

- 1993 Renovation of the Library. Extensive investment in Information Technology (with financial support from the P T A)
- 1994 Refurbishment of the Science Laboratories with a capital grant from the Department for Further Education  
September - 550 boys on roll.
- 2004 September - School designated as an Engineering Specialist School
- 2006 July - Retirement of Mr B N Titterington (Headmaster since 1991)  
Appointment of Mrs F Cottam as Head Teacher
- 2006 1<sup>st</sup> November - Opening of “The Evans Building” a new teaching block named in honour of Ken Evans, a governor of the school from 1978 - 2004.
- 2009 Resignation of Mrs F Cottam.
- 2010 Mr Andy Williamson appointed Head Teacher  
*KCC announce plans for the Wilmington Enterprise College, previous known as Wilmington High School on the neighbouring site, to be renamed again as the Wilmington Academy and form part of the Leigh Academy Trust. There is a suggestion that the buildings, many of which date from 1972, might be demolished with new building provided.*

This is likely to have some affect on Wilmington Grammar School.

This summary is based upon an initial summary published in the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the Newsletter in November 1994 and has been updated as appropriate.

For further information about the history of the school see details elsewhere in this newsletter.

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A couple of our Age Groups have asked us to advertise this year:

The Class of 1970 are having a re-union at the 2010 Annual Dinner on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May. So if you joined in September 1970 come along for a beer and celebrate 40 years.

Contact: Clive Stringer - [clive\\_stringer@hotmail.com](mailto:clive_stringer@hotmail.com)  
or Jamie Hillman: [Jamie.hillman@bt.com](mailto:Jamie.hillman@bt.com) for details.

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The Class of 56 crosses the 65 years of age milestone. Seems like a good idea to celebrate this occurrence with one’s contemporaries who remember when we were “fleet of foot”.  
[tonycarpenter2@gmail.com](mailto:tonycarpenter2@gmail.com)

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All members and wives/partners are welcome to the Afternoon Tour, the Annual General Meeting and the Dinner. There will be other age groups attending so hopefully you will find other members of your Age Group present, as usual we have members who travel many miles to be here so please make every effort to attend yourselves.

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*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 24

MARCH 2010



**17th ANNUAL REUNION DINNER & A.G.M.**

***on Saturday, 8th May, 2010***

We have invited **David Edgington 1955-1958** 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.**

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**18th ANNUAL REUNION DINNER & A.G.M.**

***on Saturday, 14th May, 2011***

Our Guest of Honour to be  
decided

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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 2011 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

- 1964 Building programme commences.  
Assembly Hall, Dining Hall and staff offices in use.
- 1965 New Science Laboratories, Staffroom, Library, Classrooms and Gymnasium now in use
- 1967 Reorganisation of Secondary Schooling announced. The Boys and Girls Technical Schools on either side of the road were to be merged and there would be a substantial building programme to create a mixed comprehensive school catering for upwards of 2,000 pupils.
- 1969 Kent Education Committee now plans four 11-18 comprehensive schools in Dartford. Wilmington will house the boys' school. Strong local opposition.
- 1971 Demolition of Wilmington Hall (except for the stables), in order to commence the first half of an extension to house the new school.
- 1972 Kent Education Committee. (K E C) withdraws its original plan and decides to convert the new buildings for the creation of an 'interim' mixed non-selective school - the Wilmington Secondary School.
- 1974 The new school is opened with Mr J D Edgeler as Head of both schools following the departure of Mr Mogford.
- 1976 Formation of the Parent Teachers Association (P T A).
- 1979 As a result of the falling birth rate, only two forms of entry are available.
- 1980 Joint working of a Sixth Form timetable with Dartford Girls' Tech.
- 1982 K E C announces a plan to change the nature of the school.
- 1983 Mr Edgeler remains as Head of Wilmington High School (the renamed Wilmington Secondary School).  
Mr D B Thomas is appointed Head of Dartford Technical High School for Boys.  
1<sup>st</sup> September - Dartford Technical High School for Boys is renamed Wilmington Grammar School for Boys.
- 1984 K E C announces a second plan to change the nature of the School.
- 1987 K E C announces a plan to close the School.  
Formation of an Action Group.
- 1989 First vote on whether to seek Grant Maintained status-defeated.  
Chairman of K E C tells the Staff "please don't let it go - you're safe with us".
- 1990 K E C announces a plan to close the School.  
A mere 21 pupils start in the first year.  
Governors recommend seeking Grant Maintained status.  
Parents and Staff give full backing. Action Group reaches a peak of lobbying.
- 1991 (January) Announcement that Grant Maintained status would apply to our School from April 1991.  
School roll - 307.  
(December) - retirement of Mr D B Thomas as Head Teacher, following the appointment of Mr B N Titterington in September.
- 1992 School has a four-form entry for the first time since 1957.

