



Believe, Belong, Become



Aspire, Achieve, Succeed

Old Camdenians Newsletter, September 2021

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Denis Piggott Chairman

Welcome to the September 2021 issue of the Old Camdenians Newsletter. In the three months since the last issue, things have opened up considerably, students have returned to school, and though the pandemic is far from over there is definitely a feeling of a return to something like normality. This means of course that we can be confident that the AGM and Annual Lunch can go ahead as planned in the school on October 29th.

This will be George and Pam's swansong as organisers of the event, so please come along if you can to show your appreciation for all they've done over many years. Tickets are still available. See the end of this newsletter for details and an order form.

The other big news is that we have commissioned a revamp of our website, which it is hoped will go live in time for the AGM. See below for Ray's message, and what the site's developers have in mind.

This month we also mourn the passing of two distinguished OCs, former Headteacher Paul Smith and Peter Sims. Tributes appear below.

Dennis Warwick Vice-President

I know the forthcoming AGM/Lunch is the culmination of the committee's ongoing desire to provide a positive response to 18 months of Covid, offering the first opportunity since 2019 for all OCC members to meet again and enjoy the food, refreshments and novelty of each other's company, with much to catch up on. A great opportunity for all members.

But there is another reason, maybe of equal importance. Members who have attended lunches over the years have always eulogised about George and Pam's organisation, presentation and quality of food/drink provided. Many have recorded their satisfaction in previous newsletters. Now, as he gets a bit older, I guess even our George finds his range of services to the Club potentially exhausting, and has regretfully decided this will be the last lunch he and Pam organise. Of course George is still an essential component of the OCCs and still runs the 50+ Club. However, the forthcoming lunch will be a great occasion for all previous attendees to come and express their appreciation to George for his commitment in always providing such excellent meals. And new attendees will have this last opportunity to experience the lunch event we all rave about.

Ray Rowe Secretary

The OCC Committee has commissioned Qwerty IT Services Limited to produce a new website for the club that is secure, easy to use and appealing to all. We think they've been doing a grand job so far, and we hope that the new site will be ready to go live by the time of our AGM. Watch this space!

The committee has been busy and communicating via Zoom. We look forward to meeting you all at the AGM and Annual Lunch. In the meantime, if anyone would like to meet up on Zoom with their OC friends, then please let me know and the OCC will see if we can host it for you. A group of 12 OCs, from 1963-70, have been piloting the project and meeting once a month. It is free and fun. As stated above you can join for free via a landline anywhere. Tell your friends about it.

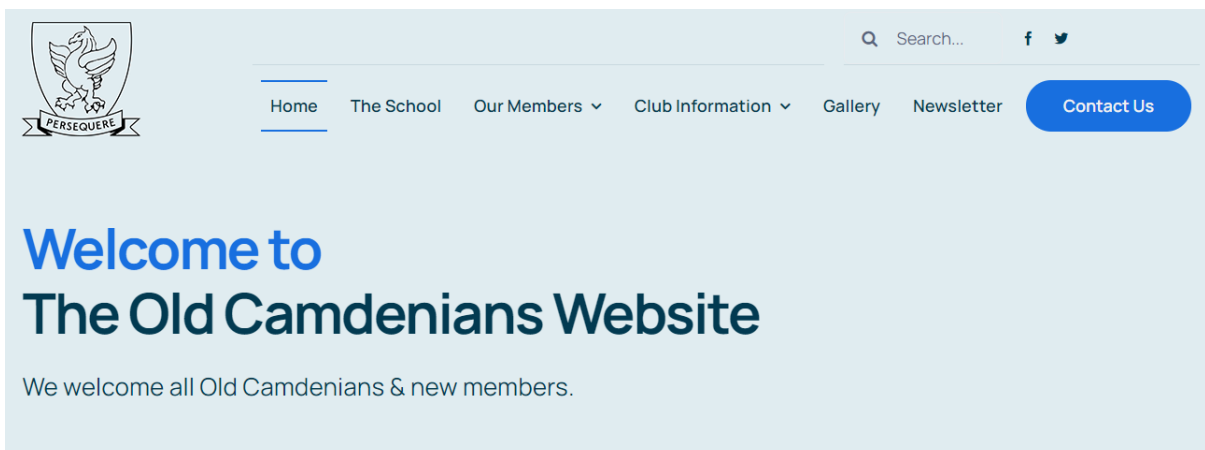
Sarah McDonald, Assistant Headteacher, has contacted six past Headteacher's Ambassadors who will be joining us for the AGM and Annual Lunch on 29th October. They are Samira, Nicola Maher, Eyub Kamazo, Jimmy Elliott, Rianne Cumberbatch and Shazia Azif. We look forward to meeting them on the day.

