

2008 DINNER

As previously mentioned we welcome back as our Guest of Honour this year Mike Wesson, Sports Master from 1969 - 1995. The application form for your ticket can be found with this Newsletter, please apply early so that we can confirm numbers with our caterers (final date for booking 25th April). Wives/partners are always welcome to attend. Please remember our Dress Code, which we class as tidy (ie not Jeans and Trainers).

Tickets can be reserved via the Internet (oldboys@odwa.co.uk), but bookings will not be confirmed until payment has been received by our Treasurer Keith Potter, details on the enclosed booking form. To keep costs down we will not be sending out tickets again this year, all bookings will be confirmed with final details by email, where available, if not a S.A.E. would be appreciated with the booking form.

The Menu for this years dinner has now been fixed as follows:

*Homemade Vegetable Soup
with roll and butter
* * * * **

*Gammon and Pineapple
Roast Beef and Yorkshire Pudding
Roast Turkey
Vegetarian option
Roast Potatoes & Seasonal Vegetables
* * * * **

*Choice of dessert
Selection of cold desserts
Fresh fruit salad with cream
Apple crumble with custard
* * * * **

Coffee and mints

Owing to increased expenses this year we have had to increase the Ticket price to £21.00. Please remember our Dress Code.

As in past years we appreciate any donation that you are able to make. Over the years these donations have enabled us to keep to our policy of not charging a membership fee, publishing one Newsletter costs approx. £365 per issue. Once again this year, owing to lack of copy I have struggled to fill it, in fact I have had to come down to 12 pages, so please any comments you wish to make about School memories, what you have done since leaving or even reports about a Dinner that you have attended. I start compiling the next issue as soon as this one is published.

The following members have already expressed an interest in attending this year so hopefully they will be joined by other former friends:

Keith Chessell 1947-51, Brian Cogger 1948-51 plus 3 or 4 more of his year; Gerald Pontin 1952-55; Clive Jay 1955-59, Rod Cronin 1955-60, Tony Foster 1958-62, Peter Samson 1958-61 and Graham Latter 1966-71, plus of course Committee Members.

Rod Cronin will be travelling from Australia again this year and would be pleased to meet/hear from some of the 1955, 11 year old intake.

This Newsletter is made up from contributions of Members and the views expressed are those of the individual and not of the Association.



DARTECH AND WILMINGTONIAN

A NEWSLETTER FROM YOUR OLD SCHOOL

NUMBER 22

MARCH 2008



15th ANNUAL REUNION DINNER & A.G.M.

on Saturday, 10th May, 2008

Guest of Honour is Mike Wesson (1969-1995)

Carvery style Dinner and of
course a Licensed Bar and a
Conducted Nostalgia Tour.
All ages are Welcome.

16th ANNUAL REUNION DINNER & A.G.M.

on Saturday, 9th May, 2009

Our Guest of Honour will be
announced soon

If you wish to find former School friends and
get more of your own age group together do
not hesitate to contact us, as we have the
original Intake lists and facilities to
make comprehensive searches.

Visit our Website and check out the names that we have, and if
you know any members not listed give us their details

www.odwa.co.uk email: oldboys@odwa.co.uk

Your next Newsletter is due to be published in February 2009
but to do this I need more articles and correspondence.
Comments with regard to your memories while at the School, experiences
at previous Reunions or details of your own life since leaving will be
greatly appreciated.

Please contact Dennis Wells,
3 Millbro, Victoria Hill Road, Hextable, Swanley, Kent BR8 7LF.
email: dennis.wells1@ntlworld.com

Peter Ferris - 1963 - 67

Hi... I was at Dartech from Sep 1963 until June 1967 and was wondering if there are any photos around please?

I saw the Friends Reunited website but nothing from my period.

I was in School house and played a couple of rugby games for the school team (4th or 5th form I think) when the 'athletes' were busy with football.

A 'year' photo would be nice. Either boys, staff or both.

Can you help at all please? Thanks, Peter

Nick Moon - 1972 - 1978

I was wondering if you have ever considered adding an employment section on the web site or would be interested in articles about employment opportunities.

I was a pupil 1972 – 1978 and moved to NZ nearly 5 years ago, in NZ in general there is a desperate shortage of skilled labour and the company I work for are continually trying to employ Engineering Staff at all levels from the UK. Would an article be possible to be added to the web site?

