

APRIL NEWSLETTER

No.2 – April – 2013



For the Members, Family and Friends of the
OLD WEALDEN ASSOCIATION

Joint Editors:
ALISTAIR McGECHIE (1957)
PETER LUCK (1943)

Reunion : 27th April 2013

The Reunion forms are out, many of them returned already. Have you sent yours back yet?

Even if you can't come please send the form back and remember to put your news on the back. We can use it in these Newsletters.

Your News ...

FROM SYLVIA ROBINSON ...

Thank you for your reminder about the next HWCS Reunion and the news from various ex-pupils. It is always interesting to hear what other people have been involved in over the years. I haven't got any particularly interesting news, though I keep myself very busy, mainly with voluntary activities. As a former infant teacher trainer in Zimbabwe for a good number of years, I enjoy helping individual children with their reading at a local Primary school; I'm a volunteer "teacher's assistant" with a first level English class for people from around the world at our adult education college; and I help twice a week in my church's little café. But none of this is worth putting in the Newsletter – I just wanted to acknowledge receipt of your email.

Hoping to be at the Reunion.

Sylvia Robinson

[ED:– Sylvia, I hope you won't mind if I disagree with you about the worth of putting your news in the Newsletter. I always find it extremely interesting to read what OWs have been doing and I know others agree.]

FROM JEAN HOOK ...

I am really sorry that I cannot come to the Reunion this year. I have very much enjoyed the three times I have been in recent years, and had hoped to unearth more of my contemporaries for this, the 80th anniversary.

Unfortunately, the date has clashed with the final two performances of "La Belle Hélène", the show in which I am appearing at Erith in Kent.

If you think the readers of the magazine would like to know a little of my Am-Dram experiences over the last 40 years, I would be happy to submit a humorous account. You may ask what it has to do with HWCS, but I was inspired to dance through my PE teacher, Mrs Fitzgerald and her encouragement, and first joined a musical show as a dancer in 1973, while training to be a ballet teacher.

I hope everyone has a great day!

[ED: I have asked Jean to write her piece for a future Newsletter.]

FROM MARIAN (HARDING) WHITEHEAD (1948)

I am so sorry to miss the Annual Reunion but I shall be on my annual trip to Washington DC, USA, to visit my daughter and grandsons. My daughter is an independent documentary film maker and has just completed a film about the life and artistry of a pioneering woman photographer of the "rock and roll" era in Seattle. For details go to:

www.heraimistruemovie.com

The children of Old Wealdens still make waves!

SHIRLEY (ROWLES) READ (1945) ...

Shirley regrets she will be unable to attend the Reunion – but she has contributed some extra cash, along with her subscription, to go towards the bubbly ...!

YOUR NEWS: Please send to: alistair.mcgechie@btopenworld.com or

p.luck123@btinternet.com

THELMA (GYOURY) WOOD (1943) writes ...

I like the idea of sparkling wine and anniversary cake! I'll raise my glass of sherry and drink to **The Weald** but I probably won't stand up and sing the School Song! I hope all goes well, which I am sure it will, and that you get a good attendance.

Hope you are all in good health. I am fine (just the ever-present back trouble) and keep myself as busy as ever. At the moment I am resting on my laurels, having just produced one of our quarterly 24-page newsletters! I run a Theatre Group and go every month. I also run a Writing Group and am a member of the Music Appreciation, Latin, Reading, Computer, Comedy, Poetry and Cryptic Crossword Groups!!! I also do some child-minding for my two young grandsons (7 and 9) taking them to and meeting them from school when required. So you see, I'm having a pretty active retirement!

Please remember me to the gang and to anyone else who may enquire if I'm still in the land of the living!

SANDRA (SEAMER) MORGAN (1943) writes ...

After 45 years on the Worplesdon Parish Council I have had a road named after me. Morgan Close is a small group of houses about half a mile from my home in Worplesdon.

SHEILA FITZGERALD (Staff) (1958) writes ...

I find it quite amazing that in two weeks' time I shall be the same age as the school!!!

I am still being reminded "not to run" as I always have done – and I realise how fortunate I am to be able to do so. So often OWs are in my thoughts – twelve of the happiest years of my life – lovely to see so many every year – long may it continue.

ANGELA ROSEMARY (WEST) BUISSON (1947) writes ...