David Silvester and Scott Robertson from Qwerty IT Services tell us about themselves

Hi everyone. We are an IT services and web development provider catering for small and medium sized businesses throughout the UK. We are based in Scotland but have strong ties with the South-East of England as well, with the owner David Silvester having lived in Barnehurst and then Bexley, before moving to Scotland around seven years ago.

Website development and design is a big part of our business, and we aim to build visually appealing, yet functional websites. We take every project as a completely unique one and rather than having a "one size fits all" website design process, we work with each client to first understand the information they are trying to present, along with the vision they have in mind, before bringing the new website into fruition.

To that end, we have been working on the redesign of the OCC website over the past month. Our thoughts on the existing website are that it is well designed, easy to use and extremely functional with lots of content being added regularly and that same content being very useful and informative for anyone looking up the OCC, associated school and its pupils, past and present.



How the homepage of the new OCC website will look

We understood from our initial discussions with Ray, and via feedback from the other club members, that the site just needed to be modernised in order that it appeal to a younger audience. In addition, it needed some added functionality in order to make the addition of content easier and more streamlined.

We also identified an issue in that, having non-technical users update the website occasionally caused problems in terms of the consistency throughout the site.

Taking all these points into consideration, we have been working on a fresh, modern website design along with some added functionality. We have taken inspiration from the Beacon High website, which itself has a very modern design, and drawn inspiration from the OCC badge, the existing website and then added a little bit of Qwerty flare into the mix.

As part of the process, we have remastered the OCC badge – keeping its original form but digitising it in vector format, making it easy to scale across all mediums without any deterioration in quality. We have copied across all of the existing information from the current website, keeping the overall structure mostly the same, but adding a few tweaks to each individual page. We have also added some new functionality including a structured timeline for the archive page (Thanks Dr Bob Hartley for inspiration on that one) and a facility for newsletters to be added directly to the website and then syndicated out via email and social media.

Aside from the redesign itself, we have also made use of the popular CMS platform WordPress which allows for content and design to be completely separated from each other. The end result of this separation is the ability for designated “site editors” to be able to add and edit content without any website coding knowledge, or any fear of altering the integrity of the site’s design or structure. As far as our timeline is concerned, we have a few more tweaks to do on the functionality side, but we should have a fully working website within the next two to three weeks – in time for a showcase at the Club’s AGM.

News from committee members

George Ives

Come and join us at the Annual Lunch for a joyful celebration to mark the return to (a sort of) normality, on Friday 29th October 2021 at the school. The Committee have decided to mark this occasion by agreeing to maintain the price of a ticket at £30, the same cost as pre-covid. This includes an excellent four-course lunch comprising smoked salmon, roast beef with seasonal vegetables, a choice of three desserts, cheese and biscuits and coffee. All wines, beers and soft drinks are included in the price both at the reception and during lunch. We will be continuing the tradition of inviting ten former students from Beacon High/Holloway School to attend the Annual Lunch. They each receive £50 towards the cost of books, a free lunch and an opportunity to meet fellow Old Camdenians. Off-street parking is available, and if you have not been to the school lately there is a tour which is very enlightening. See the order form at the end of this newsletter for details. Come and join our merry throng!

Your Club Needs You!

Please join if you are not already a member



50+ Club membership is £60 per year or a standing order of £5 per month. A number between 1 and 59 is selected and that is entered into a monthly draw which is determined by the first two numbers drawn in the National Lottery. Prizes are £100 (£200 in November) and £20 (£50 in November).

Your contact for the Annual Lunch and 50+ Club is George Ives, 32 Amersham Hill Gardens, High Wycombe HP13 6QR. Phone: 01494 524 501; Email: george.ives@btinternet.com

Ellie Mandla

Ambassador for the Bill and Nora Wraight Old Camdenians Memorial Fund

Entering year two of my degree, I can honestly say I cannot wait. One step closer to my career! I would just like to thank you all, and your support from the Bill and Nora Wraight fund. This has really helped me prepare for university financially as well as mentally, knowing there is always support behind me. Your contribution goes far on behalf of a student! I'm looking forward to seeing you all shortly.

