



# 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)

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**No 40**

**April 2018**

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## **2018 Reunion**

Please note that this event will now be held on **Monday 12 November**. The Windmill, including the Blue Room, will be undergoing a major refurbishment during the autumn, and consequently the Association's original booking for 9 October (as advised in no 39) has had to be switched; the other information given in that issue is still applicable.

## **Annual General Meeting**

The Association's eleventh AGM was held at Lambeth Academy, Elms Road, SW4, on Saturday 24 March. The main items discussed or reported were:

- Management Committee members elected or re-elected to serve until 31 March 2019:

President: Michael Caplan, QC

Vice-President: (Vacancy)

Chairman: Jeff Green

Vice-Chairman: Ron Davies

Secretary: Ted Hayward

Treasurer: Peter Greenwood

Entry-year representatives:

1930s/1940s: (Vacancy)

1950s: Bob Hay

1960s: (Vacancy)

1970s/1980s: (Vacancy).

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

*As indicated, there are four vacancies, primarily for entry-year representatives. 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 2017, prepared by outgoing Treasurer Terry Lawlor and examined by Bob Hay, was adopted. A copy is attached.
- The following recommendation from the Committee meeting held on 13 November 2017 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 2018; ii. joiners in 2018, and any rejoining, after a break, in that year, would be required to pay the relevant membership fee in the normal way.*

For your diary: next year's meeting will be on Saturday **23 March**; venue subject to confirmation but probably once again at Lambeth Academy.

## **Association Tie**

Contact Ted Hayward if you'd like to purchase one: the price is £15, including postage. (An image of the tie is displayed on the website, in the Miscellaneous gallery - no 5 in the line-up - which is accessed by clicking on Memorabilia on the home page menu.)

## **Reminiscences**

Four more OTs share their memories of **Hywel Thomas Bennett** (1955-62), whose obituary appeared in the previous newsletter.

**Geoff Clark** (1957-64): I watched the play in which Hywel Bennett played Hamlet and was mightily impressed. He showed so much prowess and confidence – I thought he was a born actor. In later years I was disappointed that he did not realise his potential – or rather the potential I thought he had – in full measure. I had put him in the same category of excellence as Derek Jacobi. There is a lot of randomness about the level of success we achieve.

**Peter Smith** (1962-7): I also remember Hywel Bennett, although I was much younger. My brother, Alan, went to HT also and he is seven years older than me so I saw Hywel play Hamlet whilst my brother was a soldier of the king!

**Geoff White** (1958-65): he was two or three years older than me but was stunning in the school plays. When he played Henry V I was the fourth citizen. I also took part in the Play of Daniel, playing the recorder of all things! I saw him in the West End once, in *Play it Again, Sam* – I think with Dudley Moore but it was donkey's years ago.

**Jonathan Knopp** (1957-62): he was one year above me and we both then lived in Streatham. He was a brilliant athlete and well deserved his Victor Ludorum. I recall seeing him perform at the Old Vic in the sixties, and how I wish that he had been filmed in his many Shakespearean roles – but, alas, I believe that in those days he could earn far more by making films! I think he stole the show as the Narrator in the *Play of Daniel* (a relatively unknown play which I have never seen other than at HT) and I was surprised to see the somewhat adverse comment that he was “a little theatrical”.

**Terry Lawlor** (1951-6) writes:

Newsletter no 5 (April 2008) included a contribution from Steve Kingshott which mentioned Ernie Williams, who boxed for the school teams.

Ernie was a lad from a large, quite poor family who managed to pass the 11+ examination and to take advantage of the opportunity to go to a grammar school.

I went to the same primary school in South Lambeth – Wyvil Road – as Ernie and arrived at HT with Edward Rothery and Alan Dorey on the first morning, when new boys were herded into the fives courts to have bare legs whipped by branches wielded by older boys. [Thankfully, not an initiation “ceremony” I recall! Ed]

Ernie landed several solid punches on the noses of our tormentors, and we were soon left alone. Later he became famous for his tactics for “inviting” donations of sandwiches for himself at lunch breaks.

Steve also mentioned games at Rose Hill: this always afforded the opportunity to earn a modest return from the official fares we were given by juggling bus (including Green Line)

and Tube pricing structures. Also, and more important, the chance to meet girls on the bus that stopped near La Retraite school.

