

# News and Views Extra

April 2021

## And in the golden days of youth.....



You know the next bit.....Here, with their stories and news, come greetings from some of your fellow Old Wealdens - some you may know, some 'just' share a bit of history with you - but that shared history keeps this connection strong between us, spread as we are across decades, and with childhoods so differently backdropped.

In Issue 44, Tony Radford 1957 spoke tantalisingly of a jazz band at the bottom of the East Field, one entirely in the imaginations of its members, using what was to hand – Tony's clarinet excepted – and he said he had a photo.....and here, much anticipated, it is, to start us off.



The East Field Stompers

In Tony's words, from Issue 44:

The East Field roller is the bass drum, with Alan Wilson on banjo - his dad was a banjo player in a pre-WWII band – plus Brian Irving on bongos, Mike Rosen on trumpet, Clive Triolaire on drums, Marshall Colman on double bass, Ken Monk on saxophone and Dave Stollar on piano. All instruments were purely in our imagination. I should add that this must have been in the 3rd or 4th year by which time I (the photographer) had started playing the clarinet, discovered jazz; and been thrown out of school clarinet lessons (given by a man called Herbert New who was 2nd clarinet in the BBC Symphony Orchestra) for trying to sound like Acker Bilk.

Tony has a wonderful collection of photos, so precious when we think that few people took a camera to school in those days. We have the official school ones, of course, the choirs and teams, and the long one we keep rolled up, that reveals so many familiar faces when we dig it out. These off the record ones, though, are precious in their scarcity, and heart-warming, a reminder of those golden days of youth, and of all we hoped for and imagined the world would be. Clive Triolaire, perched on the wall, above, is the very embodiment of it.

In Class 1c in 1957 was a little clutch of boys whose surnames were adjacent, and

hearing those names follow each other every morning when the register was called, it must have stayed with them (more on this later!). Tony Radford was there, and then - the nemesis for people like me who get names muddled - came John Radley. And it has been John who has now released Tony's photos from their negatives, and made them shareable. It's been real team work.

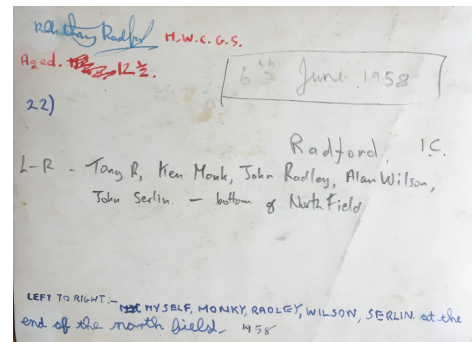
**The person who is our 'chair' was in that 1c class with Tony and John, too**, as was Alistair of such fond memory - and when asked if he could remember the other boys, came back remarkably quickly with this list.

**NB The photos that accompany them are a few more of Tony's, NOT an attempt to picture all the list! Your contributions to filling in the gaps will be most welcome.**

**Chris Overson 1c, wrote:**

I have used the 1960 (year 3 for me) school photo as a reminder. I think the c class started with M, thus:

Alistair McGechie  
Jim McGlaughlin  
Ken Monk  
Dave Nelson  
Roger Occamore  
Chris Overson  
Tony Radford  
John Radley  
Roger Richardson  
Michael Rosen  
Ian Quarrie  
John Serlin  
Jim Stafford  
Dave Stollar  
Graham Taylor  
Clive Triolaire  
Ken Ward  
Alan Wilson  
Richard Wood



Chris added the following queries, included here in the hope, again, that someone might fill in the gaps.....

I seem to remember in 1c we had Alan Stepney but I have a vague memory that he died young. Also, I think Jim McGlaughlin and Ian Quarrie are in the photo, but I'm not absolutely sure. I think they joined our year later than 1957.



Finally, I thought Roger Jones was in the c class. But other J, K and Ls I can think of weren't, so I must be wrong. Sorry to muddy things a bit, although I am happy about the other names.

