

Mr. Keith Potter
Treasurer O.D. & W.A.,
11 Thirlmere Road,
Bexleyheath, Kent DA7 6PU

**Please submit to arrive no
later than Wednesday 29th
April 2009. Thank you.**

I would like tickets @ £22.00 each for the 16th Annual Dinner on Saturday,
9th May 2009. (Please adhere to dress code)

Name
(Please print)

Pupil / Staff at School from to

Address
.....
.....

e-mail address

Telephone number

Please complete form over to assist our caterer

Name of partner / guest(s) (if any)

I would like to join the Nostalgia Tour at 3.45p.m. YES / NO

I would like to receive the Newsletter by email / post.

Association may publish / may not publish my email address on the ODWA
website.

Association may / may not give out my email to other members on request.

I enclose a cheque, payable to ODWA for £.....

This includes a donation to Association Funds

Please return this form to : Mr. Keith Potter, Old Dartech's & Wilmingtonians' Association, 11 Thirlmere Road, Bexleyheath, Kent DA7 6PU

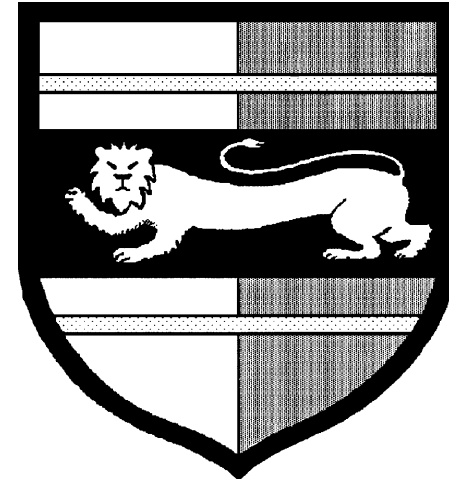


DARTECH AND WILMINGTONIAN

A NEWSLETTER FROM YOUR OLD SCHOOL

NUMBER 23

MARCH 2009



**16th ANNUAL REUNION DINNER & A.G.M.
on Saturday, 9th May, 2009**

We have invited **Trevor Stevens 1954-1959** to render his thoughts on his times of Education 4 Course Dinner and of course a Licensed Bar and a Conducted Nostalgia Tour.
All ages are Welcome.

**17th ANNUAL REUNION DINNER & A.G.M.
on Saturday, 8th May, 2010**

Our Guest of Honour to be decided

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 2010 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

We have a few Anniversaries this year, and some of our Age Groups are hoping to get a good following.

1954 Intake - Fifty Years since leaving.

After low numbers in recent years it would be nice to get a good number of us along this year.

contact: Dennis Wells - *dennis.wells3@ntlworld.com*

1959 Intake - Fifty years since starting.

There is interest from a number who are planning to attend so if you are interested contact: Colin Fradd - *colin.fradd@virgin.net*

1969 Intake - Forty years since starting.

Another year group who hope to have a good attendance

Contact: Graham Hillman - *gphillman@gmail.com*

Clive (*cliver@mercuryin.es*) and **Ann Read** are coming from Spain, also **Jim Garlinge** (*ajgarlinge@aol.com*) and **his wife** hope to meet some other members of the 1952 intake group

Rod Cronin 1955-1960 is coming from Australia again and hopes to meet some of his year - *rodcronin@westnet.com.au*

Simon Bird 1970-1977 is hoping to meet some friends from his time at the School - *woodlakehouse@aol.com*

We will try and keep an up to date list on the Website as we receive bookings

We can finally confirm the Menu for this years Dinner and to assist our new Caterer it would be appreciated if you can mark your preference and return this slip with your booking Form

Smoked Salmon Paté with Toast

	<i>No. of each</i>
----- Steak and Kidney Pie	
Chicken in red wine Casserole	
Baked Gammon	
Vegetarian alternative	
New Potatoes and the Chef's selection of vegetables	
----- Choice of cold sweets or cheese & biscuits	
----- Coffee / Tea and mints	

Name/s.....

When he and Mary moved into their home near Knatts Valley, John became interested in beekeeping. Initially with a few hives in their very large garden, however, the number of hives gradually grew until he had around forty five spread around the local countryside. This was beekeeping on a semi-commercial scale, which one year produced around three thousand pounds of honey. As if all the above was not enough he learnt to play the guitar and became a competent water colour painter and even found time to obtain two Masters degrees. Whatever John did he was always dedicated and sought perfection or at least to be competent. I clearly remember at school that he was not satisfied with his handwriting and decided to switch from copperplate to italic script. He practised so hard at perfecting it that within a short period he was writing immaculately in italics as well as being faster than the rest of us using copperplate.

Although John never had children of his own he thought a great deal of his step children and it is sad that he will not see his grand children grow up as he loved playing with them. I am sure all John's friends will miss him but at least he had a fulfilling life and achieved many of his ambitions. Our condolences go to Mary and the rest of his family.

John Nunn

O.D. & W.A. Committee

At a Committee meeting following last years Dinner we discussed whether the format should be changed as we had struggled to get sufficient members interested in 2008 Dinner. At the official closing date for bookings we had less than 40 members booked, and as this was not an economical number to cater for we were considering cancelling, but fortunately a flush of late bookings enabled it to go ahead. Unfortunately we received some even later ones which caused some problems for our Caterers.

