

# OLD WESTCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION

(formed 1926)



## NEWSLETTER 2019

### 1. OFFICERS & COMMITTEE 2018 - 2019

**PRESIDENT** - D A Norman, MBE, *MA*  
(*Oxon*), *M. Univ (Open)*

#### VICE PRESIDENTS:

R. Arnold  
T.W. Birdseye, *JP*  
H.P. Briggs  
R.T. Darvell, *BA (Hons)*  
D.A. Day, *FCA*  
J. Harrison  
A.A. Hurst, *BA (Hons)*  
N.C. Kelleway, *FCA*  
C.R.N. Taylor, *FCA*  
M. Wren

**CHAIRMAN** - M.A. Skelly, *MA*

**HON. SECRETARY** - T.W. Birdseye, *JP*  
**HON. TREASURER** - C.R.P. Hennis

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

R. Arnold  
A. Graham  
K. Hickey  
A.A. Hurst, *BA (Hons)*  
Father J. McCollough  
D. Partridge  
B. Warby  
School Head Boy,  
or his Deputy

**HON. AUDITOR** - A.R. Millman, *FCA*

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR** - S.V. White  
*email: terry.birdseye@gmail.com*

Hon. Sec - Terry Birdseye, *JP*  
810 London Road, Leigh on Sea, Essex, SS9 3NH  
Telephone - 01702 714241, Mobile - 07752 192164  
Email: terry.birdseye@gmail.com

- 2. AGM 15TH JULY 2019 AT 7:00 PM AT THE SCHOOL**  
**3. ANNUAL REUNION DINNER - FRIDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER 2019**  
**6:15 PM FOR 7:00 PM AT THE SCHOOL**  
**DETAILS ON PAGE 3**

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### 3. OWA ANNUAL REUNION DINNER - FRIDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER 2019

**At the School: WHSB, Kenilworth Gardens, Westcliff on Sea, Essex, SS0 0BP  
6:15 PM FOR 7 PM OR 5:30 PM SHOULD YOU WISH TO LOOK ROUND THE SCHOOL  
COST £29.50 (£17.50 FOR STUDENTS IN FULL TIME EDUCATION)  
*TICKETS WILL NOT BE ISSUED***

**DRESS - LOUNGE SUIT, ASSOCIATION TIE (£12, Available from Hon. Sec. - see page 43)**

#### MENU

Pot of port & orange pâté, with side salad, onion chutney & toast

\*\*\*

Roast rump of Welsh lamb with roasted root vegetables  
& red wine & redcurrant sauce

\*\*\*

Traditional summer pudding with mixed fruits and clotted cream

\*\*\*

Cheese and biscuits

\*\*\*

Tea or Coffee

*(Vegetarian Meal available on request)*

- NO BOOKINGS WILL BE TAKEN AFTER THE DEADLINE OF NOON ON WEDNESDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER.
- ALL CANCELLATIONS AFTER THIS TIME MUST BE PAID FOR.

.....

**REPLY SLIP: O.W.A. ANNUAL REUNION DINNER - FRIDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER 2019**

**FROM: Name:** .....

**Address:** .....

.....

**Postcode:** ..... **Phone:** .....

**TO: TERRY BIRDSEYE - 810 LONDON ROAD, LEIGH ON SEA, ESSEX, SS9 3NH  
TELEPHONE: 01702 714241/terry.birdseye@gmail.com**

**PLEASE RESERVE ..... PLACE(S) FOR:**

<u>NAME</u>	<u>* YEAR DATES AT SCHOOL</u>	<u>COST</u>
.....	(.....)	.....
.....	(.....)	.....
.....	(.....)	.....
.....	(.....)	.....

**TOTAL: £** .....

**\* PLEASE COMPLETE YOUR YEARS AT SCHOOL. THIS IS IMPORTANT.**

**CHEQUE PAYABLE TO "OLD WESTCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION"**

**\* PAYMENT MAY ALSO BE MADE USING "TICKETSOURCE" VIA THE SCHOOL WEBSITE**



4. (i) TO: HONORARY SECRETARY O.W.A. - TERRY BIRDSEYE

OLD WESTCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION

Careers Guidance Support Form

As in previous years, we are continuing with our careers advice network. The intention is that both current pupils and Old Boys can tap into the wealth of knowledge about careers and universities held by us, the membership of the OWA. Those seeking advice will be able to search anonymised data and then submit pertinent questions for direction to the appropriate alumni by an intermediary at the School. In order to set up and sustain the network we are asking willing Old Boys to supply a brief resume of their career history below:

Name: .....

Years at WHSB: .....

University, Subject, Degree Level, Dates 1: .....

.....

.....

University, Subject, Degree Level, Dates 2: .....

.....

.....

Profession(s)

.....

Email Address:

.....

By signing below I consent for this data to be kept on record and to be used solely to match those seeking careers advice with those offering it.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

#### **4. (ii) HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Fellow members, it is that time of year again, my 19th annual report as your secretary. Doesn't time fly when you're having fun! Seriously though, it is a pleasure and a privilege to be playing my part in keeping the show on the road. I must record my thanks, as always, to the school CDO for all their invaluable help, David, Jemima and Nicki.

I have been notified of the following members who have passed on, namely David Clough, Donald N. Fraser, Steve Southworth, B.V. Riley, Alan Burroughs, Michael Cornish, Peter White, Geoff (Syd) Thompson, Ian Tripcony, Professor Robin Priest, Peter Sanderson, Graham Croxford and Ken Ulrich. Their obituaries, where this has been possible, are included later. There may be others, but these are the ones that have been brought to my attention. Our thoughts are with their families and loved ones.

Please keep the articles coming! We are only able to publish this newsletter with your views and memories. This year we have had a great deal of copy. We have given priority to memories of the departed. If your particular article is not in print this year, please accept my apologies, it will be in 2020!

This year we have changed our subscription structure for the first time in fifteen years. Those from year 13 at school to the end of full time education will be free. Then up to 30 will remain at £10 and over 30 will increase to £20. This is primarily to encourage our younger colleagues to join. They are our future! We are only able to keep our fee at a modest level with your generosity. Any donations that you are, therefore, able to spare will always be gratefully received.

The school CCF goes from strength to strength with a new Navy section. The OWA have been pleased to support the CCF with a donation towards the three new flagpoles which stand to the rear of the school. The Old Westcliffian Lodge have also made a substantial donation towards the flags.

Our last annual reunion dinner in September was a great success with celebrated journalist and author Neil Harmon as our guest speaker. Over 100 people spanning nine decades attended. This year's dinner will be on 6th September with the details on page 3. Our speaker will be Roger Buxton, former BBC Essex Radio sports presenter. If you have not been before, make this your first year. You will have a very entertaining and enjoyable evening. I should mention that cards are accepted at the cash bar and there will be a raffle for which cards will not be accepted!

Our AGM will be on 15th July at 7pm. It has been decided not to hold Alumni Network socials this year in order to concentrate on the school centenary celebrations. Please, nevertheless, come and support the AGM. It would be great to see more new faces!

You will know by now that the school celebrates its Centenary next year. The festivities kick off with a black-tie dinner at the Cliffs Pavilion on 1st February. There will be a drinks reception at 6pm, followed by a formal dinner at 7pm. Live entertainment will be by current pupils and alumni of the school with a luxury raffle and a special auction. Tickets may be booked via Ticketsource online...£85. If you have a problem booking, contact me in the first instance. It would be really great to have a good showing from the OWA! There will be further events throughout the year of which you will be notified.

When you have a moment, please look at the website, where you will find past issues of the newsletter and other items of interest.

My thanks as always go to my committee for their help and to the Headmaster for his unfailing support to me and to the Association. I must also thank Shanie, our editor, who somehow miraculously pulls it all together!

I wish you all good health and happiness and I hope to see you during the year.

**Terry Birdseye**  
**Honorary Secretary**

**4. (iii) NEW MEMBERS**

Dr. Omar Jarral	(94-01)	Oliver Vickers	(11-18)
Jacob M Cox	(07-14)	Rajarshi Chatternee	(11-18)
Michael Taylor	(54-62)	David T. Willmott	(45-52)
Alan A.G. Dimond	(41-46)	Alex Welsh (ex staff)	(56-94)
Iain N. Ager	(86-93)	Michael Stephen Taylor	(54-61)
George Tothill	(10-17)	Paul Rhys Williams	(59-64)
Brian Bridge	(51-58)		

**Total    13**

**4. (iv) MEMBERS DONATIONS**

Members who have given donations over the last year, which are received with grateful thanks:

Tony Axe  
John Parlane  
Michael Warwick  
Fr. John McCollough  
John McGladdery  
George Tothill  
Dr. Christopher Ward  
Robin Sanderson

## 5. HONORARY TREASURER

### OLD WESTCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018

	2018		2017 9 MONTHS	
	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>				
Life subscriptions	120		150	
Profit on ties etc	39		33	
Donations, bequests etc	1,172		351	
Surplus on function	<u>135</u>		<u>21</u>	
		1,466		555
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Printing, postage & database	235		278	
Sundry expenses	45		214	
Grant to WHSB CCF Naval section	500		-	
OWA prizes	<u>50</u>		<u>-</u>	
		830		492
<b>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</b>		<u>636</u>		<u>63</u>

### BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2018

	2018	2017 9 MONTHS
	£	£
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Stock of ties etc	980	771
Cash at bank	7,096	6,669
Cash at building society	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u>8,078</u>	<u>7,442</u>
<b>FINANCED BY</b>		
General fund brought forward	7,442	7,379
Surplus for the year	<u>636</u>	<u>63</u>
<b>GENERAL FUND CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<u>8,078</u>	<u>7,442</u>

C R P HENNIS  
HONORARY TREASURER

A R MILLMAN FCA  
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER



## 6. PRESIDENT

It has been a privilege to continue to serve as President of the OWA during the past year, one in which our Association has gone from strength to strength. Inevitably in this day and age a diaspora takes place after people leave school but a substantial number of Westcliffians choose to remain in our home town or increasingly choose to return to Southend on their retirement. Hardly a week goes by without me meeting an old Westcliffian here in Southend. Almost invariably they are pleased to talk with affection of their time at our school, as can be seen elsewhere in this magazine.

We are now approaching the centenary of WHSB and many exciting events are planned for next year. The OWA has been fully involved right from the start in the planning and I serve on the Committee convened by the Headmaster to plan the centenary celebrations. I have also been given the honour of making a speech at next year's Speech Day. I see myself speaking on behalf of the many thousands who have passed through WHSB since 1920.

Next year not only sees the School Centenary but also will be the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of the Second World War. All Westcliffians will recall the Memorial Plaque in the west corridor by the Hall bearing the names of those from our school who died in the conflict. I have always taken a personal interest in this memorial as one of the names is that of my mother's cousin. I asked if the school could find out more about the men whose names appear on the plaque. Much will now appear in the forthcoming book on the history of the school. This November on Remembrance Sunday I will be laying a wreath on behalf of the OWA at the Southend War Memorial, as we do each year, in memory of the Westcliffians who gave their lives in World War 2 and later conflicts. They will never be forgotten.