I have been meaning to drop you a line with an up date with what I have been up to, but one interesting discussion point will be that I bumped into Mike Wesson while he was here earlier in the year; we were on holiday over in The Coromandel with family from the UK. I attach this photo.



Janet Webb (Staff) - 1972 - 1978

Mrs. Janet Webb died on 4th April 2007 she taught at the school from 1972 -1978

Janet was a quiet shy person who loved her subject, she encouraged anyone who showed an interest. Janet had a quiet but wry sense of humour which gave her the capacity to treat the boys with a kindly smile and a compassion often lacking in others.

Janet's contribution to the department was appreciated by teachers and technicians alike, she created a happy atmosphere in which to work and was sorely missed when she left to do her M.Phil. this included a detailed study of part of Dartford Heath, she would often call in to see us and give us a progress report. I know it gave her great pleasure in the last few months catching up on the lives of past pupils and hearing of their progress. A professor, a doctor, a space satellite designer, and the owner of a garden centre. Janet was a personal friend of mine and will be greatly missed.

IN MEMORY

We have been advised that the following members have passed on

Andrew Wilmot - 1956-61

Philip Mallion - 1962-70

Janet Webb - 1972-78 (Staff)

Anthony Reid - 1972-1977

EDITORIAL

I have been approached by a Gentleman who has been asked by Keith Richards to pen his memoirs, and Keith would like any member of the Association to write about any events, stories, etc that they can recall that concerned Keith in any way. I have received a few notes from former members of his year, but perhaps other Members may recall more events that could be included in the book. Keith has mentioned Mr Clare (Jake) with some fondness and perhaps other members could give us some information about his various works, before the Tech or since.

Please send any contributions to me: D. R. Wells 3 Millbro, Victoria Hill Road, Hextable, Swanley, Kent BR8 7LF or email to: chairman@odwa.co.uk

At 'A' level we studied Economics, Economic History and English(?) together and shared many hours in the classroom with the likes of Mr Lawson, Len Hollingsworth, Jesse James and Mr Hardman (?). We were competitors, but not in an aggressive way, as neither of us displayed particular ambition in those days.

Out of school we spent a lot of time at each other's houses and playing football (with Peter and Gordon Scott) for our local team in Slade Green. You could always be sure of the offer of some food and drink during a visit to Phil's house as his mum and dad regarded any visitor as part of the family. Similarly with his grandparents in Charlton where we would often meet up before a game at the Valley. Phil had a great sense of humour and he could get on with almost anyone.

In music though our interests diverged. Phil was a great admirer of Judith Durham from The Seekers (I think for her voice rather than her physical attributes!); I was a fan of the Searchers myself (I can't imagine why now) and there was a constant rivalry over who was highest in the charts. Judith was not the most trendy pop idol amongst sixth form colleagues but this did not prevent Phil from championing her cause to the end. He could be very stubborn when he wanted to be.

Our lives went in rather different directions after he moved to the South Coast with Barclays and we did not see so much of each other after that. Then his illness took over and sadly life for Phil and his family became very different.

It was not easy seeing Phil's health gradually deteriorate to the point where he became an invalid; but I will remember his funeral, like Peter, as a celebration of his life and an occasion to look back on some very happy memories, especially of our school days together.

Brian Hyland - 1956 - 1963

I was at Wilmington 1956-63 and in the late 90's put in a big effort to trace most of the '56 entrants - help from Dennis Wells with the original form entrant lists. I only had about 5 people that I wasn't able to trace. Since then we have had a few reunions, sometimes in the Leyton Cross pub (Horse & Groom) as well as the official annual dinner. After about 4 to 5 years of this interest seemed to wane and recently I am in contact with only a small number again. It doesn't help when people change their ISP and of course we are all 62, so now several of us are retiring. Fascinating how so many differing careers came from the group and perhaps I now have more time (retiring from full time work this month), I might do some contacting again, or even do a magazine article.

