News and Views Extra

April 25th 2020



How are you doing?

It's ironic in one way that our most recent News and Views was full of reunion stories, and headlined 'Getting Together'; but in fact, we still are, aren't we, and maybe all the world is too, in a way it hasn't done before.

So, we asked some of your fellow Old Wealdens, by email, a question: How are you doing? We had some great responses, funny, clear, honest, rich in detail, and I think that the best way to present them is exactly in the way and order in which they arrived in my inbox. Notably, the first to respond was Ray Bickmore, 1937, and the word 'trisolated' has been delighting my friends and family ever since.

Here they are, our own little reunion across the years and across the miles, on the day that we should have been gathering face to face. That will happen again, for sure, but for now, I hope you will enjoy these messages from our fellow Old Wealdens.

Raymond Bickmore 1937

I must be somewhere near the front of the queue to be the oldest inhabitant of the OWA, having entered Miss Joseph's form 1a in 1937, and I applaud heartily your efforts to keep us in good spirits in current circumstances.

At least in wartime we knew who and what our enemy was and what had eventually to be done to get rid of him, but this time much is not understood nor by any means certain. We can, however, behave ourselves, do as we are guided, and stop finding fault with the efforts of those who are really putting their lives at risk to help us.

I struggle to keep up with communications technology, but am grateful that I can stay closely in touch with my somewhat far-flung family electronically, while holed up and trisolated comfortably at present with two of them, in my adjoining county, Gloucestershire. Perhaps this is the time to dig out one of those board games that we used to play and see if we can remember the rules. Alternatively, we could set ourselves some homework other than dusting, vacuuming and foraging.....

Best wishes to all,

Ray Bickmore.

Geoffrey Hewings 1954

Thanks for reaching out. I am currently in Tucson, Arizona where I had planned to spend

some days with my wife Adrianna (who winters here) before heading to a series of conferences in Europe, all of which were cancelled. We are adapting to new ways of doing things – teaching classes at the University of Illinois on-line, holding oral final exams for PhD dissertations virtually, and interacting with our youngest son and his family who live in Tucson but at a distance (no hugging!). Back in Chicago (and Illinois as a whole), there is a stay-at-home order while in Arizona, the limitations are minimal. The local supermarket opens for a seniors-only period each morning from 6-7 am and, reflecting the fact that most of us at this age find sleep an elusive commodity, the store is well populated by 6:05. The panic buying seems to have slowed as shoppers adjust to the reality of adequate stocks (save for pasta, toilet paper and paper towels). We miss our weekend orgy of Premier League football games, my wife included (with dubious taste in supporting Arsenal) but the NY Met Opera is offering free live streaming from their archives. Last week we were treated to 6 Wagner operas including the Ring Cycle and thus plan our evenings accordingly. If we had any confidence in the Trump administration, this period would be more tolerable but the incompetence that has been on display does not make one optimistic. The prospect of another four years with this person in charge is an appalling one.

Finally, I am sad that the gathering in April has had, understandably, to be cancelled; it would have been my first reunion but let's hope we will survive to reconnect in 2021.

Please stay safe With all good wishes

Geoffrey Hewings (entered in 1954)

Ian Enticott 1971

I am having to make short video services each week to post on our (new) church YouTube Channel.

We are still managing to run the Food Bank - more needed now than ever.

I am shopping for an 80 year old neighbour.

And still running regularly for my 'exercise' time.

WhatsApp helps to keep up with the family - we have a daughter in lockdown in Naples, Italy. My wife, Fiona, and all 3 daughters with 2 of our grandchildren all do 'PE with Joe' at 9.00 every morning and message or video-call on WhatsApp. Our son is well-practised at social isolation, although he does manage to emerge for mealtimes! We had to fetch him from university in St Andrews just before lockdown began.

lan



John Holt 1960

I am:

- with my girlfriend, Jorun, in her home so she can best support her disabled son who lives nearby, the three of us being 'isolated in two places'
- co-ordinating the work of my Therapy Centre's staff as they work from home supporting our disabled clients as best we can, and taking the opportunity to update our systems manual
- writing up the family tree for my two grand-daughters, a story that covers 8 generations but with many gaps in the information
- considering taking up on-line Bridge to replace the real thing.
- counting my wine stock and planning accordingly.
- wondering if our planned trip to Burma/Myanmar this November will be feasible.
- writing a stream of jokes to my sister about what Donald Trump will say next week.
- totally cheesed off that I'm not allowed to be out there doing something importantly useful for those in real and urgent need.