One more name occurs to me. Alan Middleton. I should have remembered him because he conducted us the last time we met. But I'm pretty sure he wasn't in the c class, which leaves me a bit confused because I'm sure that Ken Monk was. Perhaps some M s were in the b class and some in c in order to equalise numbers.

*(Ed. Alan certainly did conduct us, of course, we being now bereft of both beloved John Becker, and piano, and he delighted all the attendees by enthusiastically singing the 'piano bits' between verses, a custom which should probably become established because it was great fun – and would undoubtedly have been enjoyed by the late lamented Irene Pyke too.)*

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## **Out on the field, cutting grass in the sunshine**

If that title sounds familiar, it is from Issue 42, one of the great responses we received to the topic of tests and exams. This one stayed so much with me, the boy looking out at the so familiar figure of our groundsman, cutting the grass; the boy wishing he was out there with a clear job to do instead of at a desk, with a problem-filled summer exam paper in front of him. The boy was **Bryan Gilbert, 1944**, and he ended his piece with some thoughts on what might have helped him – all of us indeed - to feel more able to succeed in school education:

*Help in 'how to study' and prepare for an exam would have been so helpful in those early days. Also, guidance as to the 'benefits' of education would have motivated me – perhaps. But there again, others got on with it and did well, so maybe it is just a few of us that are slow beginners. A target in life does make a difference, as I found out later in life... Years after being at H.W. I realized the great value of asking quality questions of others in order to develop and make progress. I needed to have learned that right at the beginning of my education, but like many others, I felt it showed up my ignorance and caused my peer group to laugh. I hope these few thoughts are of some value.*

It was a great pleasure, then, when Bryan sent the following, back in February, after he had read Issue 44. He calls it 'the school report', and it is, but it's so much more.

### **THE SCHOOL REPORT**

Have you read your School Report recently? Do you even still have it among your treasured memories? Mine came to light recently while clearing out the books in my study. There it was, grubby and scuffed, but still in its original brown paper outer covering that we used to cover all our school books with.

The last time it was read, it sadly reminded me just how backward and badly educated I was in those far off days. The grades and the comments didn't change much over the years. They were still along the lines "I think he will do better if he works more". Even in Religious Knowledge, Shove Halfpenny had written "Disappointing" against the grade of C-. I wish he had been there at London University many years later when I received my Bachelor of Divinity degree!

Even our dear principal Barlow Butlin had used his red pen and written "I hope that he will at once make the effort required to raise the standard of his work in most subjects". To be honest, I did for many years consider myself to have been underperforming and slow to get off the mark.

THIS TIME, I read the report closely, with special attention to the details and comments of Mr Hawtrey our PE teacher. Normally I had just skipped over these pages. Now, as an arm chair detective, with a further education through Netflix, I looked for clues in those early pages and in the context in which they were written.

Why was I so slow to learn? Why so bad at English, especially my spelling? For the first time I questioned my achievements and the reasons why the grades were so low, and yet in later life they so dramatically changed for the better. Comments by Mr Crowley such as "Spelling and punctuation are very weak still" brought questions to my mind of why this could be so. Later he wrote "A mixture of immaturity and late development" and gave me C+ for English. (Quite good for me!)

I hope he would have been pleased to learn that I had a number of books published and some of it was translated into 24 languages (Not by me!) Also, I enjoyed writing regularly for various magazines and weekly papers for some years. Their hard work paid off in the end. Thank you, my teachers.

Miss Sellers our Geography teacher would have been interested to know that my life took me to many parts of the world. And I enjoyed remembering all she had instilled in me about other lands, their culture and traditions.

Likewise, Miss Hirst and Mr Clark my French teachers, who struggled to get me above a C-, would hardly credit the fact that as I travelled my French conversation ability grew rapidly. In fact, although I did not learn German at school, I was on occasions able to preach in German, and although humorous to the listener, they understood it!

Mr Monday taught us woodwork, or at least, he tried to teach some of us. He gave up on my efforts and let me do what I wanted to do knowing I could do no harm. How delighted he would be to know that in later years I excelled at DIY jobs and saved thousands of pounds.

