

## EDITORIAL

Well it is that time of the year again, and this is the tenth issue of your newsletter. Last year's dinner was a success with several well known Old Boys turning up for their first visit to the re-union. The first was R.E.P (Peter) Wright (1939/48) fondly remembered as 'Rep'. The second was Graham Dickson (1941/50), who was in my class. The speaker at the dinner was Dr John Green (1948/55) John started his career with Bristol Aircraft, then went up to Cambridge to read Engineering, after two years with De Havilland Engine Co, he then had three more years at Cambridge to do a PhD. I could go on, but to save his blushes, I will just say that his wealth of experience made for a very interesting talk, thanks John!!!

We are still on a sound financial footing, thanks are due to Eric Jackson (1939/44) who has been our Treasurer since the restart of our Old Boys Association. Eric is not in the best of health and has intimated that he will have to resign his position with immediate effect. We are in need of a replacement anyone with a couple of hours to spare each year will be very welcome and a volunteer will be received with open arms. It is the generosity of Old Boys that has kept us sound and all such contributions are very warmly welcomed, please keep them rolling in.

I have been adding up the cost of producing and mailing the newsletter. The printing alone cost over £100 then the cost of postage over £200. Other costs include envelopes bring the figure to near £400. (I may add that I make no charges whatsoever for my phone calls, time spent at my computer &c.). The purpose behind all this is to ask you to send me your email address. In your message please give details such as your full name and address and Post Code, Year of birth, Years at B.I. and telephone number. This will serve two purposes 1) Bring my records up to date, and 2) Allow me to send the letter by email instead of 'snail mail' (if any of you would prefer, of course, I will continue to use the postal service, just let me know. The latter includes people without a computer).

This year the reunion will again be at Caldy Golf Club on October 14<sup>th</sup>. Please return the application form (at the back of the News Letter) as soon as possible. The second Friday in October appears to suit everyone, I have only had one complaint and that was from a member who has an AGM to attend on that day. Sorry we cannot suit everyone. The venue is to suit an Old Boy in a wheelchair. I have to tell you that the dinner has been running at a loss for a couple of years, so I am putting the cost up to £25 this includes the hire of the premises, the dinner, the gratuities to the chef and the serving and bar staff, the wine &c. I think you will agree that it is still good value for money, I do not think that we will have to raise this charge in the foreseeable future.

## MEMORIES OF WW II, VE & VJ DAYS

I rang several Old Boys for their memories of the events of the above days. This is a selection of the replies I received. I decided to leave them anonymous to save any embarrassment

1. All the church bells started to clang “What the hell’s going on?” we shouted at some youths down below “La Guerra e finito. Non avete sentito?” We hadn’t heard the war was over. We in the Intelligence Service were the last to know. (Ed; what’s new?) We were in ‘Civvies’ and lying low in a remote township having been by-passed by 13 Corps rapid advance. Only a couple of days before a German Patrol had passed our window but that is another story. Oddly enough we carried on with our report. I think that having looked forward for so long to the wars end that when it came a feeling of anti climax set in. HQ contacted us. Get over here there is going to be a party. Certain lady friends had been invited , but unfortunately my “friend” had brought her brother (trust those Italians). Still, who was I to complain on that blessed day when the war in Europe was finally ended.
2. Our persuasive Editor disturbed my hibernation with a request for some words about memories of V.E. day. He used the term “words from your age group”, but really saying “you who are very, very Old Boys”. I recollect reading a book entitled ‘Old Men Forget’. I have forgotten who wrote it. That is how it is for me. I have forgotten where I was on that day. Certainly in Europe and I think in a German wireless station we had taken over. Nothing memorable happened, but I remember being posted to Copenhagen to a British Military Mission to help train a Danish Unit for the army of occupation. There was no urgency by the Danes to train so I had plenty of off duty time. Each morning my enquiries to the Signal Officer what his ideas were for that day would be met with “come back after lunch, Sergeant, big party last night” or “ have to meet my wife see me tomorrow”. The citizens of Copenhagen were very hospitable with invitations to come to dinner or a party. Three months later ‘demob’.
3. On V.E. Day I was in a town called Emmerich on the east bank of the Rhine where the Army had built a pontoon bridge. I was an Armament Artificer Staff Sergeant in R.E.M.E. responsible for the installation and maintenance of Radio Detection Finders (RDF) later called radar. I heard the news on the radio sitting with some of our men. Some local German women were passing. I translated the news to them and saw relief not sorrow on their faces. That night the searchlights called Monty’s Moonlight (they were shone on to clouds to give reflected light and thus area illumination) went sweeping around and accompanied by bursts of tracer bullets. V.J. Day saw me in Hamburg working as a controller in civilian car workshops (Fiat in my case) when the news came through. I was very glad to hear it, as I had just been graded Far East . Little did I think that after demob I was to spend my working life in nuclear Physics and meet many of the scientists who worked here in Liverpool and the U.S. on the basic research to develop the bomb
4. I cannot say that I celebrated either V.E. or V.J. Day in style and yet sixty years later I still remember both days. V.E. I was outside Ferrara in Italy. There was some ‘vino’ available but the abiding memory is of an enormous bonfire. Royal Artillery gunners had broken open some explosive charges, and were throwing spaghetti like rods of cordite on to the fire. One or two rods at a time, they didn’t go off with a bang but they certainly livened up the proceedings. A few days before V.J. Day I was given leave with everything

