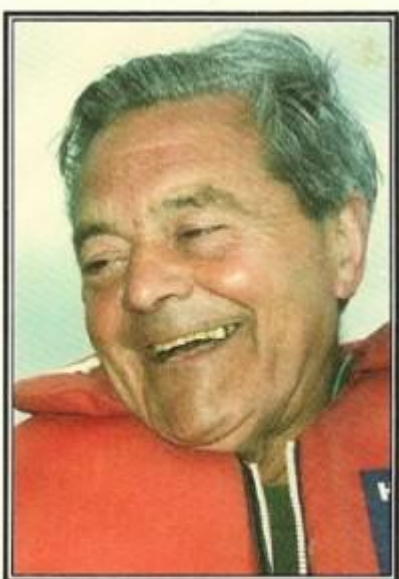
The prime minister, Lord Salisbury, also sent a telegram on behalf of the British Government:

“The Government has learnt with deep regret of the loss of so many brave lives in the attack on the Mahlabatini magistracy yesterday morning. It desires, however, to express its admiration of the brilliant manner in which the Natal Police field force acquitted itself on that occasion, when attacked with overwhelming strength, with the result that the attack was repulsed and the enemy were defeated. I beg of you to be good enough to convey this expression of appreciation to the remaining members of the field force who took part in the engagement.”

When news of Nigel Locke’s death reached Hartlip, the church bells were rung half-muffled as a mark of respect and his family later dedicated a stone tablet to his memory inside the church itself.

## Leonard Grice OBE (1923 - 2009) - Obituary

Len Grice, who died on December 23rd 2009 at the age of 86, was born in Sheerness and started his education at a school whose headmaster was Mr Bryceson, father of Leslie who became a lifelong friend. At eleven, Len went to Borden Grammar School and thoroughly enjoyed his years there. In his autobiography, which he wrote for his grandchildren when he could still see, he said that “to have been able to go to Borden Grammar School was a great privilege – and a handful of outstanding teachers helped me enormously.” He was involved in sport and in music (he played the trumpet in the orchestra) as well as academic work and achieved excellent results in the Higher School exams in 1941.



Since the start of the war in 1939, he had already spent time helping in the ARP and could have joined up when he finished at Borden. But he was advised to get a qualification first, so he went off to Bristol University, which had an excellent reputation for Physics, and shared a room at Wills Hall with Kevin Keohane from BGS, also reading Physics.

In December 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour and sank the RN battleships ‘Prince of Wales’ and ‘Repulse’ off the coast of Malaya. Japan had not declared war, but it was now obvious that another phase of the war had begun. Len had to finish the academic year at Bristol, but then he volunteered for the Army and did an intensive training course in radio equipment and was commissioned into REME when he passed. And so to Catterick camp in Yorkshire and responsibility for running a wireless workshop – and eventually in 1943 an overseas posting in to Burma to join the 20th Indian Division. The troopship went as far as Bombay, then he travelled by train across India to Calcutta and eventually into Burma – to Kohima, Imphal and finally Tamu (HQ of the Division). Len was in charge of 3 electronic workshops in 3 brigades responsible for seeing that their crews kept communications open – a difficult task when the heat and humidity led to mould growing over electronic components in the wireless sets and there was always a shortage of supplies!

To prevent the Japanese from invading India, all army units were called to defend Imphal. They lived in dugouts round the perimeter, in monsoon conditions, for 3 months to defend Imphal against very heavy attacks. Eventually Imphal was relieved, the Japanese experienced their first defeat and the 14th Army started to make its way down to Rangoon. The Japanese surrendered after the 2 atomic bombs had been dropped on Japan, and the war was



over at last. Len was sad to leave his Indian troops but decided not to stay on in the Army but to go back to Bristol to finish his degree. He was pleased to hear back in England that he had been ‘Mentioned in Despatches’ for his work in Burma and he felt that his Army experience had made him a more confident person, able to manage men and to respect people from other nations.

Back at Bristol, he worked hard and played hard too – rowing (4th from the left in photo) and swimming for the university, playing football and organising a Judo club, for all of which he was awarded Half Colours.

He ended up with a ‘First’ in Physics (an achievement in those days!) and decided to accept an offer from GEC to work as a research physicist in their Hurst Laboratories in Wembley. He started there in August 1948 in the Illumination Lab designing and testing lighting fittings for streets and airports. He was then asked by the Staff Manager to help with staff recruitment and be responsible for education & training at the Labs. This seemed an interesting challenge so he accepted and was therefore involved in personnel work from the early days of its development.

