



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 43

April 2019

Annual General Meeting

The Association's twelfth AGM was held at Lambeth Academy, Elms Road, SW4, on Saturday 23 March. The main items discussed or reported were:

- Management Committee members elected or re-elected to serve until 31 March 2020:

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)
- The statement of account for the year ended 31 December 2018, prepared by Peter Greenwood and examined by Bob Hay, was adopted. A copy is attached.
- The following recommendation from the Committee meeting held on 18 September 2018 was accepted:

That a. 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 the year from 1 January 2019; b. joiners in 2019, and any rejoining, after a break, in that year, would be required to pay the relevant membership fee in the normal way.

For your diaries: next year's meeting will be on Saturday **21 March**; venue subject to confirmation but probably once again at Lambeth Academy.

Obituaries

Mike Clark (1957-64): died 2 January 2019. Attached is a tribute prepared by members of his year group, and he appears in the reunion photo below.



This photo was taken at the 2009 reunion. L-R: Peter Barrell, Rob Donkin, Basic Pearce, Mike, Roy Daniel

RHW (Ron) Thurston (1940-6, including Chichester until 1942): died 8 November 2018. The following are selected extracts from an email he sent to the Editor in 2016:

Early in 1940 I was evacuated from my primary school in Stockwell to Combe-in-Teignhead in Devon (great move for a London lad). Then received invite to join HT in Chichester, but couldn't get there until October due to air raids. I was billeted at Cawley and Grosvenor Roads. Mr Read and Mr Dix also lived in Grosvenor Road so had to behave. Also knew Mr Bramble. For the record, all old haunts remain. PS Jimmy Hill ("Chinners") was in the year above me. He didn't only play football – I can remember him playing in a band at a dance in the Catholic Church hall in Clapham!

Robert David Lewin (1950-3): died 24 February 2019.

1949 School Inspection

SUBJECTS OF INSTRUCTION

FRENCH

French is taught by four Masters [*Mr C W Gribble, Mr A W Lambert, Mr W R Davies, Mr A A Rapp*] who are all suitably qualified academically and by residence or study in France; together they make a good team; the Head of Department [*Mr Gribble*] has a First-class degree. The teaching is careful and thorough, attention being paid to pronunciation and correct phrasing, and a good standard of written work is attained. Every boy in the School starts the subject in his first term and offers it in the first School Examination after a five-year course. The C Forms are allowed four periods a week in the first year, five in the second and third, and six in the fourth and fifth; the A and B Forms have four periods only, except in the last year. It is desirable that a daily period should be contrived for all Forms at least in the first and second years, where it is most important. Six periods are a meagre allowance for the Sixth Form, since boys in the first and second years of the advanced course are taken together for four out of the six. It is a weakness of the timetable that the work with IVC has to be shared by two Masters.

Some skilful and resourceful oral teaching was seen, in the main closely related to the text of the book being studied or to the syntax or grammar under discussion. The boys concentrated well on the work, and as a rule interest was well maintained, but in general the lessons were narrowly directed towards specific points and seldom afforded wide experience in the use of language. This latter object would be more easily attained if more time were allowed in the first two years, and if the practice of starting each lesson with some pronunciation drill were continued to a considerably later point in the course than appears to be done at present. Although a very good example was seen in IA, which showed what can be done in the first year, and a good preparation lesson was seen in VC, free composition needs rather more attention right through the Main School course; the work being done in VA was good and accurate enough, and the foundations sufficiently well laid, to encourage rather more ambitious themes. Some carefully prepared dictation was seen, but it could be more widely used for specific language training and practice. The C Forms were working well and

earnestly, but it would be better for the boys if their syllabus were considered afresh, separately from that of the A Forms; at present the A and C Forms follow the same course, but the C Forms do not move so fast or cover as much ground. A more practical approach might be tried, with as much oral practice in vocabulary and sentence-making as possible, and making a feature of lessons containing regular sound drill and a “core” corresponding in length and difficulty to the powers of concentration and absorption of the boys.

The Arts Sixth consists of seven boys in their first year and four in their second. Their work centres chiefly round [*sic*] the Higher Certificate syllabus. In the upper section good translation is done, with careful attention to style and feeling, though it is not always free from elementary mistakes. Some thoughtful essays are also written. These able boys would benefit from wider reading. The six boys in the first year and five in the second in the Economics Sixth vary widely in their grasp of French. They are preparing for the Subsidiary paper in the Higher Certificate examination, and reading a set book. The arrangement is not satisfactory; they only have five periods, two with one Master and three with another. Some help is given to the Sixth Forms by an *Assistant*, but he is not well used to the type of work, and generally it is found desirable to have a Master present when he is conversing with the boys in school, though he does some valuable work out of school with the keener and more able boys. The School could make use of a highly qualified *Assistant*.

From the Pages of *The Thorntonian*

Autumn 1952:

THE SCHOOL SONG

What has happened to our School Song?

Just over a year ago the House system was re-arranged. The introduction of one new name (Clarkson) and the exclusion of three others (Cavendish, Cook and Pepys) rendered useless two or three lines in the second verse of the School Song. Thus we have been virtually without a School Song for *over one year*.

Not every school is fortunate enough to have a song of its very own. We are; but we ought not to allow this privilege to slip from our grasp. Our song was composed by a Thorntonian (E.G Gilder) before the war; since then countless Thorntonians have made it their song – something they could sing together with justifiable pride in their fine school and in many achievements.

The following are humbly submitted as possible modifications of the second verse of the School Song to suit modern requirements:—

Though other schools exist
Older than ours and bigger
Not one of these compares
With our Thorntonian vigour.
Macaulay, Stephen, Wilberforce
And Thomas Clarkson too—
These famous men have shown us all
The things we ought to do.
Chorus: Then onward, ye Thorntonians, &c.

Certain people have suggested “scrapping” the second verse altogether. There are two sound arguments against this:—

(a) The first half of the verse praises “Thorntonian vigour”. This is a characteristic trait in nearly all the boys – past and present – of the School and is indeed a laudable one;

(b) The third verse follows from the second: “So like *those men of old*”. Hence omitting verse two would destroy the continuity of the song.

The writer hopes that this article will raise discussion of this topic. Surely, for want of altering one or two words, we are not going to allow our School Song to fade ignominiously into oblivion?

ROBERT G.J. WOOD

Editor's note: this *cri de coeur* succeeded in convincing "management" (presumably represented by Mr D B Gaskin, who had succeeded "Taffy" Evans as Head Master in 1952), to introduce an amended second verse. The latter corresponded to Bob Wood's suggested text except that his final line ("These famous men...do") was replaced with the more imposing "These famous names have shown us all ideals we should pursue".

1955 Intake – Reunion

On 27 March 14 OTs, predominantly those who joined the school in 1955, attended a reunion lunch in the Drawing Room at The Windmill – an "Alive at 75" celebration, reflecting the age of those concerned in this year group; see photos below. Several wives or partners were also present, with two invited guests – Committee member Mike Surrige (accompanied by his wife Joan) and Ted Hayward, Association Secretary. The lunch had been efficiently organised by Vlad Haltigin from his home in Canada; regrettably, on health grounds he had to withdraw shortly beforehand. In his absence Colin Corbey ably hosted the convivial proceedings, during which the school song (appropriately, the 1952 version featured above) was sung with commendable vigour and tunefulness.

Were you also a 1955 entrant? If so, and you're interested in joining this group, which has held a number of such reunions in the past, please contact Roger Govus: roger.govus@btinternet.com.



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