organised. Three tonner from Udine to Milan. Two days sightseeing. Train through the Simplon tunnel past Lake Geneva and into France. Long journey to Dover. Train to Victoria. Bus to Euston, trouble began. Eve of V.J. Day centre of London packed. I missed the train to Liverpool and could only get as far as Crewe. It was mid morning of V.J. Day when I got home after three and a half years abroad, but I suspect that my parents enjoyed the day thankful that my brother and I had both survived the war.

5. In the 41/42 era, going on leave to Alexandria or Cairo was like attending an 'Old Boys' Reunion. I recall bumping into Les Macklin several times. Ken Carr was captured at Dunkirk, serving with the 'Cheshires' and Reg Wilde lost his life flying a fighter with the Hooton Squadron. Paul Simpson was a naval Officer. I was in the Liverpool Scottish. In 1940 I was posted to a composite outfit called No 4 Independent Coy and took part in the ill-fated Norwegian Campaign. This unit became '2 Commando'. I was sent to Malta to carry out raids from submarines. From there I went to Egypt and became a member of the newly formed S.A.S with whom I served in the desert. Later I saw action in Sicily, Italy and Occupied France and finally in the France Belgium Holland and Germany campaigns

Editor. I am grateful to the contributors to this article. I have only to ring certain members and they come up with the goods. I am always short of copy for the newsletter and will be in your debt if you send me something that I can publish, PLEASE !!!!!!!.

OXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Editor. The following article I received a few months ago from John Posnett (1938/41) John unfortunately died a few weeks ago. He was a singing fanatic and died on stage, where he was performing with the Aire Valley Singers. He had just sung two solo pieces and had come forward to introduce the next item when he collapsed. John was a member of School choir. He was a founding member of the BBC Northern Singers. He will be sadly missed by his wife, two children and four grandchildren.

John Posnett

I doubt if many people will remember me – I came late in 1938 and left early in 1941. My father worked in Shipbuilding, and transferred from Vickers in Barrow-in-Furness to Cammell Lairds. "Hey Barrow!" "Yes" "Pick it up and wheel it" passed for wit in 3B. There was no tradition of further education in my family so I left school at 16. We had sport on Wednesday afternoon and did school work on Saturday morning. I was small light and lacking in coordination, so although passionately fond of Cricket and Rugby, I was never picked for any of the teams. On one occasion the Cricket team were playing against Liverpool Institute and at 11 o'clock the lads asked permission to leave early. It was given reluctantly and I rose with the players. Tiger Lewis roared "Posnett! Where do you think you're sloping-off to? You can't be in the team!" "No Sir" I replied, "I'm the Scorer" My hobby was music, and as there was no Music Teacher available, W.E. Williams took the class. The tone-deaf were sorted out to the back of the class and we then played through things we had been taught some time before. W.E.W. was always willing to be distracted and we thought up all sort of questions to set him off. I will always be grateful for the music that we sang at morning assembly. We gained a solid basis of all the best hymns and in addition learned four inspirational pieces; Beethoven's "Creation Hymn". Holst's "I vow to thee my Country" Parry's "Jerusalem" and Geoffrey Shaw's "O Brother Man". I think that the Klondike knew what a bond is created by people singing together. I was in the 13<sup>th</sup> Birkenhead Coy, of Boys Brigade, connected with St Catherine's Church. There were over 70 on the roll in those days among them were Eric Jackson

and D.S.W Jones. Please pass on my regards to them and any other people who remember me. Those were the days.