Ronald Bathurst - 1949 - 1952

I was at Essex Road and Lowfield Street and then we moved to the old Manor House at Wilmington. We could not believe our luck when we saw the huge playing fields. Maggie Mountjoy was my form Mistress and she gave me the love of History that I still have today. Mr Clare took us for music and I played violin in the school orchestra and as a result I have enjoyed many years of listening to Classical music. Mr Gregory and Mr Murphy took us for woodwork and Mr Lewis and Mr Black took us for Physics and Chemistry.

Roger Wood - 1954 - 1958

Hi Dennis. Just a quick email to find out how the reunion went? I did scroll through the guest list but did not recognise anyone from our year attending? Except I did spot you had an apology from a Alan Gregory, who if I recall correctly was 1 year ahead of us but I knew him quite well because we played in the same school soccer team. His best mate was a guy called Blackman I'm sure John Frankton will know if I am right on that!

If I can, I am going to try to get over for next years reunion but my wife and I are coming over again in August so it may be tricky. Will definitely give it a try though! On this trip we will be also trying to catch up again with Barbara across the road from you, so may get to meet you!

James Nugent - 1976 - 1981

Now living in Long Valley, New Jersey, USA. 'Just wanted to see if anyone from 1976-1981/3 was out there'

John Ransley - 1947 - 1950

I was prompted to contribute to the newsletter by reading about the experiences of Adrian Luff and David Nicholson who were a year after me but tell a familiar story.

I remember turning up at Essex Road. In uniform for the first time - complete with cap (which I think lasted about two terms). In that first year we alternated between Essex Road for the main lessons, the Conybeare Club in Kingsfield Terrace (Kent Road), for German, Lowfield Street for metalwork, woodwork, school dinners and the gym, Burnham Road for football and the Central Park for sports days.

I remember Mr. Wall taking us for a lesson and although one of your previous correspondents said he was against corporal punishment I thought he was the hardest man I had ever met. He certainly frightened me. Mr (Percy) Black used to teach physics and chemistry in the basement - although we used to have the odd diversion discussing the merits of Newcastle and Charlton football teams. We were in the ascendancy a bit as Charlton has recently beaten Newcastle on the way to winning the cup. (Heady days).

A bit of schoolboy humour used to occur at Essex Road when at the bottom of the staircase the house football teams would be posted and to our amusement the two fullbacks for (I think) Thames House were Allcock and Noble.

Apart from the ones mentioned regularly some of the teachers I remember were Messrs. Pestel and Payne (metalwork), Mr Brough (PT) who started the students playing basketball - He later got Joe Jagger (Micks father) who started coaching classes there (My one claim to fame - that I knew Mick Jagger's father). One of the reasons for Mr Payne's popularity was that we thought he had once played football for Derby County. The buildings are still there but I think only woodwork survives as an Adult Education Class - I think the canteen is still there.

I read with interest about the chap who fell off the side of the building. His name was Lawrence Henderson - I knew him well as we had gone to primary school together and I lived opposite him. You can still see the bricks jutting out, I think they were for tying onto a new building - not bomb damage. He didn't come back to school but I saw in later years that he had joined the Royal Marines so he obviously recovered well.

We then started to go to Wilmington, we would have a morning in Dartford then make our way to Wilmington for the afternoon lessons or vice-versa. We used to get bus tickets, but we learnt that if we walked we could use the tickets at other times, and anyway the walk took us by the Girls Grammar School in Shepherds Lane.

At Wilmington I remember the bridge that used to span over the road between us and the girls school. The only trouble was that only prefects were allowed to go up there to speak to the girls. I think our class got the privilege once when the seniors were taking their exams.

The popular Mr Brough then left the school and the new PT master "Killer" Williams appeared. I remember him walking about outside in a parachutist smock - which gave a really tough image to us.

We always thought that VOD stood for Vicar of Dartford.

The students I remember were Charlie Hartfield, Eric Noble, David Rostoff, David Jewel, Peter New, Derek Heinzeman, two chaps call Windows and Pizey who were good athletes. Peter New was an excellent footballer and the David Jewel a really good cricketer.

In the Matriculation class I recall Head Boy Stanford, House Captain Booker and Alan Dixon who went on to play for Kent at cricket.

When I left, I dithered about for a year or so and then got an apprenticeship into the print and stayed in the job all my working life trying to catch up or stay one jump ahead of new technology - which finally defeated me and I retired at 61 in 1995. I have lived in Dartford most of my life and see a few of Dartford Tech old boys - but all from later years.