We look forward to welcoming you to our Annual Dinner at the school in September. It's pleasing to report that numbers attending the dinner have been growing year on year. We are especially pleased to have recruited many younger members as well as members going back to the 1940s.

I hope to see you there!

**Councillor David Norman MBE, MA (Oxon), M Univ. (Open)  
President**

## 7. CHAIRMAN & HEADMASTER

With less than a year to go before we begin celebrating our Centenary year, I am pleased to update Old Westcliffians on the School's news. Old Westcliffians will know that we have been working on increasing our local intake of Year 7 pupils, and we have enjoyed success in this area with the number of local pupils joining us rising year on year. This is due in no small part to the work of our Westcliff Centre for Gifted Children and its highly popular 'Go for Grammar' programme. I am delighted to report at the time of writing that we have filled all of the places allocated for local children in Year 7. In response to the growing demand locally, we have also increased the proportion of places allocated to local children to eighty percent. Old Westcliffians will be aware from my previous reports that the School is heavily oversubscribed, and that remains the case despite the expansion of the School from 154 to 185 pupils in each cohort.

The School continues to perform well in the Public Examinations and I am delighted to report that we had another successful set of results in August 2018. At Advanced Level 20% of our students' entries were graded A\* and 50% of all students' entries were graded A\*/A. Twenty-three students gained two or more A\* grades and ten students achieved at least three A\* grades. The majority of students achieved or exceeded their University offers, including nine students who secured places at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. We also enjoyed outstanding GCSE results with 48% of entries graded 8/9 (formerly A\* grades) and 76% of entries graded 7-9 (formerly A\*- A grades). One-hundred and three pupils achieved eight or more 7-9 (A\*-A) grades and twenty-seven pupils achieved twelve or more 7-9 (A\*-A) grades. This was a particularly pleasing set of GCSE results as it was the first occasion that the majority of subjects were assessed on the new 9 to 1 grade scale. Once again, our School is the highest performing School in the borough using the Department for Education's new metric Progress 8. You will also be pleased to learn that your School has been ranked in 36<sup>th</sup> position in the top 100 performing State Schools in the Sunday Times. As you would expect, we take nothing for granted and are conscious that each academic year brings a fresh challenge. However, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the pupils on their impressive achievements and to thank our excellent staff for all their hard work in ensuring pupils were well prepared for their examinations.

The School's sport continues to improve significantly under the leadership of Mr Morrish, our Director of Sport. The skill, commitment and enthusiasm which he and his colleagues bring to their positions continues to inspire our pupils to participate and enjoy their sports. As is often the case in life, success breeds success and our pupils have enjoyed tremendous success in the winter sporting programme. The School's Year 8 pupils have had a particularly notable season, being crowned Double County Champions in rugby (winning the Essex Schools and Essex Schools' Sevens Competitions, this Year 8 team has remained undefeated in competition for two seasons), Borough Champions in football and County Champions in basketball. The Year 7 rugby team also shows great promise, coming runners up in the County Championship.

The Year 7 basketball players were also runners up in the County Championship. Not be outdone by their peers, the Year 9 rugby team won the U14 Essex Plate. The School's U18 basketball players were also crowned County Champions. I encourage Old Westcliffians to visit the website for details of successes in other sports.

The levels of participation in drama, and its quantity and quality, continue to rise under the leadership of Mr Jefferys, Director of Drama. Fresh from their success at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival last summer, the School's company has already put on two major productions (Hamlet and Guys and Dolls). Both productions were triumphs and showcased the School's outstanding talent in this field. The summer play (Lord of the Flies) is already in rehearsal and promises to be another wonderful production. Music remains a great strength of the School under the superb leadership of Mr Derrick, Director of Music. Mr Derrick continues to stretch our musicians by challenging them with demanding repertoire. The most recent symphonia concert had over 350 people in attendance to listen to a wonderful programme of music including Sibelius' Finlandia and Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition. Of course, this but a flavour of our extensive extra-curricular programme for pupils and I encourage Old Westcliffians to read the Termly Westcliff Diary (available on the School website) if you are interested in knowing more about the programme.

The programme for the Centenary Year has been finalized and preparations are underway in relation to a number of key events such as the official launch, the concerts, drama and exhibitions. Dr White has made splendid progress with the commemorative book and we anticipate that the book will be ready for publication in early spring 2020. He has also begun work on vignettes from the School's life across the last one hundred years which will be used to create 45 display boards around the School corridors.

The School is proud to announce that Paul Robinson Solicitors LLP has kindly agreed to be the Principal Sponsor for the School's Centenary year. The School has a long association with the firm and thanks to their generous support we have been able to plan an ambitious range of activities to celebrate the Centenary. We have also received generous support from Rickard Luckin Accountants and Cadman, the building firm which completed the splendid internal refurbishment of the Science Building. We have also received donations from private individuals in support of the Centenary year and I would like to thank them for their generous support. All surplus funds raised during the Centenary year will go towards improving our sporting and recreational facilities. We appreciate that we live in challenging economic times, however if there are any Old Westcliffians (or their firms) who wish to discuss making a donation towards the Centenary fund then please do not hesitate to contact myself or Mr Partridge, the Director of Resources and Support Services (partridge@whsb.essex.sch.uk).

Tickets for the Official Launch (Saturday 1 February 2020) at the Cliffs Pavilion, Westcliff on Sea, are now on sale. At the time of writing nearly half of the tickets have already been sold and I would encourage you to make your booking as early as possible. A particular highlight of the event will be the attendance of former pupils from across the year and we would be delighted to see you there. This promises to be a unique and wonderful event, with entertainment provided at this black-tie dinner and dance by the current pupils and Alumni of the School. This will be an opportunity to celebrate the very best of WHSB and properly mark our 100<sup>th</sup> year. The tickets can be purchased via ticket source (<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whsb>).

On Thursday 28 March, one of our Centenary Patrons, Lord Petre, former Lord Lieutenant of Essex, and Sam Robinson, managing partner of our Principal Sponsor Paul Robinson Solicitors LLP, and his colleague Ms Natalie Pavelin visited the School to meet the staff and pupils and to discuss our preparations for the Centenary celebrations. It was my great pleasure to introduce our visitors to our pupils and staff who engaged in the School's music, drama, CCF and sporting activities. Our guests also had a chance to discuss the School with our Head Boy, Jonathan Travers and his Deputies, Victor Popoola, Marcus Kelly and Callum Finnegan. It was a wonderful occasion and our pupils and staff represented their School superbly. Lord Gold, also a Centenary Patron and former pupil, shall be visiting us later this academic year.

We are delighted that Cllr David Norman has accepted the invitation to be our Guest of Honour at our Centenary Speech Day 2020. Cllr Norman has been awarded an MBE for his Services to Education, including his twenty-year association with Ruskin College, Oxford. Old Westcliffians will also be aware that he is President of the Old Westcliffian Association as well as a Governor of the School. We look forward to his reflections at this event during our special year.

The arrangements for the Centenary year represent a significant undertaking and we anticipate many challenges ahead as we prepare for this historical event in the life of the School. However, we like a challenge at WHSB and we hold with Abraham Lincoln's adage - "Determine that the thing can and shall be done, and then we shall find the way." In order to ensure the success of the Centenary Year we need your support. In particular, I hope that many of you will join us for the many events we have planned, in particular our special launch event. This year will be a unique opportunity for Old Westcliffians from across the generations to come together to celebrate the School, the part it has played in their lives, and the many people who have been part of its 100 years of history.

I offer all Old Westcliffians my best wishes and sincere thanks for your continuing support.

**Michael A Skelly**

## 8. IN MEMORIAM

Alan Burroughs	July 2018
Michael Cornish (44-51)	Aug 2018
John Wilfred Cowan (44-50)	2018
Graham Croxford (57-64)	24/11/18
David Clough (35-41)	April 2019
Donald N Fraser	02/04/18
Derrick Holden-Brown	06/03/18
Professor Robin Priest (44-51)	02/10/18
B.V. Riley	2017/18
Peter Sanderson	16/04/19
Martyn Smith	
Steve Southworth	Jan 2018
Geoff (Syd) Thompson	21/09/18
Ian Tripcony (55-61)	06/09/18
Ken Ulrich	
Peter White (45-52)	July 2018

*All will be sadly missed*

## 9. OBITUARIES

<i>Alan Burroughs</i>	
<i>Michael Cornish</i>	2018
<i>John Wilfred Cowan</i>	2018
<i>Graham Croxford</i>	24/11/2018
<i>Donald Fraser</i>	02/04/2018
<i>Derrick Holden-Brown</i>	06/03/2018
<i>Robin Priest</i>	02/10/2018
<i>Peter Sanderson</i>	2019
<i>Martyn Smith</i>	
<i>Geoff (Syd) Thompson</i>	2018
<i>Ken Ulrich</i>	
<i>Peter White</i>	2018

### ALAN BURROUGHS

These are simply my memories of Alan with no attempt at a full biography.

He was born almost exactly one month after me in 1932 and I first met him before the war when we attended Westleigh School. (We are in the attached photograph). Subsequently, when schools in Southend were closed in the early years of the war we attended, not together as it happens, classes “ladies of a certain age” conducted in the homes of helpful parents until the School was evacuated to Derbyshire in 1940.

Not all the children went with the School and eventually Alan and I found ourselves travelling to and from the Elms by bus to Hadleigh School in Church Road, Hadleigh. We were fortunate to be able to attend that school but, in the end, stayed until 1943 when we each passed the exam, enabling us to attend either Southend High or Westcliff High. We started at the latter on the same day in September 1943.

Unlike Alan, whose memories of events at Westleigh, the air-raid shelters and (“Gibbo” for short) and Miss Budd for example, were very good, I recall very little of what happened to him at Westcliff: we were in different forms (he in 2F and I was in 2G initially, F = French, G = German from the languages we studied) and houses (he was in either North or East and I was in South).

We really lost contact after we left school. He went into the Merchant Navy while I went into the City. I do recall that he came ashore, after an accident I believe, becoming a Marine Superintendent with Andrew Weir.

I first met his wife Barbara at the Sunray Milk Bar near Chalkwell Park in the 1950's.



Later when we had both retired Alan and I found ourselves members of Probus Clubs and he, Barbara, my wife Jean and I enjoyed each other's company on Club trips abroad and at home and also away from Probus as a foursome.

Sadly, Barbara died some years ago, my wife doing so more recently and Alan spent the last year or so in a care home ironically built on ground at one time belonging to Westcliff High School for Girls.

### **Norman Lawrence (WHSB: 1943 - 1948)**

### **MICHAEL CORNISH (1933 - 2018)**

Michael was born in Eastwood in 1933. His Grandfather owned the brickworks and lived in the large house (being the several-hundred-year-old Bellhouse, Rayleigh Road, Eastwood), now a pub. It had a tennis court where many of his friends gathered in their teens.