We have considered changing our format from a Set Dinner to a Buffet to make it easier.

Over the years we have invited former members of Staff back as our Guest of Honour, but as the years progress, their numbers reduce and we have had to start doubling up. We decided to invite Mr Bryn Thomas (Headmaster 1983-1991) this year, but unfortunately he had another event on for the whole weekend. So as a change we have invited a former Old Boy, those that attended the First Dinner back in 1994 may remember the speech of Trevor Stevens (1954-59) so we have asked him to do an 'Encore'

Having recently sent out a Questionnaire via email for suggestions for the format for this years Dinner, and of the few answers received, it would appear that the members are not over concerned what format we have, so we decided to continue with the usual format, regrettably I have now been advised that the School are unable to do the catering this year, we have checked around a few local caterers without any luck for the cooked format but we have found one who can do a Buffet meal. So we can see if the change of format makes any major difference in our numbers, unfortunately we have since found out that we have to hire crockery etc, and lay out the Buffet ourselves. On more searching we have found a Catering Firm that are prepared to keep to our normal format, at a similar price to last year, so once again our plans have been changed for us. We are discussing the actual Menu which will be sent to all members that book, as we must get this Newsletter out without delay. With regard to the email Questionnaire we sent out, unfortunately not only was the response poor but of over 600 email addresses on our Database, over 70 emails were returned address not known, obviously many members have not advised us that they are no longer on the internet or that they have changed servers, so if you normally receive this newsletter via email, and have got it by snail mail please advise us of your change. At the same time, no doubt, many of you that receive the Newsletter by post, might have an email address for us to use in the future, last year the postage alone was almost £200.00, while an email cost nothing.

Edward (Ted) Harper by George Whitehead - 1950-53

Ted Harper was our sports master. He played football at right half for Walthamstow Avenue and was an England Amateur International. Walthamstow won the FA Amateur Cup in 1951 beating Leyton 2-1 in the final. This was the first official 100,000 gate at Wembley Stadium for the Amateur Cup Final. The following season they reached the fourth round of the FA Challenge Cup beating Wimbledon 3-0, Watford 2-1 and Stockport County 2-1. They then held Manchester United to a 1-1 draw at Old Trafford and in the replay at Highbury they were beaten 5-2. This was a magnificent achievement for an amateur club.

Due to the replay being held at Highbury I had, for many years, mistakenly believed that Walthamstow had played against Arsenal during that round and that Ted Harper had left Dartford Tech. and gone on to play for Arsenal. However, I have been in touch with the Arsenal Football Club's official historian and he tells me that Arsenal never played against Walthamstow and Ted Harper never played for Arsenal. I have also been in touch with Walthamstow FC only to find that in 1988 the club had merged with Leytonstone/Ilford and the early Walthamstow Club records are not available so I have been unable to trace Ted Harper's movements from the club.

Shortly after the game against Manchester United (I am not sure exactly when) Ted Harper, who had become our sporting icon, left Dartford Tech. for new fields and pastures green and his replacement was Mr Williams. We were soon to be reminded that the national sport in Wales was Rugby, a game played by blokes with 'funny shaped balls'. Down came our goal posts and up went, those tall, funny looking ones that we had never seen up close before.

Come the first Wednesday afternoon sports session under Mr Williams and he called us all together. He pointed to one side of the halfway line and said, "I want 15 of you over there", then he pointed to the other side of the line and said, "and I want 15 of you over there". Nobody moved. "Oh I see; it's going to be like that is it? I will give you one more chance, I want 15 of you over there and 15 of you over there". A few of the weaker willed ones moved but he still didn't have his two teams. Mr Williams had a look around our huge grounds and he gave us another option, "15 of you over there and 15 of you over there or all of you big brave lads can go and do 15 laps of the grounds". He got a few more but not enough so off we went to do our 15 laps.

After we had done about 4 or 5 laps he called us back and gave us another chance, he got a few more but not enough, so off we went again, and he kept it up until he had his two teams. The survivors were then allowed to go and play real football on a small sloping pitch higher up on the grounds, but we were happy, we didn't want to play handball.

That evening whilst waiting for the 401 at Leyton Cross Roads we saw Mr Williams approaching. Just as he got within earshot, my mate Jack Jeffries said, "what's that I can smell? Oh I see its Sweet Williams". But he said nothing. From then on that became his nickname, 'Sweet Williams'.

At the start of the following Wednesday afternoon sports session I was singled out and he said to me "Sweet Williams wants a word with you", I got the blame for the smart remark and I got a thick ear for my cheek, he then ordered me to play rugby. Sometime during the game I took an intercept pass, ran half the length of the pitch whooping like a Red Indian and scored a try. I got another thick ear and was ordered off to go and play football. I was never instructed to play his treasured sport again. During my time at Wilmington I played football for Danson Youth Club and it annoyed Williams that I chose not to play for the School; he mentioned it on several occasions. The only teacher who ever gave me a pat on the back for playing a good midweek game for our house was our form teacher, Frank Payne. On my final school report Williams wrote: 'A capable gymnast, a member of the school display team'. I have often wondered how much it must have peeved him to have to write this comment.