After the newly-wed Theresa left the show to raise a family it was left to Patrick to come up with a new dance each week for the top-rated show. Such dances as the Mod and the Block were either dances he'd picked up from visiting such hip London mod clubs like the Scene or were the product of his own inventiveness.

In 1964, Kerr left the show for a brief stint as a pop singer under the guidance of Adam Faith and Sandie Shaw's manager, Eve Taylor. He released one single, a cover of Bacharach and David's "Magic Potion" and toured the UK on a package with Faith, Shaw, The Barron Knights and The Paramounts, who later became Procol Harum.

Returning to Ready, Steady, Go! as both dancer and presenter alongside Cathy McGowan, Kerr was, by now, friends with most of the key faces of Swinging London including Paul McCartney, Jane Asher, Tara Browne, Pete Townshend and Brian Jones, with whom he co-wrote an unreleased song. He and Theresa even had their own Pimlico boutique, Hem and Fringe, on Moreton Street.

After RSG! ended in 1966, Kerr joined a latter day version of harmony trio the Ivy League, and after eventually relocating to Cambridge, he and Theresa opened their first dance studio in 1978. Thanks to the Saturday Night Fever craze, the operation was an instant success and continued to grow into the thriving Bodywork Company Dance Studio, which is now part of the government's prestigious Dance and Drama Awards Scheme, training future dancers and singers for West End productions.

Kerr is survived by his wife, four children and eight grandchildren. - Andy Neill  
*Patrick Kerr, dancer, choreographer, teacher and singer: born 20 February 1941; married Theresa Confrey (four children); died 15 August 2009.*

We were notified by David Benson (1954-1957)

### **Sixty Years at Wilmington.**

This year, marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of lessons at the site off Common Lane in Wilmington.

The following records some of the significant events over that time.

1949 The Dartford County Technical School for Boys is established on sites at Essex Road and Lowfield Street Dartford, prior to a formal move in December that year to Wilmington Hall - a large country house, with magnificent grounds.

1950 Lessons start at Wilmington Hall, although use is still made of sites in Dartford.

1956 The first new buildings erected on the site.

1957 First year entry of 120 pupils. Only year in which there was a 4 form entry until 1992

1961 Last of the 'Ag' (agricultural) stream students leaves.

1962 Dartford County Technical School renamed Dartford Technical High School.

1963 (December) Retirement of Mr L V Wall, first Headmaster of the School

1964 (January) Mr J A Mogford new Headmaster

Introduction of 'A' level studies in the Humanities and Languages, thus making the School more like a Grammar School.

### **Clive Read 1954-56**

Along with around 70 other 'old boys' and partners, I revisited Wilmington Hall (as was) and left with a warm glow.

After collecting our name badges on arrival, I found myself on the bottom row of the school panoramic picture of 1952, but it was my wife who recognised me on the top row, a year later. I still cannot find myself on the photos of those who had brought sporting excellency to the school!!

The AGM was attended by more people than when I was there in 2007, but more than 60% of those who attended the Dinner, decided to stay reminiscing with chums at the bar, or arrived in time for the meal. ODWA Chairman Dennis Wells walked us through the Agenda, paying tribute to an old boy who had offered to serve on the committee last year but then suffered ill health. There were two new volunteers this year.

The accounts for the year 2008/9 were explained by Keith Potter, the Treasurer, and showed a surplus of £230 with the main item being the Reunion Dinner. The 'Honour Board' that ODWA had financed each year, to record those who went on to University, would run-out this year and not only would 5 or 6 new one's be expensive, but those already on the wall would need to be repositioned. Before the evening was over, one old boy had made a substantial donation towards the cost.

Those who had served the Committee so well, for many years, were thanked and deserve our thanks, as well.

### **Reunion Dinner**

Catering has grown into a greater problem each year, with uncertainty of numbers - some not confirming until numbers had been given to the caterers, but the decision to invite a lady from Sevenoaks to supply the food was a great success, though there are bound to be suggestions for improvement for next year.

Three 6th form (potential Old Boy's) waited on table, two with long blonde hair and far more shapely than in previous years, reflecting the fact that girls can now apply for 6th form places.