So why have I bored you with all this personal trivia? It is because I want to make a point. We cannot take a fix on our life at any one point and imagine that we will stay the same forever. We are a 'work in progress' and our teachers have been so vital in setting the right foundations. They were called to teach and care for their pupils, even the backward and difficult ones like me.

It has been quite a revelation for me to look back to those years long ago and consider the context in which they set out to educate me.

Firstly, I remember that from 1940-1941 I was evacuated away into the country and did not see my parents for many months at a time. Sadly, it was not a happy time and the tiny village school my brother John and I attended in Hanbury, Worcestershire, was not the best in the world, even though we walked two miles each day in all weather conditions to get there.

Because we were not happy and the bombing was moving away from Birmingham where we lived, it was possible to return home to Handsworth. Our house was opposite a large gun emplacement which tended to keep us awake each night as we tried to sleep in the Anderson shelter we had erected in the back garden. It was exciting, but also very scary, as bombs went over our head and flattened houses down the road.

Secondly, it was then that something happened that could well have greatly affected my education. I caught rheumatic fever. So serious was my condition that I then spent one whole year in bed and had to learn to walk again. Nobody thought to give me any help with my schooling and that was the important year when I missed my spelling tests. No wonder my spelling was so poor!

Following the illness, the doctors diagnosed an enlarged heart which meant little sporting activity for two years. My parents then sent me to another Primary School in Handsworth for about 12 months.

Thirdly, we moved house, from Handsworth in Birmingham to Harrow Weald in Middlesex, just before entering the Grammar School.

In spite of these setbacks, somehow I had managed to pass my 11 plus exam and gain a

place at a Birmingham Grammar School, and was all rigged out in my black school blazer and cap. Being wartime, my parents could not afford to buy a new set of school clothes, and thus upon arriving at Harrow Weald County School in 1944, I stood out among the 600 pupils dressed in grey, like a sore thumb, black jacket and complete with a broad Brummy accent.

Mr Burgen, our Science teacher, soon took me in hand with a view to correcting my accent. He would say "Gilbert, go and find out what the time is by the clock outside the class room." "Haff past eleven" I would report when I returned. "You mean HAALF PAAST Gilbert. Half past. Now tell me what the time is". He did this at the same time for some weeks until I learned to remove the hard letter 'a'. Schooling certainly got rid of the Birmingham accent.

In those far off days during the war, there was no such thing as School Counsellors to try and get beside pupils who showed signs of needing help. But looking back, the staff were kindness itself and always supportive.

#### BACK TO THE SCHOOL REPORT.

If you do get out your old report, take a good look at those opening pages and see when you had a growth spurt. I entered school in 1944 a 7st.2lb weakling standing 5'1" tall, and left in 1950 weighing 12st.4lb and 6' tall. I don't think it was the school dinners that did it in those war time years and those that followed. Between '46 -'47 alone, I grew 3" in height and put on 2 stone! My mate, Norman Fountain, was heavier than me and we both hated cross country running, which took us up Brookshill and all the way round. We did take a short cut on one occasion, but only once.

#### THE MUSICAL JOURNEY

Being unable to take part in sporting activities when aged 9-10 because of the enlarged heart, I took to playing the ukulele. This soon gave way to a battered old electric guitar which had many outings to local gigs, after which we had to walk home carrying all the gear. No transport or roadies for us.

Miss Pyke took an interest in me when I joined the choir and gave me lots of encouragement. Mrs Monday, the Domestic Science teacher, was giving me piano lessons at the time and later I had guitar lessons from Ivor Mairants, whose daughter Valerie was also at our school.

My having won a school singing competition with a rendering of "The Blind Ploughman", Miss Pyke remarked that I only won because I looked the part! – but she also kindly suggested I audition for the BBC Choral Society in London and so it came about that I became the youngest bass in the choir. Miss Pyke would come home for tea with our family on the days that we had to travel up to London for concerts. We were both dressed up for the occasion (black bow tie, the lot) and many were the glances from passengers on the tube as they looked at this lady and her toy boy! Not many music teachers would have put themselves out as she did and I'm forever grateful to her.

