



AD-VISOR



The Newsletter of the Birkenhead Institute Old Boys

Issue 16, Autumn 2011

Edited by Harry Burkett 13, Prenton Farm Road, Prenton

Birkenhead CH43 3BN

E mail:- harry_burkett@btopenworld.com

Telephone:- 0151 608 8837

Editorial

Well its that time of year so once again you have to put up with my scribblings but what a year we have had. The Association has suffered the loss of two of our brightest lights and I have penned obituaries for both printed later in this Newsletter.

We have had the Saga of our old playing fields at Ingleborough Road. All of you who are on the internet have been kept up to date on the matter by Keith Dutton. What a find we have in this member. He keeps all of our records and has set up a website that is well worth a read. If you can go on the internet just type in www.BIOB.co.uk and follow the links. He has printed several School Photographs but is short on identification of some of the faces. If anyone can identify any of the unknown faces Keith would love to hear from you at WebMaster@BIOB.co.uk. For identification place the cursor on the face and a “thinks bubble” will appear over the person involved. It will either show a name or a number. Just send the Number and the name of the individual, together with the year to Keith who will then bring the records up to date.

There is another site set up by Philip Ronald-Price (1960/67) and this contains other information and is very well informed. He did this off his own bat and his research is commendable.

Now back to Ingleborough Road I think that everyone is aware that when the School was moved to Tollemache Road the field was found to be at an awkward distance and I believe was not used to any great extent. When Tollemache Road was closed the new owners after the demise of the Merseyside County Council was Wirral Borough Council who, in their wisdom, decided that the Field was surplus to requirements. Some time later the field was exchanged for a paltry sum of money and a cinder pitch somewhere in the vicinity of Gautby Road (this was needed for use as an access road to Bidston Moss). The sum of money was small because clearly the pitch was a recreational facility and this was made very clear in the Deed of Exchange. I may add that within that document it also stated that the Memorial Gates, The Pavilion, and the Poplar Trees were to be maintained. So far Tranmere Rovers (the new owners) have pulled down the sign with “Birkenhead Institute Playing Fields” over the gates, allowed the pavilion to fall into the hands of vandals and the poplar trees, if any, are in a terrible state. As you are all aware these trees were planted as a Memorial to Old Boys who had died in the First World War and, of course, included one for Wilfred Owen. The trees were registered with the Imperial War Memorial Trust and I wonder how Tranmere can reconcile this with their support for the Poppy Appeal. As an ex serviceman I find that this attitude beneath contempt. How can anyone support the one and disregard the other.

Now comes the crunch, Tranmere have discovered the immense value of the site for building purposes and have submitted an Application to build an Estate on the land and for a change of use from recreational to building purposes. This is now in with the Council for consideration. As you are all aware the value of building land when compared to Recreational bears no consideration and Tranmere will undoubtedly make several Million Pounds in profit on the transaction. I would suggest that if members feel strongly about this matter that they write to the M.P. for this area one Frank Field at the House of Commons or if they still live within the Wirral Borough Council Area they can write to the Borough Council at the Town Hall Brighton Street, Wallasey Wirral CH44 8ED. You cannot appeal against this matter if you live outside the area but you can make representations to the relevant MP.

The thing that puzzles me is that there has been a moratorium on the use of green field sites as opposed to brown in existence for some years but Tranmere seem to be able to drive a coach and horses through Planning Regulations. I think that the thing that fills me with the greatest despair is that an Old Boy is the leader of the Council. He is far too busy to see us and I have been deafened by his silence on the matter. I will nonetheless send him a copy of this Newsletter. The newsletter is sent to all Registered Old Boys and is restricted to their use and not for General Publication so I hope that this stirs his conscience.

One other Old Boy who has put in a great deal of research and has written an 'Opera' on the works of Wilfred Owen. He is Dean Johnson. He is an excellent musician and although I am not into Modern musical works I can see the merit of this and I have attended two performances and enjoyed both.

I am in touch with a relative of Nancy Price's and he has informed me that Nancy, who has Alzheimer's is alive and well in a nursing home in the Southern Area of the Lake District. She has very little memory and does not recognise anyone but that she is very comfortable and at peace with the World. I think that she is in most Old Boys thoughts and prayers. God bless you Nancy.

Old Instonians Golf Society

2011 Pyke Cup

The Pyke Cup was won by Steve Haresnape at last years competition. This year the competition will take place on October 7th before the Dinner at Calday Golf Club. It is an excellent days golfing on a superb course. The International Youth competition was held there last year.