There was plenty of time between courses for exchange of memories (some of mine appear to have been imagination or fantasy) but I was fortunate to be sitting opposite Gerald Pontin, whose memory is fantastic and it is important that he be encouraged to contribute to the School History that Keith Potter is compiling.

Gerald asked me to find something for him. As I do not know his eMail address, I can only hope he reads this: <http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/m/o/d/modelchu.htm>

Fiona Cottam welcomed everyone, and then explained that after a 3-year term in which she had realised why the School was regarded with such high esteem by old boys. I think Fiona said that there had been 140 applications from external students to join the 6th-form, including 49 girls - instead of the 3 this year. More than 100 families had appealed against the decision that their child could not be allocated a place in September. There were currently 900 students and funds for the second stage of the Evans Building had been allocated, to create a purpose-built home for the 6th form. Fiona said that she, her husband and 7 year-old son would be relocating to Dubai, where she would be responsible for the Wellington Academy, that would open in September

Bryan Hyland spoke about the need for sponsors for small teams of 4 or 5 students to be

introduced to engineering and said that his own company's involvement, currently in the region of £3,500 a year, was regarded as a sound and sensible investment, with one student now at University and, if they took him on in 2-years time, their investment for 'someone with whom we know shares our values' will have been less than paying an Agency to fill a vacancy.

There is such an abundance of audio equipment in the Assembly Hall, that I hope - next year - the speakers can have access to a microphone. No disrespect was intended, but as people commented on what had just been said, those around them missed the next episode. To close the evening, Trevor Stevens had listeners rolling about hysterically (or glaring in disapproval) - dressed in short skirt, stockinged legs and bulging jumper - he walked listeners through his time at Wilmington Hall. It was so entertaining that I asked if he would send me a copy by eMail, so that I could share it with this Group. If he does - I will.

Next year's reunion will be on 8th May (the Day of Europe if anyone in the UK is interested) and the patience of former RI teacher David Edgington will be rewarded, as he will be the Guest Speaker.

I'm looking forward to it, already. Well done lads!!

The raffle made a surplus of £185.

#### **Alan Whiteland - 1953-1956**

Thank you for the Newsletter No 23. It is great that I can still be touch with the school and you. I am still living in Finland (now 14 years almost) and have recovered completely from a triple artery heart bypass in August 08. I am back to football coaching and now take care of two teams, 10 and 11 year old boys. It takes my mind of housework!!!

I opened the MS word attachment without problem and saved it, but now have to erase the email (I saved the contents) as it added 15% to my small mail box.

Once again I will be unable to come for the dinner, but maybe next year

#### **Andrew Prewer 1950 - 1954**

To all who may remember me in Thames house. Joined the Army at 15. Spent 25 years in the Royal Artillery. Saw a lot of the world at tax payers expense. Left army in 79 joined Prison Service. Drove me almost to extinction. Retired early and became a house husband. OAP since 2004 and now a proud owner of a Photo Driving licence. If anyone does remember me then please get in touch.

#### **Brian Hyland 1956 - 1963**

Hi Dennis, may I report what's been happening and the '56 chaps ideas for the future - there is always a flurry of things after a reunion but it often dies again! We had a good meeting on Sunday 1st March, despite the weather closing in that afternoon. 11 chaps and some wives attended - the list is shown below and also shows those that I have re-established good contacts and can eventually update your registers.

Final list of old boys for tomorrow at Horse & Groom, 17 including myself - a good number for the first meeting for some time. Perhaps having at least your first name on a

several of our old masters. Many had nick names. Mr. Wall was indeed the Head Master and Mr McKetnie (probably spelt wrong) was the principal at the time. Later Dr Gyngell became principal. He was a Chemist and later in 1947 I was the laboratory assistant in the Chemistry Department working under Mr Barr and Mr Brunskill, this meant that I was seated on the Staff Dinner table in the Canteen. I always tried to sit next to Mr McCaskill a wily Scot and a very interesting man. He used to teach not only Physics but also Religious Instruction. He was so gifted that he worked from a Greek Bible and translated en route. He taught me to think positively - Positive Mental Attitude - other thoughts were a waste of time he said. Margaret Mountjoy married during my time there and she was really beautiful and was an Ice Skating Star at Streatham ice rink in London. I have not been to Dartford since my family moved to Sellindge, nr Hythe am married and I live in Folkestone. Pam and I celebrate our Golden Wedding anniversary in March. I will close now and if interested in old memories, may contact you again.