Gerry Haggerty (1947/54)

## BRIAN

Every Club has someone who is “special” in most of what he does. For Brian it was the total commitment and the raw enthusiasm with which he carried out all the tasks he did. Also we remember the ready humour in which those tasks were done.

The above tells us which Brian is the subject of a few of the many anecdotes we all have of him. J.B.Huntriss, ( or S.B.Huntriss as he preferred to sign his cheques, suggesting they cleared faster with that small change of initial). Some time later I questioned this strange banking facility he had, and he mentioned something about a bank manager in a wardrobe, but I dismissed it as the bitter confusing of his mind (Who ever heard of a Bank Manager in a wardrobe).

We were playing Vulcan Iron Works away and I was very impressed by the industrial diesel shunting engine they manufactured and displayed at their home ground, this magnificent machine was square, solid, powerful and virtually indestructible. I was playing in our front row against their front row, which was square, solid, powerful and virtually indestructible. Their backs were different from their forwards, they were smaller, faster, trickier and virtually un-tackleable.

Brian was playing in the backs and decided that Vulcan’s outside half was the problem, and that strange glazed look came into his eyes. Now Brian was a formidable tackler. ‘Kamakazi’ comes to mind to describe it, and it would have been ideal for the situation except for a minor problem. The power in his crash-tackle was awesome, their star player was horizontal, and that was the condition in which he was carried off the field.

The consensus of opinion was that the tackle was superb in all respects except one, it arrived just before the ball, only marginally just before the ball, but marginally enough to upset the square, solid, powerful and virtually indestructible front row. They could not get to Brian, so they redirected their need for revenge to those nearest, us, our beloved front row.

The words of the scrum-half saying “coming in now” had, until then, meant the ball, but now included bunches of fists, each fist being square, solid, powerful and virtually indestructible.

At the end of the game Brian in a feeling of pride said “We sorted out Twinkle-Toes then”.

We agreed, mumbling our appreciation through swollen lips and modified dental alignments. I played many games with Brian, but the above game is easily recalled as I still have to shave carefully around the scar tissue.

Not all meetings were on the rugby pitch. In the 1960’s the company who employed me sent me to Cumbria and as Brian’s employers required him to visit Cumbria several times a year, Brian accepted my invitation to visit Penrith, where I lived, and to have a training session with Penrith R.U.F.C. as I had become a member. Several pints later on the return to my flat for a late supper Brian insisted on providing the wine. He was a regular guest at the George Hotel, Penrith’s best, and decided that their wine cellar would be the best in town.

While enjoying a further few pints Brian insisted that the hotel’s chief sommelier be summoned from the dining room, or any other duties he may be doing, to advise

Brian on the appropriate wine for the feast I was to prepare when we would arrive home. Eventually the Sommelier arrived, hot, flustered, with an armful of wine lists, and with apologies for the delay, only to be devastated when Brian asked me what was the main course I was to prepare. I replied "Cumberland Sausage".

The Sommelier retired gracefully with a less than happy smile, suggesting that he would send the barman. Unabashed, another pint each, and a pack or two of strong beer, we set off to find where I had left the flat.

Some hours later and replete Brian set off to return to the George Hotel less than a half mile away only to find that he was not booked in there, but at the "Fantails" an hotel several miles east of Carlisle, at least twenty miles away.

I only learned this the following day when Brian told me that Cumbria had some of the worst drivers he had ever had the good fortune of just missing. He mentioned that the on-coming drivers were coming over onto his side of the road, only to be surprised when I told him it was a three lane road and the middle lane was shared, the white lines giving a clue as to whose turn it was to use the lane at that point. "Its not a four lane road then, I bet a few of them were surprised too!" He said, stroking his chin.

In 1965 I moved to a very isolated farm in the Lake District and welcomed Brian as an overnight guest on many occasions over many years. (This move was much appreciated by late night motorists travelling from Carlisle to Penrith).

Brian visited most often in daylight and even stayed with Brenda and the children while returning from holiday on Arran in the Western Isles, he knew the area very well.