Ask me in a month's time and see if the list has changed much, but don't be surprised if the only change to report will be 'more Bridge and less wine'!

Take good care of yourself and the same to everyone in the 'Class of 1960'.

John

Paul Morton 1973

While at Harrow Weald I did not excel at maths or physics although I found them extremely interesting subjects. However, I have always been keen to learn more about the universe (modest ambition) so last September I enrolled on a degree course at the University of Hertfordshire to study astrophysics, which continues uninterrupted using digital technology. Slightly more than 40 years after leaving Harrow Weald, I find that both maths and physics seem to make much more sense and all is going very well. In another 40 years I am hopeful of having a good general understanding of the universe but in the meantime there is a startling new idea almost every day!

Many friends have also taken this opportunity to start studying something new - it seems a great way of using the quiet time ahead of us.

I hope you are keeping safe and well.

Very best wishes,

Paul



Jane (Tann) Longford 1963

I'm delighted to hear from you.

I have thought about your request and...

1. Practical. Source local food outlets other than the supermarkets, as you may get a delivery.

Here in a rural environment, never having used any supermarket home delivery services, we have found that garden centres with cafes and food shops, farm shops, butchers and small grocers, local suppliers to restaurants (this is big in London apparently), all are now setting up delivery services, limited by drivers and vehicles but developing. There are real alternatives to going out to Tesco or waiting to get an Ocado slot. Our village is very proactive in exchanging information, get to know neighbours, even if over the phone.

2. Be tolerant, be kind, be patient.

OK so here there's only my husband and I to bicker with each other, (we're not a family of 5 living in a small flat), so that can sound pious. It seems everyone is swapping messages and instructions and advice like mad, along with all the funny or "uplifting" links. Some of these can annoy or upset, given a bad moment, but everyone is looking for distractions to cope, in their own manner. Find a way to let it pass (gosh I sound like my yoga teacher - I promise you that I can be as grumpy and touchy as any. Jim might say more than most!)

- 3. Don't expect the answers, Google doesn't know. In our case this is frustration at not being able to get any advice, over a 4yr old granddaughter with a cough and night time fever. 111 can't help unless it's a hospital case, symptom checker is too vague. The truth is that we don't b..... know, and that is not something we as a society have grown used to. But that leads to...
- 4. Trust science, not politics. Suddenly (remember this Mr Gove?) we haven't had "enough of experts", we long for them to know. It will take time, sadly.

Is that too long winded? I've had a lot of time to philosophise while digging the garden (might as well grow lots of vegetables).

Last week I was in shock, even though we knew this was coming. Our plans for the year, moving house, son's wedding, grandson's baptism in Spain, family get togethers, all are shelved. I have now accepted that we will have to wait a year or so. That makes me sad, and I miss the family dreadfully (I have 3 grandchildren that I'm really close to) but for them to stay alive is more important. Sobering times. I might have a little cry now. Maybe that should be in the points above- cry when you need to! I so hope that you stay safe and well.









Trevor Sears 1965

I thought you might like to hear from the suburbs of NY, in Port Jefferson on the north shore of Long Island, about 50 miles from Manhattan. It's quiet here, and Susan and I are healthy. Almost everyone is at home all the time, and there are many fewer cars on the roads. We are permitted to go out for exercise and essential shopping, and we've been limiting ourselves to fewer than once a week trips to the supermarket. After an initial panic a few weeks ago, there is plenty in stock in the stores.

I work at Stony Brook University, one of the main campuses of the NY State system. All teaching is online now, so I have been giving online lectures from our home. That seems to be working out OK, and students ask questions via a live chat line manned by a colleague and teaching assistants. Exams and tests are online too, with students scanning their answers on their phones and uploading them. All my exams have been "open book" anyway, so it's not such a big change.