#### **OBITUARY**

It is with great sadness that I regret to inform you of the sudden death of my brother Timothy John Keneston who died of a heart attack on 27th June just two weeks after his 55th birthday. I don't think he ever joined the old boys association although I did tell him about it when it first started up. He had lived in Australia for over 30 years and leaves his wife Alison and three children Charlotte, Harriet & Toby. I know your site through my husband Ian Dennis (1969-1974) and I myself attended Dartford Tech for girls as did my sister Sally. Tim attended the 'Tech' from 1965 - 1970 and I believe he was a bit of a character and fairly well known (for all the wrong reasons!). I remember his stories of various teachers - Mr Mogford, 'Percy' Black, Mr Austen, Mr Gough & Mr Daly to name just a few. Also of the various antics he and his friend got up to whilst at school. I'm sure there will be many of your 'old boys' who will remember Tim as he was such a larger than life chap and was also over 6ft 6in tall. He will be very sorely missed by all of his family and the many, many friend that he had made both in Australia and over here in the UK.

Yours sincerely Joanna Dennis

#### **Patrick Kerr - 1954-1957**

For any self-respecting teenager in the mid 1960s, tuning into Rediffusion's Friday night pop show Ready, Steady, Go! to watch Patrick Kerr demonstrate the latest "in" dance craze was an essential weekend ritual.

Originally starting out as a guitarist in his native south London, Kerr turned to dancing full-time with his girlfriend and future wife, Theresa Confrey. The two regularly appeared on Radio Luxembourg programmes such as Muriel Young's Friday Spectacular before being offered work teaching dancing on a cruise ship to Central America and the United States. Returning to London in 1963 as the beat boom was taking off, they were hired by RSG! boss Elkan Allan to demonstrate the dances they'd picked up in America such as the Bossa Nova and the Hitch Hike.

areas. So, for example, after the Balkan wars of the 1990s he took a leading part in the rebuilding of Pristina power-station in Kosovo. Bombing put it out of action, he says, so it's right that we should restore it. His current consultancies include a project to repair the thermal power station at Bulawayo, which is potentially a key part of the solution to Zimbabwe's energy crisis, and could also produce enough electricity to share with neighbouring countries. But there's no money to pay for it, and Bernard is now negotiating with international development agencies to raise funds. Considering that he is – at least in theory – retired, he is immensely energetic and his commitment is as great as ever. Bernard is a highly successful and internationally reputed engineer, who uses his business achievements and resources to help others, particularly in the developing world. He is rightly described as 'a true unsung hero of our day'. Pro-Chancellor, I have the honour to present Bernard Roberts, and ask you to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Engineering, honoris causa.

### **John King - 1950-1953**

Found the odwa quite by chance-I was a pupil from 1950 to 1953, thereafter completing an engineering apprenticeship, eventually becoming a design engineer on the North Sea Oil Rigs residing in Aberdeen. Retirement now & resident in Manchester & enjoying my sport of cycling at the velodrome here. Am keen to attend the annual dinner in May; how do I access the booking form on the website? Look forward to your reply.  
Very Best Regards, John King

### **Rhoda Windiate-Blackmore - 1943 - 1949**

I thought I had better let you know of the following office staff who've 'popped their clogs' over the past year or so - though it is rather doubtful if many of the younger 'Old Dartechs' would have known them.

Jack HAMMOND, who was the first College Registrar, died in March last year; he came to the College in 1947 and stayed for eight years. He was from Rochester and in his early 90s when he died.

Doris BELCHER, who, when I married in 1957, took over my post as Secretary to the then Registrar, Lawrence BRYANT. Doris died last year aged 81.

(Gladys Blowers, 87 this year and myself, still totter on, plus Rita Swain (nee Lee) and possibly Marjorie Leonard - as was).

Dr Eric S Gyngell, Principal of the College during 'my time' died in 1979 aged 77, while Laurence Bryant, Registrar, died in 1995 aged 80.

Am looking forward to reading the latest ODWA publication!