He attended Westcliff Boys from 1944 to 1951. Then he joined the RAF to train as a pilot. Whilst in Southern Rhodesia his best friend, Gerry Rayner who had become a test pilot, was killed while on a test flight. Michael disputed their findings and soon after came out of the RAF.

He became a junior engineer with French, constructing Hanningfield Reservoir and decided to train as a civil engineer.

He attended Battersea Polytechnic and then joined Taylor Woodrow as an engineer working on several projects up and down the country.

At the weekends he helped restart a brickworks at Guestling near Hastings for his father, but having got it up and functioning his father separated from his mother and she moved back, with Michael's support, to Southend.

Soon after he married his wife, Moyra and they lived in London, whilst Michael spent a year in Taylor Woodrow's drawing office – a requirement for his Institute exams. He then became a Project Manager on several contracts including the Esso Building in Victoria Street and completed the renewal of services at Ford Dagenham.

On completion of this contract, he moved to Derbyshire to oversee the Boots Head Office in Nottingham, which made architectural news. He then transferred to Crewe Hospital then back again to Nottingham to work on the Queen's Medical Centre, which was the largest non-government contract to have been let in the country at the time.

Part way through this contract he joined a local group setting up a company as their Contracts Manager.

Unfortunately, the group were too ambitious and were caught out when there was a massive hike in interest rates and the Company had to be wound up. At this point, he joined up with a colleague and formed their own Company doing the initial bidding, surveying and contracting for tennis courts, football pitches, athletics tracks at Crystal Palace and a practice run at Lingfield Race Course for Entout Cas. He enjoyed being his own boss.

Up until this time, he'd had little time for leisure, but his daughter Julie began to drag him off on several backpacking holidays all over the world, including Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong, China, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and South America. Their stories of encounters with puff adders, machine gun hold ups and dangerous river trips were only recounted to Moyra on his return.

He became a beekeeper with his son John. Turned his love of aircraft model making into radio control and became very interested in helping with a group known as Friends of Wollaton Park, Nottingham. He had many ideas for reinstating a large walled garden, which had been badly neglected and contributed largely to initiating positive steps to its reuse. Unfortunately, through stress caused by the sudden death of his son, he himself suffered from several problems and died quite suddenly aged 85.

Michael managed to keep in contact with a number of his school friends and attended several of the Old Boys Dinners with some of them. About 11 years ago he compiled a "register" of those who had been in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Forms with him. He managed to make contact with about 20 of them and then circulated the life summaries that they had provided including a 1949/50 Whole School photograph.



L to R: Malcolm Couzens, Donald Mack, Michael Cornish, Jimmy Harrison and John Boulton

## **DR. JOHN WILFRED COWAN** (WHSB: 1944-1950)

John Cowan was close school-friend as we progressed through the 'A' stream. We shared interests in the stories of Arthur Ransome, and explored their settings in the Norfolk Broads, Suffolk, and Northeast Essex together on bicycle holidays, and later toured Devon and Cornwall after our 'matric' year. We remained in contact throughout our lives. He was a committed and steadfast Christian throughout his life, and godfather to my son Niall (1969-76).

At school, John's father, 'Casey' Cowan was our German master, and his family was in fact of German origin. His mother's family was connected with the local solicitor's firm of Thatcher, in Leigh Broadway (to which John was articled after school, and which he said was a 'wonderful opportunity' – although his heart was always in the natural sciences.) A Thatcher forebear had been head teacher of the original Leigh primary school on Church Hill and North Street.

The family have provided the following obituary details:-

When he was young, John's enthusiasm for the Natural Sciences began with the gift of a microscope and the breeding of Shubunkin goldfish sparked in particular a fascination with genetics.

Avoidance of National Service in the Korean war led him to be articled to the law for 5 years to become a solicitor. During National Service he was posted to Wattisham and Waterbeach within easy reach of Flatford Mill Field Centre where he continued his study of mosses and fungi leading to an adult state scholarship and a place at Queen Mary College to study Botany.



Schoolfriends: Trevor Brown, Gordon Campbell, John Cowan, David Dibble and his younger brother, Robert, ? and Alan Moss.



After graduating, the post of research assistant at University College led to an appointment to the staff of King's College Botany department, where he lectured until his retirement.

During these years he encouraged his four children and his wife Dorothea to develop their own interests in the natural sciences and music. Family holidays were enjoyed walking in the Lake District, Derbyshire and the West Country.

He had many interests and hobbies that filled his life. As a teenager he had a tendency to stutter and as a result of help from a drama teacher he developed a keen enthusiasm for amateur dramatics including taking part in the first two productions of the Matchbox Theatre.

In his twenties he had singing lessons which enabled him to win prizes at the South End Music festival including the gold medal for solo singing in 1960. This enjoyment of singing continued with a long membership of the Bromley Philharmonic Choir and St Francis Church Choir.

When Andrew started to learn to play the violin by the Suzuki method, John learnt with him and continued lessons gaining grade five. This enabled him to play chamber music with Dorothea and friends.

He began keeping honeybees in 1978. Exhibiting and winning prizes in honey shows. He became secretary of Bromley and Kent Bee Keepers Associations and taught microscopy for bee keepers at Flatford.

He developed a skill in bookbinding and an inheritance of equipment from his Aunt Dot resulted in him dividing the heavy choir hymn books at St Francis into 2 volumes. Learning how to bind loose A4 sheets led him to produce a number of volumes of family history which may be viewed at his home 121 The Grove, West Wickham. His life celebration service was conducted at St Francis' Church on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

**Cowan family, & Ken MacKinnon (1944-51)**



**GRAHAM CROXFORD** (1957-64)  
died on 24 November 2018 at Wanganui,  
New Zealand. He was 72.

To be joining Westcliff High School in 1964 was in many ways a wholly surprising event. As a young child, Graham had kept a kangaroo as a pet on the isolated sheep station where his parents then lived; they having emigrated to Australia. An unexpected return to England and the good fortune to find lodgings close to the Thorpe Greenways school, led to him putting on the blue blazer.

When at Westcliff he was a fairly conventional student who applied himself in equal measure to work and to play. As a sixth former he particularly enjoyed and was much influenced by the teaching and company of 'Spike' Limbird and Eve Brogden, who had created a markedly 'liberal' and very adult teaching environment in the biology department. Graham always enjoyed the company of others and had a circle of good friends both at school and out. His days of being a Scout at the Holy Trinity Southchurch troop were fondly remembered. As a teenager he became a noted swimmer, winning the Southend Open Sea Race on several occasions. But he was particularly successful as an excellent sprint swimmer. Those who can recall those days will remember that he was amongst the first to appear in 'budgie smugglers', and; they will doubtless also recall the reaction of others (especially the girls) to them!

As a teenager, he aspired to own an Austin Healey 3000 sports car, and always claimed that becoming a dentist was the only way he could think of being able to afford one. So, it was off to the London Hospital Medical School to qualify as a dental surgeon. That was a very happy period, with much time (too much time) given over to the Dionysian's, playing poker, and enjoying the company of others. Sharing a house with various trainee doctors and dentists (and nurses) in what was a decaying and rank smelling slum seemed to him to be a highly valuable part of the whole experience.

Having qualified he spent only a short time practising in England. Encouraged by members of his family to think of Southern Africa as a "land of milk and honey", he and his first wife emigrated to South Africa. There the pattern for most of the rest of his life was set. Those who were treated by him during the day invariably spoke of a skilful dentist working calmly and effectively to treat them without discomfort. He was the model of a sober professional, but he enjoyed a remarkable constitution which always allowed him to be two men. "Out of hours" his consumption of alcohol and cigarettes was prodigious. Golf became a great enthusiasm (Vice President and former Captain of Port Shepstone G.C.). That was partly for the competition (at one time playing off 6-8), but largely because it offered the chance of enjoying the convivial companionship of others. His habit of organising a great party to be enjoyed by many, but taking himself off to bed when "full", leaving others then happily to party on was notorious.

After many years in South Africa came a lengthy period in Bahrain. There to his playing golf was added a renewed interest in sailing, and he often crewed a Fireball with Dr. Peter Hart. Again, his popularity was marked, this time by his election as Commodore of Zallaqa Sailing Club. Then followed New Zealand and, quite briefly, Australia also. He was a popular and familiar figure at the beautiful Wanganui (Belmont Links) GC.

Through all those years he worked very hard; for he loved dentistry and loved going to his surgery to treat his patients. He was financially well rewarded. However, through all those years he always spent more than he earned; having always lived for the moment.

He was married four times. He had three children, about whom he was deeply sentimental, and they very loving of him.

For most of his life, Graham was a voracious reader. He was seldom seen without a book in hand or nearby. Each change of continent as home led to the abandonment of a vast collection of books. However, in later years Youtube lectures and talks replaced the written word. He consumed them as once he had books. Academics of greater reputation or none, political journalists and various 'snake oil salesmen' came increasingly to hold sway over his thinking. Identifying those who were credible with genuine learning, from those who were charlatans was however a struggle.

Over those nearly fifty years of expat life, he seldom returned to the UK. His last visit in 2017 was a difficult one. His health was not good. He was keen to seek out old friends but was unaware or unaccepting of the extent to which time, and his choices of lifestyle, had led them to grow apart. However, he found great pleasure and satisfaction in meeting up with school friends such as Jon Morgan and Robin Fosdal (who tragically died shortly thereafter). A walk down to the end of the pier prompted him to revisit the spot where the Open Sea race used to begin. A trip to Snowdonia, and inspection of the Mountain Rangers' hut in the Ogwen Valley, brought back vivid memories of a school field trip in the early 1960s, albeit that climbing Tryffan was now out of the question. Likewise, a chance meeting with an Irishman 'philosopher of life' in the Good Samaritan, Whitechapel, provoked hours of pleasurable discussion over many glasses of beer, and served to rekindle his strong memories of those happy times of the late 1960s spent in the East End.

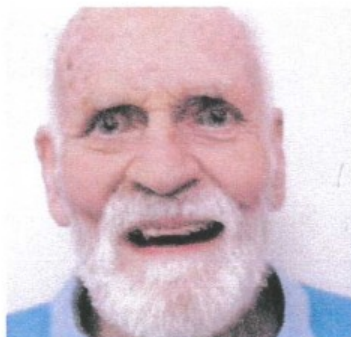
He did not want fanfare or fuss at his end, he chose to die quietly, in the company of his children who had all travelled great distances to be with him.

He never bought that Healey 3000, but as one of his children remarked: *"Considering his lifestyle it's amazing that he lasted so long."*

Those who knew him would certainly agree with that.

**Ian Croxford, QC**

## DONALD FRASER



### TRIBUTE IN THE LEIGHWAY SUMMER 2018

It is with great sadness that we have to inform members of the passing of one of our longest serving and most devoted members, helpers and treasurer, Donald Fraser.

Donald worked for many years in the Heritage Centre and was an absolute joy to listen to with all his knowledge of Leigh stretching back over his 90+ years. For many years he 'did the books' for the Heritage Centre with great diligence and accuracy, no doubt learned from his many years working at the Bank of England where he was well respected for these attributes.