Trevor Rigg - 1957 - 1962

Dennis, I shan't be able, unfortunately, to attend this year's reunion; more's the pity since I was one of the 1957 intake.

It occurs to me that it might be a nice idea if there was a notice-board with messages from absentees, photos, memorabilia etc. Had you plans for something similar?

By the way, Chris Portwine's submission on staff cars has a post-script on things we made in craft. I STILL have three of the said objects, a coffee table, a butt-jointed trinket box and coffee tray, all in daily use! Could send photo! Please pass on info to Chris.

Dave Catchpole - 1957 - 1964

and another response

Apart from the coffee table, my mother kept and used everything (including the photo frame) and they await my bringing them here – unfortunately the tray has had its base replaced with nothing as nice as the original and is in a sad state. The coffee table I gave to my sister as an engagement present and it is still in daily use. I also have the cupboard latch, toasting fork and poker that we made in metals. The latter my father used until central heating was installed in the house. I haven't yet come across the aluminium door knob, but I'm sure it's around somewhere.

Leslie Hammond - 1956 - 1961

Just discovered this site and it's been interesting having a look round. Scrolled right through this list to see if I could pick up any old names, but only a couple I'm familiar with.

Mention of one Mr Matthews raised a wry smile with me, I remember him very well. I recall my mum meeting him at some school do, and thinking he was wonderful - I remember feeling quite differently about the bloke.

My abiding memory is as a first year, when on one occasion we were unable to have the games period, much to my annoyance as that was one of the few things I enjoyed. Matthews decided we would all be better educated by knowing how to put our football kit on correctly, which led to one poor soul (I know his name but won't give it in case I embarrass him should he read this) having to stand on a desk (yes stand on a desk) strip off, put his kit on etc.

My young mind just couldn't understand why we needed to know how to change into our football gear. The last time I saw Matthews was in class where he was teaching English, when one Mr Bates came in and asked if he could go and see LAV Wall, the headmaster.

He never returned.

Spent most of my years at the school pretty much hating it and not wanting to be there - and was glad to get out of the school gates on the last day of my final term.

Strange then how I remember the place with so much affection, and some of the faces I see on the old school pics.

Whoever posted the photo of the school football team could have got my name right.

Haven't seen a single person from the school since I left over 40 years ago.

Lo and behold I just got in touch with someone who was my best pal there, and we've arranged to meet for a glass.

Seems he is a Charlton fan which don't say much for the DT sports education.

Peter Samson - 1958 - 1961

Please accept my apologies for my non attendance at the Dinner this year. I would have liked to have met Pip Cartwright as he joined the staff a year later than myself if I recall correctly and he was my geography master in his first year.

However, I will be making every effort next year to attend as it will be the 50th anniversary of my year 1 start. I have accessed the ODWA site on a regular basis, hoping that a few more active names appear on the pupil list, but we still do not appear to be very well represented at all, although I have made contact with Tony Foster (now in Cornwall) recently. Hopefully over the coming year a few more may come on board in anticipation of next year. My regards to Keith Potter.

Every success for the reunion

Sean Gordon - 1980 - 1987

Thanks for the email and attached Newsletter.

I noticed the letter from Neil Turley.

I was in Neil's class until he emigrated to Australia (as I recall), and also recall that his best friend was Mark ("flopsy") Phillips, who I think later changed his surname when his mother remarried.

Derek Wildish - 1962 - 1967

I am married with two grown up children, both who managed to earn degrees in their chosen subjects. My wife Susan and myself have lived in Ashford since we got married in 1974 and since 1977 I have worked at Dungeness Nuclear Power station as initially a shift electrical chargehand but now I am classed as a D & D Technician, although my work role has changed little. With the station now not generating most of my work entails training old and new workers in how to operate the modified equipment needed for taking the fuel out of the reactors, this has been an ongoing task which I have found interesting as it different from my normal duties.

Peter Leach - 1962 - 1970

Perhaps I should first introduce myself. My name is Peter Leach and I was in the same year as Phillip Mallion and Brian Binning. In fact we were the best of friends not just in school but outside too.

I, with my wife, Jenny, attended Phil's funeral in Weymouth. I'm pleased to say that it was very much a celebration of Phil's life and despite the sadness at our loss, Phil has, in some way rekindled something in me and I feel the richer for it. I think Brian Binning felt much the same.

