

Most of our Dinners have been attended by our more Senior Members, it would be very good to see some younger members in attendance. We are not the 'stuffy old fogeys' that you might think. Why not get some groups together and attend, you will be most welcome. We have a large selection of Memorabilia collected over the years which will be on display in the entrance hall.

If you feel you have something that we may not have, please contact me: 3 Millbro, Victoria Hill Road, Hextable, Kent BR8 7LF or by email: chairman@odwa.co.uk

At the Dinner each year we have groups that are celebrating certain Anniversaries, i.e. for those that started in 1961 can celebrate 50 years since starting, plus for those that left in 1961 it is 50 years since leaving. Should any groups want any help to get together please do not hesitate to get in touch with me as I have full records of those that we are in touch with and can sometimes find lost friends.

We have received a few enquiries already about attending: David Savage (1941-43), Spencer Parrish (1949-53), John & Betty Nunn (1955-61), Clive Jay and Anje (1955-1959), Robin Pitman (1956-63), plus of course all the regulars.

Dennis Wells (Chairman)

Wally James (1957-1989)

We have received the following report

Wally lived until very recently in Dartford Road. Talking to the neighbours he was taken into hospital a few weeks ago having had yet another fall at home (he has been in and out of hospital quite a few times over this past year having had many falls) I am led to believe that he is now quite frail and has been diagnosed as having the onset of Parkinson's disease. Apparently he is now out of hospital and is in a home as he is not able to look after himself very well. I know that a nurse would visit twice daily to get him up and put him to bed (as early as 4:00pm many a winter afternoon).

School History – 1949 - 2009

The written history of your school continues to grow as ex-pupils and staff submit interesting articles and information is unearthed from old documents.

The editor recently was given a handwritten journal, entitled 'School Annals', completed by Mr L V Wall, the school's first headmaster. In this he records visits from old boys, together with the appointment or resignation of members of staff. He mentions sporting and educational achievements. He notes visits from Kent Education Committee officials and HM Inspectors, together with visits from and to staff in other schools. This has thrown an interesting light on some aspects of school life in the 1950s and 1960s, now perhaps long forgotten

For example there are regular mentions of visits by one Dr Fox to conduct medicals. Injections against polio and TB seem to be a regular occurrence. Then there is mention of a mass X-ray in 1952. Did everyone stand together in front of an x-ray machine? Perhaps someone could enlighten us.

Mr Wall records that when the school first moved to Wilmington there were only 212 pupils on school roll. At that time, pupils started school at age 13. However by the time he left in 1963 the school roll was over 500.

With last year's snow in mind, it is worth noting the problems that occurred in January 1963. There is also mention of how dense fog and oddly newspaper and postal strikes affected the smooth running of the school.

For further information see the section in the history entitled – Jottings from LV Wall.

Peter Mucci sent in his recollection of an incident with his class mate - Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones.

Keith May, a long serving school governor has submitted an interesting article detailing the problems that occurred at the end of the 1980's when the school nearly closed but was saved by parent power, went on to become a Foundation School and eventually grew to the school that we now see.

The updated history can be read/printed as a pdf file at <http://www.kbp.me.uk/ODWA.htm>

Further contributions are always welcome. Please send these to treasurer@odwa.co.uk or to the address below.

For those without access to a computer, a printed copy can be supplied. It is approx 110 sheets of A4 paper, loosely bound. The cost including postage and packing is £10.

Send cheque payable to OD & WA to Keith Potter, 11 Thirlmere Road, Bexleyheath, Kent DA7 6PU.



DARTECH AND WILMINGTONIAN

A NEWSLETTER FROM YOUR OLD SCHOOL

NUMBER 25

MARCH 2011



We have invited _____ our present Headteacher
as our Guest of Honour.
A 4 Course Dinner and of course a Licensed Bar and a
Conducted Nostalgia Tour.

on Saturday, 12th May, 2012

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

Your next Newsletter is due to be published in March 2012
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.wells3@ntlworld.com

Meanwhile the commanding officer of the Argentine Base "Teniente Matiezo" had heard of Kenneth's condition and on 29th July he took off in a Beaver aircraft with a doctor and two other men and flew to the British Base on Argentine Islands in hazardous weather conditions and successfully landed on a short snow strip. None of the men on the British Base were of the same blood group as Kenneth, but the two Argentine crew were. The doctor gave Kenneth blood transfusions.

In order to save time, it was decided to evacuate Kenneth north to the Argentine Base "Esperanza". The pilot made a solo flight to the US Palmer Base on Anvers Island to refuel. On his return to the British Base he made another successful landing. Preparations were made and the aircraft took off with Kenneth on board, however due to the extremely severe conditions the aircraft crashed shortly after take off. The aircraft was irretrievably damaged but none of the occupants was seriously injured.

The ice breaker ARA General San Martin arrived at Palmer Station on 18th August. She had covered some 900 miles from South America. At this time of year it is not normally possible for the ship to operate because the winter ice has not yet melted to leave open water. Although the D.C.4 had made an aerial reconnaissance during its flight to drop the medication, for the last three days of the voyage the ice breaker was breaking ice and could get no further south than Anvers Island, about 30 miles from the British Base. The helicopters were flown off and they picked up Kenneth and returned him to the ship. The ice breaker sailed the next day and arrived back in South America on 23rd August. He was flown from Tierra del Fuego to Buenos Aires, the aircraft had a fire in the tail shortly after take off and had to return to Tierra del Fuego. On his arrival in Buenos Aires he was admitted to The British Hospital. He underwent two operations but was not strong enough to resist an attack of Broncho-pneumonia. He died in the British Hospital at 8.30 pm. on 10th October 1968.

This Obituary was originally published in Proboscis edition 14 dated March 1969. Kenneth's brother Christopher Portwine (1957-1965) (chris_portwine@hotmail.com) would be pleased to hear from any former friends of his brother.

Christopher Crouch (1951-1955)

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you that my husband, Ray Crouch, passed away in hospital on 18th May last year. Chris Crouch.

Ronald Wash (1950-1953)

Dear Dennis I am writing to tell you of my Husband's death in 2005. He was Ron Wash and attended Wilmington Hall from 1950 - 1953.

He joined the Air Force on leaving School and travelled the world for the next 23 years. After leaving the RAF at the age of 40 he took up a job selling Typewriters and then went into Plastics. Later he joined Securicor and taught for them in Newcastle. After that he and my Son ran a Taxi business for 19 years from our bungalow in Waddington. I am sending your Newsletter on to my Cousin Alan Huggett, also an Old Boy from 1950-1953. I myself attended Chislehurst County Grammar School for 6 years. Yours sincerely Betty J. Walsh

18th ANNUAL REUNION DINNER and ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Unfortunately there were problems at last year's Dinner when our Caterers arrived late. From then on things went from bad to worse as the night progressed with coffee being served at about 10.15p.m. This was very disappointing as we had received excellent food and service the previous year from the same caterer.