Trevor John 1957-1964

Please give my regards to any 57ers at the reunion. Hope to make it in 09. I see from the newsletter that I'm not the only one retaining woodwork and metalwork class projects. Before we moved last June I had to decide what we could fit into the new smaller house and the bookcase had to go (it's

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

been to Bideford from 1970 to 1997 with my Mum). I took it to the recycling depot on the heath placed in the wood furniture section and before I had fully turned away it got smashed to pieces by a dumper truck! Still I've got the tray, coffee table, pencil box, jewellery case, toasting fork and door catch - now what happened to the ruler? can't find it anywhere but I hope I left it at school implanted in the rear of a certain hedonistic woodwork teacher who delighted in throwing bits of wood at pupils he accused of maltreating wood.
Ah happy memories!

Alan Garlinge 1952 - 1955

I find the Newsletters and the website extremely interesting and will try to make a contribution this year. I am (at nearly 69) still working as a Consultant Marine Engineer for about 10 weeks a year and hope to carry on for a while yet.

In my other life I am a Volunteer with Victim Support and the Chairman of a National Charity as well running a Bridge Club with my wife, so am still very active. It is uncanny that I have been abroad working at the time of the Annual Dinner for the last few years and will be away this year as well but hope to attend in the future.

Glenn Salt 1970 - 1976

Hi To everyone that may remember me, I used to enjoy playing cricket for dart tech and was also quite good at the Javelin, not bad for a short arse. Love my school photo, taken outside the head masters office of the school football team, I think I did have the longest hair, surprised myself how long it was.

After running a large UK timber importation business, I retired early in 2001. Then in later 2001 I decided to live in Tenerife. Bought myself a restaurant and enjoy life here very much. I have 2 girls and 3 grandchildren, my, doesn't the family grow up quick.

Having got divorced after 10 years, I am now with my Spanish wife after just 5 years ago, as she speaks no english, my spanish has got pretty good, although I always preferred French at Dartford Tech, Graham was a good teacher and after school football practice, he used to drop me off at home in Dartford, what a nice guy he was, hope he is still around these days.

Please feel free to contact me by email, I will be happy to talk with any old friends and after so many years, maybe any enemies that I might have had, but cant think of any.

So, Hatsa Luego amigos

Derek Window 1950 - 1953

Life today.....We live in the Snowy Mountains about 20 klms north of Cooma. A town of some 8000 souls, our house coordinates on Google earth are 36 08' 23.37"S 148 58' 42.66E

Our place is 500 acres of hills and wooded valleys. We make our own electricity from the Sun and wind backed up by a 5.5 kva diesel generator. We collect our water off the roof and store it in two 6000gal fibreglass tanks, our heating is done by wood fires and the hot water comes from a solar hot water heater. The council does sweet FA for us except charge us rates. Our driveway is a private gravel road 4.5 klms long which we have to grade. We also have 55 acres of good barley acres 7klms away on which we keep our four horses.

All the above is the reason we came to Australia. We did not fancy a three bedroom semi in Lion Road, Bexleyheath so in 1962 we paid our ten quid and boarded the Canberra with 250 pounds in our pockets.

I worked for thirty years on the waterfront as a specialist electrician fixing Crupp cranes. Good job, good dough. In our spare time we started a driving school and built it up to employ up to eighteen instructors.

both conventional treatments and unconventional ones. Throughout he had always remained positive and even when told by the doctors there was nothing more that could be done, his characteristic dogged determined nature was apparent as he continued to actively pursue his interests to the end.



John was brought up in Dartford and like many of us, he failed his 11+ and went to Dartford West Secondary Modern School for two years before passing the 13+ exam. for Dartford Technical School in Wilmington. He was a hard working pupil and was justifiably rewarded with 10 GCEs at O Level and 6 at A Level. Whilst at the school he was a prefect for four years, the last two of which were as Head Boy. In addition he was captain of Cray House and the school Cricket Captain. After leaving school John went to Bristol University where he graduated with an Honours Degree in Physics and obtained his post graduate

teaching certificate. His first teaching post was at Eltham Green comprehensive school where he spent a couple of years before moving on to Forest Hill. John later moved to Charles Darwin School at Biggin Hill as Head of Physics. This was a brand new school with no pupils and as a passionate believer in comprehensive education, it was an opportunity and challenge which he seized with relish. After a relatively short period he became Head of Science and eventually Deputy Headmaster. In his mid fifties John took early retirement when he found the new headmaster's way of managing the school clashed with almost everything which he believed in. After retirement it was not long before he was asked to teach part time at two private catholic girls schools and surprisingly it was an experience he enjoyed.

John and I became close friends during our time at the school, a friendship which proved to be lifelong. We had many common interests, particularly sport and it was whilst at school that he persuaded me to start playing league table tennis, which I still do. John was Best Man at my wedding and gave a very witty speech. Speechmaking was something at which he excelled, always being able to find the right words for the occasion. John was passionate about teaching and had an intense dislike of selective schooling as he believed no child should be made to feel a 'failure', something he personally experienced. During term time he used to work late into the evenings to ensure all pupils in a mixed ability class reached their full potential. In school holidays he forgot teaching and 'disappeared', usually walking in the some remote hills. With this lifestyle it is not surprising that he married late in life at the age of 43. He met Mary at Charles Darwin School where she was a laboratory technician and they shared many common interests. Each year they used to have a winter holiday cross country skiing, going from hut to hut and village to village, usually in Scandinavia. John always dreamt of going to Antarctica and this ambition was realised, not long before he became ill, when he and Mary visited many of the areas on his hero Shackleton's route. Before meeting Mary he twice hiked across Iceland with a party of pupils and walked the Pennine Way.