The Chromebook Fund

Now that students have returned to school, the Old Camdenians Chromebook Fund has been discontinued. Thanks to their generosity over the course of the lockdowns, members of the OCC have donated £4,320, enabling the purchase of 36 Chromebooks so that students could continue their education remotely. The school has expressed its heartfelt gratitude, and in its weekly newsletter *The Beacon* there have been interviews with some of the recipients, who described how useful the Chromebooks have been.

Keeping in touch

www.oldcamdenians.info

Do you have any photos or documents from your time at Holloway and/or Beacon High? If so, we will share them with your friends on our (soon to be relaunched) website and include them in future newsletters. Also, we would like to include school team photos, from a variety of sports, on the website in the photo gallery, along with the names of the team members.

There is a link from our website to www.beaconhigh.org. Read the school's weekly newsletter *The Beacon*, where we have a voice too with links to our website. Visit Beacon High's website and in the tab "About Us" you will find "Community Links". Click on that and you will see a tab entitled "Old Camdenians – Alumni Success Stories" that takes you straight to a link to our website <http://www.oldcamdenians.info>. Why not give it a try?

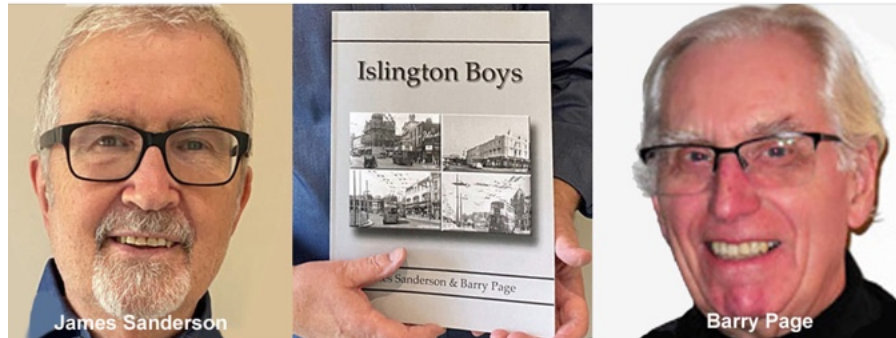
Holloway Heroes

This photograph is titled "Holloway School Heroes 1969", and a caption reads: "On their way to school in Camden Road, they heard a commotion and saw a fire on the top floor of a house. They went in and rescued the children. **Mike Merrison** is far left and **Tony and Bobby Goldsmith** are third and fourth from the left respectively." Can anyone recognise anyone else, or add further details? Get in touch if you do.



Islington Boys in print

James Sanderson and **Barry Page**, two old boys of Barnsbury Secondary School, have written a book, *Islington Boys*, which brings to life the recollections of lads from that school growing up in the borough in the



aftermath of war. Now James and Barry are in the process of writing a sequel. Barry says, "James and I are looking for anecdotes from Islington schoolboys, other than those who attended Barnsbury School. So, if any Old Camdenians would like to contribute a brief story of their time at Holloway School, they are invited to participate. Articles can be emailed to islingtonboys2@yahoo.com. Text files (preferably in PDF format) can be attached to the relevant message. The names of those who submit entries will be acknowledged as part of each entry, and any pertinent dates (such as the years when attending the school) are also encouraged." To order a copy of *Islington Boys* for £6 (a not-for-profit venture), email ironlay@yahoo.co.uk.

Ray Rowe reviews 'Islington Boys'

This book is beautifully presented and is a rich mine of memories. It will take you back to playing on the bombsites with friends in those formative years of our lives and the long summers before we all went our own ways. *Islington Boys* gives a gritty account of the demise of Barnsbury Boys School and how so easily it could have been the fate of Holloway School, but for the sheer grit and determination of a few who cared, such as the late Paul Smith. The book is well illustrated and provides a good social history. It is a worthy addition to a person's library and good value for money.

Obituaries

Paul Smith

Paul Graham Smith, Headteacher at Holloway School from 1988 to 1997, died on 24th July 2021, aged 74. Paul always supported the Old Camdenians, both as President during his term of office and after he left. His funeral in Nuneaton was filmed and will be made available on the Old Camdenians website.