Having been Best Man to Brian O'Connell, Tom Croally and Leslie Bryceson at their weddings, Len eventually got married to Joan Thirkettle (whose brother Eric is also an Old Bordenian), an ex-County School girl whom he had known for many years.

In 1952, the GEC Staff Manager asked Len to transfer to Head Office and co-ordinate training throughout the company and to organise the training programme for overseas students. He was enjoying life at the Labs and didn't really want to go into central London every day, but it was a chance to get to know what went on



in all the other parts of GEC, so he accepted.

Then, out of the blue, came the requirement to replace the Controller of Training at the Coventry factory. The management there had realised that with the advance of technology, more graduates were needed to develop new products or they would lose orders to their competitors. The MD had recently leased a stately home, Coombe Abbey, on the outskirts of the city to be a hostel for graduate and student apprentices; if Len accepted the job, he would be expected to live in and 'keep an eye on things'!



*Coombe Abbey*

So began 7 years of life at Coombe Abbey – a happy but busy time for Len whose evenings and weekends were often spent on Coombe affairs after a hard day's work in the office! He set up a house committee which he chaired and which sorted out any problems among up to 70 apprentices and the domestic staff. He and the boys built a fine swimming pool next to the tennis court in the

grounds and then later a bar in the basement of the monastic cloisters.

There were great social occasions and sporting ones and there was a very happy relationship between British and overseas students. Several Old Bordenians and their families came to visit the Grices there.



*Coombe Abbey Swimming Pool*



*Coombe Abbey Bar*

Three children were born in the Abbey to Joan and Len in those years – 2 girls and a boy – so a baby in a pram in the courtyard was a common sight! But when the daughters started school, Len and family moved to Kenilworth. At work, Len was getting more involved in training methods and in setting up new courses for engineers in local colleges and universities. In 1961, he was made Group Personnel Manager for GEC Telecoms factories in Coventry, Middlesbrough and Aycliffe. At a time when the trade unions in the car industry in Coventry were very militant, he was respected as a skilled negotiator for a company where strikes were relatively few.

In 1967, Len was involved in the merger of AEI into the GEC empire under Arnold Weinstock. A number of factories had to be closed, but arrangements were made to find work for those made redundant and, when the Woolwich factory, the largest, finally closed in 1969, 93% of the workforce who wanted work had been placed in alternative employment thanks to Len and his team. He was also becoming more involved in work external to GEC. He was a Board member of the Coventry and District Employers Association, one of the team that sat on Industrial Tribunals in Birmingham, he chaired the local Employment Committee and the area Manpower Board, and also the committee which produced for the government 'The Coventry Report on Employment and Training in the Coventry Area' (there was another one in Liverpool). He set up a job sharing scheme for school leavers which attracted international interest. His work with colleges to promote the training and employment of young people was acknowledged by the award of an Honorary Life Fellowship at Coventry Polytechnic – and when this became Coventry University, he chaired the personnel committee until 1996.



In 1981, he received an OBE for his work for the Manpower Services Commission.

Meanwhile, in 1978, when Len was still playing tennis, squash and badminton and sailing and gardening in whatever spare time he had, he was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis and was on medication for that for the rest of his life. A year later, he lost the sight of one eye but managed well with the remaining good one, except that he could no longer play games. He retired from GEC in 1988 but still continued his active life in the community, attending governors' meetings, chairing committees, etc. Even

when he became completely blind in 2000 he still took an active part in the running of the Kenilworth Talking News for the Blind. He felt himself lucky to have so many friends, some from BGS days, others from his working life, others again from his retirement years who read to him, took him out for walks or for a pub lunch and made his last years a happy time in spite of his disabilities. He was always positive, optimistic and uncomplaining. He will be greatly missed by his widow, his 3 children, 8 grandchildren and all who knew him.



*Len Grice, Brian O'Connell, Freddie Cooper  
April 1998 OBA Dinner*

## **Borden Grammar School in the snow!**

I know many of the regular visitors to this site live in the far flung parts of the world and may have heard that we are having a little scattering of snow here in Sittingbourne! I popped down to the school earlier today (20 December 2010) to take a few pictures to share with you. The caretaker had obviously been busy clearing the main entrance driveway and he was clearing the car park as I was on my way home.



### **End of Digest**

*The next digest will include all articles posted on the Old Bordenians Website that are suitable for a printed format during 2011.*

*David Palmer, OBA Website Committee*

*January 2011*