Sport was one of John's main interests outside of school. He played sixty nine times for the Old Boys cricket team in the 1960s and I believe he also played for Eynsford on Sundays. He then took up orienteering and started the Darwin Forest Orienteering Club. With the starting of the London Marathon he switched to long distance running and it was not long before he was running the London Marathon fairly regularly. If I remember correctly his best time was under three hours. Even the marathon distance was not long enough and he twice took part in a London to Brighton race before moving on to the a twenty four hour race known as the 'ultra marathon' after which he was ranked 10th in the country. Apart from competitive running, on two or three days a week would run from his home near Knatts Valley (near West Kingsdown) to his school at Biggin Hill and back again in the evening. For most people 15 miles each way would have been too daunting to contemplate, particularly as the route was all up and down hill, but John even had a rucksack on his back as well. In retirement he played golf at Wrotham Golf Club.

and MPs. The fight went on for more than a decade but it was well worth it, as so many homes were saved and restored. Since then, no government has put up a scheme that would go through an urban community.

Simon was born in Hextable, Kent, the son of market gardeners, and educated at local schools. In the late 1960s, he pioneered Cablevision in Plumstead. From the early 1980s to the early 1990s, he was a presenter on the London news radio station LBC. His style and approach won him a substantial audience. But then, he was an outstanding speaker; I have seen him at public meetings in Docklands and Woolwich speaking, without notes, with great confidence and conviction on green issues.

After LBC, Simon worked as a trainer in radio techniques, often with people from ethnic minorities, and usually in the north of England. For the last decade he and his wife Carol lived in the west country. He worked for BBC Radio Cornwall, and was very proud of Carol when she became a Methodist preacher. Courageous and compassionate, Simon loved life, and he was a joy to know. He is survived by Carol and their 11-year-old son Alistair, the number one in their both lives.

John Goodwin - Tuesday May 15, 2007 The Guardian

John Yelding - 1961-1967

Cynthia Vinall, Wife of the late John Vinall (1957-1961)

Dear Dennis

I have received your newsletter. Unfortunately John passed away on the 14th March 2006 - he had just turned 60. He was at Dartford Tech from 1957 but I don't know when he left. I have some school reports but they are only for the years 1957 to 1958. John was in forms 1A and 2A (form master J.A. Robinson)

I note your letter in the mag about Bexley Tech for Girls and Hall Place. I was at Bexley Tech (Townley Road and Hall Place) from 1957. The first year we were at Hall Place because there was not enough room at Townley Road for us. We were the first year to use Hall Place and it was a lovely place to go to school. On Wednesday afternoons we had to walk (unescorted) along the A2 from Hall Place to Townley Road for cookery/needlework. Would not be allowed these days and I am not sure I would want to walk along there now anyway.

John David Sulsh - 1951-1955

Sad to report that 'JD' died on his 70th Birthday Cruise of the Caribbean. He and Carole departed England on 21st March, 2008, celebrated his birthday on the 27th, he suffered a first stroke the following day, then another and passed away on 4th April.

John (and I) served apprenticeships at Siemens Bros., Woolwich and specialised in telecommunications. The Company went through various ownerships, therefore name changes. But for a short break at Redifusion, he spent his working life with them until he retired, aged 58, having travelled the world as an expert on telephone cable systems, particularly submarine cable systems. In his younger years, 'JD' became a 5 handicap golfer and in his later years a competent lawn-green bowler - a passion we shared and played together.

John will be sorely missed *Bill Hollins - 1951-1955*

John Love 1961 - 1966

I regret to inform you of the death of Mr John Frederick Charles Love (on February 26th, 2007) who was a pupil at DTHS during 1961 to 1966. John was my close friend for over 45 years. We were in 1A then 2A then 3B, 4B and 5B together. We left to do A-levels at NWKCT in Miskin Road, each gaining three by 1968.

I hope this information is helpful to you in maintaining your excellent records.

Yours, Howard Ross-Parker

John Fitton 1955 - 1961

It is with great sadness I have to report the death of John Fitton on 10th July, just eighteen days short of his sixty sixth birthday. John had been battling bowel cancer for some three years undergoing

Ken King 1945-??

I don't know if this will reach Ray Scott or anyone else as I am not sufficiently computer literate to log in on the yahoo website. I thought I had jumped thru all the hoops correctly but no dice. I too attended DT in the Lowfield (gym, woodwork and metalwork shops). Many great games of basketball in the gym but not such happy memories of the other two. The move to Wilmington was a hoot and we prefects had the top floor to ourselves and in one scrimmage we set off a fire extinguisher which a quick thinking boy (Dave Pointer?) picked up and directed it out of the window without checking who was below. As it turned out only Mr. Harris' Jag was in the firing line. But enough of this as it might not reach any other really old boy. Surprised to hear that somebody still had their cap on their last day. In my day a senior boy grabbed it on your day and that was that. No caps worn after that until next years' new entry.