A special Green Fee of £20.00 for non members of the club has been arranged by one Old Boy who is a committee member.

It will take the form of a Stapleford Competition with full Handicap. Tee times available from 1.00pm to 2.00pm.

The organizer can be contacted by email at :- Arthur.Howarth@BTInternet.com or on 0151 336 1026. If out leave your details on the answerphone and Arthur will get back to you. Don't forget your own phone number.

This is a good outing organized by one of our stalwarts and is worthy of support. You are not forced to attend the Dinner as well. but we will talk about you if you don't.

The Len Malcolm Tankard is still missing We would love to hear of its whereabouts.

OBITUARY

Leonard T. Malcolm MA (Cantab) – at B.I. 1934/1943 and 1945/1982

It is with deep regret that I have to inform you all of the death of Leonard T. Malcolm. He gained the title of “Mister B.I” for his extensive knowledge of all things pertaining to our old Alma Mater.

Len had the distinction of having given two of the talks at the Annual Dinner.. To the first of these he gave the title ‘Spirit of B.I’ and it truly was a speech that encompassed all that was great about our old School. The second was in part a History of his own life but it contained some wonderful and humorous anecdotes one of which was to inform us that he had started his education at Calday Grange Grammar School.

Len could always be relied on for information and would give of his time and expertise willingly He will be missed by all of us. Landican Crematorium was packed with Old Boys for the service and I think that it would have brought a tear to his eyes to see the obvious affection in which he was held.

N.B. I have received this tribute from A.A. Smith (1942/50) and I think that it is worth printing

“I got to know Len well during my time at the B.I. This was mainly because of his interest and involvement in School matters outside his main subject, Physics. Among these were School Rugby, particularly the 1st XV, when playing away games, Amateur Dramatics, often using the facilities of the YMCA where he lived during this time, and even being responsible for the group of students who during the summer holidays assisted the owner of a farm in Great Barrow near Chester

It is no exaggeration, it seems to me, to say that Len Malcolm came to be regarded, admired and supported as the member of staff who could always be relied upon to support and champion the reputation of the Birkenhead Institute and its Old Instonians.

His memory will remain with Old Instonians for many years to come.”

OBITUARY

Bert Bushell - at B.I. 1939/1944

Bert was one of those people who had the interests of our Association at the very centre of his being.

He played for, and was a member at, the "St Mary's" Cricket Club. It was at his funeral that one of his fellow members was talking about the depth of his involvement with the behind the scenes activities at the club. Bert would give of his time very willingly and the consensus was that the Club would miss him dearly.

He played both Rugby and Cricket for School and the Old Boys and in later years could be relied upon to run the touch line no matter what weather conditions. Bert would very willingly play for any side (First to Thirds) without complaint and in any position.

Bert has been at the helm of all activities run by your Association for most of its existence and a single phone call has been all that was necessary to have him here and ready to do any task asked of him.

Bert had been deeply involved with the last Dinner, as usual, but he fell ill just before the day of the Dinner and was most upset at having to miss out on what was for him a very special occasion.

A dour character with a keen sense of humour and a bright wit Bert will be sorely missed by all who knew and admired him.

His funeral at Landican was packed out with Old Boys and I think that this very modest man would have been surprised and delighted with the turnout.

Other deceased members of the Old Boys Association include

Ernie Hewitt in Australia

Jim Ellis - 1946/1951

Denis Osborne – 1935/1945

John Whitehead

Ted James

All of the above have passed on but will not be forgotten

I have found the notes that Len Malcolm made for his speech in 1999. The speech was padded out by Len and this does not give the true picture of his timing and ad-libs but does give a flavour.

The best laid schemes of mice and men

A toast by Lenny Malcolm

Shortly after the Dinner of October 1998 Harold [Beckett] came round to discuss how it had gone and to start planning one for this year. I made two main points: since it was to be a gathering of Old Instonians the emphasis should be on Birkenhead Institute and an attempt should be made to cover as wide an age range as possible. Having painted myself into a corner, I sat down to write the history of B.I. from my view point from the 1930s to the 1980s, with many stories of incidents and individuals, of staff, pupils and certainly of those who would be at the Dinner. When I had finished I sat back.

The history of Birkenhead Institute. In 20 minutes?