Sorry that I can't make it to the Reunion. I shall be in Shropshire on a week's walking holiday with King's Lynn Ramblers. Happily my husband and I are still pretty fit. I also

Recent 62nd Wedding Anniversary Celebration for Evelyn and Roy Cook



THESE TWO oldie Old Wealdens, now living on the island of Sark, came to Harrow Weald in 1938 and 1936 respectively but didn't really meet until after the war when they were both regulars at Old Wealden functions: badminton, table tennis, mixed hockey, dances, etc. They were married in 1950.

Our photo shows Eve and Roy taken in the summer last year on the terrace of their house, on the cliff and facing east towards France.

Recently they have been experiencing blizzards which is most unusual and pretty devastating. Not unlike what the UK has had !

enjoy Swimming, and English and Scottish Country Dancing.

I am membership secretary of the Hunstanton U3A and I also play the handbells, so I keep very busy. I am at the moment reading "La Muerte de Lord Edgware" by Agatha Christie in Spanish.

I send best wishes to anyone between 1947 and 1952 who might remember me.

PAT (PAMPLIN) MITCHELL (1943) writes ...

I sailed for Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) in 1956, as a Nursing Sister, and 18 months later came back to All Saints, Harrow Weald to be married to a Yorkshire man I had met while abroad, before returning to Africa for the next 30 years.

I had always kept in touch with Jean (Hall) Robson, Margaret (Evans) Fuller, Margaret (Nicholls) Cole and Audrey (Farrow) Martin (all 1943). We used to meet biannually together with husbands.

I used to be a golfer and have always loved entertaining. We live at Bedford now which is in easy reach

of Milton Keynes, Cambridge and Northampton.

We are members of the English Speaking Union which is a very interesting organisation. My main interest now is Bridge – I play twice weekly at the Club and some social bridge as well.

We have a family of three; all are in the UK living in London, Nottingham and Wilmslow.

Pat says anyone who is passing near to Bedford would be very welcome. Call 01234 354879.

BURSARY APPLICATION PENDING

The grandson of Margaret (Kay) Paine (1941) and son of Linda Paine-Winnett (6th Form 1980) has submitted a claim on the Memorial Bursary Fund for a trip in the summer of 2014 to Ecuador.

Rowan Paine-Winnett is expecting to be involved in wildlife conservation projects and community service projects. He is currently washing cars amongst other things to help raise the approximate £4,000 which will be needed to fund the trip.

INSPIRED TO BECOME A POTTER

By Marshall Colman (1957)

AFTER MANY YEARS in local government I retrained and started a second career as a potter. I did the ceramics BA at the University of Westminster in Northwick Park, one of the best in the country. The seed of this new career was sown fifty years ago in Connie Passfield's art room. Although pottery was not part of the syllabus, there was a potter's wheel in the classroom and I had a go on it. It was difficult: you had to stand on one foot, kick the treadle with the other, which caused you to wobble, and then make a pot. These school wheels were designed to put people off pottery but it failed to put me off. Mrs Passfield had also got a book for the school library called "Practical Pottery and Ceramics" by Kenneth Clark – not the art historian but a successful designer of tableware, tiles and architectural ceramics. "Practical Pottery" was only eighty pages long but it was good – well written and nicely illustrated. Clark said in his acknowledgments, "I must first, as an ex-student, say how much I owe to Miss Dora Billington for her teaching and instruction on which I have unashamedly drawn."

Then I went to Keele University, in the shadow of the Potteries. I spent evenings in the art room trying to make pots and after graduating continued in evening classes and read as much about pottery as I could.

Miss Billington kept cropping up in my reading. A dictionary of

pottery by Robert Fournier was "Dedicated to the memory of Dora Billington. For the sound basis of knowledge that her training gave to me and many others." Quentin Bell (son of Clive and Vanessa Bell), who studied pottery with her at the Central School of Arts and Crafts (now Central Saint Martins), called her "the kindly sovereign of the place". I found that she had published one of the best handbooks on pottery, a review of which said that her students regarded her with respect, almost with reverence. I learned about her catholic tastes and her encouragement of the young. While studio pottery was inspired by the Orient and dominated by rough, brown things, served with a dollop of

Eastern religion, she praised the younger English potters who were inspired by the Mediterranean and made things painted in bright colours, as I do.