On winter nights it was understandable that he phoned to say that his estimated time of arrival was in thirty minutes, and to put the outside light on. In the valley where I lived there are only farmyard lights, and when they are off it is dark, really dark. As my nearest neighbour lived half a mile away on one side, and the neighbour on the other side although a little nearer was not visible being over a hill. Dutifully I put on the outside light and after half an hour expected to hear his car. Another half hour passed and no Brian. Half an hour more passed and there was a knock on the door. I opened it and there was Brian, rather wet standing there in some very muddy shoes. "Where's your car?" Brian pointed to car lights some way down the road in the field. "I need a tow", he said. When we got to the car, it had gone through a hedge, and been restrained by barbed wire and very recently removed posts. He explained that on coming around the corner he saw the farmyard light and headed directly towards it without any consideration for the bends in the road. "You've been working with shipping for too long." I suggested. Back at the house Brian showered, changed, dried his clothes and cleaned his shoes. Meanwhile I returned to the scene with some dogs to gather the sheep, which had found a gap in the fence and gone walkabout. (Sheep know instinctively if there is a gap in a fence and proceed to go through, this information is passed on telepathically to all other sheep within a radius of at least twenty miles.) When I returned some time later, after repairing the fence, and rather wet. Brian asked "Where have you been?" "Taking the dogs for a walk" I said. "In this weather, you must be mad" he replied. The car was fairly new, and the first change he had had from the Morris 1000 which he preferred for the extra headroom it had. The new car was a Fiat. "What do you know about Fiats?" Brian asked. Very little I realised so we looked it up in a motoring book. We found out that FIAT is a word made up of the initials of the company that makes them, Fabbrica Italiano Automobile Torino. Brian thought this was great news to answer other Herberts, (he tended to refer to those, with whom he wasn't au fait, as Herberts) who enquired as to what he was driving presently. Later we were in the pub and Brian was practicing from memory 'fabbrica italiano automobile torino' when somebody asked him if he was Italian. "No, I have a new car" Brian replied. This left the other person more confused and convinced Brian was foreign, and that all foreigners were mad.

There are many more stories to tell but whether the joke was on me or on Brian, We always we saw the funny side equally and laughed long and heartily about them for many hours.

It is always better to keep a few tales for another day since if Harry phones, and we all know he will, and asks if you will speak at the next dinner you can always put him off with a no, if you can promise something for the newsletter.

Dick Bell (1931/38)

#### More recollections of the 23<sup>rd</sup>

It was with some interest that I read Bryce Halliday's recollections of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Scouts for it was at that time I was also part of that band of worthies and knew most of the other scouts named. I did not go camping because in the Easter and Summer holidays, my brothers and I were packed off to stay with my grandparents in a small village up in the Eden Valley in Cumberland. The Scout camps were held at Silverdale near Arnside and later at Ingleton. I have a vague recollection of a Gang Show in the Gym, this was run by Don Coughtrie and Frank Tomlinson and I.D Christian whose first name, like so many other things these days escapes me. I remember playing games down at the Solly Rec. in Woodchurch Road. I think that these games were exercises in tracking, but 70 years on they seem more like games of hide and seek.

I was part of the guard of honour at the opening of the Mersey Tunnel. Our task was to take the greatcoats of the bands men from their transport and lay them round the edge of the bandstand. I was 13 and quite small (when I was in 6S I was still under the height limit of 5ft 3ins and was able to play for the Bantams Rugby Team), however the Greatcoat was very heavy and I was a few yards from the bandstand when it started to slip, but I managed to place it down before disaster struck, I breathed a sigh of relief and hoped that no one had noticed.. One Christmas recently I was given a video "Wirral – Memories of the 1920's and 1930's". There was reference to the 23<sup>rd</sup>'s part in the ceremony and there to my horror was a line of scouts and at the end a very small scout struggling with a very large greatcoat. It is a sobering thought that in the present days of knife culture, in those far of days there was a bunch of B.I lads wandering about the town with sheaf knives strapped to their belts. Not everything has changed for the better.

#### BIOB Golf Society.

The Golf Society held this years competition at Prenton Golf Club on Friday May13th. The weather was kind and 27 players took part. The winner of the Bill Pyke Cup was Nigel Simms (1973/77) and Mike Hayman (1959/66) won the Len Malcolm Tankard as runner up. Steve Haresnape ( ? ) came third The visitors prizes were won by J Lewis with D Breslan as runner up. All information can be obtained from Derek Turner (1946/50) Telephone 0151-608-5785. This is a good day out for any golf fan and should not be missed. There is an excellent dinner after the Golf in one of Wirral's top Golf Clubs. The next competition will be on May 12<sup>th</sup> 2006.