I realised that it was an impossible task. The stories would have to go for a start. 20 minutes! This would allow for essentials only. I would wish to mention the Junior School - Sadie Bowers, Head Mistress, a large lady with a sit up and beg bicycle, and Kathleen Booth - a School which was so successful until its demise was brought about by the Butler Education Act of 1944. I must include the 23rd Scouts run by Don Coughtrie. The time factor will preclude mention of others. I'll just look at an old photograph to see if I can put names to faces. This I found somewhat harrowing for I realised as I looked at the photograph taken in the mid-thirties that in twelve year's time, as Secretary of the War Memorial Committee, I would be including on the Memorial, among the 93 names of casualties, the names of Ted Mathews, John Gullan and John Beckett. A feature of the 23rd was the camping. Overchurch at the weekends on a site long since gone and then longer camps in the holidays at Brynbach in North Wales and Wootton Fitzpaine, north of Charmouth in Dorset. I have revisited both these sites. The one I have not been back to is Gatehouse of Fleet, this for psychological reasons. I am sure most of you can look back at moments in your lives when opportunities were missed - I had one such moment at Gatehouse of Fleet. One day we were divided into pairs and sent forth into the wild Kirkudbrightshire countryside with only basic materials and told to light a fire and prepare our own meals. I wish, oh how I wish, that I had paid greater attention to my partner. I had a letter from him only last year. "Since Gatehouse of Fleet in 1938 I have learnt to become a first-class cook (references available)". I wrote back immediately to offer my congratulations and to ask to see the references. They have never been forthcoming. I will have to refer to the third of September 1939. Each pupil was given a gas mask and put on the train: the evacuation to Oswestry had begun. I have been back there too. I walked round Oswestry High School, across the town to the Market Square and over to the Memorial Hall, for ever linked with the Ancient Order of Buffaloes, and then back to Cae Glas Park where the school assembled on arrival. The great W.E. Williams, who taught history, moved along the serried ranks with a brown paper carrier bag collecting catapults and peashooters. When he emerged he held the carrier bag aloft and at this, the start of the war with Germany, announced "Disarmament Conference". Of course, all were back in Birkenhead for the bombing. This meant nights in the air raid shelters and the occasional detour to Whetstone Lane to avoid unexploded bombs. The only damage to the fabric of the school happened on the thirteenth of March, 1941, when two incendiaries fell through the gym roof; Gerry Hall was the firewatcher on duty. He summoned assistance and the fire was extinguished. The School did lose one pupil, A.R. Gibbons, who was killed when a bomb fell in Hamilton Street. Part of the School's war effort was the farming camp held on the farm of Harry Blackburn at Great Barrow, on the far side of Chester. I have been back there too and how it has changed. The village pump, which once overnight suffered the indignity of being whitewashed has gone. The arms on the signpost at the crossroads now point in the correct directions. The White Horse Inn is still there but opposite it is the Post Office surrounded by modern housing. No barns, no mushroom sheds. I felt a pang of conscience as I walked along the main street as I had organised the last four camps and had been in charge of the cooking. I thought back to