Adrian (Stan) Sutton 1967 - 1973

'Since I last wrote in 2002 I spent some time working in Helsinki in 2003 and 2004. I resigned my professorship at Oxford in December 2004 to take up a new post in London. I am now Professor of Nanotechnology at Imperial College in the Department of Physics, where I am also Head of the Condensed Matter Theory Group. In 2003 I was made a Fellow of the Royal Society, which is probably the biggest thing that has happened in my professional life.

Life is very busy but very good. However, my mother has advanced dementia and no longer knows me, and my father has Parkinson's disease. The end of life can be very lonely and very sad.

I saw Anton Syrocki at his 50th birthday party. We were great friends even before we went to the Tech, he one year before me. He hadn't changed a bit!

Bexley Technical School for Girls / Wilmington Manor

In 1946 Kent County Council purchased Wilmington Manor from the Trustees of the will of Sir Clarence Smith for £5,500.00.

In 1948 it was opened as the Wilmington Annexe to Bexley Technical School for Girls. The girls spent the first year of their time at the Manor and the balance at the School in Townley Road, Bexleyheath.

In 1957 Hall Place in Bexley was also used as an annexe to the school but it has subsequently been restored to its former glory as an historic building.

In 1959 Wilmington Manor became part of Dartford County Technical School for Girls.

The girls at Bexley Technical School wore a grey uniform and the girls at Dartford Technical School wore maroon.

Regarding the secret tunnel -

Iris Heddle, who was a student at the school in 1948 and later became a member of staff, reports:

"In 1970 the floorboards were taken up at the east end of the building for the laying of central heating pipes, a semi-circular brick structure was found leading through a low arch into the ground beside the house. A rumour raced through the school network that a secret tunnel to the boy's school had been found! After excavation it was decided that not even the smallest of year 7 could have squeezed through the opening and indeed would have been less than willing when it was found to be a sewage outlet. In 1976 the floorboards were taken up once again in that room and this time, slanting diagonally from west to east and by passing the earlier outlet, were several sections of hand made sewage pipes. Two sections were left in place".

Regarding members of staff. I am often amazed by the adulations that are poured on Maggie Mountjoy. I can only suggest that in her latter years she must have mellowed as in our days she was looked upon as the 'Iron Maiden' who dished out Saturday morning detentions willy-nilly. A strange form of punishment as a member of staff had to be present to supervise the 'naughty boys'.
George Whitehead 1950-53

Martin Beal - 1954-1958

My name is Martin Beal, a very old boy of the school. Recently I have been in touch with two other old Dartfordians (*Ed - No bad language please, Dartechs*) via Friends Re-united. They are Roger Wood and John Ince who were both in my year. (1954 – 1958) It sounds like a good idea to add my name and details to your database, so they are given below. Currently I'm living in Perth, Western Australia, no longer working and very involved with an Australian motorcycle club called The Ulysses Club. Hopefully this is enough info for you

David Stillaman 1962 - 1963

I note some 'Old Boys' asking after the origin of Mr Lawson's nickname 'Tut - tut'. As I recall, he was named after a character from the television series *Bootsie and Snudge*. Mr Lawson closely resembled one of the actors whose chief characteristic was to forestall interruption by repeating 'Tut - tut!'

I have good memories of Mr Denham, my English teacher (does anyone know what happened to him?).

We once put on a memorable version of 'Theseus' using glove puppets. The climactic battle in the last scene was usually punctuated by the papier-mache head of the Minotaur flying off and into the audience. I like to think it hit Jackabow.

Leslie Ashdown - 1948 - 1952

Hi Roy - Not sure you will remember me but I do remember you. I was in the same class as Brian Cogger and a complete nonentity except for holding the prestigious Discus record for many years. Reading your e-mail brings back memories of flying into New Z for 2 hours on my way to Melbourne to visit my brother in 1980. How time flies!

I am living in Devon with my Chinese wife of 12 years and wonderful daughter of 9 years. Talk about starting life again at 73 - I am a very lucky man.

This May '08, four of my old school colleagues went to the reunion, maybe you could come to next years?

Each year we go back to China during the school holidays, maybe one year we should drop off in NZ on the way. Please keep in touch and may be you will be able to identify a character in a photograph that Brian has, which he states is me but I am sure it isn't - mystery or is my mind going?

Ray Scott - 1945 - 1948

Hi Les - A Case of mistaken identity - me thinking that your e-mail to another Roy was actually intended for me, as I sometimes have been called Roy rather than Ray, my true name. I was in an earlier year at Dartford Tech., from 1945-48, so haven't managed contact with many contemporaries. However, since we seem to have a few things in common I thought it worth dropping a line. I live in Brighton with my Filipino wife of 14 years and our daughter aged 13; have a son and daughter from previous marriage; son and 3 grandchildren currently living in Melbourne, thinking of move to Sydney. We usually stop over in Philippines where we have a house, but have been thinking about a visit to China, but not during the Olympics invasion! Hobbies range from scuba diving and flying to veggie gardening and playing piano. Drop us a line if you have the time and inclination. Best wishes to you and yours.

Ray Scott

Derek Ford 1951

Hi, You may remember me struggling around in plaster for several months and on crutches. Later coming to school on a 1935, 250 BSA, but most of all being involved with the incident of the .22

I read Chris's email with interest and agree with his idea about recognition for the teachers who did their best to educate us in our formative years, they didn't get much at the time, well not by me anyway. I (like many I think) regard the 'blessed Margaret' as an inspiration, for me in English, French and History and without realising at the time kindled an interest in English and History that has stayed with me throughout my life. She tried hard to teach me French without much success but the grounding I obtained in grammar helped later when learning Spanish in Argentina where I spent the 70's.