Born on 15th June 1947, Paul dedicated his life to education. He will be sadly missed by all. Our condolences and best wishes go to Stephen Smith, Paul's brother, and his family and friends.

The following tributes are from those who worked with him

Penelope Harris: I remember the moment I was introduced to Paul. He had been appointed as



Paul Smith B.Phil. FRSA
Headteacher 1988-1997

Head of South Hackney lower school. He specialised in English and would therefore become a member of my English Department. I remember his eyes: direct warm quick and friendly. I knew we would get on really well.

Paul was the most dedicated and inspiring teacher I had ever met. The children in our school were a handful; full of energy and fun, mischievous and responsive. Many had difficulties at home but brimmed with energy and laughter.

It quickly became evident that Paul was an exceptional teacher. He encouraged motivated and inspired them with the confidence to do well. He was a brilliant teacher and he changed their lives for the better. He was gifted, caring, and committed to raising their horizons. I know that they could look forward to a future with a confidence that he had nurtured.

South Hackney became part of a four-school amalgamation. I spoke to Barry Simmons, the overall Head, who asked me to say this: "Paul was an inspirational teacher, a smashing bloke, he worked incredibly hard and he was wonderful to work with."

In 1988 Paul was appointed as Headteacher of Holloway School. A few years after that I applied to be Paul's Deputy and got the job.

My twin brother Philip had gone to Holloway school in 1958. I had ties. Philip had worked with Paul at South Hackney as head of resources and then at Kingsland as media resource officer (MRO). He had also worked with Paul training the football teams. Philip became the MRO at Holloway. With Paul's wholehearted support he encouraged Philip to apply to the ILEA for a year's secondment to develop multi-ethnic and disabled teacher support materials for use in all London schools. It was called "COPY ART". It was sent to every school for teachers to use on worksheets to reflect the diversity of our children. It is incredible to think that up until that time only able-bodied and white children's images had been used.

Philip told me he witnessed the way Paul looked out for children who needed help and understanding. He also supported his staff team. We were all lucky to have known him as a colleague and a friend for his passion, generosity, care, and great sense of humour.

I was privileged to know and work with Paul. And I was the most fortunate person in the world to have him as a friend.

Lidia Solari: It is with sadness that I am writing this tribute but also with a degree of pleasure that I can express my gratitude and memories of Paul Smith – my "boss".

I began working as an admin assistant at Holloway School in 1986 and Paul joined the school as Headteacher in 1988. I remember very well his first full staff meeting when he outlined his vision of where he wanted the school to go. He was clear about the goals set before him and how to go about achieving them. He was going to increase the intake of pupils and he wanted Holloway to become a more successful school. With great skill, intelligence and tenacity Paul managed to do this during his tenure.

During those nine years I was promoted to office manager and became Paul's PA and I have many fond memories of us working together. It was a hectic and challenging time but also very rewarding and I can honestly say there was never a time I did not look forward to going to work as Paul always made me feel appreciated, which gave me a great sense of job satisfaction. Paul had respect and a great empathy for all the staff, from the cleaners upwards. Although quiet and unassuming in manner, Paul was extremely kind and generous, never wishing or expecting to be acknowledged or thanked. Many a good deed was done without due reward!

Since he left Holloway School in 1997 we kept in touch, and I shall miss our yearly catch-up at Christmas.

I was privileged to be able to attend his funeral recently and looked back fondly to a very special person.

Deirdre Murphy: When Paul arrived at Holloway, Jo Hogan had retired and there were many changes that needed to take place. It was a time of much change in London schools as the ILEA was being disbanded and local authorities were taking control of Education.

I was Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator at the time of Paul's arrival, and Paul displayed a real passion for the students who had many challenges. Children and students were at the heart of his work as a teacher and as headteacher and he wanted all children to have the best opportunities. We had a number of incredible successes at Holloway, and I do feel that Paul's leadership and focus on students enabled success. He was determined, but at all times fair. He gave respect and expected respect on every level.

Holloway school faced many challenges, falling roll, reputation and funding, but Paul took all this on with vigour, determination and commitment. He worked incredibly hard and was very often the last to leave. He was a visible head, walking around the corridors from the old building to the new building throughout the day. He instilled calmness and dealt with difficult situations in a calm, measured way. He had a sense of humour and could always laugh with others and at himself.