There is a field hospital being constructed on the sports fields of the campus to handle overload from the main university teaching hospital which is close to capacity. There will be up to 1000 more beds there available from sometime next week. Smaller local hospitals are taking overflow patients from the city already. and are pretty much full, we are told. The predictions are that numbers of serious cases will peak in the next week or two as the social distancing and stay at home orders start to take effect on numbers of new cases.

I hope you and your family are keeping well. Trevor

Stuart Irwin 1971

I normally work as a class primary teacher in a school in Helsinki and I am, in fact, still doing that: but from home.

Here, we have been distance teaching (and learning) for about three weeks now. Luckily the pupils (aged from 6 to 8) were already quite digitally aware and so the transformation from a 'digital classroom' to a 'digital distance classroom' wasn't a complete shock though, of course, distance teaching and learning can never replicate the classroom for younger pupils.

It has also meant a little more work for me but, on the plus side, I no longer have to commute!

On a personal front, I am fortunate in that I have a garden (Spring is just arriving in southern Finland now) and a roomy house, although my wife and my two teenage children are also working from home; we are on our computers most of the time but manage to meet up in the evenings.

And we are all looking forward to the Easter break!

I hope all is well with my fellow Old Wealdens. I am thinking of you all.

Stuart

Jerry Harding 1954

A complete lockdown in Sydney for Easter, which will be a real test for all families and friends.

- Isolation at home
- All pubs, clubs, restaurants and gyms closed
- No travel except to shops for food, medicine or emergencies
- Lone exercise is allowed
- You can play golf but only 2 people and no beer at club afterwards
- Lots of the beaches are closed in popular areas such as Bondi and Manly
- No gatherings
- Social distancing

Weather is wet today Good Friday which will be a good mental test especially families with kids. However, it seems to be working and cases of Corona Virus reported are going down and the Government are hinting that restrictions will be relaxed shortly

Stay healthy in UK and hopefully you will soon have Boris back running the country.

Cheers Jerry

Barbara (Penny) Summerfield 1943

I write as a real oldie having come to Harrow Weald in 1943, aged now 88. Having moved into a flat here in Hassocks Sussex quite recently I have really tidied up all my cupboards and drawers, all gleaming with being polished. Every day while this lovely weather lasts I am able to walk in the park opposite. Several other people also do the same thing and it's lovely, everybody waves and good distances are kept.

I have several good books to read, knitting to be done and lastly perhaps the TV but also several recordings on DVD and video to be watched. BUT shall be pleased to be let out (having been a JP for over 20 years)

Sincerely

Barbara Summerfield MBE

Gordon Taylor 1949

I have been living on my own now for 11 years, since my wife died, so, to be honest, day to day life is not a lot different from usual, apart from the inability to take holidays or a trip out for the day. I seem to have plenty to occupy my time, not least my musical interest. As a result, I am able to practise more and I am very grateful for the opportunity to do so. I hope I look grateful in my photo!!

Regards,

Gordon Taylor



And from me, **Linda Jane 1960**, same as most, I guess, learning stuff, doing the chores, enjoying the good bits, sad about the awfulness of it for some, but hopeful for the future, with maybe some lessons learned about who and what really matters.

Meanwhile, I have it on good authority from the rest of the committee that a lot of tea is being drunk on a lot of sofas - and it certainly is on mine. Some of us are missing the football, all of us are missing other people, but finding ways to make the days good. I watched my grandsons' faces, on a screen, the other day, as they were watching Torvill and Dean skating to 'Mack and Mabel' on another screen, on You Tube, sitting on daddy's lap. They were entranced, I was entranced - and that routine is worth a watch too - great tunes, great fun. To my shame, I spent a good deal of time in Miss Joseph's German lessons engraving skating boots on my wooden ruler, and choreographing ice dance routines in my head. If I'd known then what I've since discovered, from a much wiser Old Wealden than me, that she was passionate and knowledgeable about German Lieder, which I absolutely love, I'd have given her a lot more respect and affection - and I wish she was here to talk to now. I've realised, with all this time to get immersed in my own favourite things to do, that I've never learnt anything that I didn't learn from someone else - sounds obvious, but I'd missed that important point - and it's probably one of the things that holds us all together, we who did a lot of our learning in the same place, from the same great people.

