

News and Views Extra

June 2022



Such a happy day!

April 30th 2022!



Back at school?! Well yes and no.....but the smile (zoom in!) sums up the day. Read on....

Kay Haig née Hawley 1963, our Secretary, and so much more, sent these thoughts about the day - which as always she had a large part in making happen - just hours after the event.

Our second reunion at the Memorial Hall went exceptionally well and was as good as the first with the added bonus of a visit to the School! It's still there but, of course, not quite as we knew it. Despite a new lick of paint and a fair number of interesting changes it could still spark reminiscences and evoke memories.

We felt that after two years of missing out on holding reunions because of Covid we didn't want to miss another. This decision had to be taken back in early February in order to get the preparations started. Back then it was far from certain that going ahead was a good idea. There was more doubt amongst the general populace about the wisdom of opening up again than there is now. Question number one was "would enough people want to come?" The only way to find out was to send out the invitations and wait for replies. The number crept up slowly. It remained at 25 for a while and I had my doubts. Keith remained optimistic and he turned out to be right. Our final total of 57 worked very well and we were pleased to welcome some new faces from the 1966 year group. My thanks go to Pamela Gilmour for putting us on the map, as it were, on the School's Facebook group. Next year we hope that there will be yet more who will be interested in attending for the first time. And there were also those who would have liked to have come but unfortunately couldn't. They wrote us some very nice messages which we added to the notices we put up on the walls.

Dee, the Manager of the Hall, did us proud again. She is meticulous in wanting to get everything right and likes to provide a tasty, varied and more than plentiful buffet. We are lucky to have that venue just down the hill from the School which, in some ways and because of its décor, makes me feel I'm back at School again almost as much as the School itself!

And it is so easy to circulate at our reunions. We all have a common interest. No-one is there who doesn't want to talk about their schooldays and share in the memories of others. It is such a treat to chat to old friends and to others you're meeting for the first time. I've found out a good number of things I didn't know about before I started coming to the reunions and feel a lot richer for it. You learn about what it was like to be at the School years before you arrived and how much of a change there was after you left. We can all reminisce over the archive too. That's where you find out who's who when someone else can give you a name to match a face you recognise but can't place.

My thanks go to all who attended and to those who have supported us in the past. Do come along in future. We need to keep our reunions going. They are too important to lose.

The Memorial Hall is already booked for next year!





John Awcock 1950 (cousin of late lamented Yvonne 1951) was joined - as here by **Heather Bickerton 1940** - by various members throughout the day, and entertained all!

Thank you for sending me the picture from the Reunion. It's nice to have some memories of a lovely day. I really enjoyed meeting up with a few that I knew and also the trip to the Weald to see round the new school. Thanks to all of you who make this happen.

Jeannette Miller née Pirie 1944



First to arrive, and smiling all day, **Dorothy Corney née Hunt 1944** shared life, wit and wisdom with members across the decades, and stayed in many hearts and minds.



"As usual a really good reunion. The food even out-did our last reunion at the Memorial Hall"
Diane Owen née Hughes 1948

NB Diane did also say it would have been even better if more of her year group had been there, so do join us next year, if that's you!





Ed. entertained by some of the 1957ers - others busy (talking!) at the bar

The Williams sisters!

Geraldine 1960, Barbara 1957

Barbara and I did enjoy the afternoon. The hall is ideal and the food was excellent. Many thanks to everyone who organised the whole day. It was very successful all round.



I would like to say how much our 1966 group enjoyed ourselves on Saturday. Lots of memories shared, and great to visit the school again. Was also good to spend time with **Wendy Smith** who taught us all (Ed. lovely photo, 'front' page)

I have put pictures on the school's Facebook group and been overjoyed at the feedback received. Many comments include those who are keen to attend next year - including Michael Rosen 1957.

Pamela Gilmour née Gentry 1966



The 'great' photo the editor took of Peter and Ann together was an abject failure. They did indeed look great - but the photographer cut one of them in half....sorry!

Dear Keith

May I thank you and the other committee members for the organisation and time you spent on the very successful reunion on 30th April. From the time that we were welcomed at the door by yourself, to the subsequent visit to our table by Linda on a 'face finding tour', and to the very special buffet, so well set out!

We were able to see old friends, and meet and make new friends on the day.

Peter (1945) and Ann Cowan

Ed. and as Ann said, she and Peter got together when she was seventeen. It really brought it home how so many of our 'guests' have been part of 'us' for a very long time!

There was a great mix across the decades, although some individual years were more highly represented than others. The 1960s were out in force, this year added to wonderfully by those from '64 and '66. **Look back at the 'front' page, top right:**

Sue MacHorton née Stiles & Andrea Vickers née Tyminski are both new members, both from 1964. Sue wrote to us:

From Sue MacHorton née Stiles 1964

It was a great pleasure to meet you and several other delightful people! One week on and I am still thinking about the reunion. So many memories, not just of school but my childhood in Harrow in general.