### **Alex Edwards 1943-1946**

I attended the Technical College from 1943 until 1946. I recently had an e-mail from an old class friend who lives in New Zealand and between us we recalled the names of

sticky label somewhere in view may help jog memories! It will be good to see you all. Just a reminder that the kitchens are still not finished at the pub so instead of the usual Sunday roast it will be sandwiches, jacket potatoes etc. regards Brian

*Indicated they were coming*

Robert Deal; Ralph Smith; Brian Oliver; Mike Samuel; Ken Rawlinson; Dave Perkins; Dennis Wells (possibly); Tony Nash; Roger Hammond, Michael Lyons; Malcolm Bourne; Tony Clark; Colin Archer; Chris Wood; John Woodard

*Responded but not able to come.*

Innes Simpson (working) Terry Staples (lives Vancouver); Mike Sutton (on holiday); Peter Ferrer (lives USA); Bob Crighton (flying to USA that day); Mike Parkinson (lives New Zealand); Roger Russell (lives Wiltshire); David Budd; Roger Brown (Somerset); David May; Tony Carpenter; Tony Blair; Mike Bartle; Nigel Bourne. *I'm not clear whether coming or not - Bob Salmon*

It was agreed that we will have a once a year function at the Horse and Groom, which I will organise - I've more time now I have retired. We agreed to keep this well apart from the May school annual dinner so November is the agreed month - I will fix the date soon and at the moment will probably make it Sunday the 8th. Most of the chaps have said they miss the annual Dennis newsletter so I suggested that it wouldn't happen unless they wrote and submitted some more stories, whether it be about life at school or later. The chaps come out with amazing stuff at the reunion but don't put in down in text for you. I'll work on them.

Re the May dinner, the 1956 group haven't organised anything special but have promised to do so next year - Tony Carpenter is keen to do this even though he lives in Italy. He's gone quiet since he volunteered but again I will chase him. There's no reason why we shouldn't have at least a 30 strong contingent next year. Over the next few months I will gradually try to re-establish contact with another 35 or so where I have physical addresses or phone numbers, from my old records and supplied previously by yourself.

School project sponsorship. You may know that my firm Scott Wilson sponsors a lower sixth project team at the school. We provide between £3k and £4k of funding in conjunction with the Engineering Schools charity which enables the school to fund a team of 4 or 5 boys to encourage them into an Engineering career. We provide a real project - the brief and mentoring support, sometimes materials for model building and lay on visits to our design offices and where appropriate construction sites. I occasionally meet at the school with the students and we also correspond via e-mail. The students have a workshop for 3 days at University, prepare a detailed report and model, and have an end of term award day where they have to prepare an exhibition stand of their work, make a powerpoint presentation to examiners and are assessed on their overall performance. Currently around 20 schools are involved from Kent and Essex. What do Scott Wilson get out of this. The satisfaction of giving something back to society and in the commercial sense a demonstration of our involvement in the community - nowadays a contractual requirement if one tenders for work on such major schemes for Transport for London or Crossrail. We also hope we may eventually gain staff that like us so we don't have to recruit. Now the reason for adding this to this mail is that at the annual

dinner there must be many in employment who had fond memories of the school and may be able to contribute to the schools engineering education scheme in a similar way.

Having run the scheme at Wilmington for three years, there is clearly scope for more than one team. Would there be an opportunity for a brief mention of this at the annual dinner? I wouldn't want to intrude on the guest of honours speech but could keep it brief and add some humour. What do you think Dennis - are you already fully organised for this May?

### **Peter Mucci - 1955-1961**

I went on from having a great time at Dartech to do a student apprenticeship at the RAE (Royal Aircraft Establishment) where apart from fantastic training I got involved in all sorts of stunts (those living in Kent in the late 1960's may remember the 'spacecraft' that 'landed' on Dartford marshes!) From RAE I did a short stint in an engineering firm then off round the world with a backpack and tent. On my return I got a research post at Imperial College and went on to do a post-graduate degree in design. From there to STC at Greenwich and then back to Dartford as a director of Apex the chemical engineers in Kent Rd. I then got a lectureship in design at Southampton University and started a research group in design and published a book on the subject with the BSI. I became Director of the Southampton University MEng (undergraduate masters) course and was elected a Fellow of the IMechE and the RSA. By now I had got a few patents in design and was seconded to work at the DTI advising the Government on intellectual property and design and published another book sponsored by the DTI. Whilst there I soon learnt of the plans for student fees for the HE sector and tried to influence the Government to pay more attention to innovation and design as I saw a need for a revival in manufacturing industry.

At the time my research was into solar energy and was bearing fruit so I patented the idea, left the University, put my money where my mouth was and started up a company. We have now licensed the product to the Marley Group and it is known as the 'Marley Solar Tile', licensed from our company Powertile Ltd.