Maggie seemed to me sometimes to have waspish tongue when dealing with boys' fallibility but reading a School Magazine of 1953 in which she wrote a piece on a typical French lesson I now see that a lot of it was humour, possibly satirical in a form made popular by Joyce Grenfell at that time. As a small point for accuracy I think Percy Black was a Geordie, I remember this as there was a boy in our class who was even less attentive than me in his punctuality and study, but as he came from the North East was treated by Percy more leniently than most.

Jim Garlinge 1952-1955

Yes, Percy Black was a Geordie and in my day was called Mr Frightener by us 'lads'. He had this name, behind his back of course although he probably knew it and I suspect rather liked the effect it created, because he had a habit of creeping up behind a boy who was not meeting Percy's high standards and then loudly close to one ear booming, "I'll frighten you lad, if you don't start paying attention." It usually worked.

I don't know how I ended up in the school choir as my wife tells me any singing I do is so painful it should be restricted to the bathroom preferably when the house is otherwise empty. I guess Mr Clare must have been desperate to get anyone if he thought I could sing.

I was directly involved in the move from the old college building to Wilmington Hall when I must say a great deal of fun was had by all on the day.

Anyone else remember the move and the human chain of excited boys which unloaded books, etc and conveyed them to the Hall and up the stairs?

At the age of about 30 I decided to visit the school when on my way through Kent. As I drove up to the front entrance I had just got out of the car when you came to meet me but Mr Wall himself. "Chessell, dear boy" he said, "How very nice to see you again. Do come in and tell everything you have been doing these past years". We went to his study and I was required to 'spill the beans'. Afterwards he took me into the staff room. Have you ever noticed how all the teachers seem to be getting younger? I was almost persuaded to address the top form about my RAF service but fortunately managed to escape on the pretext of another urgent appointment. I must say I was made very welcome and really enjoyed my visit meeting quite a few of my old masters and of course the teacher we all loved, Maggie.

Happy days.

Keith Chessell 1947 - 1951

OBITUARIES

Alan Riddington 1950-53

John Gough 1951-1954

Brian West 1946-1950

Simon Baines (1961-1966)

It is with great regret that I have to inform that Simon passed away last March (2007).

I spoke to his wife and she said that she would contact the school, but no doubt there are many more important matters to deal with.

Simon spent most of his married life in Cornwall, a place that he was extremely fond of.

Simon Baines

The radio presenter Simon Baines, who has died aged 57, saved Plumstead from a motorway. I first met him in the early 1980s at a south-east London meeting trying to stop that motorway from being built through local woods, and destroying several hundred homes.

Simon was a key campaigner for Plumstead against the River Crossing, confronting the Department of Transport. During the 12-month public inquiry at Woolwich town hall, he was invariably there, leaving no stone unturned, involving radio, television, the Greater London council, the EU, councillors

Sad that the old school building was demolished - it had a cosy, homely feel compared with the modern buildings.

David Benson 1954 - 57

I also remember Claire as I played the violin reasonably well. In fact Claire made me leader of the school orchestra soon after I arrived at the school. There I was all of 11 years old leading an orchestra which had boys of 16 and 17. He would pop his head into our Friday afternoon tutorials to fish me out for orchestra practice which took place in the canteen.

Unfortunately after a few years I succumbed to the ridicule of my classmates and gave up the violin.

Tony Carpenter (1956-1963)

As a student a year behind Keef I was always interested in music which is why I was in the choir unfortunately not a very good member of that or the classes I tried to avoid; however the music chosen by the Stones was and is still integral to probably all modern musicians today. They were leaders in their field and still are and as to not showing the "Right Stuff", as the saying goes 'Those were the days'.

Having been a muso in Oz since 1965 I can tell you all that it's bloody hard work just to keep on top of your contemporaries without all the youngies moving up trying to cut you out. Hours and hours of practice in the music room and the same with the band at the studio without earning a crust, it is hard work and I say to 'Keef' and the band "Well done, and keep it up for as long as possible".

True performing art Legends and a wonderful advert for any institution. *Rod Cronin 1955 - 1960*

Enjoyed reading some of the comments about Messrs Richards and Claire following my initial speculations as to where the Preserved One found his musical inspiration. Now it seems that some of the evidence coming to light suggests that a reassessment of the great man's work (Jake not Keef) is now in order.

I can't say that I had a lot of time for Jake when I was at school. He walked around in perfect time with his head slightly in the air and he had if I recall an air of exasperation about him. It didn't help that I had Mrs Jake for piano lessons, a combination it must be said that didn't lead to harmony on or off the keyboard. It seems that Jake spent his life trying to coax musicality from lumpen school boys where none existed. And teaching times table up to 20! What a saint, try telling that to the youth of today who can't multiply two numbers by two others even with the help of pen and paper. So no wonder the old maestro was a bit peeved at times.

Musing on this matter and others I suggest a Dart Tech teachers hall of fame. It's a game that others can take up if they wish. All the old suspects of course like the Blessed Margaret would get plenty of votes but I shall restrict myself to those teachers who actually taught me. So I shall first nominate Jake, not because he was my favourite mentor but because he never stopped trying. We listened to classical music in his theory lessons without it really going in and almost everyone I knew sang out of tune in his choir.