I tried to discover who this Miss Billington was but found that almost nothing had been written about her, despite the fact that she taught at the Central for almost forty years. Now, as well as making brightly painted pottery in my St Albans studio, I am writing a biography of her, interviewing the few people who remember her (all in their eighties now) and looking in archives. If anyone has any connection with her or information about her, I would love to hear from them.

And fifty years after borrowing "Practical Pottery and Ceramics", I still have it. If there is a library amnesty, I will bring it back.

marshall@marshallcolman.com



The author at work.

Obituary

CLIVE J. BIGGS (1946)

1935–2013

It is with great sadness that I write to tell you of the death of my husband, Clive, on 1st February.

We first came across one

another when he played football on Saturday mornings and I was helping with refreshments – though neither of us remembered the encounters very well. We met up again later and married in 1955 (they did try to tell us we were too young, as the song says)

and we had 57 good years together.

Clive was not a great academic but he thoroughly enjoyed his time at Harrow Weald for all the sporting activities. He also did well in Maths and Sciences, but felt that was down to luck rather

than effort. After an electrical engineering apprenticeship Clive joined the Royal Air Force and served 12 years as a Radar Technician and from there joined the management team of an electronics company. He captained their cricket team for years – until his knees gave out; all sport was the love of his life, as well as gardening and, of course, the family, but I'm not sure what order they came in!

Neither Clive nor I achieved a great deal at School and we both had to leave early for family reasons, but it did instil in us the desire to learn and showed what could be done if the opportunities were taken up. We passed this on to our children and they, and our grandchildren, have all done very well and we have been very proud of them all.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer

Mrs Jennifer (Harding) Biggs
(1948)

[ED – We send very sincere condolences to Jennifer, her children and grandchildren.]

More sad news ...

We also have very recent sad news of the death of David Lush (1943) after a considerable period of illness. We will have a full obit later in the year. For now we recall David's brilliance at school, his considerable prowess as a sprinter in athletics and, of course, later, his work for the Association as Archivist.

We send our sincere condolences to his wife, Eileen, and their children.

David is in the picture below, to the right and nearest the front, on one of the Easter jaunts which were indulged in during the fifties. *Photo by Peter Briggshaw.*



Others in the picture are: behind David and to his left, Carol (Bell) Vad; back row right to left: Shirley (Hopson) Lamb, Margaret (Dodgson) Hill, Geoff Davies, Veronica (Humphries) Mason; the middle row left to right: Dennis Bower, Tony Cook, Janet (Ryan) Woodward.

RON HOLROYD COMMENTS ...



GRUMPIES OF THE WORLD UNITE !!

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR FIXING THE ECONOMY

Dear Mr Cameron

Please find below our suggestions for fixing England's economy:

Instead of giving billions of pounds to banks, that will squander the money on lavish parties and unearned bonuses, use the following plan:-

You can call it THE PATRIOTIC RETIREMENT PLAN

There are about 10 million people over 50 in the workforce.

Pay them £1 million each severance for early retirement with the following stipulations:-

- 1) They MUST retire. Ten million job openings – UNEMPLOYMENT FIXED.
- 2) They MUST buy a new British car. Ten million cars ordered – CAR INDUSTRY FIXED.
- 3) They MUST either buy a house or pay off their mortgage – HOUSING CRISIS FIXED.
- 4) They MUST send their kids to school/college/university – CRIME RATE FIXED.
- 5) They MUST buy £100 worth of alcohol/tobacco a week – and there's your money back in duty/tax etc.
- 6) Instead of stuffing around with the carbon emissions trading scheme that makes us pay for the major polluters, tell the greedy b***** to reduce their pollution emissions by 75% within

5 years or we shut them down.

If more money is needed, have all MPs pay back their falsely claimed expenses and second home allowances.

STOP PRESS: –

ANTHEA (TARLING) FLINN (1948) writes from Macclesfield...

Thank you very much for continuing to send "OW News & Views". I very much appreciate the work that goes into it.

I didn't make the headlines or attend every Reunion but I do read N&V cover to cover the moment it arrives.

MALCOLM BENTOTE (1953) writes from Pinner ...

At a recent Quiz Night one question was – who wrote "To strive, to seek and not to yield". I was fortunate to remember that this was the Tennyson (my house) motto. The only other one I remembered was "Damned be him who cries 'Hold, enough' ". We came second in the quiz.