Many of you will know Donald perhaps not by name but by the fact he could always be seen around Leigh in shorts and sandals whatever the weather a hardy soul indeed.

Donald was one of the original members of Leigh Town Council when it was formed in 1996 and served faithfully until earlier this year. He was also a staunch member of the Church at St Clement's and later at St Margaret's. We will miss him terribly, in particular his sense of humour, concern for others, determination and integrity at all times.

## **SIR DERRICK HOLDEN-BROWN (14. 2. 1923 –6. 3. 2018)**

I am sorry to inform you that my brother, Derrick, died in March this year. His birth on St. Valentine's Day 1923, when I was two years old, is my earliest memory.

We were brought up in Surrey and went to Sutton County School (now Sutton Grammar School) until the family moved to Westcliff in August 1934 when we transferred to Westcliff High School, I into the fifth form and he into the second.

I left school in 1938 to be articled to Monkhouse Stoneham & Co., a firm of Chartered Accountants in the City. The Munich crisis was taking place and many young men were joining the auxiliary forces. I decided to join the Territorial Army and enlisted in the Royal Artillery. Our senior partner, an Ulsterman and intensely patriotic, encouraged us but the result was that when war broke out in September 1939 all the young men, including myself, were called up, leaving the firm extremely short-staffed. Derrick, then 16, felt unsettled and decided to leave school and train to be a chartered accountant so he took my place in the firm. They were delighted to have him and he had two years accountancy training before joining the navy under the Y-scheme as a potential officer.

After initial training in the coal-burning Fleet minesweeper, HMS Elgin he was sent to King Alfred for officer training and passed out as a sub-lieutenant, RNVR, in 1943. As he had always been interested in small boats he opted to serve in Coastal Forces and was posted to 56th flotilla of six motor torpedo boats and motor gunboats. These were D-class boats, 112 feet long, heavily armed and each manned by three officers and 25 men. Derrick's boat was MGB 663, commanded by Lieutenant Tom Ladner, a Canadian. Their boat was nearing completion at Hillyard's boatyard, Littlehampton.

The whole crew having mustered, went to Littlehampton, gave the boat her trials and took her over. They joined the rest of the flotilla at Milford Haven and, with additional petrol tanks fitted to their decks, set off for the Mediterranean.

To avoid detection and attack by German forces in western France they went far out into the Atlantic and one night heard shouting and found men swimming. It transpired that two U-boats had collided and one had sunk. The survivors were dragged aboard the British boats and taken onto Gibraltar.

Operating in the Mediterranean and Adriatic they took part in the invasion of Sicily and in several skirmishes with German E-boats. They intercepted and sank or captured a number of ships used by the Germans to supply the islands they had seized. Then, one dark night their boat hit a mine and sank. Of six men on the bridge one died, four were injured but Derrick was virtually unscathed. They were rescued by other boats in the flotilla and returned to their shore base. A few weeks later Derrick received his own command-MTB 655.

They patrolled off the Yugoslav coast with frequent engagements against convoys that by then were more strongly escorted and succeeded in disrupting the enemy's supply route but on the night of 22 March 1945, in the Kvarner channel, they struck a mine, killing many of the crew and injuring others including Derrick. He suffered a broken leg and burns but was picked up and taken ashore and to hospital, his seagoing career ended. He returned to England in a hospital ship and was later discharged. The survivors of his flotilla kept in touch with each other and became lifelong friends.

Resuming his employment with Monkhouse Stoneham & Co, he continued his accountancy studies and in 1948 qualified as a Chartered Accountant. After a further year he decided to leave the firm and go into the brewing and wine and spirit trade. His first job was with Hiram Walker, the Canadian distiller, followed by a three-year spell as managing director of a brewery company near Dublin. Having thus gained experience of the trade he then joined Ind Coope, which later became Allied Breweries, and was appointed managing director of their wines and spirits business centered on Victoria Wine Company and Grants of St. James. It was not long before he was promoted to the main board

They took over many companies, Derrick using his accountancy skills in choosing only those that he calculated would enhance his group. Among those taken over was Showerings, the maker of Babycham. Three of the Showering family came on to the Allied board and, soon after, Keith Showering became Chairman with Derrick as his deputy.

Derrick was also in demand as a non-executive director of Midland Bank and Sun-Alliance Insurance Company. He was Deputy Chairman of the latter. In 1978 he took the chair of the Brewers Society, quite an onerous job, which he coped with by being at his desk at Allied Breweries by 0730 in the morning, putting in a day's work there until 4 o'clock when he would walk across to the Brewers Society and work another two or three hours before attending a function in the evening where he often was called on to speak.

At that time the Government commissioned reports on each of our major industries and Derrick agreed to be chairman of the committee reporting on the brewing industry. He pushed his committee along and was the first to complete the report. As soon as it was printed he was asked to go to No. 10 Downing Street and present it to the Prime Minister, Jim Callaghan, and members of the Cabinet. It was well received and a few months later the P.M. put him forward for a knighthood in the 1979 New Year Honour's list.

Back at Allied Breweries the group continued to advance. It was learned that the great catering company J. Lyons was experiencing difficulties and was looking for help. Derrick did his homework and decided that Lyons would complement the brewing business. A friendly takeover was arranged and the group was renamed Allied-Lyons.

In 1981 Derrick confided in me that he was thinking of taking early retirement. He told me that the Chairman, Keith Showering, was ten years younger than he so he did not see himself advancing any further from his current position of Deputy Chairman.

However, not long afterwards, Showering went to a reception at the Bank of England where he suffered a heart attack, collapsed and died. The following morning at an emergency meeting the board unanimously appointed Derrick Chairman, a position that he held for the next nine years. During his tenure he had to fight off several approaches from predators seeking to take over the group but he was successful and the share price more than trebled.

His pastime was sailing. His first boat, bought when he was fourteen, was a ten-foot dinghy which he sailed from Chalkwell beach. Immediately after the second world war he joined the Essex Yacht Club and sailed an Essex One-Design until he moved away and thereafter sailed from Lymington. There he joined the Royal Lymington Yacht Club and was elected to the Royal Yacht Squadron which entitled him to fly the white ensign on his yachts.

In 1950 Derrick Holden-Brown married Patricia Mackenzie, a Canadian. They had a daughter, who survives him, and a son who died in 2002. Pat had died a few months earlier and in 2005 Derrick married again, Farideh Pelham, who survives him together with his two step-daughters and their families.

## **G Holden-Brown**

## **ROBIN PRIEST was a prominent London Academic Psychiatrist**

Robert George Priest (usually known as Robin) was at school from 1944-1951. He played rugby for the 1st XV and was a keen member of 'Black Harry's' gardening club.

After he left school, he went on to UCH Medical School. Following House jobs including a post with Lord Amulree he was called up for National Service and decided to take a 3yr commission in course of which he was posted to the Far East, using his spare time to study for the membership of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh which he duly obtained. At one stage he was promoted to T/Major.

On returning to civilian life he soon took up psychiatry obtaining an exchange post in Chicago where he made many life-long friends. While there he wrote a thesis on homeless men for which he was awarded his MD.

He became senior Lecturer at St George's Hospital London in the mid 60s and proceeded from there to become Professor of Psychiatry at St Mary's hospital Paddington. Later he was elected Registrar of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, He taught medical students and psychiatrists over many years, while establishing Regional rotational training schemes in NW London. He undertook much research into the outcomes of drug and other treatments.

He often attended International Conferences on these topics taking his wife and junior and senior colleagues with him.

He was happily married to Marilyn who had kept her eye on him from the common room in the Girls School. She predeceased him by less than a year. He left two sons, several grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. His younger brother David was also at WHSB.

Robin died a few days after a well-attended party given for his 85th birthday

**Jack Steinert**

## **PETER SANDERSON- (1930 - 2019)**

My brother Peter always showed me the way of this world. He was Rugby Captain at Westcliff.

I followed in his footsteps.

He joined the Royal Artillery for his National Service.

I became a physical trainer at Shoenbury in R.A.

Peter went to Loughborough and played rugby for 3 years. I followed there also.

He became the Headmaster at Gravesend Grammar and held that position for many years.

No one will believe it, but I also became the Headmaster of a Junior School!

Peter died at 6:00 am on 16 April 2019, he was 89 years old.

**Robin Sanderson**

www.echo-news.co.uk

# Tributes paid to naval officer

By ELLIS WHITEHOUSE  
ellis.whitehouse@exeterpost.co.uk

TRIBUTES have been paid to a former Naval officer and RNLI inspector who has sadly died of bone marrow cancer.

The 56-year-old grew up in Leigh as the son of the late Pat and Don Smith.

He was born at Rochford Hospital in October 1962 and lived until the age of 18 at the family home in Tankerville Drive with his younger brother Duncan.

Martyn attended West Leigh Junior School and subsequently Westcliff High School for Boys.

Throughout his adolescence, he was an active member of the 3rd Chalkwell Bay Sea Scout Group and after his A Levels, he attended Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth where he trained as a Naval Officer.

He travelled extensively including the Caribbean, post-war Falklands and he was the navigator of the frigate HMS Brave during the first Gulf War. Mr Smith was an accomplished offshore yachtsman and par-



Officer - Martyn Smith was born and raised in Leigh

ticipated in numerous tallships races including a trans-Atlantic passage. Lately, he was a skipper for The London Sailing Project taking youngsters on cruises in the UK and across the channel.

After his naval career, he joined the RNLI as a divisional inspector for the Eastern Division which enabled him to rekindle his links with the Southend crews and fundraising team.

His brother said: "Martyn was popular and respected for his seamanship, drive and com-

mitment to high standards. Following restructuring within the RNLI, Martyn was posted to take control of RNLI operations in Ireland where he stayed for over ten years until his untimely death last week in Dublin.

"He was clearly immensely popular with the stations on both sides of the border and at his Irish wake, crews travelled from all over to pay their respects."

Mr Smith is survived by Rachel, his wife of 29 years, and his family in Cornwall, Leigh and Suffolk.



In Loving Memory of

*Geoff Thompson*

1941 - 2018

Funeral service at the Cathedral Church of St Peter, Exeter  
Wednesday 10th October 2018 at 2.30 pm

Service conducted by  
The Reverend Canon Dr Mike Williams, Canon Treasurer

Yesterday, I drove down to Exeter to attend the funeral of Syd Thompson at Exeter Cathedral, and I've attached a copy of the front cover of the service booklet. I hadn't realised quite how much Christianity was a part of Syd's life; he had attended Sunday morning services at the Cathedral religiously (how else?) since moving down to Exeter, and was involved in a number of local charities in which the Cathedral was involved. In consequence, there was a pretty good turn-out to see Syd off but only Gordon Bareham, his wife Phillippa and I managed to represent the times when Syd was amongst us at WHSB and OWRFC.

Mind you, there could have been others but I was incapable of peering through the veils of age to discern the youthful features of anyone I might have known back then. And I was sober.

As I believe is already known, Syd kept a small treasure trove of mementos of his participation in those times and I've already discussed with Elizabeth, Syd's elder daughter, the possibility of my collecting such items on behalf of both the OWA and the OWRFC.