And finally, the response from secretary Kay:



Kay (Hawley) Haig 1963

I'm holed up in the Forest of Dean tackling the large, wild garden that was my Mum's till she died a year ago. I take Rufus for walks in the Forest and, apart from lan, the only souls I meet are fellow dogwalkers. I've cancelled everything I was going to do and this morning made a Victoria sponge cake, the first I've made in about 25 years. No nipping down to Tesco's for croissants now. By the time this is over I might have been cured of my sweet tooth.

Keep well

Kay

Ed. I feel the need to make a Victoria Sponge coming on, Kay! If things had been as planned, Kay would have been dashing about today, being the person who made the reunion the warm place that it is, arriving with her arms full of balloons, and lists, and hi-viz jacket to help us park. Next year......

Now, a heartfelt apology, away from the current issue, to two members whose contributions were omitted from the recent News and Views!

They had responded to the request to add comments to the back of their subscription form, in spring last year, but didn't see their efforts in print, for which I am so sorry. It was totally my fault, and I know how it happened, and it won't happen again, but that doesn't make up for the fact that they'd sent great pieces that weren't printed. So, apologies to Sheila Whittle and Gillian Broadbent, whose contribtuions follow below. Sheila's was actually printed out by Keith and put up at the reunion, as it was a also a 'can't be there and best wishes to all" message, but it should also have come through your doors. It did give me the excuse to phone them both and have a chat, and they were both, of course, forgiving, but I still felt bad! Here they are, and Sheila's is particularly relevant to the great report we had from Pat Carvalho about Harrow College and the links we still feel with her students. Very sadly, as you will see further through, Gillian's brother Desmond has since died, and she told me about this when I phoned. Gillian has sent a tribute to him, which follows also.

Sheila (Franklyn) Whittle 1958 Staff

I always love reading the OWA magazine – very sad not to have the hall any more for meetings just once a year - however it's the people who make it – I keep telling myself. However, I was interested to hear what the College is doing with their Community Care courses as that is what I was privileged to set up and develop when I was appointed to Exeter College in 1978, to do just that. The College then had 15,000 students!

Gillian (Hammerton) Broadbent 1953

I always have very fond memories of schooldays. I remember being very anxious when I sat the 11+ that I may not pass as I so wanted to go to the same school as my older brothers Desmond and Michael Hammerton (1940 and 1941), and my sister Karla (1947). My grandparents had been friends with E Barlow Butlin and so Harrow Weald was the top priority as the school to go to.

We always respected the teachers and were in awe of them, Miss Drury (or The Drew as some pupils called her) in particular, but I remember a story she told of wartime days when the school had to be patrolled in blackout. She was alone, walking and checking the corridors around the Quad, and held a torch. She felt very frightened when approaching a door ahead and seeing a light – but it was just the reflection!

Tributes to friends we've lost

We do sadly have some deaths to report, received since the last News and Views went out. The determining surname is that by which peers would first have known them, and is in capitals. Married surnames follow where needed.

Desmond HAMMERTON 1941 17.11.1929 - 5.2.2020



This tribute to her brother was sent by Gillian.

Desmond came to Harrow Weald in January of 1941, after the school year had already started. That was because the family had been living in Cairo where our father was chief chemist for the new Cairo Water Purification Board. He did not go to school but instead was taught by our mother (who was a teacher) through the Parents National Education Union (PNEU), a correspondence curriculum. After four and a half years there they finally left Egypt by ship, stopping in Toulon during which time war broke out and they decided to buy a vineyard. Before too long the Germans had broken through the Maginot Line and the British were advised to leave as soon as possible. They boarded the first ship available, not knowing where it was going and they ended up in Oran and were present at the British Bombing of the French Fleet at Mers El Kebir. They were in Oran for about a month and then finally got a ship back to Toulon where they returned to their vineyard near Bandol.