It was Miss Pyke who paired me up with Karla Hammerton – wow! I was to play the piano accompaniment for her viola grade examinations. What a thrill, but sadly nothing came of it even though I asked her out to go boating with me one fine day. She (wisely) insisted that her young sister Gillian (1953) came with us and that was that. I'm sure Gillian will not remember that day on the lake rowing the boat while Karla and I sat in the stern.

When no career choice seemed obvious, it was again Miss Pyke who came to the rescue with the suggestion that I sit the entrance exam at the Royal Academy of Music and also the Guildhall School of Music. Her support and encouragement resulted in a scholarship at both, and so I chose the Royal Academy, and the rest is history.

All this, and much more, came flooding back from a tattered old school report. How about some of you following my example and taking a serious look at what went on all those years ago? By the way, I ended up with 9 GSE grades and most of them were credits or above. All the praise and 'credit' must go to those wonderful teachers.

What a very grown up look back, and very considered piece of remembering – thank you Bryan, it has been a privilege to read this. **And, from Gillian, came this:**

**I remember Bryan Gilbert and his playing with Karla - I was quite young at the time. I must admit I have little recollection of a boat trip where I was presumably the gooseberry. But I do remember him coming to our house when they practised for the viola exam.**

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### **Who built our school? It came as a surprise.....**



Our iconic 1930s school building, in spite of all later additions and alterations, remains the image that says Harrow Weald. Its architects, though, were a surprise to **Marshall Colman 1957**, and he writes more on his website blog: <https://marshallcolman.blog/2020/06/26/w-t-curtis-and-william-burchett/>

Marshall said he was “fascinated to discover that our school - ‘the 1930s building - was designed by the same architectural team that did all the modernist primary schools and the Grade II listed Kenton Library in the Dudok style - including my primary school, Pinner Park, which was one of the first to have concrete floors supported on columns. “

Do have a look at Marshall’s website. He has written about his ‘second’ life as a ceramicist in earlier editions of News and Views; but he is equally interested in how things are made and used and in the built environment of the everyday. He owes his early love of ceramics to Connie Passfield, who as so many of our teachers did – think of Irene Pyke on the tube with Bryan on the way to choir practice - went the extra mile to enable the interests and passions of their individual pupils.

## Tributes to friends lost but never forgotten

We do have some deaths to record, sadly, but while we mourn the loss of friends, dearly, we also celebrate them and want to share their stories – hence the place for tributes being in the heart of this publication, not tucked away at the end. We often learn so much about someone after they have died, when friends share their memories - and everyone has a story, and all are interesting. Importantly, all the tributes will be repeated, and often expanded, in the annual paper edition, to make sure that everyone gets to see and contribute to them.

Just a note about the order. Those boys' names so readily brought to mind by Chris Overson probably stuck in the memory so firmly because of the convention at the time of using surnames only for them, but first names for the girls. That's one thing we have happily left behind, and the list of contributors I keep is always ordered by first name, because it seems to be the easiest way to find people, male or female. Ordering tributes in this publication is further complicated by the fact that if a woman has married, she usually acquires a second surname. The rest of the world will then routinely know her by that – but we knew her first by the one she was born into, and carry both in our heads. So, the simplest thing is probably to order tributes by first name, for everyone.

### Barbara Ede née Mole 1948

As part of the annual exchange of info when Keith Mayes sends us out the subscription forms, we often get lovely news back; but sometimes the message is to tell us that one of our members has sadly died. On March 10th this year, we heard in this way that Barbara had died, on October 13th 2020. If you have memories of her that you'd like to share, please do let us know, and they will add to the tribute that will be in the next paper magazine.

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### Betty Woolley née Reynolds 1939

On March 13th this year Betty's husband Ian wrote to us:

It is with great sadness that I write to let you know that my wife, Betty, passed away peacefully here at home on the 17th February 2021.

