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## The Old Camdenians

### April News 2019

Well, a fair bit has happened or is in the process of happening.

Let us start with Bill and Nora Wraight.

You will all recall the death of Bill Wraight and the obituary that was given at that time.

To ease the memory I have attached it now together with a pic of Bill with the OC Soccer team from the 1960's. In fact two of those in the photo were at the Reunion in Oct 2018.

To provide a broader view I also include a pic of the OC cricket side.

## William R Wraight

(School Years 1936 - 40)



*"Bill died in hospital on Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2008 after a long illness, which he fought to the end. From an early age he was always a dedicated and energetic sportsman. He was evacuated with the school to the Towcester area and was a member of the ATC. During the*

War he became a pilot and navigator air bomber. Bill played an important role in the Old Boys cricket and football sides during their glory years after the war. As a diminutive opening bat his strength was the classic hook shot. He was a fearless close forward short leg fielder; in what was then fashionable to have three short legs to off spin bowlers. He bowled occasional loopy off breaks himself when called upon to end any resistant partnerships. His quick dashes down the wing for the football 1<sup>st</sup> XI earned him some bone cracking tackles to add to his numerous cracked or broken fingers whilst fielding at cricket. Bill was a team man and he urged everyone to perform to his best. After he retired playing, Bill was a keen spectator and had season tickets for both Middlesex and Surrey and indeed was a member of the M.C.C. He was light on his feet and taught Latin American dancing until ill health prevented him. He was supported and nursed by Nora, his wife whom he married in 1948. They were due to celebrate their Diamond wedding



1957 - Old CAMDENIANS 1<sup>st</sup> XI at Bow Lane  
 From Left to Right  
 Front Row (Seated):- A. Kerby, J. Crook, W. Wraight (Cape), D. Steel, A. Cornelius  
 Back Row:- G. Reid, W. Eyles, R. Booth, P. Yates, C. Simpson, R. Brown, J. Keating (Umpire)

later this year. We send Nora our sympathy at this sad time".

Richard Brown,  
 Chairman OCC

(Extract from OCC Chairman's Newsletter 2008)

*Correspondence*

"It was good to hear once more from Alan Shearn with his perceptive view of life in South Africa.....Alan also recalled happy days playing football

in the 1<sup>st</sup> XI alongside Bill Wraight in the 1960s and, particularly, the latter's solo effort winning goal in an important AFA cup tie!"

(Extract from OCC Chairman's Newsletter 2008 – 'Correspondence')

You may well ask why we are repeating this.

Bill's wife, Nora, has also since passed away and it has taken more than 2 years to finalise the will left by Nora.

It is with great surprise and delight that we learn of a very large sum being donated to the Old Camdenians and illustrates the value that was placed on the OC's by Bill and Nora. A link that we might easily overlook in our otherwise busy and complicated lives.

It underlines the role of the alumni and the need to retain this connection. We know it is a challenge in 2019 as we do not have the enormous sporting conduit from school to the Old Camdenians being the route that so many took. This is why we have so many sports pictures whenever we refer back to earlier times.

A recent committee meeting confirmed the establishment of the:-

**Bill and Nora Wraight Old Camdenians Memorial Fund**

To support this effort we have obtained the services of OC, John Fitzgerald together with fellow OC Mike Capocci, both of whom bring a wealth of experience in related fields. A set of trustees is being established, being up to 6 OC members.

The finer details will need to be ironed out but it was agreed that the funds be used to assist the school and pupils still undertaking full further education together with the Old Camdenians Club.

It is intended that applications for funds be made to the Trustees with proposals for consideration. We will need to write separately on this point once all the details have been established.

The Committee meeting was attended by both the head of sports at Holloway as well as the Head and Deputy Head. All three could see the enormous potential and easily came up with ideas for its use. No surprise there!

Alan Streeter (Head) was asked how he saw the main role of the Old Camdenians and he believed that one of the great opportunities was by way of work experience or career guidance.

I am sure that the committee would like to hear from anyone who feels that they can assist in this respect with ideas or proposals. The same holds good for utilisation of the funds.

That is the big, big news and this larger pot of money puts us back on the map. It is added to the valuable contributions already made that also await meaningful utilisation.

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Alan Streeter also advised us of the name change of the school. Many proposals had been put forward but for various reasons they could not be used. In the end the adjacent street name and area was selected, being Beacon Hill.

The school will change its name in June 2019 to **Beacon Hill High**. This is another change and thus will not affect the name of the alumni being The Old Camdenians that goes back to the original name.

