

1996

OLD CAMDENIANS CLUB

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THE CHAIRMAN'S 1996 NEWSLETTER

I was reminded of Alistair Cooke's Letter from America last week while I was driving southwards from Stowe to Great Barrington in his beloved Vermont, with thousands of trees changing colour from green to bright and bold yellows to dusky and dark auburns and deep red, brown and purple.

My wife and I arrived back at Heathrow at 4.00 a.m. on Saturday (probably the only time of the day when an intercontinental flight can land an hour ahead of schedule). By 9.00 a.m. after an hour's sleep, the telephone was ringing and a stack of post lay neatly piled on my desk where a kindly neighbour had stored it while we were away. Isn't it amazing the amount of junk mail that is delivered nowadays. Among my lot were four different offers to lend me vast sums of money (at very high interest rates), invitations to cruises, which if I accepted them all would mean living afloat for the next year or so, three appeals for money, three bills and some genuine correspondence. By 11 o'clock Leonard Hinton had called from Worcestershire, advising me that Fred Lindgren is back in England and had I heard that dear old Tubby Dawes had died in his 91st year. As always Leonard sends his regards to the 'old Brigade'. He says, at the age of 87, he thinks he is 'Leader of the House' now - Is that right, Sidney?

It is sad to have to tell you that our President, Paul Smith, will be leaving the school early next year. On your behalf I take this opportunity to extend a "Thank you" to Paul for his help and assistance to the Old Boys over the past eight years. After a long spell of inactivity between the School and Old Boys, Paul, along with other members of his staff, helped us work much closer together. We are all aware of the difficulties that the School has encountered for some considerable time. It must be extremely frustrating to meet educational standards when over 60% of intake of boys of 11 years of age have a reading ability of less than 9 years. In his own way Paul has tried to restore social standards and improve academic attainments within the school. We hope that we may have the pleasure of his company at future dinners in his capacity as an 'Old Boy'.

Hamed Lawal, the schoolboy who replied so eloquently to the toast of 'School and Staff' at last year's dinner has achieved remarkable results in his examination - 7 starred A's and 2 A's. A big "Well done" from us all. Such successes go to show that not everything is rotten in the State of Denmark.

BURTON HOLE LANE

Regular attendees at the AGM will know of the long saga of trying to retain tenure at Burton Hole Lane in view of rising costs, Council prevarication, reduced income and membership difficulties (to name but a few). Roger Gravett and his Social Trust Fund committee have worked wonders in restoring a cash balance to operate the ground on a day to day basis. The question of long term use still poses problems.

We have been extremely fortunate in having the services of Mike Duffy (a specialist in land conveyancing) to guide us through the bureaucratic negotiations of the various options to gain security of tenure through a long term lease or purchase of the freehold. Both these and other options have not yet been firmly decided upon, and in any event will require a lot of money.

I will ask Mike to say a few words at the AGM about current developments. What is important is that the current lease expires in 1998 and that with Mike's help we will work something out. Naturally, the Sports section is hoping to obtain the freehold to maintain the future of the Club. In a complicated set of negotiations we are again indebted to the Fitzpatricks for their continued support regarding the clubhouse.

There will come a time when we will be asking for money to support our claim for extension of the lease or purchase of the ground. John Gottesman writes to say "I'm sure many Old Boys will be only too pleased to help as they did when it was first acquired." I hope you are right, John, and congratulations on being part of the delegation to visit Jerusalem and Amman as Chairman of the Provincial Council of the Board of Deputies.

THE HOLLOWAY PARTNERSHIP

On behalf of 'The Holloway Partnership' a number of us gave a talk to schoolboys this year about our various professions. Whilst all the talks were appreciated, the star performer was undoubtedly Sidney Hutchison. Talking about his favourite topic, Sidney so excited his audience he was invited back to view the school's art display and to visit the Learning Resources Centre. Sidney took the opportunity to learn something himself. I'm told he practised playing an electronic keyboard. What is more - he's going to accompany our singing of "Forty Years On" at the finale of the dinner. Let's see how he manages that introductory rumble of the left hand. In any event Bill Rogers will be delighted. Bill will find a keyboard easier to carry than moving the old upright iron piano.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

In my "Where are they now?" section last year I mentioned Attila Byas. He contacted me and we had a very long and interesting conversation. Attila recalls Gary Allen, Roy Bennett, Jonathon Kingshott, Lee Mitty, Dinos Constantinou, Kenny Smith, Jonathon Armstrong, Dwight Marshall, Tommy Colman and Adam Ibrahim. I think they all played together in winning Holloway football teams of late 70's and early 80's. Attila was hoping for a big reunion at the dinner. What about it lads - why don't you all come. If you know where any of the above Old Boys are now - please let me know.