Best regards

Gus

## GEOFF (SYD) THOMPSON



After he contacted me via the Hon. Sec. Geoff and I enjoyed a wonderful conversation, which took us both back into the long distant past. At this time, he knew his illness was terminal, yet was so amazingly sanguine and, clearly, determined to enjoy to the full whatever time he had left.

A short time back, I enjoyed a very long telephone conversation with Geoff: he had emailed Terry Birdseye, to request Terry passed him my contact details: Geoff had picked up on my name and remembered me, from an article I wrote for the OWA's Annual Newsletter.

Geoff and I had been classmates at Westcliff for five years 1953 to 1958, from the First Year, right the way through to the Fifth. As we chatted and laughed at old memories, well, the years rolled away.

My late Father was a very keen boating man and on one occasion, Geoff accompanied us for the day, on Dad's splendid, very rapid cabin cruiser, for a voyage around the Estuary! Which Geoff had never forgotten.

In our wonderful conversation, together, we remembered Masters who taught us (Well, tried, to anyway!), characters amongst our class-mates and the sheer atmosphere of the school.

Geoff was very pragmatic about his illness and full-well knew he was living on borrowed time: his sheer sanguinity, was so very brave: (I looked up one meaning of the word and believe it reflected precisely how Geoff felt and behaved in his circumstances:

**sanguinity:** *"optimistic or positive, especially in an apparently bad or difficult situation."*

We chatted about Geoff's time in the RAF and he told me how much he had enjoyed his service career and that "We had had fun!"

A very modest statement, I felt, when considering, at that time in history, we all grew up, married, had kids yet lived under a sort of Sword of Damocles, as we felt, deep inside, at any moment, the World might well be decimated by a global nuclear holocaust!

Yet Geoff, and hundreds like him, were in the front-line and, cheerfully, carrying a huge responsibility, when serving their Queen and Country.

Which they and he, so modestly, dismissed simply, as "Having fun"...

I am now so very glad I had that last opportunity, of once again, sharing his presence, albeit over the telephone; which will not be forgotten.

He was man of many parts: his loves and hobbies included Rugby; Sailing; Gardening; Norfolk Broads. He was a Sea Scout; played Hooker for the School 1<sup>st</sup> team and OWRFC and then for Wasps and The RAF. His hobbies included sailing old wooden boats on the Norfolk Broads and in later life he collected many books on the Broads and, as if this was not enough, gardening and reviving his old stamp collection

After working at Perkins in Peterborough Geoff met up with another Old Westcliffian, Colin Ford who was in the RAF as a Navigator and he decided this was for him, too!

He served from 1962 to 1996 and post-training, was commissioned as an acting Pilot Officer and qualified as a Navigator, which became his main service occupation: flying various "Types" which included Canberra, Hercules and Pembrokes amongst others. Service Theatres included the Falklands and Ethiopia on famine relief.

Why "Syd"? Well, in 1954, Harry Brownlee the PT Master, organised a gymnastics display in Chalkwell Park, for which Geoff volunteered. He went at everything, Head On: including, on this epic occasion the horizontal box, completely mistiming the springboard and then head butting the box! Face covered in blood, however, he would not give up and as a result, Harry Brownlee (Or Martin Clarke's father) nicknamed him "Suicide Syd"; which soubriquet stuck in perpetuity. He was what we called, then, "A game 'un!"

The Funeral Service was held in Exeter Cathedral Church and conducted by The Reverend Cannon Treasurer, Dr Mike Williams on Wednesday October 10th 2018. Throughout his life, Geoff was a Devout practicing Christian and involved with many local Christian charities attached to Exeter Cathedral.

Geoff was married to Barbara for 46 years until she sadly passed away in 2014. They had two children and enjoyed four grandchildren. Barbara and Geoff have now been interred, together, in the Exeter Garden of Remembrance.

### **Michael C Feltham**

*(N.B. Owing to available space limitations, there is much I have been compelled to omit. If any Old Boy would like a more detailed record of Geoff's full and fascinating life, then please contact The Hon. Sec and this can be sent on.*

*I am indebted to Geoff's daughter, Liz for her time and trouble in providing much information; and to Christopher "Gus" Chesney, Mike Wardle and Martin Clarke.)*



## **KEN ULRICH**

### **My memory of Ken by Keith Stephens**

I first met Ken in 1945. Both of us were put in form II A. H King was the form master. We sat in alphabetical order. Against the south wall, in wooden desks with ink wells sat: Gordon Sains, Seyfried, KS, Ken Ulrich, Walker and Peter White.

Ken and I were very keen on fireworks; they were not available during the war. Shops selling Standard 1/2d bangers and other noisy fireworks attracted eager schoolboys. I don't remember having a problem buying them despite being 11 years old.

NatWest Bank employed Ken all his working life apart from National Service in the RAF. He was involved in the establishment of the NatWest Tower. He was very keen on the study of British Lepidoptera.

### **Keith Stephens**

## **PETER WHITE (1945-1952 )**

Peter White attended West Leigh Junior school interrupted by a spell in Belper when his brother was evacuated there with WHSB.

Peter left Westcliff after A-levels in 1952 and went to Imperial College in London. He graduated in 1955 with a B. Sc (Eng) in civil engineering. He went from there to a good Graduate Training Scheme with British Rail.

He worked in Stratford, King's Cross, Leeds, Newcastle, Preston, Liverpool, Manchester and London. His last two jobs were Assistant Director of Civil Engineering at BRB HQ on the structures side, and Infrastructure Manager for North West Regional Railways, back in Manchester.

After 39 years he retired from B.R. at the start of the process towards privatisation and did consultancy work. He worked on the railway constructed to serve the new airport at Chek Lap Kok in Hong Kong involving the longest suspension bridge in the world carrying a road and railway.

Peter was interested in photography and had a deep knowledge of classical music particularly choral music. He was an enthusiastic member of local choral societies, his interest starting with the school choir. He loved travelling and was good at languages.

He was a loving husband, father and grandfather of five grandchildren. He loved family gatherings, one of which he was able to enjoy just days before his death.

He was very happy to have attended an annual dinner when he met contemporaries in particular, Harry Bacon, who was a lifelong friend.

### **Margaret White**

## 10. NEWS OF AND FROM OLD WESTCLIFFIANS

### GORDON BAREHAM

I continue to enjoy reading the “newsletter” and catching up on Old Westcliffian and WHSB matters. One of the downsides is reading of another sad death of an old fellow pupil. Not really surprising as I am approaching 77 and lucky to be still around . “On the green side of the grass” as we say amongst the Seniors group in my golf club.

You ask for contributions. The photograph dated 1958/59 might be of interest. It is a team photograph of probably the school 2nd XV of that period. It was certainly not the 1sts! The picture was taken on the south side of the old gym.

I found this amongst my hoarded treasures recently. Looking at the line-up, my first challenge was to try and put names to the faces. My thoughts then moved on to wondering what had happened to my fellow players in the past sixty years! I pondered how many were still alive.

Here is my recollection of the names of the line-up. It was a long time ago so some names are likely to be wrong.

#### **Back row left to right.**

Dave Grellier, Mike Sampson, Mike Phillips, John Dangerfield, Mike Kingsley, Peter McGlone, me (Piggy Bareham), Mike Horner, Mark Benson.

#### **Front row left to right.**

Claude Webber, ?, Mr. Moon, Ian “fatty “ Rule, Henry Cloake, Peter Dooley, Clifford Jacques, Mike Company, Ron Coates.



I played with some of the chaps for the OWRFC back in the 1960s but sadly lost contact with all of them. I know some have died.

Looking again at the picture brings back fond memories of my time at Westcliff High. We respected our masters then and we were lucky in having the likes of The Boot, Claude and Coates to set us on our way in life. I am still a very proud Old Westcliffian.

I don't know if what I have said and the photograph is of interest with the possibility of editing it or adaptation into an article. If so, good. If not, I will not be offended as I have enjoyed my trip down Memory Lane.

### Gordon

## **MICHAEL FELTHAM – (WHSB: 1953 to 1958)**

### **Memories of Another Year**

I read the last (June 2017) issue of the Westcliff Old Boy's Newsletter with, as always, much pleasure and was much interested by Keith Stephens's comment regarding myself; clearly, we were followers of the same Primrose Path to Hell, or perhaps, self-oblivion! At Westcliff, I was not alone.

The early 1950s were, in many ways, a strange time, since World War Two was a recent event; and our lives, then, were influenced significantly by the whole social upheaval. More importantly, the "Fatal Attraction" of bangs, seemed all a part of this.

Personally, I suppose, having a very enquiring mind, chemistry completely fascinated me: so much so, I spent all my Christmas and birthday gifts in building up a mini-laboratory at home. In those far off halcyon days, was a shop in Leigh, in Elm Road and on the corner of the junction opposite St. Clement's Church. Nominally, it was a toy shop: bewitching Dickensian small square windows with the odd bullion; all painted dark green. "Toys" in those days clearly included chemistry sets, glassware, retorts, Bunsen burners, flasks and so on. Lovely!

Experimenting with substances which exploded seemed a natural progression...

Interestingly, in the late 1980s, my wife, Maggie and I joined a rather nice club on the border of Great Wakering, where we would enjoy a good meal and a nice bottle of wine.

If I was working locally, I would often go to the club for a lunchtime sandwich and a quick pint: and by chance met and chatted to a most fascinating group of men. They were all retired scientists and researchers from AWRE (Atomic Weapons Research Establishment) on Foulness. One, in particular, became something of a chum: Dr Chas was, perversely a civil engineer: who became a demolitions expert. Why? Since, as he explained, in order to destroy things, one firstly had to learn how to build them!

He confessed he took a childish pleasure in making very loud bangs! I was therefore not alone it seems...

In the early 1950s, one of the favourite base chemicals for making loud bangs was Potassium Chlorate – an intense oxidising agent: whilst it was commonly available in what we used to call Chemist Shops, the pharmacists were extremely careful in supplying it. Mainly since, no doubt, IRA bombers used this base chemical to produce what they called Paxo, dangerously created in their unsuspecting landladies' kitchens in a saucepan on the gas stove!

To young experimenters, such as myself, it was begrudgingly doled out by the teaspoon, in one of those lovely old white card round pill boxes. Pot Chlorate mixed with 50% sulphur, finely powdered, created an excellent detonation explosive. However, therein lay a problem: a Detonator.

Solution: as November headed towards the fifth, one laid in copious stocks of small bangers: which were stored in damp-free conditions and used as needed.

A cigar tube (My Dad used to smoke Havana cigars); home brewed explosive packed tightly and a banger set in the top and the whole infernal machine, sealed with fire clay. The lovely soft blue tissue paper used to pack citrus fruit in little boxes, scrounged from a friendly greengrocer made excellent time fuse; steeped in Nitre (Saltpetre or chemically, Potassium Nitrate).

One fine day, I popped into a chemist near the railway by Westcliff Station: the pharmacist was at lunch, leaving his shop in the dubious hands of a young woman more concerned with her nail varnish than anything else, much.