I learnt a lot from Paul and in fact I am proud to say that he became a friend. We would chat a lot about education and about politics, sometimes over the odd glass of red wine.

Paul was tolerant and allowed staff to grow. He would never have used the phrase "grow your own" but that's what he did. He looked at staff's interests and gave them chances to explore and develop. I certainly benefited from this approach and went on to become deputy head and then headteacher. I believe very strongly that Paul's belief in me put me on this path.

It is very important to recognise that Paul gave many students chances to turn themselves around and to look at themselves in a positive way, and I am certain that there are many students who could recall how Paul Smith emphasised the present and the future and not the past.

I was delighted to hear that when Paul left Holloway he got a headship in Coventry, at Lyng Hall, and was very successful in turning that school around before his retirement. After retirement he did some work for the Association of School and College Leaders in helping schools and heads.

I was very sad to hear about his illness and how hard it was for him in the last few years. I know he had a lot more to give to education and it is very sad that he died far too soon. He loved the work of the Old Camdenians. George Ives was the chair when Paul was head of the school and President of the Old Camdenians Club.

Dave Dennis: In the early 90s Paul's leadership saved the school from closure, and as a result of his success the school began to grow at a rapid rate. This period was a particularly challenging chapter in Holloway school's history, and Paul's leadership marked him out as an extraordinary headteacher.

They say leadership is about people, and management is about things. Although Paul was good with both, he clearly demonstrated he was a gifted people person. He was also a very capable, clever, caring, selfless and compassionate man with a brilliant sense of humour. The sort of leader that etches themselves into your heart and mind.

No challenge ever fazed him, and despite all the pressure and challenges of the role, he was always positive, friendly and approachable for both staff and the students. He worked hard, cared for his staff and was passionate about the students.

At the time Holloway was a challenging school, it was tough and required a lot of hard work, and Paul's leadership won our commitment. I feel very fortunate to have worked under Paul's watch, and I definitely benefited from his support. He gave a great deal to Holloway and his colleagues, and I am greatly saddened by the premature passing of this Holloway Hero.

Paul Freeman: I do not believe the school that now stands on the site once occupied by Holloway Boys School would exist were it not for Paul Smith. Years after Paul dragged Holloway back from the

brink of closure, and after he moved to his Coventry school, government realised that, actually, you could solve problems by throwing money at them. Paul was never given the resources he needed at Holloway, but what he did have was fierce determination and an indomitable will. Who now remembers that only about 30 students were signed up to join Holloway in the months before Paul took over? The school was whizzing towards its sell-by date. Paul's first miracle was to earn the trust of sufficient Holloway parents through what he promised them. His second and more extraordinary miracle was to deliver on those promises, and, in short order, Holloway Boys became oversubscribed.

I was one of Paul Smith's deputy heads from 1991 to 1997. On the occasions we drove into school at the same time, he would fly out of his car - some horrid blue thing he was immensely proud of - and head towards me like a ground-to-air missile. Having spent the evening, as usual, reflecting on what needed doing, he launched into his two lists: that which had to be done immediately and that which had to be done right now. I tried to keep up, to make notes, very often distracted by the question of whether I should mention the candy floss of shaving foam drying on the side of his head. These briefings could be lengthy, and often as he spun away from me he would, slightly sheepishly, and a tad belatedly, wish me a "Oh, good morning by the way".

Not that Paul was a rude man. In fact he was exquisitely courteous and thoughtful. To celebrate my first birthday at the school he struck me dumb by bringing in a cake. Now I shall not have the opportunity to tell him how much that act meant to me. Paul thought that Wordsworth had it right, *The best portion of a good man's life is his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love.*

There was a brief spell soon after the end of Paul's tenure at Holloway, when a craze emerged at the Department for Education for Superheads. These characters were anointed, appointed and generously salaried, before being fired, sometimes within months; rare confirmed cases of spontaneous human combustion. Paul Smith, an essentially shy and retiring man, engineered himself into someone who could cause hundreds of unruly boys to fall dead silent merely by tilting his head and taking one sideways step. He did remarkable things. In our darkest moments he would dissolve us into helpless laughter. Of the uniformed critics he would say, "We shall make our own judgments." The Paul Smith I knew was the real thing, a genuine Superhead and a deeply kind man.