IN MEMORIAM

It is with much sadness that we record the passing of one of our dearest and most respected masters, Theo Crabtree.

Theo was a dedicated teacher and colleague who cared, was kind, supportive and helpful. He began teaching at Holloway in the 1920's. During the war years he retained his quiet and dignified manner as he strived under difficult conditions, to maintain standards so that the school might return in good order at the end of the war. In 1947 Theo was Head of Modern Languages (assisted by Al Ahier and Jock Adams) in a crowded staff room including Richard King, Bunny Griffiths, Doc Atkinson, Bill Seitz and George Mangham. Theo was Blue House Master and invited new boy Gordon Clarke to join him. The House system was the basis of healthy competitive spirit with lots of fun and enjoyment, especially at Christmas.

One year Robert Pinker designed a coat of arms for Theo - a large tree embracing a monstrous crab. Theo Crabtree was respected and held in high esteem. He was never more enthusiastic than when the cricket season came round. (He was President of Southgate Cricket Club). He encourage^d everyone to play and to enjoy playing. He gave a great deal of commitment and was generous with his time and energy, often on Saturday morning at Bow Lane. Paul Yates and Alan Cornelius were just two who benefitted from his coaching.

*"His life was gentle, and the elements
So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up
And say to the world, This was a man."*

(GCC)

I also have to record the passing of Bertram Rentell, who always took an interest in the Club and was one of the oldest regular attendees at the dinner. Bertram was a collector of Old Boys memorabilia and he has passed on to me many programmes, photographs and souvenirs of life at pre-war Holloway.

THE AGM and DINNER

This newsletter also serves as official notification for the Annual General Meeting to take place at the School at 6.30 p.m. on

FRIDAY, 29th NOVEMBER 1996

followed at 7.15 by the Annual dinner which will be held in the Seitz Camdenian Hall. This year we are delighted to welcome as our principal guest someone who was an active member of both the football and cricket clubs for decades and was a key player for both clubs between 1955 and 1982 - Bert Weedall.

We are creating a precedent in that we will have a double principal guest - for all of you who have sampled teas, suppers and dinners prepared by Elsie, know full well that where Bert is so there is Elsie providing sustenance. Bert and Elsie now live in the small East Sussex village of Udimore, where they still play hosts to a bunch of O.C. cricketers each year (including Roger Gravett, John Maskell, Bob Cairns, Dave Cronin, Martin Quilter, Paul Scott, Alan Robinson, Mickie Bartlett and Geoff Young).

So all of you who have played cricket or football with Bert over many years and have enjoyed Elsie's food, come and greet them as our guests. (I wonder which of them will make the speech in reply to the toast to be proposed by Alan Cornelius).

George is still trying to have the p.a. system in the hall improved in time for the dinner. Bring any photographs you may have of the "Good Old Days". They always bring a smile (to other people).

Peter Andes has been providing substantial practical help to the school with the provision of new toilet facilities in the new school hall. Peter's work does not help the situation while dining in the hall. George is seeking to hire a 'honey wagon' for our convenience.

OLD BOYS TIES

Old Boys ties are available at £7.50 each. Please send George a cheque with your dinner application.

A WALK'N'TALK AROUND THE BOUNDARY

Roger Gravett is again trying to arrange a football match between the School and Old Boys for April next year. More news at the dinner.

George Ives has been elected Vice Chairman of the School Governors.

Fred Lindgren, who was made a Life Vice President in 1963, and his wife Mary have now returned to England and are living in a nursing home at Brockenhurst. Should you wish to write to Fred, I have the address. Fred's daughter will be pleased to read your letters to him.