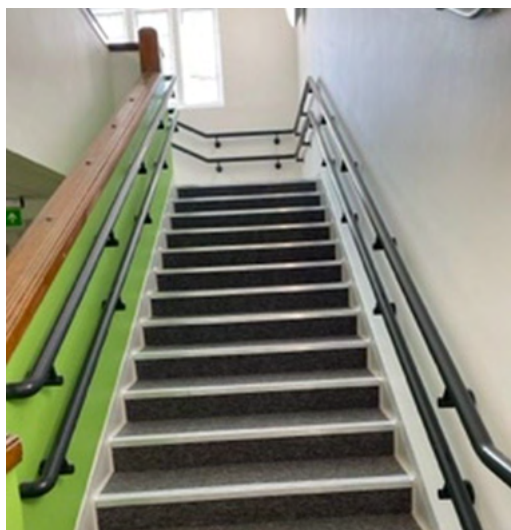
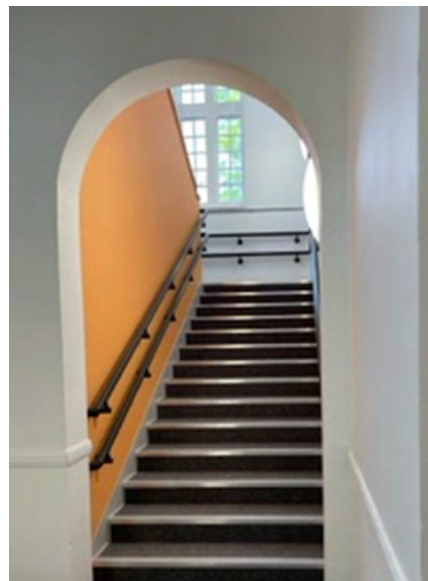
Thank you for introducing me to **Heather** – what a role model for us all and such an interesting lady. She is the first person that I have met in 60 years who attended Whitegates School, albeit long before I did.

P.S. - I knew every word of the school song!



Where do you remember these leading? We must have walked miles of them in our time!

The visit to the old building, that is now new again, was the highlight of the day for **Jolyon Portillo 1960**, who sent us all these images. His thoughts on it follow.



This is Jolyon's 'broken ankle' staircase!

The low extra handrail indicates how little some of the new pupils are!



The building was redolent with memories for me - including the staircase I struggled up with crutches one Monday morning - having broken my ankle the previous Saturday playing football for the Weald.

The photo of the 'stage' is tinged with sadness because it looks 'blacked off', and the Headteacher indeed explained that he didn't have the resources to refurbish and bring it back into use - the space under the stage now has ingress of water - and infestation?! Asked - by me - if not being able to access the stage was a difficulty for Assembly purposes, he gave us an old fashioned look and commented that no, it wasn't really as the primary school children were of a reduced height such that they could all see him quite clearly anyway!

The Headmaster of this new Faith Primary School won my admiration - turning out on a Saturday to afford us access and additionally being on hand to answer all our (daft) questions - a thoroughly nice guy!

Just to state my take on the old school as is now: lost a Hall Balcony and a Quad Pool! gained a Lift to the upper floor!

Jolyon Portillo 1960



Jolyon's last photo speaks for itself, capturing **two members of the Mayes family, Keith 1963 and sister Dorothy 1960**, as they walk away from a happy visit to the 'new' old school.

Dorothy sent us her thoughts:

After a long-awaited Old Wealdens reunion, on April 30th, a good number of us made our way up to our old school in Brookshill. The headmaster of the new Hujjat Primary School, David Poole, had kindly unlocked the school and allowed us freedom to roam.

I think we were all impressed by how bright and airy the place seemed. The original windows and woodwork had had to be kept which I think has caused some problems.

It brought back many memories and we had a lovely 'Do you remember....? What did that room used to be?' time. David Poole also took time to tell us about the new school and answer our questions. We were most impressed by his enthusiasm and the school's multicultural ethos. I think most of us would have been happy to send our grandchildren there. Just a shame about the fields being built on. The new pupils would have enjoyed the space we had.

Ed. Thank you Dorothy, and yes, we were so lucky to have those three huge fields! A hopeful note is that near the end of her piece in Issue 45, Jo Withers, Principal of Harrow College, did speak of plans to make good use of their 'remaining outdoor areas', for 'community use' and she certainly welcomes their new young neighbours as part of the community on Brookshill. We will hope for some good running around space for them asap.

That's nearly it for now, until the next e-News later in the year, but here are some gems and messages that couldn't wait to be told. The first two are in response to the latest paper magazine.

“Despairing, cursing rage....”

In response to the photo of the choir on stage in the 1963 concert, in Issue 45, **Lynda Boesenberg-Bywater née Harrison 1956** sent us some names to add to the 'back' of it, for the archive. She also identified herself, most helpfully, as the half-head visible in the back row of the altos, on the centre aisle! **Then came this great story:**

I remember singing Haydn's Creation, and the line 'despairing cursing rage attends their rapid fall'. I had a Saturday job in a wool shop in Pinner when I was sixteen, where my main occupation was dusting the packets of wool in their slippery packaging. They would often slip and descend on me, when I would loudly sing the lines from Haydn to express my frustration.