Phil and I shared the delusion that one day Charlton Athletic F.C. may win the Division One (now premiership title and often spent our Saturdays together at the Valley in vain hope. Other Saturday afternoons would entail seeking out some local fixture and occasionally finding Mr Hollingsworth. He usually played left wing as I recall; we would cheer him on but I have to admit sometimes those cheers would carry a good level of irony if 'Ollie' fell over or missed a sitter! Strange, I can recall using his nickname, but even now I cannot bring myself to call my history teacher, Len. We were doubtless a mischievous lot in those days but unfashionable as it sounds, we had great respect for the good teachers. Mr Hollingsworth, Mr (Percy) Black, our deputy head and Mr Parker were on my list of great guys and to whom I owe a great deal.

I got to hear about this network from an email that Denise, Phil's wife, showed me. Oh by the way, the School hymn was, Forth in thy name O Lord I go with the music of 'Angels song'. It's strange but I recalled this within a few seconds of being asked. I can only put this down to the fact that this hymn with the inexplicably slow accompaniment took an age to sing, or perhaps I should say mumble. Of course at end of term afternoon assembly it stood between us and our release orders. Anyhow I thought some might be pleased to hear that 'Leach' wasn't entirely irreverent.

I doubt Mr Hollingsworth will remember me because alas when the time came I chose to become a "boffin", as we were referred to, and pursued the sciences rather than becoming a "waffler" which was our retaliatory response.

However, I would like to thank both Mr Hollingsworth and Mr Parker not only for their academic teaching but for the good advice I received from them. Principles have always been important to me but in those school days I was pigheaded bloody-minded and hot-headed in pursuance of them. There was a time, when having taken and passed Maths and French GCE a year early, Mrs Mountjoy (God rest her soul) directed me to start A level French. It was to be over my dead body and probably would have been if I'd continued to pursue my instinctive course of action. This is where two previously unknown entities entered my life, the art of diplomacy and patience. Sure enough these and a little help from Mr Black and the Head, Mr Mogford, encouraged Mrs Mountjoy to recognise that a Maths course would be more rewarding for young Leach.

Dennis, this email started out as a quick hello to some people that I would like to be remembered to. I apologise for perhaps over indulging. Alas I am too late to thank Mr Black but I would be most grateful if you could pass on my very warmest regards to Mr Hollingsworth and Mr Parker. Please feel free to release my email address to them. Peter Leach (School House Forever!)

Brian Binning - 1962 - 1969

I would say that Philip (Mallion) was undoubtedly my closest friend in the 5th and 6th forms at DTHS. He was an inspiration to me as a person, a sportsman and a student. He was, of course, a gifted footballer and athlete, a master of the slide tackle with the energy to run all day long. That is why it is so tragic that he was not able to continue with an active life after his illness took hold. At least he was able to marry Denise and have two lovely kids in the early days.

Topic for old boys????... a little different. As it panned out nostalgia, backed by the DVD (thanks to Mr Knights), seemed to work. I was heartened and impressed by the genuine friendly greetings I received from all I met on the night. I was particularly pleased to meet up with 'my' 1959 intake. Many of course were in my Form when they started, or in the 1st year football Team, or later in my first 'A' level group. To see how successful they have become is always satisfying to a teacher, whether it was because or despite their educational experience!!

My wife wishes to express her delight at receiving the lovely bouquet of flowers and it was most appreciated. May I thank all involved in the organisation of the evening, The Committee, your good self, The Headmistress, her Staff and 6th Form Waiters and those who provided such a tasty meal.

May Dartech and Wilmingtonians Reunions continue to flourish.

Best wishes, Pip (Philip) Cartwright.

Stan Frith - 1954 - 1959

It was good to see a letter from Peter Wright in the last newsletter. Clearly he is enjoying retirement and his new-found utopia - sunny Isle of Wight. Similarly Neil McKay has retired to Ireland. No doubt in exchange for a Guinness or two, some poor soul starved of a bit of 'blarney' will learn how one of his classmates at school was Keith Richard etc. Just kidding Neil, you did a great job of locating and convening the Class of '59 and I wish you well.