We have been looking around to find an alternative and we have now been recommended to a Gentleman, who has been involved in Catering for over 40 years, both as a college teacher and organising catering events, which have included events for the Royal Family. We have met with Mr. Alun John at the School and discussed our Menu. This you will find on a separate section with this Newsletter. Hopefully we will avoid last years problems.

You can book on line and pay electronically.. Go to <http://www.kbp.me.uk/Dinner2011.htm>

We trust that you will turn out in good numbers to support us and Alun. In recent years we have had a few more wives attending, so why not bring your wife/partner with you. Regrettably we have had to increase our price slightly this year to cover the extra cost of our change of caterer.

A second catch I had to take over my head. Not too far but a difficult one nonetheless. Maybe it was Martin that was bowling because I remember him saying something along the lines of "It wasn't easy that". Apparently I scored 13 runs with Andrew 24 not out (Fair to say that didn't happen often). It was probably Chris Beard that took us there. I remember we used to go back to the social club afterwards and luckily a few of the older generation would buy us a drink as we were paying our subs with our pocket money.

At 17 years old, I injured my finger playing for Dartechs. I was in the outfield when their player pulled a shot that was heading for a horizontal six. This was coming at speed. The ball hit the end of my finger pushed the bone backwards and popped the bone behind it out of the skin. Without bones to elongate your finger you might be surprised to know they're not very long. Compound Dislocation it was called. I remember it as it happened, the ball of course dropped to the ground, Bob shouted at me to "get it in", I then attempted to throw it in with my left hand. I then showed Bob my finger bone and I remember him saying "Sorry mate I didn't realise". With my A levels coming up I ended up having to type all my A level exams on a computer because I couldn't write. It was suggested I not play again and I took a few years off and went to Uni. It was upon Andrew's death that I came back to the team, playing in his memory and then filling the gap that he left. It almost seemed right that I should be drawn back at that time. The circumstances were tragic and to this day, as philosophical as I think I am, I can't really come to terms with the ending of a young life. We grew up together, shared interests, girlfriends, school, cricket and yet I lived on to get married, buy a house, have a daughter, when his life stopped at 21. It will never seem right. What Andrew's passing did was bring the club back to me and I may not have returned had it not happened. For all the club has given me I have Andrew to thank for that, twice!

OBITUARIES

Kenneth James Portwine (1949-1952)

Kenneth was born on 9th October 1936 in Welling, the son of William James Portwine and Bessie Winfred Portwine nee Smith

Kenneth received his primary education at Hook Lane School and Westwood School in Welling. At the age of 12 he went to Dartford Technical School and left in 1952, when he joined the staff of Fox Photos, a photographic agency in London.

At 18 he entered the Royal Air Force for his National Service. After initial training he was attached to 13 Squadron, this was a photo reconnaissance squadron. He served in Egypt and in Cyprus at the time of the Suez Crisis. After demobilisation he returned to Fox Photos.

In 1960 Kenneth joined the warden staff of the Youth Hostellers Association. After working in the London Region he moved to Coniston, in the Lake District in 1962 and was warden of Coppermines Hostel until 1967

He joined the staff of the British Antarctic Survey as a cook and sailed from Southampton on R.R.S. Shackleton on 11th October 1967.

On his arrival in Antarctica he went to a base on Deception Island to help in erecting new buildings. On 4th December 1967 the volcano erupted on the island and the men on the British and Chilean bases were evacuated to the Chilean Naval ship *Piloto Pardo* by helicopters of the Chilean Navy.

Kenneth was transferred to R.R.S. Shackleton and was later taken to the Argentine Islands where he was expected to serve as cook for two years.

In April 1966 he became ill with a stomach disorder. The base did not have the necessary medication to treat this. The required drugs were packed in Great Britain and flown to Argentina. The medication weighed 305 kg.

The Argentine Navy using a D.C.4 aircraft and an escort of two seaplanes, which were used for communication purposes, dropped the medication and other supplies to the base on 17th July. The medication was dropped in the middle of Antarctic winter, with very little limited hours of daylight, visibility was poor, some snow was falling and a wind of 15 knots was blowing.

It became apparent that Kenneth would have to be evacuated from the base and taken to hospital.

The Argentine ice breaker *ARA General San Martin*, which was in dry dock at the time, was made ready and on 9th August left Buenos Aires for Antarctica. On the way south the ice breaker picked up two helicopters.

Some of the messages sent as apologies for the Dinner in 2010

Hello again Dennis - great to hear from you and read the newsletter Once again I am afraid that Trudy and I cannot make it; as you may remember May is our time of year to visit old friends in Crete. We always go there during or after Easter, this year we are going from 4th to 11th May, spring will be well under way and all the mountain sides will be full of flowers. Strangely enough I have just read a mail from Stavros; he and Uli run the family hotel that we stay in — he says that unlike the rest of Europe they have had the warmest and sunniest winter in memory, unlike ourselves!

Anyway Dennis I will say goodbye and look forward to the day when our spring holiday doesn't clash with the Annual Dinner. Please send my best wishes to any old friends who may remember me - Bruce Timms (1954-59)

Thanks Dennis, for the latest Newsletter. We won't be coming back to the UK in May, this year, but will be thinking of you. Clive Read (1952-54)

I regret to say that due to an unfortunate clash of dates, I will be unable to attend this year's events. I am due back from the New Forest at about 7pm to Bexleyheath and would therefore be unable to arrive at Wilmington before 7.30 and I feel that it would be a discourtesy to the other attendees if I were to arrive late. Please accept my apologies. Ian Wright (1970-77)

Hi Dennis, thanks for keeping me informed of the annual diner and news of other old boys through the newsletter.

You are doing a fantastic job as always and totally unpaid. I sometimes wonder who will take over from yourself should you ever wish to retire???

As I have said before I am always in Cyprus for the months of May, June, September and October and so unfortunately I am always unable to attend the annual reunion diner.

Please give my regards to anyone from your year and later that I may know and I hope that you have another very successful evening. Alan Gregory (1953-57)

Andy Williamson has asked me to contact you to let you know that he unfortunately will not be able to attend your Annual General Meeting in May

Thanks for the newsletter & dinner invite. Unfortunately, I cannot attend the dinner because of other commitments around that time. Maybe next year?