“Hello!” I said brightly “Do you sell Potassium Chlorate, please?”; knowing full well they did.

“Yes, young man, the nail painter responded “How much would you like?”  
“Half a pound, please” I replied.

To my utter amazement, the young woman weighed half-a pound, into a nice crisp white bag and said “One and Six, please”.

Luckily, my mother informed my Dad, when he returned from work in the evening and he promptly confiscated the bag and doled it out a little per week!

Which I thought was pretty mean since it was him and his younger Brother who one holiday period, had showed us how to make Pot Chlorate bangs with sulphur! Remembering their youth.

Still, I suppose on the upside I am still alive and possess two hands, eyes and so on.

In fact, the only injury from my various bang experiments was caused by my cannon.

Furthermore, it wasn't me who was injured! Just my best friend at the time: another Old Westcliffian, Roger Norton.

Making gunpowder was a challenge to all young budding chemists of the time; gunpowder, of course is not an “explosive” per se. It is a careful mixture of Saltpetre (Potassium Nitrate), Sulphur and Charcoal (Carbon) and, when ignited, it burns rapidly, leaving little residue but creating huge volumes of hot gas. When the gas is contained, in a cannon, or tube, then there is a loud “Bang”; the bang is caused by the expanding hot gas heating surrounding air, which expands, causes a vacuum and as the air cools, the molecules crash into each other making the noise. Same as thunder, for example.

Saltpetre was easy; Sulphur, well nick the stick of rock sulphur from the family dog's drinking bowl and break off a good bit! Charcoal wasn't so simple. This was, I discovered, later, one of the core problems; gunpowder manufacturers used charcoal made from Ash. Charcoal burners were peripatetic nomads, who moved from forest to forest in the 1700 and 1800s, making charcoal; which had wide usage then.

Still, I had to make do with partially burnt and toasted sticks from the bonfire.

My cannon was constructed from a length of  $\frac{3}{4}$ " black gas barrel; lacking any other means to seal the open rear end, I carefully whittled a hardwood plug and banged it well down and then peening over the end of the tube with a hammer end. The carriage was made from spare bits of wood and two old typewriter ribbon spools became wheels!

Using my new pride and joy, a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " electric drill, a touch hole was drilled of  $\frac{1}{8}$ ".

Strangely, in the early 1950s one could still purchase photographer's flash powder; which was simply very fine "grey" rapid burning gunpowder with magnesium powder added. Thus, my load tended to be 50% each of my home brewed powder and flash powder.

I took my little cannon to Roger Norton's one fair dark Winter's night: his parents and siblings were all out. Ideal for a quick test.

The sideway along his parent's house in Crosby Road, Chalkwell, was long and useful: it ran from the garage, to the long rambling garden, with a large shed on the fence between the house and the large sort of mansion next door.

Countdown: I, the proud inventor of this "Infernal Machine!" stood right behind as the fuse spluttered down; Roger, hid behind the shed, both fingers stuffed firmly in his ears; surreally, whilst 90% of him was behind the shed, for some reason, the calf of his right leg was outside the shed's protection.

A bloody loud bang ensued! And a massive magnesium-fuelled flash...

Norton said "Feltham! What have you done?" His right calf hurt a bit. We repaired into the kitchen and as he pulled up his trouser leg, saw the blood and went into shock!

Most fortuitously, a Knight In Shining Armour suddenly appeared; one of the twin sons from next door. His name, later famous as an actor, was Philip Latham. He said, "I wondered what on earth had happened; a gas stove exploding or similar.

Latham most kindly took Roger in his car to Southend General Hospital, as it was called then: and suggested I cut off home, rather quickly.

Luckily, Roger's shin wound was only a contusion: what had happened was my over-enthusiastic ramming of charge and newspaper (used as wadding for a blank charge) had shot the wooden plug from the rear of the barrel, rather than the wadding from the front...and Murphy's Law dictated Roger's right calf was in the way of the plug's trajectory.

Eventually, as it does, parental censure banned any more cannon experiments.

Later on, in life, I became deeply involved in motor racing and automotive engineering, modifying and building racing engines: in those halcyon days, since silencers on the circuits were not mandatory, satisfying loud noises were fun. The inquiring mind had found a new purpose. I suppose it must be a noise thing....

**Michael C Feltham - November 2017**

## **VP DONATES TIME AND MONEY TO NEW HOSPICE**



### **Havens - Paul Althasen**

AN ENTREPRENEUR has given his backing to the new Fair Havens Hospice. Paul Althasen, 54, is the executive vice president of Telecoms giant Euronet and is supporting the development at Priory Crescent, Southend.

The Old Westcliffian has been a “casual supporter” of Havens Hospices for a long time, having attended many events over the years but had never had direct contact with the charity. Until the hospice cared for his father Gerry until his death. He was later approached to discuss the idea of a new hospice. He said: “Havens Hospices wanted to set up an appeal board to get the fundraising off the ground. I think it is a worthwhile scheme to get involved with and channel my resources into.” He has committed a substantial donation in time and money.

**Extract from Evening Echo February 2019**

## Meet Steven Fine: The Southend 'cheeky chappie' leading Peel Hunt's City advance



Steven Fine has been chief executive of broker Peel Hunt since 2016 (Paul Dallimore)

City broker Peel Hunt owes its name to the Etonian school chums who founded the business nearly 30 years ago, Charlie Peel and Christopher Holdsworth Hunt, but it's ended up in the hands of a grammar school boy from Southend.

Steven Fine, a proud alumnus of the Westcliff High School for Boys, has been chief executive of the broker since 2016, after a £74 million management buyout from Belgian bank KBC in 2010.

And despite a cruel climate of squeezed commissions since the financial crash, which has seen many small or mid-cap players gobbled up or disappear, and now the impact of Mifid II regulations, he's managed to maintain its run of continuous profitability since 1989.

The financial year just ended should be its best ever, with profits of around £23 million.

When I see him, Peel Hunt has just helped Galliford Try raise £157 million, while another corporate broking client, JD Sports Fashion, is splashing £400 million on a US buy.

That said, the short, bullet-headed 51-year-old is cut from a different cloth to Peel, a descendant of Metropolitan Police force founder Sir Robert. Peel once said his great management trick was get his team drunk in the pub, and let them tell him how to run the show.

He would pretend to agree with them all, and then carry on regardless.

That probably wouldn't be the best course for Fine, a golfer and a Gooner but not the world's biggest drinker ("three wine gums and I'm on the floor").

He takes his hat off to the founder, though, "the classic City guy, his timing was absolutely right and he did very well". In turn the 73-year-old, who's no longer involved after KBC bought his firm for £218 million in 2001, describes Fine as a "cheeky chappie".

Peel says: "At first I thought 'is he too much of a trader?' but he has obviously grown up a lot.

But don't tell him I said that. The first impression is a nice, cheeky chappie, getting on with everybody, but he has got much more depth than that, as he has done well. He has converted well from what he was, converted into an all-rounder."

Certainly Fine, now jockeying with mid-cap rivals like Numis, Liberum and Canaccord for business, has done OK for somebody who didn't even originally harbour ambitions to go into the City.

Although his family had a background in jewellery and pawnbroking and his father was a property entrepreneur, there were no obvious links to the Square Mile.

In fact the Fine "dream" — his word — was to become an accountant ("don't ask me why," he deadpans) as a route into corporate finance, lured by the Barbarians at the Gate era of corporate raiders like T Boone Pickens in the early Eighties.

Three weeks of tedium in his university holidays going through bank statements and chequebook stubs "killed it stone dead". Sitting in the broker's London Wall headquarters, he recalls: "I just thought, I can't do this.

You were just coming up to the Big Bang, 1986. Then I found I had friends who were driving TVRs and buying flats, while I was still at uni. Then I thought 'maybe I should give this City lark a go.' If it doesn't work, then I'll become an accountant."

He took his first plunge into that "City lark" at boutique derivatives trader Cresvale, learning his trade dealing in Japanese warrants and convertibles.

There it was a case of "Cresvale? Cres-who?", up against the big players like Nomura and Mitsubishi.

He rose to head of international sales in New York before switching to DE Shaw, an American hedge fund with state-of-the-art tech.

When his part of the business was bought by KBC in 1999 he eventually became head of its Tokyo office, shifting his wife, three children, and the dog over in 2005: "The kids cried when we went there, and cried more when we came back."



As for his Japanese, “I can count to 10, say left, right, straight, buy, sell and a few other things that probably aren’t repeatable and that’s about it.”

After Peel Hunt’s boss Tim Cockcroft left to join Kaupthing in 2006 he was asked to return to London and help run it, heading sales, trading and research, but already financial Armageddon was on the horizon.

KBC, laid low by derivatives deals turned sour and a series of bad loans, received three bailouts from the Belgian state, and by 2009 Peel Hunt, profitable but deemed non-core, was on the block.

Fine was part of the MBO team that took it off the Belgians’ hands, with managers taking 75% of the equity.

The process took 15 months as a notoriously gossipy and fee-hungry broking industry made hay at a rival’s uncertainty.

“Suddenly a broker whose outcome is unclear automatically means they’re weak. ‘Why are you going to give an IPO to broker that could be wound down? Come to us, not to them.’”

But now he and his team owned a business. They set about casting off the real tiddlers, leaving the company with 37 corporate clients, but then ran into 2011 and 2012, when there was hardly any corporate activity or floats. A flicker of self-doubt crept in.

“You think ‘gulp’. I remember driving the car and it was early 2011 and stopped at a traffic light. I turned to my wife, and said ‘my god, we’ve got to make £20 million before we’ve covered our costs, or we’re done.’ She’s terrific, she was ‘slap, slap, slap. don’t be so stupid, you’re more than capable of doing it, get on with it.’”

So he did, with the help of the market-making business which kept the broker in profit, taking five years to build up a critical mass of 100 clients. Today it has 125, with an average market cap of £400 million and a roster including Purplebricks, insurer Esure and builder Redrow. But it is also pickier because it wants the clients it thinks “will be relevant to the Legals, the Blackrocks, the Schroders”.

“We will absolutely not be transaction driven. That was a folly of a lot of our peers, taking on a client because they thought they were going to do something. We turn down way more than we take on.”

The benefits of its buy-side relationships paid dividends late last year with a quiet coup for the firm, which was credited with rescuing the £1 billion float of ready meals maker Bakkavör. Morgan Stanley, Barclays and Citi were the bookrunners, with Peel Hunt down the pecking order as lead manager.

But City sources say the bulge-bracket banks got too greedy and complacent about getting it away and the book “fell apart” in a climate where other IPOs were floundering. Peel’s top-rated consumer foods analyst Charles Hall drummed up enough support to revive it at a modest discount, a big result in the circumstances. Fine, keen not to be appear triumphalist as “what goes around comes around”, demanded only the broker’s promotion to joint bookrunner.

The latest challenge for the broking world comes from Mifid II, which means they have to charge for research. Fine’s firm sends its analysts’ work to 780 institutions, around 200 of whom pay £20,000 for it under the new directive.