Several years ago I wrote to the DTOB newsletter about life since leaving Dartford Tech, and for those who dozed off first time round, here is another chance to catch up on some sleep!

I was never the 'brightest star in the sky' at DTS and my only relative successes were at sport and English (I won an essay competition). However, upon leaving I soon realised that I had wasted a lot of valuable time mimicking Mr Amiss, irritating Percy Black and presenting "Chalky" Wall with his first opportunity since becoming headmaster, to wield the cane.

So, immediately after demob from "the Hall" I re-sat all my failed GCE's, studied for an HND in Business Studies, obtained a BComm and later, while working for Texas Instruments in Dallas, a Masters Degree in Business (MBA). I hope that bit of news caused a few masters to eat their words (or turn in their graves!) especially 'Chalky' who told my parents that I was the boy least likely to succeed in my year. Mind you, I think he told a few parents that same story!!

My initial career objective upon leaving school was to become a journalist, as I enjoyed writing, but after a summer job at the *Kentish Times* I opted for accountancy (poor old Amiss will definitely turn in his grave!!)

Career-wise, I spent 21 years with Texas Instruments, firstly as an accountant in the oil exploration division, and then in Personnel. Most of those 21 years were as an expatriate in exotic places such as Libya, Singapore, Dallas and France. I actually visited virtually every non-communist country in pursuit of my job which was very rewarding and full of great experiences.

After leaving TI I subsequently served on the Boards of Harrods/House of Fraser (1985-91), Bunzl plc (1991-93) and Somerfield. (1993-96)

I retired from corporate life in 1996 and in addition to acquiring a few businesses that tested my entrepreneurial acumen, I also started writing again. I am fortunate to have three books published in addition to a screenplay that was adapted for television. My latest literary endeavour "Time In Between" came out in March this year with all proceeds going to charity. We are well on the road to achieving my target of £10,000 for the charity thanks to book signing days at W H Smith, Waterstones and at a Bath Rugby home game, but there is still work to do (hint! hint!). If any of you are feeling philanthropic and would like to support my endeavour the book sells for £6.50 plus £1.00 p&p (or whatever amount you feel like donating). A cheque made payable to Dorothy House Hospice Care and mailed to Ashley Lodge, Prior Park Road, Bath BA2 4NW will secure you a copy and if you wanted it dedicated, just say the word. Should you want to know more about the charity or the book, check out the web-site www.stanfrith.co.uk Perhaps a fitting epitaph might be those veracious words of one Lord Byron "*Who forgives the senior's ceaseless verse, whose hairs grow hoary as his rhymes grow worse*" What more can I say?

The teacher whose name Neil could not remember was Mr (Ivor) Jenkins, who was our form tutor and woodwork teacher. Sadly, I seem believe that Mr Jenkins has now passed away. I think that there are some details about this on the website.

The Old Boys Database does also contain the names of the some of the others from our class. These include:-

Anthony Bennett, Adam Holt, Richard Jeffery, Ethan Pennell, Jon Powley, Steven Redpath & Michael Waller

Others names from our class which are not on the database, but which may jog Neil's memory are:-

Daniel Bobby, Alan Henderson, Scott Hunter, Jon Planner, Graham Keenan, Matthew Stanley & Jason Starbuck

Some of these are listed on Friends Reunited. Hope this helps.

Gerald Pontin - 1952 - 1955

I enjoyed the dinner in 2007 and the opportunity to visit the school for the first time since I left in 1955. Sadly very little remains of Wilmington Hall which is a great disappointment. Walking around the extensive grounds brings back many memories. There is much more ground now than there was then.

There was tinge of sadness because my friend Philip Saynor who I was in contact with agreed that we would meet up, unfortunately he died in early 2007. However I was pleased to see Michael Swanton and Clive Read. Michael is Professor Emeritus of English at Exeter University and Clive Anglican Bishop in Spain. We were able to share our memories and catch up on how our careers had developed, when you are young you just wonder what will happen to you, when you retire you know what has happened. All very interesting.