I also note you have included my brief comments in the newsletter; I wait to see if any 49/53 pupils respond. All the best for Easter.

With thanks for your ODWA work on our behalf. Patrick Hawes (1949-53)

Please send my regards and best wishes to everyone at the dinner please Dennis. A lot warmer out here but WGSB will always be a special place in my heart. My love to all
Fiona Cottam (Head Teacher 2006-09)

Sorry this is so late getting to you.

Regret I won't be able to get to either the dinner or the AGM next Sat.

As luck would have it, the ONLY OTHER key social date I have in my calendar the whole of this year is 8th May! I am obliged to attend a mega weekend wedding somewhere in the North.

This is especially annoying as the '56 blokes are trying to get a good turnout to mark our arrival at the '65 point. Grateful if you could pass on my apologies to both events.

Robin Pitman (1956-61)

I somehow overlooked the annual reunion !

Sorry to have missed you all this year and hopefully will manage my time better next year

John Bradford (1957-63)

Other apologies received from Roy Warman (1942-44); Rhoda Windiate-Blackmore 1943-49; Gerald Pickering 1954-57; David Catchpole 1957-64; Terry Rooke 1961-66; John Daley 1963-92 (Staff).

Dr. Peter Wright (1953-1957)

I was at Wilmington Hall from 1953 to 1957 and started as my brother, Ron, left, so it was quite a family affair. Having travelled from St Mary Cray on the green 477 double-decker I felt completely at home on my first day as I passed through the big iron gates and up the drive. I quickly found out that the likes of me never passed through the staff car park and through the big front door but rather the more modest entrance further down towards the gate. I remember most of my teachers quite well. Mr L V Wall, or 'Elvie' as we soon got to call him, was a tall, imposing figure with snow-white hair and almost always in his black gown. The physics and chemistry labs were in a separate building to the right of our entrance, with Sam Austen's technical drawing room above the physics lab. There was no facility for biology. Percy Black took me for physics and he was an enthusiastic and inspiring teacher who, I'm sure, fired my imagination and inspired me to eventually become a physicist. I only once experienced his slapped-face technique, involving both cheeks, after a prefect called Rankin dropped me right in it. I always hoped I'd meet up with Rankin again in later life, when I'd developed muscles, but it wasn't to be! I remember a physics technician at some stage, called Mrs Saunders or Sanders, a mature lady who nevertheless was fancied by all the boys.

Sam Austen took me for technical drawing and we were given bus tickets to travel to Lowfield Street for metalwork and woodwork, where Mr Gough took charge of woodwork and Messrs Frank Payne and Don Pestell took metalwork. Chick Lewis took me for chemistry, assisted on occasions by Bas Seaman and Miss Collins (or was it Power?). I seem to remember the latter later getting together with games teacher, Ted Harper. In contrast to the fiery Percy, Chick was a softly spoken, religious guy who somehow seemed to strike terror into every boy. Nobody upset Chick!

The other lessons were taken in the main building. Just inside our entrance, from the cloakroom area, steep stairs led up to a room where Mr Sant sometimes took us for geography/history. I can't remember why we called him 'Ear'ole Flynn', unless it was due to the fact that he dropped all his aitches, much to everybody's amusement. Moving round from the cloakroom area, going past toilets, there were a couple of other classrooms on the ground floor, along with Headmaster's study and Staffroom. One of the rooms was occupied by Froggie French, a large, precise gent who taught maths. His french windows opened onto a magnificent lawn, overlooked by massive cedar trees. Stairs leading up from this area led to a small library at the top, next to Maggie Mountjoy's room. Maggie provided the sexual interest in this school of predominantly males and a lot of boys, while not particularly enjoying the french, spent most of their time waiting for her to either bend over or thrust out her fairly ample bosom, something she seemed to do on a regular basis. Perhaps this was a ploy to keep everybody's attention! Maggie also had a very distinctive walk, with gyrating hips and one forearm and limp wrist held at a rakish angle. I also vaguely remember doing a bit of french with Mr Andrews in one of the other rooms. Slim Davidson took me for maths and he was another great teacher. It was rumoured that he used to fly Spitfires but I never established the truth of this although I could easily imagine him in that role. I also recall the tuition of Mr Ablett and 'Slash' Edgington along with 'Jake' Clare, who took music. On my first encounter with Jake I narrowly avoided, using devious tactics, being enlisted into the choir.

'Nobby' Kneeshaw mainly took us for geography, a subject I really didn't enjoy. Nobby was tyrannical and anyone who crossed him didn't escape lightly.

I can honestly say I enjoyed my time at Wilmington. The huge trees and playing fields were great. All the boys seemed to get on quite well together and even the prefects were quite a decent bunch. Swanton was head-prefect in my earlier years and although he was a real fuss-pot he didn't cause us too much grief. Later on, as prefects ourselves, we had a head-prefect from the Ag stream called Killick who was a very likeable guy. Being prefects entitled us to be first in the queue for "seconds" in the dining hall, when we weren't taking our turn to perform supervision duty. There would be a mad rush when pink custard or jam tart and frothy cream was up for grabs.

There was always a good choice of after-school clubs and societies and Percy ran the photography club, where we developed and printed our own photos and proudly carried them home, sometimes still wet. After school was the most likely time to bump into the lank, unsmiling, lumbering form of caretaker, Mr

50 for 50

ODWCC are going to use their 50th anniversary as an opportunity to raise money for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust. We are launching a 50 for 50 campaign, asking people to sponsor each half-century a club member scores during any of the clubs matches during the season. We only average around 10 fifties a year, so 50p per 50 should not break the bank. (If you are feeling generous £5 per fifty should help us raise a lot of money).

To make sure the bowlers don't feel left out, you can sponsor the bowlers similar amounts for each 5 wicket haul (These are even rarer!).

Please email me at Clive_stringer@hotmail.com or see details on the website at <http://www.odwa.co.uk/odwcc/index.htm>

A fuller History of the Club is being written, and if any one can shed some light on the club, particularly in the early years I would be most grateful. Particularly welcome would be an account of your "first" game if you ever turned out for the old-boys (and around 500 players have). Below is a list of officers of the Club over the years and a few of the "first game" testimonies that we have had so far.

We are planning a cricket week and a tour to help us celebrate, and also a 50th Anniversary awards dinner at the end of September, so get in touch if you want to be involved.