The senior management team at Holloway in 1992: Paul Smith is second from right, with (from left) deputy heads Penny Harris, Paul Freeman and Andreas Evripidou

Peter Sims

Peter Sims BSc MSc FRGS FGS, who was at Holloway School from 1955 to 1963, died on Saturday 17th July 2021, aged 77. Peter had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in May this year and died peacefully in his sleep at home. He is sadly missed by his wife Wendy, his two daughters from his first marriage, and his two grandchildren, along with other family members, friends and colleagues. Peter's funeral took place on Monday 9th August in Tavistock.



Peter's family has sent this tribute

Peter was born in London on the 28th April 1944 and joined Holloway School in 1955. During his time there he won a number of form awards, including specialist prizes in music, and he was first clarinet in the school orchestra. Peter played football and cricket in house teams, in his words rather unremarkably, but by the end of his first three years he became interested in athletics, specialising in 440 yards and then 880 yards, and he won the North London Schools Championship at the White City Stadium for his 440 yard runs. At the age of 14 he joined Highgate Harriers and went on to represent them in a variety of competitions on track and cross country; he also represented the County of Middlesex in 880 yards. He became Captain of Athletics at Holloway School.

Peter became Head Boy at Holloway in his final year and was put forward by the school for a national travelling scholarship to eastern Canada funded by the W.H. Rhodes Educational Trust. He, and the other scholarship winners from major cities around the UK, travelled on the Cunard Line's Franconia and visited places such as Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto and of course Niagara Falls – an incredible experience for an 18-year-old in 1963.

Peter made many friends at Holloway School, notably Derek Fricker, with whom he remained in contact with over the years. Peter also felt very fortunate to have had a number of inspirational teachers at Holloway School, in particular one of his form tutors, Derek Thompson. Peter remained indebted to him for initiating his interest in geology, which enabled him to follow a very successful career in geography and geology.

Peter left Holloway School in 1963 with A-levels in geography, geology and English. He went into higher education and graduated in 1966 with a specialist geography degree. After graduating he obtained a teaching post at Tulse Hill School in London (1966-1969) teaching all years but with special responsibility for A-level teaching in geography and geology. He also taught athletics and sailing.

In 1969 Peter moved into higher education and was appointed to set up a geography degree at what is now the University of Plymouth. Peter was also an Open University tutor in geology between 1970 and 1993. Peter has been described as the founding father of geography at Plymouth and was held in high esteem by his colleagues across the university. Peter retired from the University of Plymouth in 2006 as Associate Dean (Teaching & Learning).

Although Peter did not continue with his athletics, he was an extremely experienced and competent sailor. He successfully raced on his own, and other people's, yachts and took part in the Fastnet race. Over the past few years he enjoyed single-handed racing, along the South West coastline and across the Channel.

Old Camdenians Grand Reunion Lunch

At preCovid Prices

To be held at Beacon High School, London N7 0JG (tel.0207 607 5885)
Please return to **George Ives, 32 Amersham Hill Gardens. High Wycombe, HP13 6QR**
Tel:-01494 524 501
Email george.ives@btinternet.com

I shall be attending the Lunch on Friday 29th October 2021

Please reserve.....places for me and the following

I would like to sit near -----If possible

I would like to donate £..... towards selected Students attending as guests

I enclose a cheque to **Old Camdenians Club** for £.....(£30 per person inclusive of wines etc.
Nonalcoholic drinks available (Students, and under 21's, £15)

I remitted £.....to Old Camdenians TSB Bank A/C Number 00100746 Sort Code 30-92-43

I remitted via Pay Pal £.....

I/We would like to apply for _____ special Student Tickets @ £7-50 each

For _____

Vegetarian meal-----YES/NO _Special Diet_____

I/we would/would not like to tour the new **School Facilities** at 11-00am

Name..... Dates at Holloway School.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Post Code.....Tel.No.....Mobile No.....

Email Address.....

N.B. Reception 11 am, School Tour 11am, AGM 12 noon, Lunch 1pm.
Off road parking available at the School. Enter via the original gates (closest to Camden Rd) that used to lead to the "Caretakers" House. Bus from Kings Cross is the "390"