My career history is one that started badly but came good in the end, I think of myself as a late developer. I left the Technical School with no 'O' levels at the age of 16 in 1955. In August of that year I joined North West Kent College of Technology at Miskin Road in the Mechanical Engineering Department as a Laboratory Technician. In 1961 to 1964 I worked for G.E.C. at Erith, Kent running a Heat Transfer Rig for testing Fuel Elements that are inserted into the reactors of Nuclear Power Stations. Before I left there was an amalgamation and the department belonged to the United Power Company and was going to move to Heston near London Airport. As I had obtained a Higher National Certificate in Mechanical Engineering, was thinking about getting married I did not think it right to move to Heston so I looked elsewhere for another job.

In December 1963 that new job came, I moved to Newport in South Wales and joined Girlings in Cwmbarn not to work on brakes but in the Industrial Products Group which had not long been formed to work on electronic load cell weighbridges, hopper weighers, sack weigh fillers and fork truck weighers. I stayed there until June 1967 when I joined Rolls Royce in Bristol as a stress engineer and worked there until my retirement in September 2000 (33 years).

I stressed the L.P. and L.P. Compressors for the Olympus engine which powered the Concord, the Pegasus engine for the Harrier and some parts on the RB199 engine for the Tornado. My claim to fame is that I did the final stressing of the LP and HP Compressor for the Concord (ie front half of the engine) before the engine went into what was hoped would be a production run. As we all know now not many aircraft were produced.

I married in 1964 and have two daughters. I became a Christian in 1958 and since that time have been very much involved in Churches and Christian Fellowships where I have worked.

For the last 44 years I have been a member of Malaps Road Evangelical Church in Newport, South Wales where I have been an Elder and Trustee since 1968.

I believe the only teachers who are still alive from my days are Mr Austin as we knew him (Sam to the younger generation) and Mr Gough who taught Woodwork.

Recently I decided to have a look at my school reports to see what comments my Engineering Drawing teacher (Mr Austin) said about me that I could make known to you, they are as follows:-

1953 Autumn Term - Satisfactory progress

1954 Spring Term - Variable work

1954 Summer Term - Satisfactory

1954 Autumn Term - Good steady work

1955 Spring Term - Produces steady but uninspired work

1955 Summer Term - An improvement shown this term

Well 'Sam' this pupil of yours who did not do well at drawing or reading drawings ended up by having to read and understand complicated drawings of sophisticated aero engines. So you see 'Sam' your teaching was not in vain it all came good in the end.

The day after the dinner I visited a friend of my wife who lived in one of the cottages opposite the school farm. Her father came over from South Africa and leased the land which extended from the farm out to the Birchwood Road and used it for his cattle. However when the lease ran out he was unable to buy because the fields belonged to a number of different people. A proportion of the land was used for the Dartford Technical School for Boys. She showed me some photographs of the land, the poplar trees and cattle grazing.

The teachers I remember were

Head - Mr Wall

English - Mr Downing

Geography - Mr Kneeshaw

Metalwork - Mr Pestal and Mr Payne

Physical Education - Mr Harper and Mr Bickerstaff

Drawing - Mr Christie and Mr Austin

Chemistry - Mr Seaman and Mr Lewis

Maths - Messrs Cambell, Davidson and Gordo

History - Mrs Mountjoy

Music - Mr Clare

Woodwork - Messrs Gregory, Murphy and Gough

Religious Education - ????

French - Mr Andrews

Physics - Mr Black

Does anyone remember Mrs Betty Marfleet? She worked in the administration office probably in the late 60's/70's I married her eldest daughter Jacqueline in July 1964 and hope to celebrate our 44th wedding anniversary this year.

That's all for now, I will try and remember some of the incidents that happened during my time at the school and comment about the teachers in a future letter.

I hope to be at the school Old Boys Re-union in May 2008.

Andy Moore - 1957 - 1964

I have been meaning to contact you for some time.

Firstly, many thanks to you and your association for keeping alive the memories and contacts of those who were in school together all those years ago. It took me too long to try Friends Reunited, and then to learn of the ODWA.

Any way, I'm planning on coming to the reunion dinner on the 12th May, and will submit my completed form and cheque later today. Hopefully there is still room for latecomers like me.

I've seen the list of those intending to be there, and realise that I've not met most of my old colleagues since either 1962, or when I left in 1964!

Now retired, after 35 years employment with BA.

I'm so looking forward to the reunion and the opportunity to meet old friends after so many years.

The nostalgic tour sounds great, after which I presume we have the dinner. Could you please forward some details of the timings for the day?

