



THORNTONIAN DAYS

Newsletter of The Old Thorntonians Association (Clapham)

"Education is the leading of human souls to what is best, and making what is best out of them." John Ruskin (1819-1900)

No 37

April 2017

2017 Reunion

This event will now be held on **Monday 9 October**, from 1 until around 5pm, as the Blue Room at The Windmill is not available on the 11th, the provisionally arranged date reported in issue 36. The Management Committee has agreed that, as a minor departure from the customary format, a buffet lunch, served in the Blue Room and costing around £12 per head (with a small extra charge for soup, if required), would be provided on this occasion; members would still order, and pay for, their own drinks at the bar. The menu selection will be circulated later, and those planning to attend will be asked, for pre-ordering purposes, whether they wish to take advantage of this offer.

Annual General Meeting

The Association's tenth AGM was held at Lambeth Academy, Elms Road, SW4, on Saturday 25 March. The main items discussed or reported were:

- Management Committee members elected or re-elected to serve until 31 March 2018:

President: Michael Caplan, QC

Vice-President: (Vacancy)

Chairman: Jeff Green

Vice-Chairman: Ron Davies

Secretary: Ted Hayward

Treasurer: Terry Lawlor

Entry-year representatives:

1930s/1940s: (Vacancy; filled on an *ad hoc* basis by Ron Davies, 1948-56)

1950s: Bob Hay

1960s: Peter Greenwood

1970s/1980s: (Vacancy).

- Co-opted: Mike Surridge (as local representative)

As indicated, there are three vacancies: for Vice-President, and for representatives of pupils admitted in the 1930s or 1940s, and 1970s or 1980s. If you're interested in any of these positions, or would like to nominate an OT for them, please contact Ted Hayward.

- The statement of account for the year ended 31 December 2016, prepared by Terry Lawlor and examined by Bob Hay, was adopted. A copy is attached.
- The following recommendation from the Committee meeting held on 14 October 2016 was accepted: :

That i. as there were ample funds in the Association's account to cover known or probable expenditure in the coming year, the annual charge of £10 for Full members and £6 for Associates be waived for 2017; ii. joiners in 2017, and any rejoining, after a break, in that year, would be required to pay the relevant membership fee in the normal way.

Obituaries

Mrs Adele Wright (Associate member): Adele, daughter of the late Mr C W Gribble (at HTS 1920-54), died in May 2016. She joined the Association in 2014 and, despite her frailty, was able to attend that year's reunion, thanks to the assistance offered by Mike Matthews, 1954-60, who lives in the same locality and kindly gave her a lift to and from Clapham. OTs present on that occasion will doubtless recall her interest in sharing memories of her father and other members of staff, as well as her wish to learn more about their time at the school and about the Association generally.

John Brown (1952-7): died 1 February 2017. Friend and near-contemporary Terry Lawlor (1951-6) recalls his achievements in football and cricket, as recorded in the school magazine, including: "top scorer – 38 goals" (Under-14 XI, 1955), "scored 25 goals (1957), and "commended" for his bowling (also 1957). He adds that John progressed through the school soccer teams with himself, Bob Hay and Michael Davey; played occasionally for the Old Thorntonians; and had a successful career in the bullion business, based at Hatton Garden. He was also best man at Terry's wedding in 1960.

Peter Brown (1947-54): died 9 February 2017 in Australia, where he settled in 1989. He was a primary school teacher for most of his working life.

Peter F J Lawson (1936-41): died 19 March 2017. A wartime evacuee to Chichester, Peter joined the small groups of OTs who visited and toured the present High School for Boys in 2008 and 2009. With Mike Surridge he presented the annual Henry Thornton award (£100 in book tokens) to the nominated pupil of Lambeth College, South Side, at its ceremony held in June 2012, and was with the party of OTs who visited Lambeth Academy, Elms Road, with Derek Jakes, Monty Clarkson and others in February 2015. Members will also be interested to read of his post-HTS career aspirations and realities, as recorded in the following extract from his reminiscences which appeared in issue no 6 (July 2008):

The School Certificate examinations were over, and the results were to be available three or four weeks after the end of term. Two of us made a morning visit on the appointed day. The school was deserted, but we happened to see one of the masters, who took us into the office to see the results, congratulated us on passing and wished us a good holiday. NO mention of future plans or opportunities!

Being interested in art and not knowing how to set about the right approach for entering a completely unexplored world to me, I decided to go to the fountain head, ie, County Hall [London]. The Blitz was over and the building was deserted, but I managed to find a uniformed official, to whom I explained my presence. He said: "It sounds to me like the Education Committee for London...They happen to be sitting today... through those double doors." It seemed like a vast chamber, with a long,

crescent-shaped table and about 20 occupants. I suppose that, being wartime, they didn't have much business on their agenda, as they appeared genuinely delighted to see me! After I'd explained my position, advice flowed from all directions, and I was urged to use my scholarship by taking the RIBA Architectural Course at the School of Architecture (Regent Street Polytechnic). I later discovered it was a full-time diploma course over seven years, and a new world opened up. It was broken by emergency service, as it was called, in the Indian Army – a university of life, never to be forgotten – and then back to “long-sweat” Finals, receiving the RIBA Diploma in Architecture.