Betty was always immensely proud, throughout her life, of her education at Harrow Weald Grammar School and was also very proud of returning each year to the OWA Reunions.

Betty always enjoyed playing net-ball, but was never keen on hockey! She was always very proud that she obtained her school certificates with a Matriculation Exemption and went on to work in Drummonds Bank in Trafalgar Square when she left.



A poem that Betty wrote when she was in her first year at Harrow Weald will be read at her funeral.

With kind regards  
Ian Woolley

Here is Betty's poem, as it appeared in a Weald Chronicle

Autumn  
I like the Autumn,  
In more ways than one.  
To sit by the fireside,  
When the day's task is done.

To look from the window,  
And see the leaves play.  
Tossing and twirling,  
Like snowflakes, gay.

Betty E. Reynolds, Form 1D, Shakespeare House

**Betty's daughter Janet also wrote:**

I have now just returned home yesterday after ten weeks staying with Dad. Several of those weeks were spent looking after mum in a hospital bed at home, after she was discharged – a time that has left me with some very precious memories of my dear mum.

I can't tell you how proud mum always was of being an Old Wealden. It was a conversation very often had.

*Ed. The lovely picture of Betty at the start of this tribute was sent to us by her husband Ian. We also had some of her with her fellow Old Wealdens from the 1930s and 40s, at the 2018 Reunion – and she posed for us on that occasion too with fellow 1939 Deryk Searle – who had clearly been hi-jacked for the photo on his way to the buffet.....*





## Margaret Perrott née Munby 1951

In February this year, Margaret's husband Graham wrote to tell us that Margaret had sadly died, on November 28th 2020. He wrote: 'She had been a member of the Old Wealdens for many years and, sometimes with me, attended a fair number of your Reunions.'

You may also remember that we heard from Margaret back in Issue 43, page 22, in response to the tests and exams topic:

*On the subject of exams, does anyone remember me being sick in the art room (sat next to a sink!!) in the Applied Maths Scholarship exam, summer 1958? I do apologise - I had picked up a tummy bug.*

It made me (Ed.) smile then – as I'm sure it did others – mostly with sympathy! And it was great foresight to sit next to a sink! If you have more memories of Margaret, do let us know.

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## Michael Hammerton 1941

Not long before this newsletter was ready to go out, we heard from his sister Gillian Broadbent née Hammerton 1953 that Michael had died, on April 19th.

Gillian wrote:

My brother Michael died only yesterday and in due course I hope to send you some information about him. He and Desmond, who were 14 months apart, spent a lot of time together even in later years, despite the fact that Desmond lived in the Sudan and Scotland, and Michael was always in Sussex. They spent many holidays together both here and abroad, particularly Spain and France. They both died at the same age of 90 years and 2-3 months.

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## Pauline Smith née Chalkley 1942

In with her subscription form this year, **Jean Muth née Arthur 1942** sent us this, to let us know that her lifelong friend Pauline had sadly died, on December 11th 2020. She wrote:

We met at Harrow Weald Infants in 1934, then met up again at Harrow Weald Grammar School in 1942. We went to Harrow Weald Church youth club. She was my bridesmaid. She went to RADA and then joined several repertory companies. After this she went to Jersey where she made theatrical costumes the rest of her life. She had twins, a boy and a girl

We spent several holidays together. We met up in San Francisco where my son and daughter-in-law live, and toured America. Then we toured Egypt together. Her brother Roger took me to see her last year before she died, sadly, in a care home.

Ed. Jean said that by this time Pauline was back in England, living not far from her, in Buckinghamshire. In the phone conversation we had after Jean had sent us the tribute to Pauline, Jean said that Pauline had been extremely good at what she did, and that she would miss her friendship very much.

As we talked, Jean then said that her own husband of sixty plus years had died just over a year ago. They had met on the train, because they both travelled into the City every day; and they were married at All Saints, Harrow Weald.