<i>Chairmen</i>	<i>Secretaries</i>	<i>Treasurers</i>	<i>Fixture Secretaries</i>
John Nunn 73-80, 83	Malcolm Gregory 73-76	Pete Wright 63-82	John Nunn ? -76
Malcolm Gregory 81-82	Graham Bennett 79-83	Dave Wilson 83, 85-87	Stuart Pritchard 78-83
Graham Bennett 84-85	Dave Wilson 83-85	Pete Sulway 84-85	A Willcox 84-86
John MacSweeney 86-06	Richard Greenwood 86-89	Jonathan Stringer 87-	Clive Stringer 86- 88
Martin Smith 06-07	Tony Porter 89-94		Neil Priddy 88 - 02
Bob Dunkley 08-	Clive Stringer 95-		Adam Deal 03 -

OD & WCC First Game Testimonies

Steve Lawton (1971-1976)

I'm afraid there's no chance of me being able to remember what happened back then, I can't remember what happened last week (that's what Julie says anyway)

So going from the website records. Apparently it was 1st May 1973 against Eltham and I would have been the rip old age of 13 years 6 weeks and probably thought I knew it all. It must have been a hot sunny day because I can only remember hot sunny days back then, I'm sure it didn't use to rain in the summer when we were kids.

Apparently I managed 5 runs but didn't bowl.

I'm sure you and Martin will remember the following names that were playing on that day, Vaughan Ashdown, Ian Avis, Dave Wilson, Dave Boucher, Roger Thurman.

Again from the records it says I played the following week but it's all part of the same big blur.

I would guess that after the game I was taken to the pub, provided they allowed children in that is. Looking forward to attending some of the anniversary events

Tim McArdle (1990's???)

I trawled through the archive and found my first game. I have intermittent memories of the first match with Dartechs. I first came across Dartechs at the school game. I was playing for Wilmington Grammar as was Andrew Cruickshank. I remember scoring about 13 runs and then being caught out by Bob at Mid On as I miss hit my favourite pull shot.

Andrew played a number of matches before me, eventually recruiting me in on a game when a few extra players were needed. It was the summer of 1997. I remember very little about that game except for where it was (Hall Place) and the two catches I took. I was 16 years old and remember being in the outfield somewhere in the covers. The batsman sliced the ball in my direction but it was barely going to reach me. I remember diving forward towards the ball and just managing to catch the ball before it hit the ground. Miss it and I smash my face, catch it and I'm a hero (well it feels like it when your 16 with the great support of the team to congratulate you). Now that's the difference when you're young and have no fear. Would I do that today or would I say "Didn't reach me, couldn't get it". Most of us are over 16, with a healthy sense of self preservation and I doubt there would be much face diving towards the ball these days.

In war time they provided a vital 24hr. personnel transport facility, particularly for large factories, such as Woolwich Arsenal and Vickers at Crayford, whilst making no demands on critical oil supplies. At 3.20am on 29th. June 1944 the depot was hit by a VI and set on fire, rendering all 84 vehicles therein unfit for service. Twelve were completely destroyed and 26 needed re bodying. However London Transport drafted in enough buses and trolley buses to run an almost normal service by that evening. (Riding the top deck of a windowless trolley was quite exhilarating!)

Sadly, the service was terminated at the end of February 1959 when the trolleys were replaced by noisy, smelly, juddery Routemaster diesel buses.

Old Dartechs and Wilmingtonians Cricket Club

It is the 50th anniversary of the Old Boys Cricket Club this year, Although a number of Old boys sides played cricket fixtures against the school at the end of the fifties, it was only in 1961 that a club was formed to play against other Old Boys sides. Attempts had been made to form an Old Boys Association, but Wally James suggested that the best way to generate some activity would be to focus on specific sports. Sometime in 1961, Wally met up with Alan Gregory, John Pearce. John Nunn and John Fitton at Alan's parents house in Dartford. Wally became the President of the club, and remains President to this day.

Alan was given the contact for the fixture secretary of Old Cannockians, who in turn passed on contacts for several other clubs. Four fixtures were played in 1962 (unfortunately we do not have the scorecard for these matches) but a much fuller fixture list was fulfilled in 1963. The founder members of the club all played when they could, but a number including Alan Gregory were still studying and had limited availability early in the season. Without the additional support of players such as Roger Perry, Terry Stevens, Jim Faulkner, Malcolm Gregory and Gerry Pickering, the club would have folded almost as soon as it had begun.

Shortly after the Cricket Club was formed, Trevor and Terry Stevens and Barry Crutchfield started up the football section of the Old Boys. It was with the football club in the early seventies that there was an attempt to buy some land to erect a clubhouse and provide some pitches in Powder Mill lane. Although this never happened, it did mean that the Cricket club began running in a more formal manner, and a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer were formally elected. From that time on we can track the Officers of the Club through minutes of AGM's, some more detailed than others.

John Nunn, Pete Wright, Dave Lemon, Carl Targett, and the Gregory brothers played on during the seventies, and it was only in the eighties, that they began to retire or move away from the area. Other mainstays of the club were Graham Bennett and John Stokoe. In 1973 a second XI was started up with the help of Mick Wesson, one of the teachers at the school, who had started playing for the club along with another sports teacher Stuart Butler. A number of the older players occasionally played for the 2nd XI, including John Fitton, but it was largely a side of schoolboys such as Steve Lawton, Vaughan Ashdown and Colin Tedman.

Some of the second XI players began to play for the first XI and many such as Steve, Dave Wilson and Gary Theobald became a major part of the club. Bob Dunkley also appeared on the scene after approaching Dave Wilson for a game at Hall Place and has played ever since.

Around about the same time the 1st XI started playing league cricket, and the influx of younger players helped the club achieve reasonable success. This however meant that the 2nd XI started struggling for players. The side had a revival when Ron Clench, father of Malcolm, began running the side with the help of his brother Sid. There was an influx of new players, some from Wilmington Hall, such as Jason Allen and Neil Priddy who were to play a big role in the development and continuation of the club.

A Sunday side was also formed, largely under the captainship of John MacSweeney, another father of one of the boys at the school, Steve Jones.

Gradually over time as the older players moved away, the club dwindled down to one team playing on Sundays, but with a committed group of players and with Jonathan Stringer looking after the finances, the club has been in a fairly sound position ever since. Martin Smith and Richard Coverly have captained the side for long periods, with Pete Smith being particularly important as a match secretary.

As for the future, the Club has picked up a number of very good youngsters over the last few years, and have started playing against the School again, so we are hopeful that we can pick up some "future" old boys, and help the Club move towards its centennial, goodness knows what the game of cricket will be like then!

Joyce. We had a very uncomplimentary nickname for him which was something like "a long streak of.....", the rest of which escapes me.