The school has gone through some difficult times and the new name is seen as part of a rebranding and a drive to regain the academic and Ofsted ratings that we all associate with.

We await the new logo and other details in June.

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Before the committee meeting the school had their **year 11 assembly** which was attended by Ray Rowe with OC's Ellie Mandla and Lara Debiasi offering their views and advice on what pupils might expect with their tertiary studies.

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More pictures have been added to the gallery section of the Web Site and I add two more now that were quickly snapped when in the Old school Hall in March.



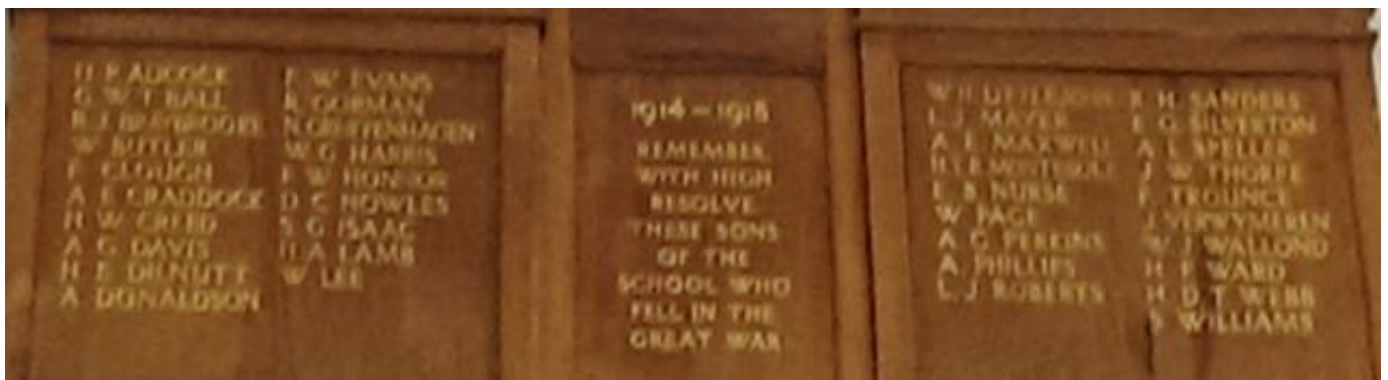
This one was hidden away and despite my poor cell phone camera effort I hope you can read the names of the Heads from 1912 to 1960.

But the other picture was clearly on view although some distance away and once again I apologise for the poor quality of the pic.





But if we try and zoom in (no access to this area these days) then you will see that it reflects the names of those who died during WWI. I do not need to mention dates but one forgets that the latest generation do not so obviously recall 1914 to 1918. I hope you can read them.



[John Simmonds.](#)

We reported on the death of John in the last News Report but now include a further obituary prepared by Alan Meyer.

#### **IN MEMORIAM**

#### **John Simmonds (1949 to 1955)**

It is with great sadness that we have to record the recent death of John Simmonds, who would have been 80 on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2019, the day on which a thanksgiving service was held at St. Mary's church, Standon, Herts. Among the large gathering present were George and Pam Ives, Peter Sumpter, Bob Pearson and Raymond Rowe, who gave one of the many moving tributes in John's memory. There was a reading from John's first book, "*The Telephone On My Desk Rang...*", where he recounts an episode that occurred during his working life in the early 1970's – a mystery that harks back to post war Europe. A copy will be placed in the school library for students to read and write their own exciting ending.

After leaving school, John joined the legal profession and worked his way up to become a highly respected barrister and High Court judge, specialising in bankruptcy. On retirement, he moved to Standon, from where he enjoyed a variety of activities, including shooting, fishing and painting, a number of his works being displayed at local exhibitions. John's background proved invaluable

during his time on the O.C. committee, where he served as the club's legal advisor. Moreover, he was a regular attendee at our annual reunions, which he greatly enjoyed, in particular engaging with students and making them feel at home.

John's dry humour, cool head and sound common-sense advice will be much missed, not just by club members, but by all those who knew him. Our sincere condolences have gone to his family at this sad time.

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So ladies and gentlemen we have work to do.

We need you to help us and would really love to have some new and younger members join the committee in order to ensure we take this alumni forward into the years ahead.

We will keep in touch as events and details are clarified.

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[Reunion Lunch Friday October 25.](#)

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Alan Shearn

[www.oldcamdenians.info](http://www.oldcamdenians.info)

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