Chris Portwine - 1957 - 1965

I enjoyed reading George Whitehead's piece on the history of Wilmington Hall in Newsletter 21. My memory is somewhat confused in the use of Wilmington Manor perhaps someone can help to clarify the situation.

I recall it being a girls' technical school, but in 1957 the girls' technical schools only took pupils from 13 upwards, so they started in our third year. When did this change to starting at 11? My brother, who was ten years my senior, attended Dartech, but he also started at 13. When did this change for boys?

The girls from Bexley Technical School in Townley Road Bexleyheath wore a grey uniform. The girls from Dartford Technical School wore maroon. I remember riding on the 401 bus from Bexleyheath with both of them. The internet confirms that Bexley girls used Hall Place in Bexley at one time, but I thought

they also used Wilmington Manor, what was wrong with their buildings in Townley Road? If this is correct when did Dartford Girls' Tech start at the Manor and where was the school located before that, or was that where the school started?

I remember the supports for the bridge being in place in 1957 but I can't remember the bridge being there. There were stories of a 'secret' passage linking the Hall with the Manor, but I don't think Len Hollingsworth found it when he was recording the basement of the Hall before it was demolished.

Darren Aylward - 1977 - 1983

Many thanks for another most enjoyable and memorable meal. As usual, it was great to see the school again and enjoy the company of the staff and the old boys. Pip Cartwright's speech (and cine footage) this year was brilliantly conceived and although Pip taught sometime before my era it was great to hear some of the anecdotes about those immortal pan-generation teachers Maggie Mountjoy, Percy Black, Wally James (Jesse) and Ian Smith (Pinhead).

This year Keith White (staff: 1978-present) accompanied us on the pre-meal school tour. Keith is the only remaining member of staff that was teaching when I was at the school, albeit as a newly qualified one. I took the opportunity to ask him whether he remembered a rather amusing incident that occurred in one of his French Lessons c. 1979.

Back in those days Mr White taught both French and R.E. in room CP3 (as it is now known) opposite what is commonly known as "Maggie's room". Before describing the incident it is worth noting that this particular room is on the second storey of the building.

I recall it being a rather warm, summer's day and we were all working (I would say "hard" but that probably wasn't the case!) on whatever exercise Mr. White had given us when suddenly our concentration was broken by a rattle at one of the windows. Looking toward the noise we were surprised to see the huge form of an older lad named Kestle squeezing himself - with some difficulty - through the now open window and into the classroom. Kestle, for the uninitiated, was a larger than life character that in many respects could loosely be described as the Billy Bunter of the school. As you can imagine, this surreal sight had the effect of totally mesmerizing both the pupils and Mr. White alike - silence reigned supreme! The calm, but profusely sweating Kestle then brushed himself off, greeted Mr. White and sauntered out of the door as if this insane act was nothing out of the normal! Mr. White took a good few seconds to shake himself from his stupor and eventually pursued the offender out of the classroom and down the corridor. By this time a long overdue furor of laughter finally erupted in the class. Needless to say not much work was done for the rest of the lesson!

I never did get to the bottom as to why this event occurred or what it was in aid of. I would be interested to hear from anyone that knew Kestle and what his motives were on this occasion - I suspect it was for some kind of dare or bet?

Back to the present and I was surprised to learn that Keith White did not remember this particular incident. He did however admit that at this time he was a newly qualified teacher fresh out of college and this type of incident was a fairly regular occurrence. Being somewhat wet-behind-the-ears, the boys tended to subject him to more than his fair share of torment. On one occasion a lad named Longhurst even went as far as locking him into the class storeroom cupboard! Apparently Teacher Training College never taught him how to handle situations like these!

However, I have warned my son Connor - who now frequents the school - not to try any like this. Keith is now Assistant Head Teacher and has another 25 years experience of handling wayward pupils!

Anyway, thanks once again for an excellent evening and I look forward to next years event and my old 1st year form teacher Mike Wesson being the guest of honour.

Pip (Philip) Cartwright - 1959 - 1966

Dennis, thank you for your email.

I have to say I am relieved that it is over. I suppose as a teacher who was used to addressing 900 children at morning assembly I should take it in my stride. However in school you have a set agenda re notices, etc.