I frequently think of my classmates at Wilmington and wonder how they fared in life. I'm in email contact with John ('Hardie') Hardman, who lives in France, but where are you Mick Ballard, Keith Blackman, John Bootham, Robin Clark, Alan Gregory, Eddy Hillman, Roger Whitehead, John Wood, Norman Woods, Rod Acock, Roger Piercy, and others. I remember hearing that John Middleton became a pilot in the Fleet Air Arm and was subsequently killed in a flying accident, but I could never confirm this. So if you are still out there John.....

John Hardman (1953-1957)

Going to Wilmington Hall represented, for me, a radical change in my life. I was an "Eleven-Plus" failure and had been obliged to 'suffer' two years of Swanley Secondary Modern (or 'Swanley Sec.' as it was known). I say 'suffer' because it was second-best and not the desirable Grammar School that every parent, not least of all mine, wanted for their son.

My two years in Swanley went very quickly and it would seem that it wasn't at all a bad experience as I regularly obtained good results in subjects that had hitherto I had never heard of in my Primary School days. Instead of walking to school (one mile across the fields of West Kingsdown) there was the school bus where I travelled with long-standing school friends and, inevitably, much older kids and the adolescent banter that came with them. I must have done well as I 'passed' to D.T.S. in 1953, age 13!

My first day at D.T.S the new intake was addressed by Mr. Wall in the small yard by the Physics lab. and he underlined the fact that we were all "Eleven-Plus" failures, but nevertheless we were going to work our socks in the next three years and achieve G.C.E. results the equal of the 'Golden Boys', who had succeeded in getting into Grammar School having passed their Eleven-Plus, would achieve in five years! That 'pep-talk' really had an impact upon me and I felt proud to wear the uniform and the cap with my 'St Davids' house badge sewed thereon. I did manage to scrape a few GCEs at both 'O' and 'A' level, so "Elvie's" words were effective!

My first French teacher was a charismatic Polish war veteran whose name escapes me. He had a flamboyant ginger moustache matching a retreating head of ginger hair and was very easily led into recounting his war memories and he was singularly unable to impart into me even the most basics of the French language. There was a boy in my class called Dennis Hope who had a facility for leading teachers astray, and deviating from the subject-matter of lessons and our French lessons were constantly disrupted by Dennis' actions. He was later asked to leave the school and we never saw him again - I believe he had a career as a photographer and had a studio in Sidcup in later life.

Although never a brilliant student; I do have good memories of some of the staff who did make Herculean efforts to drum their subjects into my less-than-receptive head: 'Chick' Lewis for his mastery of the Chemistry lab; and his devotion to Religious Instruction periods in which he was all too eager to stray into deep discussions of ethical and ecumenical issues, 'Slick' Davidson for shining a light on the mysteries (to me) of mathematics, 'Knobby' Kneeshaw for rolling his 'R's around geogwaphy pewiods, Mr Goff for his prowess in keeping a straight face when discussing the qualities the '*Pinus Sylvestris*' tree in front of 25, dirty-minded, young men in the woodwork 'shop in Lowfield Street, and Mr. French's ability to quote Sines and Cosines without any reference to the Tables. The unforgettable 'Maggie' Mountjoy who wriggled her hypnotic thighs, high heels, and ample bosom into my academic life has left an indelible mark upon me, and her French lessons were the seed of a long-term association with the French language, the culture, and the people of France and I owe her a huge debt.

The school was a good place in which to learn. The original Wilmington Hall with it's narrow corridors, steep back-stairs, inadequate toilets, and converted out-buildings that became the Drawing-Office, Physics, and Chemistry labs, contrasted sharply with the new buildings that were opened, I believe in 1956 to coincide with the need to receive vastly more pupils entering the school at age 11. Ranging from the magnificent grounds with majestic cedars and the well manicured lawns where we occasionally had lessons to the tall oak trees in the upper field where cigarette smoke could be seen rising into the sky from the dozen or so smokers who took refuge therein during midday break!

The staff car-park in front of the main entrance was graced with Mr. Wall's shiny black Hillman Minx, Mr. Austen's grey Citroen 'Traction' which had a fog lamp that was originally a landing light from a WW2 bomber (legend says..), and the brand-new green Morris Minor of the aforementioned Polish French teacher. Mr. Lewis had a motorbike and another teacher had a BSA Bantam motor bike that ended up on the last day of the 56/57 School Year atop the porch of the main entrance to the Hall - a 'Last Day Of School' prank that was, perhaps, literally, a bit over the top!

I could never come to terms with the canteen lunches and prevailed upon my mother to prepare sandwiches each day. I recall that most boys thought the lunch to be palatable, but I did not share that view and had to squeeze my midday feast into my, already overcrowded, brief case.

We must have been made of strong stuff in those days. My day started at 06h45 to be able to walk the 400 metres to the bus to catch the 08h10 Green Line from West Kingsdown to Swanley Junction, thereafter, walk a further 200 metres to catch the 477 London Country bus to Wilmington Post Office from where a walk of further 500 metres took us to Wilmington Hall. Kids these days don't know they are born !!!!!!!

In recent times I ran into 'Joe' Fox, who was in the "Ag" stream during the 1953 - 57 period. He had a holiday home close to where I live here in S.W. France. Sadly, he died of a long illness in 2010 after a very successful career with the Kent Constabulary). Apart from Peter Wright, I have no other contact with any of my classmates of that era. The photos on the ODWA web-site have provoked recollections of other pupils and staff, but I have never been very good with remembering names and often wonder about what became of Johnny Middleton, David Diboll, Eddy Hillman, Rod Aycock, Roger Piercy and so many others to which my ageing brain cannot put names.

It wasn't until my second year that Mrs "Maggie" Mountjoy took us for French. She was a very good teacher and imparted an obvious love of the language of Moliere. I cannot say that my linguistic skills are entirely due to her teaching methods but she succeeded in getting a class of male adolescents singing along to recordings of Charles Trenets' "Les Grands Boulevards" and "La Mer" !

"Maggie" also took us for History at one time and, again, she made the subject of 19th Century English and European Social & Economic History" interesting and engrossing, for me at least. But she was also something of a dragon and didn't suffer fools lightly. She gave us excessive amounts of homework which led to something of a revolt when the subject of homework cropped up in a 'Percy' Black Physics lesson. He was our Form Teacher and I think the discussion was triggered by a general concern about the volumes of work that were demanded by some of his fellow teachers. In my case I had very nearly 2 hours of journey time, via two buses, to get home, and thereafter some 2 hours of homework nearly every evening. It was too much, and in the case of Mrs Mountjoy, she expected us to consult the local reference library in order to find the facts and figures necessary to complete the History homework: There was no way I could reach a reference library in rural West Kingsdown except maybe after a 4 hour round trip to Dartford on a Saturday morning !