I don't think a single month has gone by from my time at Dartech to now when I haven't been involved in engineering drawing and design and enjoyed every moment of it - so Drawing Office Jim must have done something right! The other teacher that really inspired me was Mr Bates but I have not seen him mentioned in the newsletter. My work with engineering students, graduates and industrialists across a wide range of disciplines has convinced me that Dartech was a very special place. I remember once at the DTI discussing the future needs of technical education and being challenged by the Good and the Great; "So Mr Mucci, exactly what type of school are you proposing?" I described in detail what type of courses should run and the facilities needed. Raucous laughter followed by the usual mocking 'in your dreams', was brought to a sudden halt when I told them I was actually describing my school!

I now live just outside Southampton with my wife Elaine and in our spare time we very much enjoy working on our big garden which we are gradually turning back into natural woodland.

from the back of his car. He later graduated to a second-hand truck in which he lived for weeks at a time, buying and selling castings and boiler parts.

Marben now has two manufacturing facilities on the South Coast and a distribution centre in the Midlands. It is still very much a family business, based on a small but close-knit team. It has achieved great commercial

success, and in the depths of the recent recession its order-books remained full. The company says 'we can make anything' (and it does, from structural beams to stainless steel fittings and fixtures) but the name of Marben is still mainly known in connection with boiler plants for power stations. Because it stocks over 800 tons of spare parts it can immediately supply equipment to rectify power breakdowns anywhere in the world. Its markets include France, Iran, India, Kosovo, South Africa, Sudan, Svalbard and Zimbabwe. For the past 20 years all three international giants of the power-station world, Babcock and Wilcox, Rolls Royce Combustion and Alstom, have looked to Bernard as the leading national expert on boiler plants and consult him in their major projects around the world. Other major engineering companies such as the former Central Electricity Generating Board, Northern Ireland Electricity, ICI, Cadburys, Rover, Courtaulds and British Sugar have all turned to him as a consultant, and as their sole supplier for specialist equipment. Indeed, Marben is the only UK manufacturer of stokers, essential parts without which power station boilers cannot work. In 1994, Marben was awarded a contract, funded by the World Bank, to refurbish three power stations in Zimbabwe. Bernard found Zimbabwe an eyeopening experience, and was particularly struck by the needs of communities lacking water, and of children in particular. He saw a school in which 15 children would share a single stub of a pencil in their lessons. Before the school day started they would walk eight kilometres to a well, and eight kilometres back, to get buckets of water. The water was dirty, and children and teachers regularly died. Bernard's immediate response, as an active lifelong member of the Salvation Army, was to use its international networks to raise funds and start projects. One borehole and pipe, originally dug to supply that isolated school, now provides clean water for 22,000 people in the nearby village of Seula. Many other projects followed, and Bernard tells moving stories of lives and communities changed, and success built on success: water; crops; goats; wool; clothing for sale in the markets; and so it goes on. He has also raised charitable funding to repair and equip hospitals, and to build churches, which for many are the only source of help in Zimbabwe's humanitarian crisis.

Bernard is passionate about education at all levels. He has sponsored and promoted the education of many orphaned children. Working with Dr Ven Tauringana, a member of staff in this University, he has given immense support to Africa University, a Pan-African university at Mutare. Many BU academics, and our Students' Union, have supported his scheme to provide textbooks – over 3,000 so far – for students who cannot afford these things which we so easily take for granted. Although he is very much at home in Zimbabwe, where he regularly braved the dangers of travel in the bush, Bernard is a true international, and his work has covered many other countries, and particularly troubled and war-torn

moved here and works in the local junior school where I have been a governor for twelve years and also where I am a voluntary helper.

**Bernard Roberts - 1948-1951** (supplied by Brian Cogger 1948-1951)

Bernard Roberts attended our school from 1948 to 1951. In November 2009 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Engineering by The University of Bournemouth.

If anyone is interested, they can view the award ceremony on line at: [www.bournemouth.ac.uk/graduationstream](http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/graduationstream). The 1030am event on the 3rd November. Bernard was the second recipient after the Paralympic cyclist. Alternatively read the following details citation.



Bernard Roberts - **Doctor of Engineering** - Tuesday 3 November - Morning Ceremony  
Bernard Roberts is the founder and Chief Executive of Marben Engineering Co Ltd, a Ferndown based company which makes and supplies boiler technology equipment for power stations around the world. As a leading international specialist in boiler engineering, Bernard's expertise is much in demand and he has played key technical roles in many high profile power-supply projects, many in developing countries. These have led him into extensive charitable work, most notably in Zimbabwe where he has organised many relief projects and has supported schools, universities, hospitals and churches.