Who was the master who gave 100 lines (“He who keepeth his tongue in his head saveth his soul from sorrow”), to be written in alternate red and blue letters?

*Editor's note: Terry is offering a £10 prize to the first OT who can correctly identify the master concerned. All entries to him, please, at [e.lawlor@sky.com](mailto:e.lawlor@sky.com); 01252 724271; Spring Cottage, 11A Deepdene, Lower Bourne, Farnham, GU10 3QP. His decision is final!*

## 1949 School Inspection

### SUBJECTS OF INSTRUCTION

#### Science

Three Masters share the teaching of Science, two giving the whole of their time to the subject and one including some Mathematics in his programme. The senior Science Master [Mr S W Read] has a Second Class Honours degree in Chemistry of London University and is responsible for most of the teaching in his subject. He is a thoroughly competent schoolmaster and head of the department. The Physics Master [Mr W F C Hofmann] holds a First Class Honours degree of London University. He is mainly responsible for teaching physics. He has a thorough knowledge of this subject, a progressive and enlightened outlook and is doing much sound work. The third Master [Mr J B Phillips] is an Honours graduate of the University of Wales. He is primarily a biologist, but under present conditions in the School he has very little scope in his own subject, being responsible for the general science in Forms I, II and IIIC, which he tackles with confidence and competence.

General science is taken in the lower forms up to and including Form III and then the biological side is dropped, chemistry and physics being taken as separate subjects for two years in Forms IV and V in preparation for the School Certificate Examination. It is unfortunate that general science is not carried through the Main School as botany and zoology are taken in the Sixth Form by four boys, though owing to lack of accommodation and equipment in the School the boys concerned have to be sent to Battersea Grammar School for this part of their Sixth Form teaching. Though from some points of view it is an admirable arrangement for schools to share their teaching and laboratory resources, difficulties arise in practice; the time-tables of the schools do not fit, transport has to be arranged and a good deal of time is lost in travelling, while the different standards attained on entering the course of advanced study make adjustments necessary. It seems probable too that if the School could provide its own biology teaching the demand would grow. The staff of the Henry Thornton School is qualified to undertake the work and it is likely that the present arrangement will come to an end in the near future.

The time allotment in the Main School is two periods a week in Form I, three in Form II, four in Form III, two for each of chemistry and physics in Form IV, and four for each in Form V. If the present examination objective is to be retained, the time should be doubled in Forms IV and III. Alternative suggestions for carrying general science up to the Fifth Form stage were discussed in detail with the staff and Head Master. The work in the Main School is very sound and thorough but has to be kept to the bare essentials owing to the small time allotment.

In the Sixth form, apart from the biology previously mentioned, chemistry and physics with eight periods a week for each are taken in conjunction with Pure and Applied Mathematics in preparation for the Higher School Certificate Examination and for Open Scholarships. There are ten boys in their first year and six in their second; since both years attend at the same periods, the Master's task is no easy one, and the numbers of boys who can be included in the course are strictly limited by the size of the advanced laboratories rather than by the number

who wish to take Science in the Sixth Form. The work is well organised and reaches a good standard.

The accommodation consists of one full-sized laboratory and one small advanced laboratory for chemistry and the same for physics. A class-room fitted with a demonstration table can be used for Science teaching, but is wanted largely for other work. There is one small preparation table, quite inadequate for the needs of the School, and much apparatus has to be kept in cupboards in the corridor. A biology laboratory is badly needed. The dead end of the corridor between the physics laboratories might be used as a balance room, or as a small advanced biology laboratory.

There is a considerable shortage of apparatus owing to the impossibility of replacement in war-time and to post-war high costs and difficulties of supply. Quite often four boys are working together with the same set of elementary physics apparatus. The dark blinds in the physics laboratory require replacement.

The whole curriculum of the Science Sixth form should be reconsidered: one period of English per week does not afford an adequate opportunity for the development of the cultural and humanistic side of the boys' education. Similarly, for the non-science specialists some attempt should be made to bring to their knowledge the recent developments in scientific discovery and thought. One lecture a week, with guidance as to wider reading in the subjects of the lectures, would probably suffice.

The Science library has a number of useful books, but in a subject which is always developing there is a constant need to keep up-to-date. Many more books of a simple character for the younger boys to read about science from a wider aspect than can be covered in the lessons are desirable.

The School is fortunate in having very efficient laboratory assistance.

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