He was usually swimming against the tide and he never seemed to flag. Bravo

I shall also nominate Percy Black, a man I was unfairly accused of suggesting had a drink problem in the March 05 newsletter by Marion Miller. I most certainly did not write that and I suggest that Ms Miller reads my text from March 04 with a little more care. I didn't have a lot to do with the diminutive Scot but looking back he was always pleasant to me when our paths crossed. I remember him helping me make a thermometer after school and as a prefect he helped us run our affairs in a business like and efficient way. He was the back bone of the school for many years and I nominate him.

Anyone who read my March 04 piece will know that I have a soft spot for Uncle Tutters and Len Hollingsworth, so in they go as well.

Any more personal suggestions?

Chris Morrison 1964-1971

rifle ammunition! Due to the operation on my tendon and the bone graft on my left foot, my years in the engineering side of education were completely wasted. Following a bit of personal networking, I got a job with a stockbroker. Later I tried to get into the RAF, but failed the medical. When I later got my National Service call up papers and went along to Blackheath for the medical, I had the same flight sergeant and was treated to a little more dignity than the others. However I got Grade 4 and was rejected, but saw my friends Ben Banks and Barry (Flash) Mayheux join up. I used to knock around with Ben, Flash, Geoff Stanley and Peter Ross. I since learned that Barry later married Peter's sister in law. Ben banks became a teacher after being demobbed and is now retired and living in Lincolnshire. His sister contacted me via friends reunited and we occasionally swap emails. Feeling a little left out, I joined the Civil Defence as an ambulance driver and later became an instructor. They sent me to a Home Office school at Falfield Park near Bristol on a residential course and on my return promoted me to Platoon Officer (Lieutenant). On convoys I had a staff car and 18 ambulances to look after. This was all voluntary, although Bexley Council paid me about £2.10 an hour for teaching the effects of nuclear warfare and 7/6 an hour for teaching drivers to handle Landrovers with trailers and heavy rescue vehicles and ambulances. When C D was reorganised I became a Deputy Sector Control Officer in the HQ section and my HQ was the mansion in Danson Park.

I continued a career on the Stock Exchange and after 'Big Bang' was taken over by a merchant bank and a further take-over by Deutsche Bank from whom I retired at 52 with over 33 years service. On the plus side, they asked six of us to stay on to wind down the securities operations and paid us one and a half times our salary for a year, but on the down side there were no jobs going when we finished. As my area was dividends, corporate actions and company takeovers, I found another job with an American Stockbroker, but they made me redundant a few weeks before my 64th birthday after nearly 10 years service. At least I got another payment and pension from them. Part of my redundancy from Deutsche Bank was invested in an ancient house and 2 acres in Normandy. I sold that last year because one of my daughters moved to the south of France 7 years ago and we visit her quite often. I also have a son who lived in Germany for 20 years and moved to Denmark last year.

My hobbies are Boating and Diving and pistol shooting before it was banned. I started diving in 1960 when it was almost unknown and became an instructor with the BSAC (none of that PADI nonsense)! My last dives were 4 years ago on the Great Barrier Reef – 2 dives to 18M for 45 minutes with a decomp stop on the second. No wetsuit used a stab jacket for the first time and a dive computer. I now bore my grandchildren with the video of me surrounded by a dozen or so white tipped reef sharks – they don't know that they are harmless. In the UK we dive in poor vis usually on wrecks that are much more interesting. What my children will do with the live 18 pound shrapnel shells in my shed that I recovered from the Volnay in Cornwall when I pop my clogs is anyone's guess! I built a 14 foot marine ply fishing boat in 1967 powered by an 18 Evinrude. Some years later I swapped the Engine with a diving friend for a 50 Merc as he wanted a lighter engine for his inflatable. The plans had specified that the maximum engine size was 50hp, but it terrified me when it was opened up and I sold the outfit. The most memorable achievements were navigating an 8 metre diesel cruiser from Rochester to the Channel Islands with just a compass and radio - before Sat Nav became affordable. Working in Paris in 1987 to search for 1 Million francs of missing Michelin rights and taking the lady in my life to France by Concord and returning on the Orient Express – my son calls us Arkwright and Nurse Gladys Emmanuel because we have been going out together for 30 years and live next door but one to each other! My other main interest is Masonry and takes up quite a bit of my time. Not a lot to show for almost 70 years – except for my lovely family!

Graham (George) Crane - 1955 - 1960

Hi Dennis - Kicking a football around my garden lunch-time today with my Grandsons reminded me of the telephone call when Trevor Stevens contacted me saying he and others were forming an Old Boys Football team and was I interested.

I can remember we started our illustrious reign in the lowest division in the Sidcup & District League and within a short space of time we had to find our own pitch to play in the Kent Amateur Premier League. Our venue was at Gravesend and Northfleets stadium which we rented once a fortnight playing regularly in front on ten or twenty people mainly wives and girlfriends. During this time we ventured abroad at Easter time – Playing local teams around Blankenburg near Ostend chartering our own Aircraft from Lydd Airport near Dungeness. I could go into great detail as to some of the antics undertaken by these splendid fellows but as I was in the thick of it myself they shall remain our secrets.