Bernard Roberts is the founder and Chief Executive of Marben Engineering Co Ltd, a Ferndown-based company which makes and supplies boiler technology equipment for power stations around the world. As a leading international specialist in boiler engineering, Bernard's expertise is much in demand, and he has played key technical roles in many high-profile power supply projects, often in developing countries. These have led him into extensive charitable work, most notably in Zimbabwe where he has organised numerous relief projects and supported schools, universities, hospitals and churches.

Bernard grew up in a working-class suburb in Kent during the 1930s, and through World War 2, which brought tragedies to his family and neighbours. He left school without formal qualifications but inherited his father's talent for engineering and took an apprenticeship at a refrigeration engineering company in Dartford. He worked in the drawing office but promotion came too slowly there, so he moved to the Illinois Stoker Company of Great Britain where he quickly became chief design draughtsman, and the first contract was to build the power station at the Llanwern Steel Works in South Wales. Illinois built boiler plants until the early 1960s when it gave up this work in the belief that it had no future. Working for companies associated with coal-fired power stations, Bernard quickly saw a market niche for a specialist UK company supplying stokers, the firing mechanisms for boilers in this industry. In 1972 he took a calculated risk and formed Marben Engineering. Initially he worked alone, making castings and selling them

**Lester Hearnden - 1951 - 1955**

Having just received the old boys magazine No 23, I was saddened to read of the death of John Sulsh. He was one of my very good friends from school, along with Bill Hollins, David Foreman, Tony Renouf, and quite a few more on that 1951 intake.

Most of the gang played sport and I think we are in the 1951 football team photograph along with Ted Harper.

I have seen David Foreman in the last couple of years as I visited him in Brisbane, Australia. He is now living there. I still keep in contact with Tony Renouf. I have not been in contact with Bill Hollins for a number of years, and was hoping you could let me have his home address, or E-Mail address, so that I might contact him.

I am thinking of visiting Kent this year to see friends that I have not seen for ages, and was hoping to contact Bill.

I will try and dig out some photographs from the mid 50s and E Mail them to you, if you think they may be of interest.

**Roger Wisbey - Ag 1952 - 1955**

I was one of the very few that having taken the Agricultural, left to pursue a Farming Career, Sadly realized that as a Labourer. I would never raise the cash for my own farm and left to enter the Entertainment Industry via Granada Cinemas soon being made redundant due to the increased competition from Television.

Inspired by an old Classmate, Alan Hanson who was in the Royal Navy, I signed up for the Merchant Navy where I enjoyed 5 years rising to a Leading Hand on the Catering side, and seeing most of the world, before leaving to open my own Cafe in Bexleyheath, where after enjoying 5 exhausting but fun years. I left to open one of the early Young Mens Fashion shops in Herne Bay Kent/.

After 5 years in the trade I married my lovely Wife Wrennie and we have enjoyed 37 very happy years together with a Daughter Lisa (Nurse) and Son William (soon to enter the Church)

I was most fortunate to be in fashion during all the Crazy Happy Rock-n-Roll years, and with Wrennies flair and support our business grew , and with our customers invited ran Jazz Picnics and other events supported by the best musicians from Ronnie Scott through to Digby Fairweather.

I retired 10 years ago, and since then have concentrated on painting, some of which maybe viewed on my website listed below if anyone's interested. Still in touch with old classmate friend David Jones, and considering myself a very fortunate man. Hoping the same applies to all of my old School Friends. ([www.rogerwisbey.co.uk](http://www.rogerwisbey.co.uk))

**Patrick Hawe - 1949 - 1953**

Dennis. I have got around at last to sending my details. I learned about the website from Bernard Therin (a contemporary) in 9/08: altho' I looked at the site I did no more. What has prompted me now is a visit at our church on Thursday of Rod Taylor, who may have been at the school in your time.

Just to say that my 1st career was in insurance. Then in 1972 I went to London Bible

College (which would surprise those who knew me in my 1st year at the school!). I was then a minister at 4 evangelical churches from 1975 onwards, before my wife and I retired to New Milton in 2004.

## **DARTFORD COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOL / WILMINGTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

January 2010 marked the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the start of lessons in Wilmington.

To mark that occasion, a “history” of the school is being prepared. It will include references to its various incarnations from Dartford County Technical School, then as Dartford Technical High School through to the present Wilmington Grammar School.