The micro-cap brokers are charging firms to write research on them, but that has to be splashed across the front page when it lands on the fund manager's desk, which isn't a good look.

In Fine's view, you're a bigger draw to would-be corporate clients if you can prove you've got the ear of the buy-side reading your stuff.

After moves such as JPMorgan's drastically cheap \$10,000 charge for research he reckons the full impact of the rules will be felt this year when banks face up to hacking back costs to match the falling price of their research.

If more corporate clients knock on his door then it's all to the good for Fine, who simply plans to add 15 clients a year for the next five years ("it sounds really easy, but it's bloody difficult") and double the number of its 21 FTSE 250 clients. But it doesn't feel like the long-term plan is a return to public markets for Peel Hunt, 18 years after the founders floated it: he reckons an IPO "isn't necessarily the best solution" in a sector prone to ups and downs.

Fine sums it up: "It is a people-intensive quality product and you have to keep investing in it. If we don't look after you, you're going to lose interest pretty damn quick."

### **Extract from the Evening Standard**

## **GRAHAM PARSONS**

Returning to WHSB after living in Guatemala was something of a shock but my 5th and 6th Form years were a blast. I drove to school in my Standard Flying 8 convertible and parked it in the lane. Even with the car I had trouble getting to school on time. Fortunately, my first class was with Mr. Day for history in a ground floor classroom.

In those days there was little security and rather than disrupting the class by arriving late I would open the outside window, crawl into an empty desk at the back and resume my interrupted slumbers.

I enjoyed that early morning history class and managed to get my best marks in the "O" "A" "S" and undergraduate economics exams in history. I can only assume that Mr. Day's teaching style was right for me in some strange way because in time it became a foundation for my economics undergraduate and PhD degrees at University College London.

My first degree first led me and my new wife Penny to Toronto Canada in 1967 where I worked on setting up a Regional development program. After two years we returned to UCL where I completed a PhD and finished a road evaluation project in Ghana for the UK Overseas Development Administration.

These were interesting times to be in London and today nicely summarized in the Bohemian Rhapsody movie that was full of memories of parties, Biba and those short shorts.

By 1972 I was back to Winnipeg Canada to teach regional economic Development at the University of Manitoba.

While teaching in Winnipeg I also started work in Saskatoon as a Senior Regional Analyst for the federal government's new Department of Regional Economic Expansion. That job involved being on top of development issues in Canada's four western provinces, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Lots of time spent in the air and Ottawa in those days and many interesting projects including writing federal legislation, developing inland grain terminals and working to abolish the Crows Nest Freight rates that had been in place for a century.

While in Saskatoon I ran for a seat on City Council and lost by one vote. Probably not such a bad thing, but subsequently I got the law changed so that close votes now get an automatic recount.

In 1981 I joined the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan in charge global market intelligence and negotiated the first Canadian Potash sale with China.

A new Conservative government in Saskatchewan in 1982 abolished the marketing company and left me high and dry. Accordingly, I returned to the federal government this time in Regina in charge of federal economic development in Saskatchewan.

By 1983 the same Conservative government that had abolished the Potash marketing company hired me to work at managing the Province's Crown Corporations. A few months later I was moved into the Premier's Executive Council as the Economic Secretary to Cabinet from where I created a National Economic Agricultural Strategy for Canada, created new bond and equity financing instruments, wrote budgets and reorganized government.

That spell with the Premier then led me to become a Deputy Minister of Privatisation where during an eighteen month period I restructured and sold the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, the provincial computer company and the uranium mining company to create Cameco, issued bonds on the phone and power utilities, sold golf courses, ski hills, salt mines and peat bogs and many government services. In Saskatchewan this was a bigger revolution than Margaret Thatcher's privatizations in the UK.

As I expected when the Conservatives lost power to the Socialist New Democratic Party I was fired. That opened up an even more fruitful time of my life working on projects around the world such as writing Panama's Mining Legislation, preparing climate change legislation, writing the Platform for a successful Provincial Liberal Party and helping unite the Conservative and Liberal parties to form the Saskatchewan Party that has now been in power in Saskatchewan for three terms.

To do this work I created the Organisation for Western Economic Cooperation with a worldwide network of associates that has been centrally involved in Canada's Gateway and Corridor Strategy, irrigation development and First Nation participation in mining development in Canada and South America.

Today I live in Calgary, have slowed down on the projects and hike in the mountains and the foothills. Winters are spent somewhere warm, although I love the snow. Recently I become a fan of snowshoes that has let me climb up to 8,000 feet over icy trails.

It has been a long journey from those sleepy morning's in Mr Day's history class all those years ago. I still look back fondly on those times and like to visit the school when periodically I return to my old stomping grounds and to visit the Crooked Billet which has always been the watering hole for my mother's family since they were listed in the Doomsday Book.

At the time I never realized that the fun I had and skills I learnt at WHSB were the foundation for a lifetime of good times.

I do now and I thank my teachers in the 5th and 6th forms who planted a seed that took me all around the world and in particular Mr Day (History), Mr Henderson (Economics) and the to be feared Henry Cloak.

They all served me well.

**Graham Parsons**

WHSB	1956-1958
American School Guatemala	1958-1961
WHSB	1961-1964
UCL	1964-1967
BSc(Econ)	
UCL	1970-1972
(PhD)	

**JOHN C. SMITH**

On the subject of Reg Midgley:

I attended WHS just after WW 2. At that time, Mr Reg Midgley was my English gramma teacher.

I emigrated to Canada in 1953, and eventually joined the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). After I retired, I started to write. My first book is entitled ‘The Scarlet Sentinels’ which is of course available now for review on-line.

Mr Midgley’s teaching had a great influence on me later in life, to the point where I dedicated it to him. The point of this Note is to ask you for your help in trying to find his closest living relative so that I can send a complimentary copy to that person. Do you think you could check with the Old Boys Association for help? I have since written another novel entitled ‘First Class Passage’, also now on-line.

**PETER STANLEY**

I confess to thinking in the past "they won't be interested ", but a recent contact who, being impressed with my poetry asked "what school did you go to?" brought the response that I had an excellent education at Westcliff High but also that I had made life-time friends. So here is our story.....

In 1959, four Young Westcliffians formed a skiffle group/band called The Monotones (*yes, with hindsight....we should have known what that means!*) Members were, Brian Alexander, James Eaton, Nigel Basham and myself Peter Stanley. We were lucky enough to play for the very occasional school dance subject to the approval of the then Headmaster, Henry Cloak.

As semi-professional musicians we then played gigs at The Elms, Leigh On Sea and other local venues and released 4 records that never quite made Top Of The Pops although we did appear on Ready Steady Go and Thank Your Lucky Stars.

We then secured a permanent contract with Mecca and became the resident band at Tiffanys in Wimbledon, changing our name to The Treetops. Over the next 5 years we recorded at various studios including Abbey Rd. and played 'live ' on BBC Radio 1. Our only claim to fame was a number one selling record .....in The Philippines!!

We continued together till 1974 when we all opted for family life, mortgages and "proper jobs". We all made very successful transitions into the real world, in printing, security and retailing . The only one to continue his musical career was Nigel, who adopted the stage name Mark Loyd , moved to Australia and made a name for himself in the entertainment business until his untimely death in 2012.

Three of us now survive (*keep taking the pills!*) and on occasions, which are now less and less, we will pick up the guitars and if we can remember, imitate our heroes of the 60's, such as Roy Orbison, Buddy Holly and Elvis.

Music and friendship brought us together then and still does now and I think we have Westcliff High to thank for that. I have attached a photo of us at The Elms, and for anybody who wants to catch up we can be found on a website called Garagehangover.

**Peter**



## **KEITH STEPHENS**

Thank you for producing another splendid newsletter.

Peter White's obituary of Harry Bacon is a fitting tribute to a lovely man Peter mentioned the International Youth Camp at Loreley; Gordon Sains and Brian Garrod were another two Westcliffians that spent about ten days, in 1951, camped on this beauty spot that overlooks the Rhine.

I remember well the youth leader at a club I attended telling me that places were available at this camp. The price was £3 approximately I (forget the exact amount but I know it was very cheap).

Soon after arrival, having been shown our two -man tented accommodation, two young Germans approached us. One of them suggested that he shared our tent with one of us while the other shared a tent, in the German area, with his friend. He was keen on discussing politics and immediately spoke about Anthony Eden and the British Cabinet. We politely suggested postponing any decision re tent sharing.

Clearly these two enjoyed politics and wanted to enlarge their knowledge with our help. We saw the camp as a great place for a holiday.

The amphitheatre there had been completed in 1939 by the Nazi regime for cultural events.

I do remember playing football and running in mini games against teams from other nations and I also remember NOT talking politics with anyone.

Best wishes - **Keith Stephens**

## **ROBIN SANDERSON – WHSB 1942-1949**

I have recently become a member of the Old Westcliffians Association and I thought that I would send this account of my early history before joining Westcliff High School as well as further information of some of the happy times that I spent being educated by the masters during those years.

I was born in 1931 in London and I went to Primary school in Chadwell Heath at Whalebone Lane, a couple of miles West of Romford in Essex.

When the war broke out, I was evacuated to Leckhampsted in Berkshire at the age of eight.

A German landmine destroyed the Whalebone Lane school just after I had left! I was billeted on a farm where I stayed for two years. I passed my eleven plus test. I was the only pupil that passed in that school's history. I returned to Leigh on Sea in 1942.

The war was raging on and my bothers, Peter and Denny together with me watched the Doodle Bugs passing in the sky above our home. Search lights lit up the night sky as they looked for the German planes.

Westcliff school had been evacuated to Belper in Derbyshire and I joined there. It was now 1942 and the autumn term had begun. My eldest brother Peter had already joined. He remained eighteen months ahead of me throughout my schooling at Westcliff. When he left, he became a teacher at Gravesend Grammar school. He attained the headship there. He served for many years, so successfully that when he retired, they built a Leisure and Sports centre at the school and named it the Sanderson building!

Mr Eric Eyres was my earliest headmaster. As far as I know I hold the record for being caned on three consecutive occasions, a total of twelve strikes over the last three days of the Christmas term. First four whacks on the hands for throwing snowballs at the deputy head boy. We hit him and Eric hit us! Next, we raided the adjourning class room. We re-arranged the decorations and their form master reported us to Eric. Yes, another four on the hands. On the last day of term, I was asked to appear at the Head's office with my report. He didn't seem to be too impressed. He told me that I only excelled in Rugby and warned me that that was not good enough. "Bend over". Four final whacks on the seat.

I turned over a new leaf. I became Rugby Captain, obtained a trial with England. I played in the Possibles team, but the Probables didn't let us see much of the ball. I had attended the trial with Mr Webber. We heard no more, although I did enjoy using my love of smash tackling!

During the war, the sirens warned of the coming of the German planes. When this happened, the school departed to the underground passages below the top bank of grass at the back of the buildings.

Henry Cloke took over as Head after Ayres left for another post.

I remember about twenty of the masters that tried to teach me, but they must have had some success, for although my last report finished with the words written by Henry, I quote, "He will not pull up many trees", but, I became a Primary head teacher after I left Loughborough College. I was awarded my first fifteen school colours each year for five consecutive years.