Several names from this period training in the gym under the General- Alan Gregory- do you remember those plastic slimming things he wore? The best thing about training was afterwards in the public bar of The Foresters pub where all the good work in the Gym was quickly undone. Must mention the enjoyable Dances at the School and other gatherings plus the odd game of Cricket against the Staff

Names from the past

John Lane, Micky Jefferson, Dick Walker, Ray Kingsley, Pip Willcocks, Dave French, John Proctor, the late Terry Stevens, Trevor Stevens, Alan Siveyer, Micky Parkinson, Phil Crane to name a few and of course yourself.

Roy Jenner 1947 - 1949

Were any of you introduced to Edgar Allen Poe by way of Mr Wall's English precis as I was? The Cask of the Amontillado stands out over the years as Mr Wall made me look a right pratt as I asked too many questions about too many big words. And his appreciation of my drawings of the Solar System are also memorable. "What's this Jenner? It looks like a display of Christmas puddings" Good memories of Mr Black - Frightener - often referred to as Lead Black because of his chemical equation. Vividly remember him explaining that 'manners maketh man' and his reaction to my 6/100 for a chemistry test. (Not my best subject. The 6 probably being for a correct date and spelling my name the way it should be spelled. Four morning periods of German in the Westgate Road annex were

always interesting with Herr Altschul who was in the process of changing his name and title to Mr Andrews. Good man. Remember him well reciting 'eins - vei - drie' as 'die henne lagern(ed) ein ei' in a guttural tongue - and his frequent comments on my homework - 'Vot is zis for a nonesense?' A good man.. Happy days as Keith said and many names of co-students stick - like Fish - Levy - Johnson - the Jennings cousins and Marshal - Sandford - Reynolds - King and of course - Keith Chessell. Loved Miss Mountjoy, but hadn't reached the fantasy stage as at 13 I was recovering from the effects of Miss Hobbs at Dartford East.

Great memories 60 years down the track.

Memories of 'Jake' Claire

Hardly dull, me thinks. He hammered the times tables into me up to 20 X 20 Because of him I remember vividly a day when 9 X 13 was and still is 117. In '47 we called him Calire de Loony. Keef was probably still sampling the crumbs in the bottom of his pram when I was conscripted to the choir.. What would he have been? Humour and distraction in the choir? Of course. What else was it for? One evening we were preparing for a music festival to be held in the girls' school in Shepherds Lane. Mr Claire brought his dog to the gym - a beagle type dog I seem to recall - and

used the piano stool as a hitching rail. This was the first time I got expelled from the choir. Our noble leader (lovely man) had gone off to the toilet and being a dog lover in his absence I coaxed the animal across the floor, the width of the gym, to where the choir was gathered as obedient as ever. Dog obliged - stool and all. It was a long walk in the rain to the 480 bus stop in Spital Street and my bus had just turned the corner when a fellow choir member arrived in my wake telling me Mr Claire had had a change of heart and wanted me back. It seems the choir was too much of a challenge without me. I've many pleasurable memories of DTC. This is just one.

Roy Jenner

I remember choir practice only too well. We sung with great gusto and wildly flat " Begone dull Claire" does nobody but me remember this grand highlight of schoolboy humour?

I also was learning (?) to play the violin (lessons courtesy of my father who really could play one) but I hated it and Claire used to hunt me down during lunch break to extract a few more unwilling squeaks. When I look back I think how hard he tried to improve such unwilling (and in my case unsuitable) minds.

Certainly put me off thinking about teaching for life.

Roger Brown.

Is that the Brown - Hovis I remember ?

If so, I do recall the screeches were of a superior quality to my own - they only ended with the return of the violin to Jake. My next try was a double base with which I recall doing some damage to his foot. That was nearly the end of my musical career.

The final end came with a choir outing, from memory to some prestigious gathering of Schools in London at which our singing came a very honourable and distinctive last.

Chris Wood

1956-1961

Yes, I have a vague memory of the choir being started by Mr. Claire and everybody being auditioned. Hardly anybody from our class wanted to be chosen and so tried to sing out of tune. Nonetheless I was chosen. Don't remember what we sang though. I also remember Mr. Claire trying to start a music appreciation group and playing Sibelius - Valse Triste and Finlandia. Must have been in my last year. I also remember the first tennis tournament, but the less said the better.

Ken King

1945-1947

Like KR, I too joined the choir to get out of lessons - history with Maggie in my case. I can't recall many incidents at school but I do remember an occasion in the canteen with Jake. Must have been getting ready for some big concert as he had wheeled Mrs Jake in to play the piano while he conducted. He was standing on one end of a canteen bench and she was seated on the other end playing the piano. Some altercation occurred between them, probably a wrong note, wrong key or wrong speed and she decided enough was enough and got up to leave. Don't think Jake realised that he was standing on the end of the bench as he slowly sank to the floor - bit like a Tom & Jerry Cartoon - saluting as the ship sinks. This was followed by our complete inability to sing a note without laughing - not that many of us could actually sing and suspect most joined to get out of some lesson or other.

When I started, as a 13 year old, in 1954 the lower part of the main sports field was cordoned off for building the first new block to add space for the 11 year old intake, of which KR was one of them. Looking at Google Earth I guess this is the block with the light coloured roof parallel to Common Lane. The sports fields up by Broad Lane were cornfields used by Jack-a-Bow-Legs and the AG boys.