Both Desmond and his brother Michael attended the village school at Le Plan du Castellet, near Bandol. After a year and a few months my mother, Desmond, Michael and my sister Karla (who was about 5 years old) were finally able to leave France via Spain and Portugal at Lisbon, but our father was not allowed to leave. There were three ships leaving and two were torpedoed but they were the lucky ones to be on the remaining ship which got through unscathed and finally made it home. Some eight months later my father was allowed to leave and arrived home unexpectedly on the 9th January 1942, causing my mother to give birth to me on the 10th January. He was a surprise for my mother and I was a surprise for him! They had little correspondence during the months they were apart as letters were heavily censored.

Desmond sat a special exam (having missed the usual entrance exams) and passed with flying colours. As our grandparents were friends of Mr Butlin it was decided that the family would attend HWCGS. So that is where Desmond started. He excelled at school academically was also a keen sportsman – particularly swimming, diving and tennis and running (he used to train with Roger Bannister, who was a neighbour, and the Shaftesbury Harriers.). He was also very musical. He played the first movement of the Schuman Piano Concerto at one of the school Concerts and also sang in the School Choir with Miss Pyke conducting. I remember when I was about 6 years old, I went to a school concert in which he was taking part in the Messiah. I was enthralled and when my time came to be at school I also joined the School Choir and sang in the Messiah and have loved choral singing ever since.

When Desmond left school he went to Birkbek College University of London to study biology and at the same time worked in the Biology Department at the London Metropolitan Water Board where our father was working as Chief Chemist. When he finished his degree, his first job was to do research into freshwater biology at the Chew Valley Reservoir near Bristol. He married Jean Taylor from Manchester, who had been studying Crystallography at Newnham College Cambridge, on August 22nd 1955. A few years later he had the opportunity to take a job in Khartoum in the Sudan to do research on the River Nile and also to study a volcanic crater Jebbel Marrah in the Marrah Mountains. The family spent ten years in the Sudan and loved every minute of it. They came home every summer as it became too hot to stay there. While in Khartoum he played the organ in the Cathedral there and also learnt to tune pianos for friends as well as his own.

On returning to Britain he became the Director of the Clydesdale River Authority and while there his big achievement was to return Salmon to the Clyde after over a century of neglect. He also became a consultant for the World Health Organisation visiting India, Syria, Lebanon etc and

encouraging those countries to make simple changes for clean drinking water. Upon retirement he was awarded the OBE for services rendered to the environment. He loved living in Scotland and was on the committee for the Scottish Wildlife Fund. He loved mountaineering and potholing. Fifteen years ago he suffered a stroke but survived with limited use of his right arm and leg. But ever the optimist he managed to get around, even to going abroad to Spain with Jean and family (where he had a timeshare) and to California where he and Jean visited her sister Carol and her family. Jean looked after him in their home in Callander for many years, taking him out every day. However about a year or so before he died, he needed more specialist help and went to a Nursing Home in Stirling where he was well looked after. After his 90th birthday he gradually went downhill, and died peacefully in his sleep. Desmond is survived by his wife Jean, daughters Fiona and Alison and sons Ian and James.

Gillian (Hammerton) Broadbent

Wallace MACKENZIE 1933

Not long after the publication of the most recent News and Views, in which there was the happy photograph of Wallace at the lunch, Chairman Chris Overson sent the following:

March 17th 2020

I have just spoken to Wallace's son Jim who some of us met when had a meal with Wallace at his care home last year. He confirmed that Wallace passed away on 23 October. I asked Jim if it was possible that he could let us have a few words for News and Views, and he agreed.

So, more will hopefully follow, but it is of course sad to record the loss of one of our founder members, who clearly lived life with enormous energy and enjoyment – obvious in the photo.



Norman MULLY 1941

We recently received the following from Norman's son, Alan.

It is with great sadness that I write to tell you that my Father, Norman Mully, passed away on 4th March 2020. He wasn't in ill health and was very active but suffered a stroke that he did not regain consciousness from. It was quick and he would not have known anything about it.

I know from many conversations over the years how proud he was to have attended the school and of his continued association right up to current day.

Alan also said that instead of flowers at the funeral, he'd like to be asking for donations in memory of his father to be made to an Old Wealdens related charity, and the committee is wondering if something connected to the current Bursary would be appropriate. There will be more about this in future editions.