I played for the Old Westcliffians whilst serving my two years in the National Service as a Bombadier in the Anti Aircraft Regiment in Shoeburyness. I was a Physical Training Instructor.

My wife and I have successfully raised four daughters and one son.

Fond memories - **Robin**

p.s. Whilst in the sixth form, my form master was Harry Harden.

## STUART THORNTON

As an active reader of the OWA newsletter since leaving WHSB, I wanted to share a personal update with the community. I was at Westcliff from 1987 to 1994 through GCSEs and A Levels. To this day I appreciate the foundations and discipline that WHSB instilled. After University I left the area and moved to the Netherlands for a short stint and then on to Ireland. After a couple of years of the Irish hospitality I decided to pack my bags again – a rucksack to be precise - and ended up in Australia. I am not alone in that journey as I bumped into a few Old Westcliffians whilst there. It's a small world. I settled there for 5 years picking up a passport and a family. Between 2008 and 2012 we moved to Singapore, back to Australia for the birth of my daughter and back to Singapore again where I now reside.

My main reason for sharing with the WHSB alumni is more of a work update. After spending most of my career in the telecommunications sector, I had an opportunity to join an UK institution reborn - Worldpay - and move into the world of ecommerce and in particular payments. After 4 years running their APAC commercial team, I have taken the rather considerable jump/risk/enjoyment in setting up a company in Singapore. A case of a good idea and now or never, I cofounded and run [www.hoolah.co](http://www.hoolah.co) with a group of amazing people. Our aim is to solve the massive challenge that physical and online retailers face - that of converting customers to buy because of affordability and access to funds to buy. The opportunity to blend technology, consumer financing and payments to drive responsible consumer affordability in Asia is huge as is the opportunity to jump on the wave of ecommerce expansion.

In August of this year, having left full time employment 10 months previously, we closed our seed funding round to catapult the business into growth mode and an opportunity to earn a salary! This is allowing us to scale our technology, people and customers and make the dream come alive. The foundations of working hard, learning and the mental strength to succeed that WHSB instilled are definitely characteristics that are important for a start-up journey. The WHSB connection doesn't end there as I reconnected with Andrew Broad in Singapore, who has joined us in the role of CFO. As I said - small world.

I would like to take this opportunity to reach out to the OWA alumni who may read the newsletter. As we grow and scale our business across Asia, we will continue to look for venture investment, working capital partners and of course retail/travel companies that operate or sell into Singapore and beyond. If you, friends, family, better halves etc would have interest I would be delighted to connect, reconnect or to be introduced. Feel free to reach out to [stuart@hoolah.co](mailto:stuart@hoolah.co). Thank you and to any of my class mates I hope you are happy and well.

**Stuart**

## **VAL WEST**

Being alone a lot of the time, I notice a few things around my house, that I probably saw before but never gave them a second thought. For instance, I have a very large fir tree just in front of the house where a family of squirrels live. I suppose there have been several generations up there over the years. They are beginning to come down when I go out to see if I have anything for them & most mornings, I have something to give. If I don't, they try to climb the bird feeder to scrounge a few seeds. They seem annoyed if I chase them away from this enterprise.

Most of the wiser birds have already left for the Southern States to pass the winter, but a few of the hardier ones winter out here. I don't know if you were aware that Humming birds come all the way from their winter home to build nests, here, lay their eggs and raise their young. A round trip of more than 2000 miles. They have all long departed. How this tiny creature manages to get here considering they are not a lot bigger than a large Bumble Bee mystifies me. Some can be found 200 miles north of Toronto. I have a feeder with honey water for them in the summer. I only saw one twice this summer come to my feeder. The musings of an old man with nothing better to do! I don't send this for any reason other than to pass the time away. Do with it what you will.

I keep forgetting to ask if any old Wescliffians remember Bernard (Tinker) Howell He moved to Sheffield to work, met and married a local woman and, since moving to Canada in 1955, I lost all contact. I also recall Donald Meddle of the Leigh Meddles. I suspect most of the men of my era are now only memories. Just had a message from the widow of Allan Edwards (the Tobacconist family as was) who tells me she is terminally ill. Most news, these days, is bad news. I realise it's not your job to hunt up long lost classmates, but if anyone has a clue I would like to hear.

**Regards Val**

## 11. WESTCLIFF RFC (Formerly Old Westcliffian RFC) – Review of 2018

With the club's centenary approaching in 2022, we are delighted to report that the 1<sup>st</sup> XV have continued to grow on their experience of life in the London & South East Premier League (Level Five), and are now the highest-ranked club in Essex, and indeed third-ranked in Essex and Eastern Counties. The 2017-18 season saw the club enjoy its best season to date, finishing sixth with fifteen wins, scoring over one hundred and twenty tries and in excess of eight hundred points, at an average of over thirty points per match. Notable scalps included champions Barnes and a hugely-satisfying double over Southend, topping fifty points both at home and away in front of enormous crowds.

It was asking a great deal to improve on those efforts this season, but we have done so in no small measure, having finished as runners-up in Level Five and recently winning the Divisional play-off against Barnstaple RFC from Devon.

Thus, we enter uncharted waters at Level Four (National Two South) next season with matches against local sides being replaced by trips to Cornwall, Gloucestershire and Somerset. Our oppositions will include Redruth, Esher, Clifton, Taunton, Bury St Edmunds, Old Albanians and many other semi-professional set-ups, and the competition will be ferocious. Nevertheless, we are ready and looking forward to the challenge.

At a time when many sides are semi-professional, whether they admit it or not, we are proud to have retained our amateur status, building on the supreme strength of our youth and mini sections. We have regularly been proud to have a starting eighteen that comprises at least sixteen players who have progressed through our youth section, and indeed on two occasions all eighteen starters fell into that category.

The camaraderie within the side is immense and we have treated our vociferous home support to some sparking rugby both at home and away.

Despite a couple of minor hiccoughs, we in general played devastatingly-well against the other sides in the division this season, doing the double over the eminent Hertford club and posting our second-highest league victory with a 97-7 demolition of Shelford in September. Further doubles were achieved against Dorking, Tunbridge Wells, Guildford, Sidcup, Brentwood, Civil Service and Shelford. Had we not lost to champions Sutton & Epsom with the very last move of the match, we would have gained automatic promotion.

It may seem invidious to single out individuals in what has been a major team effort, but mention should be given to brothers Henry and Billy Marrant (both OW's) who have missed just two matches between them all season, Jack Jones who once again is our leading points scorer, currently with 182, Ben McKeith (OW) who has come out of retirement after a particularly serious injury four years ago to add his invaluable flair and experience to proceedings.



Greg Bannister has returned from his travels abroad and is currently leading try-scorer and we have in Jake Spivey an outstanding utility player, who represented Blackheath in a couple of Level Three matches at the start of the season before returning to the fold, scoring five tries in the Shelford rout.

The side has been efficiently coached and managed by OW's Chris Waring and Rick Compton and we all thirty-eight players who have represented the 1<sup>st</sup> XV can look back on an excellent season. The Lions (2<sup>nd</sup> XV) and the Rhinos (3<sup>rd</sup> XV) have continued to enjoy success in their respective merit leagues and the Youth and mini section continues to attract a huge following in the locality, with sides turning out from under six up to Colt Academy level, with both sides reaching the final of the county tournament.

More recently, the Westcliff Lion Cubs section, which caters for boys and girls between the ages of two and five years old, meets on a weekly basis and ensures that the next generation of young players will quickly become part of the Westcliff Community. More recently still, after a lapse of several years, the Westcliff Lionesses ladies' team was formed this season, and has delighted everyone by winning their division in their inaugural league season.

The club has now been at its present location since 1984, and with the expansion of Southend Airport a move became necessary. The palatial new state-of-the-art headquarters has all but been completed a few hundred yards away from Aviation Way abutting Rochford Golf Course and there was eager anticipation that the club would be able to move in this Summer.

Maddeningly, there have been unexpected complications concerning the utilities and it is feared that the move will almost certainly have to be delayed for a period.

However, disappointing though this is, the club is still in a great place and we look forward to the move cementing our position as one of the most powerful clubs in the country in the very near future. On the centenary front, Nick Crowe is intending to compile a volume documenting the club's first hundred season. If anyone has any memorabilia or other records of interest, Nick would be pleased to hear from them. All OW's are cordially invited to visit the club over a week-end, where they will be assured of a warm welcome and some top-quality rugby, at all levels.

We have been unfortunate from the point of view of passing of members, having lost four eminent senior members in the past season. Tributes were duly paid to **Geoffrey "Syd" Thompson, Dave Latham, Dick Smith** and most recently **Alan Gardner**, all of whom represented the club with aplomb and alacrity, and all of whom will be sorely missed.

**Nick Crowe**

## 12. OLD WESTCLIFFIAN LODGE NO. 5456

The Old School Lodge was founded in 1934 and meets at Saxon Hall four times a year with an annual School Meeting in July usually in the Main Hall.

The Lodge is mainly formed of Men with an association with the School and was formed by a number of Staff and Old Boys of the School.

We do accept, as members, those who did not go to the school but still like to recruit from scholars, teachers and family members associated with the school.

The Worshipful Master this year is Greg Bermon his Wardens Daryl Peagram and Jan Bardua.

We have supported the School this year by purchasing School Flags and helping other Fund raising activities.

Freemasonry is open to men over 21 who are keen to help people less fortunate than themselves.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact the Lodge Secretary Frank James on :-  
[thundersleyman@gmail.com](mailto:thundersleyman@gmail.com)

**Frank James**

## 13. EDITOR

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the Newsletter this year.

Another bumper year for articles, and I believe this year, all of these plus a few omitted from last year have found a place in the Newsletter.

Please keep up the good work!

After reading this year's Newsletter, I bet you are all thinking, how cool is Peter Stanley! (pages 36 & 37) being in a successful 60s band, great stuff.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Terry for his help and advice.

As previously, should you know of anyone not receiving their Newsletter, please ask them to get in touch. They can either email their details to [terry.birdseye@gmail.com](mailto:terry.birdseye@gmail.com) or contact the Hon. Secretary by post. Please also keep us informed of email and postal address changes.

With best wishes to all OWs.

**Shanie White**

#### 14. (i) THE OLD WESTCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION

The Association was formed in 1926 to enable pupils to have a means of keeping in touch with staff and colleagues.

The Annual Newsletter forms a good link between members at home and abroad.

The AGM is usually held in July.

Our Annual Reunion Dinner is held in September.

We welcome a growing membership and our Honorary Secretary will be pleased to welcome new members on receipt of an application.

#### 14. (ii) The Old Westcliffian Association

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**\*\*\* Please make ALL cheques payable to “Old Westcliffian Association” \*\*\***

Application for Life Membership Subscription	Free - Year 13 to end of full time education
	£10 - Up to age 30
	£20 - Over age 30
Life Members' Tie	£12
Cufflinks in Presentation Box	£15
Ladies Brooches	£12

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