Losing her old friend had been very hard, on top of the great loss of her husband, and Jean said that she didn't really like living in her house alone, after being together for so long. However, her daughter and twin grand-daughters, now seventeen, live over in Oxford, and she was looking forward to going to spend time with them over Easter, as they are 'bubbled' - she said this bit with great relish. She was also pleased that she had had her second vaccination. It was lovely to talk to her, and to be able to thank her for letting us know about Pauline.

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### **A tantalising glimpse of the archive**

Back in February 2020, Chris Overson and I (Ed.) had a plan to swap some archive material I had borrowed and needed to return for something else I needed that he was going to retrieve from Heather's beautifully organised loft - and we were going to do this at the reunion. Best laid plans.....

So, I have been storing those precious bits and pieces in my huge jigsaw folder, to keep them safe, and thought that a glimpse of the exuberance and fitness of youth might be a lovely thing to see. These are very early pictures of the school.



The field photo is amazing, because those girls are flying around those benches, and yet the movement has been captured so sharply. Someone who has experience of human pyramids may be able to figure out what is presumably the plan, on the blackboard in the gym?

One can only think that a great deal of teamwork and trust would have been needed for both these activities. They are lovely glimpses into the past, all those wonderful intent faces. Hopefully we will be able to retrieve more of our archive before too long, and make it available for all to see.

## **Our 1959 membership is growing! Thanks to Eric – and to our website**

You may recall from previous editions that 1959 member **Eric Whittington** has been trying to trace his fellow year entrants. In Issue 44 we heard from **Liz Hall née Sanders**, who we were able to welcome back, thanks to Eric, after 'losing' her for a while. **Neil Williams-Jones**, who joined during lockdown, after browsing around and finding the website, read about Eric's mission in the magazine, and wrote to him from his home in Budapest. He told the story of his life after Harrow Weald, and here it is.

**My name is Neil Williams-Jones**, but I'm pretty certain that, whilst at Harrow Weald County Grammar School, I only used the shortened version; Neil Jones. I joined HWCGS as a first year 'weed' in the first quarter of 1960, when we moved from Bournemouth to Stanmore, so that makes me part of the 1959 cohort.

My favourite school moment was in 1964, during my commencement in the Lower Sixth. At our first Sixth Form Pure Maths class Mr Lowry congratulated me on achieving grade 'A' in my maths 'O' level in the preceding Fifth Year. I think he was rather surprised, as I had only been in the third set! I was surprised as well!

Well, here I am! I'm afraid that I have no recent news regarding others of our year intake, and I will tell you why, below.

When I left the Upper Sixth, after successful 'A' level results in the summer of 1966, I joined the 5 year Graduate Student Apprentice Training Scheme of the Eastern Electricity Board, and a very good educational and practical skills, and knowledge, scheme it was too!

As part of it, I commenced as an undergraduate reading Electrical and Electronic Engineering at The City University in London in late September 1966, whilst still at the tender age of 17! Yes, I was almost a year younger than most in the 1959 cohort!

From mid-1966, through to mid-1969, I did retain contact, mainly at various weekend parties, with quite a few of the 1959 intake. However, as I was living in Islington whilst attending University, of course I spent far more time with my fellow students and, over the following few years, gradually lost touch with them.

On graduating, and then completing my Graduate Student Apprenticeship, I had an opportunity to join the multinational Anglo-American Corporation, and found myself in 1971 working in Zambia, Central Africa.

New joiners were supposed to work for a minimum of 3 years there before taking home leave, as 3000 mile international flights were very expensive in those days! In the event I stayed for 8 years and ended up as the Construction Manager for the Power Company division, responsible for construction, and commissioning, of all the high voltage transmission power lines and substations in the Copperbelt Province, all the way up to the Congo border!

During that period my professional work was also evaluated by the UK Institution of Electrical Engineers, and they granted me Chartered Electrical Engineer status, which was a cause for celebration at 27 years of age!

I was able to take a couple of leave trips home to England during that period in the 1970s, but not back to Stanmore, as my parents had moved to Somerset whilst I was away in Africa, so I was not able to keep up my old school contacts in the Harrow Weald area.