From the Pages of *The Thorntonian*

Summer, 1951: **SCHOOL AND STAFF NOTES**

For September **Mr. H. Smethurst**, Mus.Bac., has been appointed. He was at Wallington County School and at Wandsworth Emergency Training College until its dispersal.

We have bidden farewell to ***Mr. G.W. Dix**, by whose departure on retirement we lose another familiar figure. Many successive classes experienced his brusque manner and aggressive discipline, as he himself said in his valedictory address to the School, but we all know that under him many boys came to love *art and appreciate an orderly approach to the subject. He was an enthusiastic and able cricketer, always scored and bowled well for the Staff, and we hear that the easel and art materials presented to him by the boys will be used in forming his collection for an exhibition of his work.

His place has been taken by **Mr. R.R. Langford**, who has been teaching in Kent. He holds the Art Teachers' Diploma, and is particularly interested in painting.

Mr. Lawrence, our Schoolkeeper, is going on to another post, and his place is to be filled by **Mr. Martin**, who comes to us from another London school.

*Editor's note: see also relevant subject extract from the 1949 school inspection report, reproduced in newsletter no 29, February 2015.

Autumn, 1944: **ADVICE ON CAREERS**

This term two talks have been given to the Fifth Forms at the school, which form part of addresses on careers. Mr. F.S. Bryson, M.B.E., M.A., B.Sc., of the L.C.C. School of Building, Brixton, spoke on “The Building and Allied Trades.” The nature of the different branches of building, the qualifications a boy should seek to obtain, and the prospects were clearly defined by Mr. Bryson. The many questions put to the speaker showed the keen interest of the boys.

Mr. Arthur Milroy, an officer of H.M. Inland Revenue Department, spoke on the work in the Customs and Excise.

The parents of boys who will be leaving school next July will be pleased to hear that arrangements have been made by which information and personal advice may be obtained regarding particular professions and businesses, which parents may be considering for their sons. The organization of this advisory bureau has been made possible through the most generous offer of their services by the members of the Clapham Rotary Club. The field of vocations on which expert personal advice may be obtained includes Architecture, Banking, Building, Ministry, Dentistry, Engineering, Law, Printing, Insurance, General Commerce. [No mention, at least in this report, of potential careers also in the Civil Service or local government. Ed]

Parents who would desire such personal advice should write to the Head Master.

W.R.J[ohn]

1949 School Inspection

SUBJECTS OF INSTRUCTION

Mathematics

A very good standard is achieved by the A stream and the work of the rest of the boys is, on the whole progressing satisfactorily. The scheme is based on the Alternative Mathematics Syllabus for the General School Examination, and it is modified for the C stream. Perhaps even further modifications should be considered so that less able boys are not pressed to cover completely the syllabus but rather to concentrate on the real understanding of the principles involved and the quality of the work produced. It might be more profitable to begin algebra rather later in the first-year Forms to ensure that simple arithmetical mistakes should not occur in the higher Forms. Each of the first-year Forms has two periods, a generous time allowance, for geometrical drawing, which is the responsibility of the Handicraft Master.

Except in forms IC and IIC, the Mathematics teaching is shared by three Masters, two of whom take the Sixth Form work. Throughout the School the boys work hard in the classroom and derive a certain satisfaction from much of the neat mathematical work which they produce. There is perhaps a tendency on the part of one of the Masters to over-estimate the knowledge and ability of some of the boys. The stimulating oral work in IA and the high all-round standard shown in IVA must be noted.

One of the Science Masters is responsible for the work of IIC where the oral response of the boys is quite good, but the written work could be improved. In IC two Geography Masters take arithmetic and algebra respectively. It is understood that this arrangement is a temporary expedient, but it is unfortunate that the Mathematics of this first-year group is in the hands of three Masters.

Consideration should be given to the continuity of teaching so that boys have the same Master for at least their fourth and fifth years.

There are eight boys in the first and four in the second year of the Sixth Form. In both Pure and Applied Mathematics their work reflects good teaching and an understanding of mathematical principles. If the first and second years could be separated for certain periods, some of the boys would be able to get more individual tuition than is possible at present.

Suitable text-books are in use and a reasonable number of reference books are available.

Some necessary adjustments of time-table, discussed during the Inspection, would assist progress considerably throughout the School.

The Editor welcomes contributions for future issues. Please post or email them to:
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