A WALK'N'TALK AROUND THE BOUNDARY (contd)

We have had a number of requests for further copies of Richard King's booklet "Jubilee Retrospect (1907-1957)". Our present supply of not so good photocopies is nearly exhausted. If there is sufficient demand we will arrange a reprint - of better quality next time. Please let George know if you would like a copy of this fascinating piece of reminiscing by one of our favourite Old Boys.

Norman B Wright has written from Canada where he moved to in 1961. Norman still occasionally returns to his mother's house in Yerbury Road. We now have two representatives in Toronto - the other being Tony Lawes who came to the dinner last year.

On 18th August 1956 I was fortunate to be a guest at two weddings on the same day. This year I was able to telephone Charles & Maureen Simpson, Paul and Jean Yates to congratulate them on their Ruby Anniversary. Your turn next year, Gordon.

Trevor King (1970-76) writes to say that five of them from the same years still keep in touch. Let me have their names and addresses, Trevor, and I will make sure they receive invitations to the dinner on Friday, 29th November.

Recently I saw Jim Ritchie and John Swaine on video! They had been recorded on old fashioned 16mm film and transferred to tape. The occasion was the wedding of Allen & Irene Brockman - 39 years ago!

Paul Scott tells me that Bert has still retained his old speed and bounce while bowling (nearly unchanged) during the annual cricket match this year.

P E Jewell (1947-52) has made contact with us after a long absence. We hope to see you at the dinner. Gordom Clarke also says he hopes to make the dinner this year (by the way, John Stammer wishes to be remembered to you).

Classes of the early 50's want to meet together at the dinner, including Hart, Zuterek, Dickson, Lerner, Meyer, Pritchett, Robinson, Rogers, Broad, Findlater, Mitchell and Todd.

David Partridge (also early 50's) writes a long letter from Bulli, N.S.W. Australia describing a visit back home when he called unannounced at the school. David was full of praise for Philip Harris who spent 2 hours showing him around the school and making a laminated copy of a school photograph, which now has a prominent position in his home. David says "if I had to apply 3 maxims to myself, they would be "I am English, I am a Londoner and I am a Holloway Boy."

Thank you Ian Kelly (55-60) David French (63-70) Alfred Mousley (30's) Ken Pearce (27-34) Raymond Arthur (37-39) Ernie Brewer (57-72) Ron Wilby (29-32) Frank Pottinger (23-30) and Norman Wheatley (29-34) for your letters, kind words and good wishes.

Denis Piggott is now Assistant Editor of the Daily Telegraph Saturday magazine

A WALK'N'TALK AROUND THE BOUNDARY (contd)

Peter Clay (30-37) now Principal of Toastmasters Consolidated, remembers his school years and sent a photograph of himself in full regalia.

Our best wishes and thoughts for better health go to Ken Parsons and George de Spinoza. We hope that George Robb will be well enough to attend the dinner this year.

Dickie Bird has moved to Milton Keynes.

Peter Thompson writes a monthly news bulletin for the football club.

It is rewarding to know that through this newsletter, M W Brown has been able to make contact with Alan Mitchell.

I have had a very interesting letter from Dr Savvas Savouri and look forward to making his acquaintance at the dinner, together with your friends.

ACTION REQUIRED

Enclosed is an application form for the dinner. All you have to do is complete it and return it with a cheque to George Ives.

Tell your Old Camdenian friends about the dinner - all about the booze being included in the price. Make up a big reunion party and have a good time.

Date: **FRIDAY, 29th NOVEMBER 1996**
Venue: **THE SEITZ CAMDENIAN HALL**
Time: **AGM at 6.30 - DINNER at 7.00**

Last year over 90 persons were present. Will we break the hundred this year? I'm sure we can.

As I have said, soon we will require a lot of money to renew a long lease at Burton Hole Lane or maybe purchase the freehold. I am not asking for money yet though you can help by making a legacy in your will. Remember the Old Camdenian Trust is a charity and your money will benefit generations of future schoolboys through use of the sports ground and its facilities.

See you all at the dinner.

RICHARD BROWN
Chairman, Old Camdenians Club
October 1996