## Memories of School in the 1930's

Archie Pierce (1931/37)

I joined BI in 1931 in the Junior School under Miss Bowers. I recall we had weekly elocution lessons from Miss Muriel Dawn.

I do not recollect that the head was called "Klon". I do remember that he knew how to maintain discipline: His stock of canes must rank amongst the finest in the Northern Hemisphere. I experienced one of his prime specimens after I experimented with the light switch in the cloakroom right opposite his study. All the lights in School went out, and he emerged in unhappy mode seconds later. In the late 30's he told us that war was imminent- how right he was. Almost 50% of my form failed to survive.

My form master was Mr Sorby, a splendid teacher who rarely had to hand out detentions one look from those penetrating dark eyes and discipline was restored. The H2S cabinet in the 'chemmy' lab had a glass front that acted like a mirror. This allowed Bummy Jones to spot sky larkers and a large piece of chalk, or a duster, or even a large pile of books would descend on the unwary one, much to the delight of the rest of the form.

Most of us enjoyed games periods, but sports day was not universally popular for it involved our carrying heavy hurdles from Whetstone Lane to Ingleborough Road. Even less popular was the annual cross country run – Those who used to smoke behind the bike shed were not among the front runners.

One boy sold us 'Rocky's Naps' for a 1p each (old money) these contained the names of football teams and you won if your named team scored the most goals. I wonder if this entrepreneur is a billionaire now.

The sporting notables of my era were Leighton Hill, Bob Lowson, Rex Bawden et al and I still have the pleasure of meeting up with some of them.

I enjoyed my years at the Institute. We received an excellent all round education and I think it is tragic that so few grammar schools now remain.

## BIOB Plaques 2005

There will be available for purchase on the night of our reunion dinner a limited number of specially designed wall plaques. The 'Wilfred Owen' memorial window at the Birkenhead Central Library was used as a guide to the design.

Each plaque (8"x6") is carved in solid kiln dried mahogany. They are all custom made, hand carved and hand painted with high quality enamel paint. No plastics, laser burner, decals or metal stamps have been used in the manufacturing process.

All plaques are guaranteed to be free from defects from workmanship and damage in transit.

This type of high quality plaque would normally retail at £50+ but the BIOB has negotiated a special one off price of £25. Anyone unable to attend the dinner and wishing to take advantage of this most attractive offer is requested to contact, without delay, Joe Morgan at (0151-625-8671) also email [morganjoemorgan@aol.com](mailto:morganjoemorgan@aol.com) or myself at (0151-608-8837) or email [harry\\_burkett@btopenworld.com](mailto:harry_burkett@btopenworld.com). N.B. I am not putting a copy of the plaque in the newsletter. The cost of colour printing is prohibitive, and black and white does not do credit to the plaque, it should nevertheless please even the most fastidious of Old Boys. Postal despatch can be arranged (UK or Overseas) at a small additional cost just in time for that Christmas gift.

The BIOB will, in addition, benefit from every sale so you will be helping the finances of our organisation.

This is a limited time offer so please respond as soon as possible.

## OBITUARY

Fred Burls (1942/43)	J. Norman Cartwright ( ? )
Len Frowe (1933/38)	Alan. C. Jones (1942/46)
Charles Lee (1946/51)	Don Mathieson (1947/55)
Dennis Moore (1939/45)	John Posnett (1938/41)

It is with deep regret that I have to announce the death of Don Mathieson. Don was an active member of the band of keen workers that are helping to get the Old Boys Association up and running. He was trying to arrange a dance that all Old Boys and their wives or girlfriends could attend when he passed away. Many will remember Don as a Rugby Player both at School and in the Old Instonians team. Don will be missed by all his friends in our Association.

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### APPLICATION FORM FOR DINNER CALDY GOLF CLUB

Friday October the 14<sup>th</sup>

I enclose cheque for £25. (This covers the hire of Caldy Golf Club facilities; the meal plus wine on the table, free entry into the draw, and all gratuities to catering and bar staff) Donations for the draw would be very welcome Cheques to be made out to BIOB not to me please. Dress; lounge suit/blazer. Time 6.30pm for 7.30pm.  
ANY MEMBER WISHING TO KEEP THE AD VISOR WHOLE IS WELCOME TO SEND THEIR APPLICATION ON PLAIN PAPER.

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE NUMBER

YEAR OF BIRTH (for seating arrangements)

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Please return this form as soon as possible to :-  
Harry Burkett, 13, Prenton Farm Road, Prenton, Wirral CH43 3BN