Jean UPTON Barlow 1943

In March we heard from Jean's lifelong Old Wealden friend Barbara (Penny) Summerfield, that sadly Jean had died, a year before, on March 27th 2019. For Barbara this was a heavy loss, sadly followed only three weeks later by the death of her own husband, and we send our love, Barbara, and thanks for letting us know about Jean.

Jean, Barbara and Peter Luck, indeed, were all in 1c in 1943, and had always stayed in touch. Barbara said that in her later years Jean had suffered from Parkinson's, and went to live with her son, Michael, who cared for her, on the island of Luing, just outside Oban, in Scotland, where she could watch otters and seals coming up the Firth. Jean, she said, loved it! Ed. There will be more in future editions about a 3rd year trip they all made to Hampton Court maze – well worth waiting for!

Bob WATSON 1967

In February we heard from Geraldine (Williams) Young 1960 that her cousin Bob had died on 21st January this year. After the funeral there was a gathering at Headstone Manor Museum, with which Bob had been involved for years. Heather Bickerton 1940 was a good friend and neighbour of both Bob and his Old Wealden mother, Rosemary, and Heather has very recently sent us the wonderful write up of the gathering, in the magazine for Friends

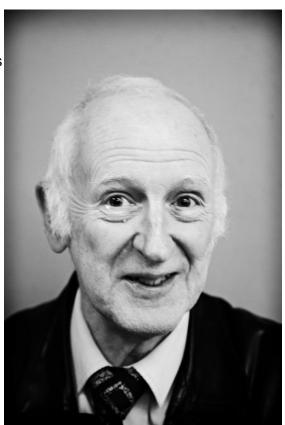
of the Harrow Museum and Heritage Centre. The deep affection and respect in which Bob was held is clear from the tributes given, and there will be more of this in future editions.

On a charming light note, Heather tells us that Bob's mother Rosemary 'held the record for throwing a rounders ball' at Harrow Weald. Sadly, Rosemary was too poorly to attend Bob's funeral, but beautiful flowers were left by the bridge at the museum, on her behalf.

Richard WESTON 1956

Joyce (Reeve) Salter 1956 wrote to tell us that her friend Richard had died last summer. Richard's brother Pete, who was also at Harrow Weald, for just a year, in 1962, has given us permission to share the eulogy he gave at Richard's funeral. Richard was a much loved member of Christ Church, in Highbury, London, and they have kindly allowed us to use their photo of him.

There will be a full account of the tributes to Richard in the next edition, as well as a great story of a school trip in a blizzard, involving Joyce, Richard and other sixth-formers; but meanwhile Richard's smile and sparkly eyes are so lovely to see, and will be remembered well by his many friends.



Importantly, all the tributes to friends who we have lost will always be repeated, and often expanded, in the annual paper edition, to make sure that everyone gets to see them.

So, on April 25th 2020, the day we sadly couldn't catch up face to face, a big thank you to all our contributors, and the best of wishes to all, from all on your committee.

There should be another 'Extra' out around July, which will be more our usual fare, including some pieces you have already sent - thank you - that I am keeping by me to do best justice to in the next one . All contributions for future 'Extras' or indeed for the next paper edition of News and Views always welcome, any length, any form.

Do remember in particular the appeal for anecdotes and personal memories of the three Head teachers we have had, which will be passed on to Rosemary Luck and John Carr, who are compiling pieces about them. Thank you to those who have already sent contributions for these. Please keep them coming. I have no doubt that you will!

Contact details for your contributions and for all the committee are in the most recent News and Views. However, **please note that** Graham no longer uses the email address shown. You can reach him on gtkingsley@cantab.net

Cheers, indeed, to Diane (Hughes) Owen 1948, for providing such an appropriate photo (front page) for all of us drinking our tea, on our sofas, and getting through.

And finally, if you'd like to have a bit of a sing in your living room, see below!

April 25th 2020 Old Wealdens News and Views Extra

e-Newsletter Apr-2020/1



THE WEALD

Words by J. N. BRITTON.

Music by W. G. WILLIAMS.







SoMunday

THE WEALD



THE SONG OF THE HARROW WEALD COUNTY SCHOOL

Words by J. N. Britton. Music by W. G. Williams.

Price Threepence.

See you next year?!