Percy took up the cudgels and the culprits, Maggie and Knobby Kneeshaw in particular, were 'spoken-to' and volumes of homework were reduced. He was a good teacher and enjoyed a joke or two with the boys: It was my misfortune that, during a Physics period, he was presenting the theory of lenses and telescopes and was drawing on the board a graphic explanation of measuring the distances of the planets and he asked the class to suggest a suitable heavenly body to illustrate the theory, when I muttered "Gina Lollobrigida" at the exact moment of the classroom falling silent. Percy saw the joke, but as my Physics results were nothing to write home about, he took the opportunity to strongly berate me for not really trying too hard.

I had a neighbour, Phillip Saynour (he joined the Kent Constabulary I believe), who was probably a couple of years my senior, who had therefore been at D.T.S. well ahead of me and he gave me a "briefing" on some of the school's teachers, their nicknames and reputations, and some of the pitfalls to avoid. He mentioned a Chemistry teacher who had a "near-death" experience the term before when an experiment to create some crystals went wrong and the resultant blast blew the said teacher's glasses into oblivion and he still, at that time, bore the scars and damaged spectacles as proof. Phillip told me his name was

luckily by the time we got back to Danson Mead there was a police car outside No.11, so we didn't get involved. We did however go to the funeral at Plumstead Cemetery, and I remember being impressed by how deep the grave was. Afterwards we popped into the Odeon to see a film about the life Amy Johnson which did not cheer us up at all.

For the first year we took packed lunches, but then a scheme of bringing in hot food in containers was introduced so that, for money, one could have something more substantial. As an alternative there was a British Restaurant at the bottom of Essex Road where one could get a set two courses for, I think, one shilling. The introduction of money into the system meant that one also had the possibility of going hungry and augmenting one's pocket money for more nefarious purposes!

An Army Cadet Force Company attached to the Royal West Kent Regiment was formed at the school c. March 1942. The Company Commander was Captain Wall (Headmaster). It consisted of four? c.30 man Platoons. I enrolled as a just fourteen year old Lance Corporal in the Platoon which was commanded by 2nd. Lt. Hutchins? (Woodwork Teacher), with Platoon Sgt. George Milton (fellow pupil). Mr. Harris commanded another Platoon, whilst a third was in the charge of the Physics teacher.

The first camp was held in the Spring of '42. It took the form of a week in army bell tents near Lullingstone Park; quite a fair march from Dartford. The highlight was a visit to a nearby Army "Fair", with demonstrations of explosions, sticky bombs, Bangalore Torpedoes, assault course etc. One evening the whole Company marched to the local cinema in Swanley?, where the performance of the film, "Top Hat", was held up awaiting our arrival. Marching back to camp in the black out pitch dark we annoyed the officers by striking showers of sparks off the road with our hob nailed boots!

For the rest of the year parades and instruction were confined to Saturday mornings, with the odd evening event thrown in. We were introduced to the intricacies of the Bren Gun and three different marks of Sten Gun, all pretty lethal to the operator. We were taught map reading, a skill useful in after life, we carried out practical exercises on Dartford Heath and, of course, we mastered the intricacies of arms drill. Our target was to pass the tests required for the award of Army Cert. A, which was achieved eventually. The second camp was held, again in bell tents, on top of a hill just south of Tonbridge, in the Spring of '43. Access to Tonbridge was by rail from Dartford.

Highlights of this camp were a series of talks given by officers from various exotic organisations, such as the Intelligence Corps and the Reconnaissance Corps, each extolling the virtues of their particular group. The Cadet Force was quite a worthwhile experience and probably made the later starting of soldiering for real a little less of a shock than it might otherwise have been.

One of the annual Prize Giving evening events which took place in the upper gym. was honoured by the presence of the commander of a submarine (HMS Mars?) who handed out the books. Towards the end of our second year the class was taken on a visit to the engineering factory of Halls (the Dartford engineering firm in which Richard Trevithick ended up). There were calls of "you'll be sorry" from some ex Dartford Tech. lads employed therein, and the general ambience put most of us off the idea of getting stuck with a factory job!!

In the July of '43, aged 15, I finished my two year course at the Dartford Tech. with some regret. Just prior to leaving the College organised an evening dance in the upstairs gym. This was quite a new experience for most of us, and I think for the College. I remember the younger lady member of staff trying to give us beforehand some idea of what was involved and what to expect. (I think our generation was some what naive when compared with present day youth!). In the event a load of girls were bused in from, I think, the Bexleyheath Technical College for Girls. Music was played, soft drinks were supplied and, although not much serious dancing was in evidence, a pleasant warm summer evening resulted.

Dartford Tech. had equipped me with useful knowledge, skills and experience but, apart from a Reference from the Principal, no actual paper qualifications. The eventual acquisition of those is another story....

TROLLEY BUSES

In Bexleyheath trolley buses replaced the trams in 1935. Route 696 ran from Woolwich Ferry to Dartford Library via Welling, whilst the 698 ran from Woolwich Ferry to the Bexleyheath Clock tower via Erith. They provided a superb service. At peak times there would be a 696 bus every one and a half minutes. The vehicles were practically silent in operation and there were no exhaust fumes. They were capable of rapid and smooth acceleration and deceleration, there being no gear changes, and they had seating for 60 passengers. The buses were based in a large purpose built depot located on the Erith road, just a few hundred yards from the Clock tower.

it on the spot. It was a rather superior machine with a Sturmey Archer 3 speed, controlled by a lever on the handlebars, and it was equipped with a dynamo lighting system. This was to serve me well for 15 years and several thousand miles. He also acquired for me a slim, gold plated, evening dress type pocket watch, which served me for the next six years. I did not have a wrist watch until my 21st. birthday! Watches were virtually unobtainable during the war years, and it could take six to nine months to get one repaired. Even the purchases of an alarm clock required the production of an “essential worker” certificate! September 1941 to July 1943 was a relatively quiet period air attack-wise, post London Blitz and pre V1/V2, but a few months after starting at the Tech. Dartford became part of a restricted area stretching to the coast, with a border at the bottom of Princes Road. This meant that one had to show a pass to officials who boarded the bus at that point, or flash it as one cycled past. This restriction was to last until well after D day. Incidentally, Princes Road was lined with oil burning smoke screen generating devices which I don’t think were ever actually used in anger.

Dartford Tech. was split between two sites. Class rooms, labs and an eating area were located in an old brick building, with a further two classrooms in a corrugated iron annex, which was still there in 1967 but appears now to have gone. Behind this was the cycle shed. There was no proper recreational area anywhere on site. All this was in Essex Road, whilst the workshops and two gyms. were a quarter-hour walk (through the town centre) away in Lowfield Street.