Eventually the political and economic situation at that time in Central Africa deteriorated, so I decided it was time for a change.

And what a change it was! I joined Royal Dutch Shell and next found myself in the middle

of the Northern North Sea commissioning the giant offshore Oil Platforms Brent 'Delta', and then Cormorant 'Alpha'!

After the commissioning periods, I became the Brent 'Delta' Offshore Platform Engineer, responsible for all Platform maintenance, often with squads of up to 150 engineers and technicians, of all engineering disciplines and trades, during major remedial works. We worked up to 18 hours a day in those early times offshore! Home to me then was Aberdeen, and what a great city it was, and still is.

As I progressed further in Shell, promotions and different internal management jobs followed in the UK, Dutch, and Norwegian sectors of the North Sea, together with assignments in Europe, North America, the Far East, and the Middle East.

Eventually I was able to persuade Shell to grant me early retirement, although I didn't intend to stop working!

I then joined BG International, similar to Shell in most respects, but much smaller, which enabled me to work on a regular 4 week on / 4 week off rotation work / home sequence from our home in Budapest - as my wife is Hungarian and we had settled there - to the giant Oil & Gas Fields in the Steppes of Central Asia, where temperatures range from plus 40 degrees C in the summer, down to minus 40 degrees C in the winter! Mr Murray, with his flowing gown in geography class, had taught us about the Steppes, but never mentioned the extreme temperature range!

After very many years of this, my final year of working was at our Field Upgrade Design Project Office in Italy, commuting weekly from Budapest to Milan; not very green because it involved over 100 flights for me in that short period!

Eventually, in 2016, after working for 50 years, in 15 countries, in the international energy industry, I finally retired, but still felt just as young, and enthusiastic, as I did when I left HWCGS.

During my career, one aspect of HWCGS was always with me. On many occasions, as an adjunct to my job, I was responsible for managing teams investigating major incidents involving systems, equipment, and people. Uncovering the key issues of each incident was essential to unravel what had actually happened, in order to prevent it happening again.

On occasion, in certain countries, being 'Valiant for Truth' put me personally in a very tight spot politically, but I was always eventually able to navigate through the difficulties.

I will always be grateful to HWCGS for giving me such a good educational preparation, which enabled me to, eventually, go on and work as permanent staff for the four excellent companies that I have mentioned above.

How good to read about a deeply satisfying career, so clearly relished, Neil – thank you for sending us your story. Thank you also for the news you have sent, below. This time last year I don't think anyone would really have thought that, a year on, we'd have been swapping vaccination stories, or that we'd be so conversant with the science of it all – but also, how much we've adapted, and found solace in doing the simple things.

### **Neil's news:**

Here, in Budapest, at the end of February 2021, we are looking that we might just be starting a 'third wave' of the pandemic. The first wave, last March and April, was very small with just a few deaths, but the second wave has taken the current overall death total to 14,600, and it is continuing to rise. When considering the relative population

sizes of Hungary and the UK, the death rates per head of population are very similar.

Except for not being able to go out for lunch, or dinner, it's not affecting us too much, as we have quite a large garden, and the weather is warming up now. We have six cats, all strays that we have adopted over the years, and two rescue dogs. The latter keep us busy with three walks every day, and we are fortunate to have a small wood quite near us which is a great joy for them. They have explored every inch of it many times over, and never seem to tire of it! One of the dogs seems to think that the wood belongs to him, and he is not keen on other dogs sharing it!

The supply of vaccines is currently more limited here in the EU than in the UK, but we are hoping to have our first jabs within the next 4-6 weeks. Maybe we will be able to go out for a meal again in May, or June; I hope so.

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**And now, from Mexico, hello from Jacqui Guillermo-Prieto née Wood**

### **Anyone else out there from 1953?**

Last week I received the magazine and subscription form, one week part. As you see, Mexican mail is not the best. I sent three March birthday cards in January and, so far, only one has arrived!