Thank you Lynda, and **if anyone wants to add to the Saturday jobs stories, do send them in.** My own (Ed.) was in Lawleys china shop in Edgware, when bone china full tea-sets were the thing. Mr and Mrs Becker bought one from me just before lunch one day, and although my head was down and concentrating on not letting any piece drop onto the glass counter top as I nervously wrapped each in tissue paper, I knew the amused kindly look he'd have on his face when I finally got through it all and dared look up.....

The story of Bryan and Ann Gilbert's 'lockdown' 60th wedding anniversary, page 9, Issue 45, brought sad and sweet memories for **Jennifer Brown née Nunn 1949.** She started her message with some lovely feedback about the magazine – thank you - and then this:

I and my husband Brian also celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary on April 3rd 2021 with a small gathering of family and friends, in the garden in our coats and hats. Back in 1961 our wedding reception was held at the Harrow Weald Memorial Hall.

Sadly, just before Christmas 2021 my husband, Brian, died very unexpectedly. I was invited to spend the Christmas break at a house party in an old Manor House in Dunster near Minehead, with family and their friends. Talking with one I hadn't met before, we discovered that we both went to HWCS, although when he attended it was part of Harrow College. It generated some lively conversation as you can imagine. He now lives in Derbyshire and I am in Somerset. It's a small world though.

Jennifer said that she would have loved to come to the reunion, but that 'my driver is not here'. It would be lovely if someone were able to be her driver for next year? Jennifer is not doing the asking, but it does seem a shame that she can't come otherwise, so if you think you might be able to help, do let us know.

It's always lovely to get new and returning members, and a bonus when they arrive with a great story! **Wendy Eatwell née Dollery 1954** joined us in May, and in response to the magazines we sent as a welcome, gave us this:

I found the magazines very interesting as Mr Crowle Ellis and Miss Drury were there when I was.

In fact, she gave most of our year detentions once, for playing across all the fields, mixing boys and girls! It was worth it though, as rushing across all three fields was so exciting!

Thank you Wendy - and others will undoubtedly remember that too!

Tributes

Sadly, since the last magazine went out, we have heard of five Old Wealdens who have died. Our thanks to all who have let us know of their losses, and sent memories, which will appear in full in the next paper edition.

For now, here are the names, which will surely bring memories to many, and do send us yours, to share. As before, they are ordered by first names.

Bill (A. W.) Broadhurst 1933, March 30th 2022

Dennis Bower 1943, December 9th 2021

Deryk Searle 1939, January 2022

John Cooper 1941, December 2019

Pamela West 1948, June 2021

And now, just two things to leave you with: the first a poem, that couldn't wait for next spring's edition; and the last, a question - and a bit of an answer.....

'SPRINGING'

The sky is spectacular!
Storm petrol clouds dissolve into a pale azure to the east
while the westerly light
illumines the new-polished peridot trees against its backdrop.
In the foredrop hangs the citrine light of rape.
No-one would believe a faithful artist's palette
"Trying too hard," they'd say.
An emerald sea of spring wheat springs through the soil.
"Spring" is the word – noun describing action.
All grammar, all verbal function held within one cohesion.
The accrual of every Nature's notion tied together,
obedient to the one intention – RENEWAL!

Lynne Nesbit née Fridkin 1957



Alan Middleton 1957, seen here at the reunion, with **Rosemary Dear née James 1960**, and holding, of course, the school song, has a promise for us, and that question.

Having conducted us brilliantly through the hymn and the song, accappella, again putting in the twiddly bits himself between song verses, Alan promises he will spend the year preparing to get us to do those too, next time, full throttle! You have been warned!

And his question?

Does anyone have a copy of the school choir singing 'The Old Hundreth', a recording that he didn't get at the time as his parents didn't own a record player. He thought it was around 1960.

A quick search of the entire digitised **Weald Chronicles** (on the editor's laptop, all of them, easily downloaded from that link we've been given by **Pat Moloney 1964** - see top of back page, Issue 45), produced a bit of an answer at least, in an item from **No.69 October 1958**, about the school concert that year:

'The climax of the first half was the arrangement by Miss Pyke of the hymn tune, The Old Hundreth, sung by the combined Junior and Senior Choirs...

At the end of (the concert), the Headmaster asked for The Old Hundreth to be sung again. This was a fitting climax to the evening.

The Old Hundreth was again performed at the last assembly of the term to the whole school and a recording was made of it.'

Hopefully someone may still have that recording, and vinyl can be digitised, and shared, so fingers crossed that a full answer to Alan's question may be just a loft search away....

Meanwhile, the best of wishes from all the committee, wishing you a good long summer, and all the things that bring you joy. Let us have those stories, pictures, memoirs, any time, any length, any sort. Thank you!

June 9th 2022
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and.....just one important PS.....

Diary date for next year:

Saturday 29th April 2023

The Harrow Weald Memorial Hall