Buildings on the Lowfield Street site were brand new, and next to them was a big excavation which was to have been the basement of a new classroom building had war not intervened.

The curriculum excluded foreign languages, but included engineering drawing, woodwork and metalwork. I still have some of the tools I made in metalwork, but unfortunately not the rather nice in-laid book holder and T-square resulting from the woodwork activity. The “academic” part of the curriculum included subjects such as mechanics, electrics, physics, chemistry, history, geography, English, maths. PT sessions were conducted in one of the two magnificent Lowfield Road Gyms., generally the lower one. As part of the English we had to prepare and deliver short “Lectures” in front of the class, which was a bit unnerving at the time, but which I now think was a good idea. The staff were all good at their job and, by and large, friendly. The Principal was a Mr. Mc. Bretney, but we saw very little of him. The College was run by the Head, a Mr. Wall who had served with the Royal Artillery in France during WW1. He used to take us for Current Affairs, and looking back, his views were far from reactionary. His bete noir was Mr. Baldwin. Chemistry was taught by a Mr. Barr and PT by a Mr. Harris. There were only two female members of staff, a young one who took us for history, and an older lady who did geography and religion.

The course lasted two years, entry being aimed at 13 year olds, and there were three classes in each year. There was also a 2 year Commercial course, which included Spanish, but we did not have much to do with them. Our class teacher for the two years was a Mr. Howard, who also took us for Engineering Drawing. He had a somewhat sarcastic attitude, but he wanted us to be the best class of the three, (T1a, T1b and T1c) and he inspired in us a desire to succeed in that aim.

We did quite a bit of walking through the town, (carrying gas mask in a cylindrical metal container), since Assembly, PT, Wood work and Metal work were all at the Lowfield Street site, whilst academic subjects were taught at Essex Road. Then, one afternoon a week, there was an even longer trek to the sports ground on the other side of the railway. In another building at Lowfield there was a fully equipped machine shop, but we never got to use any of the equipment there because it was being employed full time for the production of components for the war effort.

I became friends with classmate Ian (Nobby) Clarke who also lived in Welling. We used to cycle back together, though rarely in the other direction since he tended to arrive late. Going home there were two hills which had to be walked up. The first was Dartford West Hill, the second was Bigs Hill, between Crayford and Bexleyheath. At the foot of the latter we discovered a tiny shop from which one could get a slice of fruit cake which went down very well at that time of day. However this only lasted a few months until food stringency became such that such un rationed luxuries were no longer obtainable. Nobby and I competed for top position in the end of term class exams.

Neighbour Alan Smith, from 11 Danson Mead was also in my year, but in a different class.

Unfortunately in, I think, the Spring of 1942 he was cycling back from the sports ground and came into collision with a trolley bus coming down West Hill. He was killed instantly. Nobby and I came on the scene a couple of minutes later and wondered whether we should be the ones to tell his mother, but

Rhombic, and in my innocence, waiting outside prior to a Physics lesson, the teacher in question asked me to give a message to Percy as soon as he arrived, which I duly did. Percy enquired as to who had given me the message and I responded “Mr Rhombic”. I had no idea of his real name, how would I know ? He didn’t take my class for Chemistry, but Percy thought it hilarious and embarked upon an enquiry as to the other nicknames of his fellow teachers - it was better than having another tedious Physics lesson ! (for the more knowledgeable, the experiment was the making of Rhombic Sulphur crystals)

Whilst I certainly enjoyed the “Wilmington Hall Experience” , I entered the Sixth Form period with some trepidation as I had no idea as to what I wanted to do with the adult life that loomed at the end of the Academic Year of 1957. It was Mrs Mountjoy that suggested to my father that I had a certain aptitude for French and she put me in touch with someone at the Kent Education Committee in Maidstone who arranged a year in France to study the French language and literature. I was lucky to have a parent ready to support his wayward son in such a way. My academic achievements were never spectacular, but with the time I spent “studying” in Paris I seemed to have found myself and the French language has served me well in my career. So ‘Merci Beaucoup Madame Mountjoy” you did me proud, may you rest in peace!

Lewis Walmsley (1961-1967)

I am Lewis Walmsley Dart Tech old boy, left school in 1967 (sometimes I wish I were back there)

I have recently published a science fiction book “Glassidor”. Published in both USA and Britain “Glassidor” is available online From Authorhouse.com, Barnes and noble, Amazon.com

I have sent a complimentary copy to the current ‘Head Teacher’ at the old school (What happened to Headmaster?) and Andy informs me that it has now been placed in the library at “Wilmington Grammar”. I was very gratified to see this happen, and thought that this might be appropriate for inclusion in the ODWA March news letter.

I am living in the Bahamas today after spending 34 years in Canada. The Book has received great reviews here on island after we launched it here in October.

For your information I am attaching links to local media and if you search U tube “Glassidor” you should see a couple of promotional videos.

http://www.thebahamasweekly.com/publish/arts-and-culture/Local_author_to_launch_Science_Fiction_book_based_on_The_Bahamas12243.shtml

http://www.thebahamasweekly.com/publish/grand-bahama-community-events/Author_of_Glassidor_makes_donation_to12393.shtml

http://www.thebahamasweekly.com/publish/grand-bahama-community-events/Author_of_Glassidor_to_donate_proceeds_of_100_books_to_PACE_Center12341.shtml

It would appear that Mr Pearce was quite correct with his statements back in the sixties “Boys, a precis a day keeps failure at bay”.

Best Regards Lewis A Walmsley

Derek Window (1950-1953)

Once upon a time, in the middle of the last century at a school in Wilmington there was a schoolmaster by the name of J. Clare. A nice bloke by all accounts he taught music and other subjects.

Naturally his pupils, unwashed and scruffy did nickname him Clare de la lune.

Now it came to pass that ‘De La’ rode to school on a 28” bicycle know as his piano and every morning he would zing down the hill from Leyton Cross and make the right turn into the school driveway at high speed.

Now these pupils, being of an age where they should know better, did notice this flamboyant manoeuvre and so, as it was their last year before entering the wide world they made a plan.

This plan involved the raised concrete block in the middle of the driveway where the bolts that secured the school gates would fit into the concrete via the appropriate holes.

And so, one morning these miscreants did gather at the gate and form a line on either side of the concrete block. One lad, standing in front of the block was the only one who moved aside when 'De 'La' on his trusty piano came down the hill.

This meant that the only path open to him was in the middle of the gateway and with a mighty thump 'De La' and his piano did rise into the air and collapse in an untidy heap on the driveway.