Rather than one person writing a full history, it has a series of short “essays” partly based upon articles that have appeared in school magazines but supplemented by comments from past and present staff and pupils.

Do you have any memories that you can commit to paper, of your time at the school?

Whatever you have to say will be considered for inclusion. It would also be wonderful to hear from past and present members of staff who may have a different view of what happened during their time.

Whilst the present draft includes a wealth of information relating to the first 25 years, after that information is patchy.

Were you there when the school was under threat of becoming a Comprehensive? Were you there when it became a Grammar School?

To give you an idea of what has been prepared so far, do visit the following website, where you can download a draft copy. [www.kbp.me.uk/ODWA.htm](http://www.kbp.me.uk/ODWA.htm)

Please send your contributions to: [treasurer@odwa.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@odwa.co.uk)

or post to Keith. B Potter. 11 Thirlmere Road, Bexleyheath. Kent. DA7 6PU.

### **John Turner 1945-1949**

Dear Sir. I found your web site by accident and found it most interesting. Accordingly I filled in a ODWA database form but every attempt to submit it resulted in a message, “Your browser cannot find the document corresponding to the URL you typed in”, so in this instance I am sending the form by post.. However I am more than willing to use e-mails. I have included with this letter copies of a couple of school reports you may find of interest being my first and last ones.

As you will see I joined Dartford County Technical College, as it was, just after the end of the war. I lived at Blackfen, Sidcup and my journey was a 132 bus to Bexleyheath followed by the 696 trolley bus to Dartford. I was initially in the T1B class but was moved to T1A after the first term. I remember many of the teachers mentioned in the newsletters and some of my reminiscences may be of interest.

There was some reference to a Czech who taught French. His name was something like Altschule, He was a war refugee who had a bad time escaping across Europe resulting in not very good health. Unfortunately we did not treat him kindly and ribbed him unmercifully, for example the schoolboy prank of balancing a book on the top of the door. He was known to always carry an umbrella whatever the weather saying that he did

not trust the English climate. French lessons were held in a hall named The Conibear Hall which was situated somewhere near the bus garage.

Mr McCaskill only taught me R E; he appeared quite old even in 1945 and I assumed he had been taken out of retirement due to teachers being conscripted into the Forces. He was easily fooled into helping us with homework problems.

Mr Harris was the PE and games master. He was one of the most laid back people I’ve ever met. Games until my last year were held at the school playing field close by the railway near to the Slade Green junction. Mr Harris would arrive in his car, start the game and then get back in the car. At the end he would sound the horn and immediately drive off. However he did support us by always supplying a football to use during the lunch break. Other memories of him was that though he was a good batsman he didn’t like playing on the leg side and would deliberately move to the side so as to play an off side stroke. By 1949 the Education Authority had purchased Wilmington Hall and all sports were held there instead of Dartford. The Hall was deserted and unusable at that time but obviously there were plans to eventually move the school there from central Dartford. We were given tickets to use on the London Transport Green Buses to take us to Wilmington.

The only strong recollection I have of Miss Mountjoy is that she was keen on ice skating and often had her boots with her.

Mr Wall was tall man and walked with a slight limp. We believed this was due to a war wound.

Mr Campbell was my maths teacher and had a considerable influence on me. He was inspirational and cultivated my interest and love of mathematics which has remained with me to the present day. My career required a level of mathematical knowledge and during this time I was able to coach my daughter to attain the maths qualification needed for her to take an arts degree. Since my retirement in 1990 I have worked as a volunteer helper at Junior Schools helping the students with numeracy, I still have my geometry note books and refer to them from time to time.

The only student I have strong recollections of was named Vic Golds (A V Golds). He like me was mad on football. We both played for the school 1<sup>st</sup> team and our house. My house I believe was Thames. Vic was an extremely good goalkeeper and after leaving played for a Chelsea F C youth team, unfortunately like many others he wasn’t taken on by the senior squad. The only other name that comes to mind was a boy whose surname was Ferguson who lived in Burnt Oak Lane, Sidcup and whose father was a police inspector.

Concerning my career after taking my matriculation I joined the telephone side of the Post Office (now BT) on leaving school working in their London headquarters. I remained there until retiring in 1990. It was an interesting choice enabling me to visit most areas of the UK including the Scottish Islands. The last decade involved travelling to Sweden a number of times in connection with the engineering of a contract to supply BT with telephone exchange equipment.

In 1994 I moved from Welling to Consett in County Durham partly because my younger son had married a local girl and lived there. In 2000 my daughter, who is a teacher,