I attended one of the reunions, in 2003, as I made sure I was in England for the 50th anniversary of the 1953 year group. Only four of us attended. I recognized two, and nobody recognized me. A sobering experience. I had not gone to the big event as the form advising me arrived after the event. The only person I see in the magazine from my year is Gillian Hammerton who I believe is in Australia and I of course in Mexico. Maybe all our year are here there and everywhere.

Harrow Weald was definitely some of the best years of my life.

So, Jacqui would love to hear from others who started at Harrow Weald in 1953, wherever in the world you are, and has asked us to give her email address to anyone who'd like to get in touch – so, just give us the word, and we'll do so.

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**Gillian** now Broadbent but formerly Hammerton, as Jacqui remembers, above, and who was the little sister cum chaperone to whom Bryan Gilbert referred with some despond in his piece, also loved music, and this is a short extract from her own musical memories.

A musical highlight at school was with the choir and Miss Pyke. Some of the pupils were chosen to take part in a concert in the Royal Albert Hall with pupils from all over the country. The conductor was David Willcocks who was well known for conducting the choir of King's College Cambridge for the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols broadcast by the BBC each year. Since then I have been in several choirs, particularly here in Wales. I took part in a 'Come and Sing' Verdi Requiem in 2002 in the Royal Albert Hall - and who do you think was conducting? Sir David Willcocks at the age of 84!

## Now, an apology – and another chance to see a great photo

Apologies to Bob Chambers, who went to the trouble of making a careful list of the people in the photo he sent us for Issue 44, only to find list and picture so separated that they lost their point. He didn't complain – but had every right to, and so here they both are again, together with his explanation.

I'm sending you a copy of a photograph which reached me many years ago from Australia!! My wife had a school friend at Copthall School who emigrated to Sydney in 1957 with her family. Pam had a brother who met someone over there with some connection to HWCS and who gave him this picture.

It must come from the school photograph of about 1950 and I'm going to rummage around in the loft to see if I can find that.

It features Gordon Bryant, centre front row, sitting next to Michael Annals.

The cut off figure on Michael's left is, I believe Laurie Elliott.

I'm behind Michael and three other names I can spot are Peter Gall, Bob Spandler, and, I think, Mike Pullen.



## One more apology re Issue 44, this time to Pam Gilmour, 1966, about the Facebook Group

**On the back page of Issue 44 the Facebook Group was wrongly named.** It may seem a small matter, but when people are trying to find Pam's group, it's important that it is named correctly – because there was a previous Facebook page – ie NOT a Group – and that page is now closed and unhelpful. The Group however, is very much open, and extremely helpful! So, please avoid using 'County' in the title if you go looking. It's nothing at all to do with the status or otherwise of the school, but everything to do with finding the active Facebook Group as distinct from the defunct Facebook page. If that's not clear, could someone else have a go?! Again, it wasn't Pamela who complained, but it was noticed, and it was an editorial mistake, for which apologies are certainly due. So, in Pamela's own words:

The title of the group that I started is 'Harrow Weald Grammar School'. The original 'page' had County in it.

And in the Editor's words – please could you take a pencil to the back of your copy, and cross out the bit I got wrong – thank you!

The contact details for the committee remain the same, and are all in the latest paper magazine. Your comments and contributions to the editor are always welcome, phoned, written, sketched, any time, any sort, any length; and if by email, this is the address for them: [ljane1948@gmail.com](mailto:ljane1948@gmail.com)

I am sure you enjoyed Rosemary Luck's great piece in Issue 44 about our founding Head, Barlow Butlin. Do remember, then, in particular, the appeal for anecdotes and personal memories of the other two Head teachers we have had. Your contributions will be passed on to John Carr, who is compiling pieces about them. Thank you to those who have already sent contributions for these. They are safely waiting in the wings.

Meanwhile, this was our most recent committee meeting – all were present, although some just in spirit. We really missed Heather's cakes.



Thank you to everyone who has contributed so richly to this 'Extra' News and Views, and all your committee send the best of wishes to you – again on a day when in normal times some of us would have been actually meeting at the annual reunion. One day we will.....

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