Luckily no harm was done but not a boy was to be seen when he gained his feet and looked around.

My brother Ivor Window, 1947-50 (Who shall remain nameless) recounted this story to me this morning via Skype. We use this method of communication because he lives in Florida and I live in Australia but it is like being in the same room with him. He in his spare room and me in mine.

A second story involving the piano centres around the brake blocks. These rubber blocks fit nice and tightly in metal boxes that are closed at the front in order to stop the blocks sliding out under extreme braking.

Some young Hooligan, wearing the badge of prefect used an adjustable spanner to loosen the nuts, turn the blocks around and tighten them up again.

'De La', after an exhausting day on the violin leapt aboard his trusty piano and peddled madly down the driveway, braked hard at the bottom in order to make the turn into the road and was smitten with surprise when the blocks popped out of the brakes. 'De La' went straight on and vanished into the hedge on the other side of the road.

Barry Crutchfield (1955 - 1959)

I am sorry that this is a little dated as I had intended to have it ready for last years newsletter, having attended the 2009 get together. Why after all these years did I find my way back to what is a very different school to that which I attended.

This was for a number of reasons firstly I read the notes from John Nunn regarding the passing of John Fitton who had been a fellow class member in my last two years at the school. I suppose that we all think that we will last for ever but I did not expect to hear of the passing of people in my own age group.

This did get me thinking of those times and I suddenly found that the "grey cells" were not working as well as they should. I was in the last years of those who did the 13+ and came into the 3rd year. We lived in Welling and I was the only one from my secondary school to go to Dartford as all the others who had passed their exam had gone to Erith. I do not know if this was parental choice or the educational department decision, at least it got me a bus pass. I do remember in my 6th year having two periods a week with Mr. French which a was a recreational project and we produced a profile map of north Kent about six feet by three feet, and when it was finished we completed a survey of where everyone in the school came from and how they travelled in to the school. I was one of only three who came from Welling /Bexleyheath area.

Also in my first year we had both woodwork and metalwork which we had at Lowfield Street with the first period being PE. I cannot remember whether we returned to school at lunch time or stayed on for lessons in the buildings which were there. I cannot remember there being a canteen there. In my 4th year a decision was made between doing either history or geography and woodwork or metalwork. I was put into geography and woodwork which in the case of the later meant I had another three years of going to Lowfield Street.

I can also remember in my first year having Mr. Harper as the sports master and I still remember the showers in the toilet block which backed onto the physics lab which consisted of a hose pipe from one of the basins and going to a 20 gallon oil drum with holes pushed into the bottom.

I remember trying to get out of the class promptly on time at ten past four and running to Leyton Cross to try and get on the seventeen past four 401 bus going to Bexleyheath. I suppose this improved our general fitness levels as I do not think you could cycle to school until your 5th/6th year.

I do believe that the staff who tried to instil us with knowledge was good at that in all the range of subjects that we took. I have a daughter who teaches at our local High School and she was very surprised when I showed her my summer GCE timetable of summer 1959 with the relatively small number of subjects against what is available now.

My other reason for attending the 2009 reunion was to see Trevor Stevens again as we had been very instrumental in getting the Old Boys football team up and going. As I was still involved in cycling (being a member of West Kent RC) it was Trevor who supplied the transport at that time having got a blue MG midget which was used to go to league meetings, delivering correspondence etc. Trevor's father had been the supplier of the cash in order to buy the first kit, ball etc. which we had bought from Lilywhite (mail order company). As I was treasurer I remember trying to ensure that subs etc were collected in order to pay him back. This followed on with the comments from George Crane where after having had a fairly successful spell and having been promoted through the Sidcup League we were able to get entry into the Kent Amateur League. One week I had seen in the Kentish Times that Gravesend and Northfleet were not continuing with there second XI so I contacted them to see if they had considered hiring out the ground in order to get extra income. We had a meeting with the club and we were surprised when our proposal was accepted. This was how we came to use what was at the time the best ground in the area, being at that time owned by Blue Circle cement.

With the exception of the Old Boys functions I have not come across any of my fellow class mates in the great out doors of work with one exception. We all no doubt remember the school cross country races held in two groups of juniors and seniors but there was Dave Cheesman (I believe a few years older than me) who had no interest in sport and proceeded to walk the event and always had the honour of being last. This did of cause keep all the marshals out on the course until he got home. I did however meet him again in the 70s when I attended a meeting at Watneys brewery in Mortlake and he was part of the project team for the construction of a new brewery.

I had been treasurer of the football side and I had taken over from JIM? Faulkner (who I think lived in Eltham) the Old Boys treasurer role but with a considerable amount of work from various parties this was closed down in the 70's due mainly to lack of interest. I was very surprised to see the current interest and involvement from so many people and I hope that this continues. Now that I live in Suffolk near to Ipswich I do not find very much time to return back to the area but I will see what I can do. As my other class mates may have already found out that when you retire it is a very busy time.

I would like to express my thanks to all the people who keep this going now.

Spencer Parrish (1949-1953)

There can't be many of us left from the 1949 - 1953 years; but one last visit to the "old home", though it is much changed, would be welcome.

Back in the mid 1950s I started an "Old Boys Association" with the approval of then headmaster L V Wall. It became difficult to maintain, what with military service and the call of the new adult world, but I regularly ran fund raising dances at Crayford Town Hall. Today, somewhat retired after many years of travel and adventures, I do a lot of volunteer work in the community especially with young people. Some might think that I am very lucky as I have been in the world of beauty pageants for the past 16 years having owned a Miss America franchise.

Barry Edward Platt (1957-1962)

Just found website and was curious to see if I remembered any body. Now living in Florida

A PUPIL AT DARTFORD TECH. 1941 to 1943 By David Savage

As was the case with many of my contemporaries, (I was born in 1928), my education was disrupted by the outbreak of WW2. In effect I lost the best part of a year and hence, when I came to sit a test for admission to Dartford Grammar School I was unsuccessful. With hindsight this proved to be a blessing in disguise!

Within a few weeks however the opportunity came to sit an entrance exam for the County Technical College in Dartford. This took the form of intelligence tests and tests of mechanical aptitude etc. which suited me much better. Luckily I passed, and in the September of 1941 started at the first school which I had ever actually enjoyed attending, and one which I feel offered a really useful and worthwhile two year course which formed the basis for a future career.

Access, from my home in Welling was, on most days, by cycle, five miles each way, good exercise!, but in inclement weather by the frequent service of trolley buses, practically door to door. Prior to starting my father found an advert in the local rag for a second-hand Raleigh. We went to see this and purchased