Gatehouse of Fleet. I wish, oh how I wish, that I had paid greater attention to my partner. If any of you still harbour complaints about my cooking of fifty years ago I suggest you visit my partner of sixty years ago and see how far it gets you. He lives at 1 Salem View. Then what of the School's Tours abroad? 9 European Countries visited in 20 continuous years - no time. And the Dramatic Society? There are many tales there but no time. That is a pity for there is that story of E. Wynne Hughes and the Birkenhead Brewery - but there is a fund of E. Wynne Hughes stories. (I do not know what to do about that boy - everything I say runs off his back like duck's water. Now you boys I want to make it clear that snowballing is out of bounds.) To go on would be most unfair for I can claim that I knew him better than most and can vouch that he did a great deal for B.I. He left an impression on a number of Old Boys. To put the matter in perspective, it is only the minority here who will remember him - only those who were at school between 1929 and 1950. To the majority, his name will mean as much as those of William Connacher and Jimmy Smallpage do to me. So into the fifties which was a difficult time. It was no part of my job to see the situation from the point of view of the Education Authority but, looking back, the School was too small to be economic and there was no room to expand on the Whetstone Lane site. The solution of the Education Authority was anathema to many - the school should combine with Rock Ferry High School. That reminds me that I am still investigating a matter from 1953. Rock Ferry opened one day to find that their goal posts had been painted black and gold. In connection with this, I would like to see Thomas Hodgson afterwards. The protests started with a meeting called by Reg. Lockyer in the Liberal Club in Claughton Road. A number of us met to concoct a letter to the Ministry of Education in London: Eric Webb provided the facts, I drafted the letter, Roy Dorrity signed it. With the assistance of a number of people dotted round this room, I organised a series of Dinners - 3 in Birkenhead Town Hall and 2 in the Masonic Hall, Clifton Road - concentrating on well-established Old Boys who would carry most clout: - The Lord Cohen of Birkenhead, Sir Herbert Manzoni C.B.E., the City Engineer of Birmingham, Schofield Alien Q.C., LLB., M.P., the Recorder of Blackburn, Professor Hallett of Durham University, W.L. Cottier, the Medical Officer of Health for Willenhall, and many more. John Allison supplied me with a list of names and I consulted a copy of "Who's Who" at the Birkenhead Library and was heartened by the support I received. Then there was the subterfuge with the Chairman of the Education Committee but, alas, no time. The plan was eventually withdrawn. I hope that those at the Dinner will appreciate that academic work proceeded apace in Whetstone Lane. Should I drown them in letters? S.c., Subsid., H.S.C., were replaced by G.C.E. 0 and A, and then along came C.S.E. and, later, G.C.S.E. The syllabi were continually changing and much hard work was done by pupils and staff. Then there was Ingleborough Road:- Athletics, Rugby, Cricket. In all the years I spent at square leg looking at the pavilion, the memorial to the 83 casualties of the first World War, including Wilfred Owen, I never imagined that it would ever be occupied by Tranmere Rovers. Then in 1970 came the move to Tollemache Road. I have no wish to get embroiled in the relative merits of the Grammar School Comprehensive systems. The decision was taken by politicians elected by the majority which is known as democracy. The education authorities were as fair as possible:- Park High combined with Hamilton, Rock Ferry with Kirklands and B.I. with Grange. One of the main advantages was the improved facilities and one of the main disadvantages was that the School more than doubled in size with the loss of a degree of friendliness, Is that not the way of the world? Small banks and corner shops have largely gone and in a few years' time Birkenhead was to be absorbed into Wirral. I remember the 1970's as a period of hard work tinged with sadness. In 1972 Dennis Hughes died having been on the staff for twenty years and he had certainly thrown himself enthusiastically into the life of the School. In 1975 Miss Cojeen retired after thirty three years of valiant service. I did have one piece of good fortune. I was so busy that I failed to realise that the buildings in Whetstone Lane were being demolished. If I had, inevitably I would have been drawn there to recall stories of Johnny Paris, Bertie Bloor, Tiger Lewis et al and many Old Boys. I would only have got upset and so it was as well that I did not know. Immediately after the Dinner of 1998 I wrote to Harold to draw attention to his inability to spell correctly the word "Questionnaire". He replied immediately. "You were the first one to spot my deliberate mistake. A prize for this will be forthcoming eventually". I hoped for some culinary delicacy but have

received nothing. I wondered how I could prise my reward from Harold's grasp and decided to run a competition. One of the features of B.I. of the 1930s was the appearance of the janitor of those days, one Russell by name, to toll the bell above the bicycle shed before each session to cause boys to hare along Hollybank Road. During the demolition that bell was purloined. I would award "Harold's Prize" to the first at the Dinner who could trace it. I would have to give clues - but alas, no time. So into the 1980s and in 1982 it was time for me to leave. 48 years after crossing the threshold in one direction I crossed it in the other, taught for three years elsewhere and then retired. If I had to associate my time at B.I. with only one word I would choose the word "friendship". I was fortunate in that the generation before mine produced men who became colleagues and then friends. I am thinking particularly of A.O. Jones, W.E. Williams, Robert Hall and Reg. Bolton. In my own generation Dermis Hughes and then three whom I still see regularly - John Allan, Norman Bailey and Rene Cojeen. Then there are the ghosts, not all departed this life, whom I have met at Brynbach, Wootton Fitzpaine, Oswestry, Great Barrow, Ingleborough Road and Whetstone Lane. I serve on a committee with a man who was semi-educated at Park High School. Since this is a private meeting I will admit, somewhat reluctantly, that Rock Ferry and Park High were worthy opponents but I will continue to decry them in public. The result is certain banter in which I have an unfair advantage since I visited both Rock Ferry and Park High so often with Rugby and Cricket Teams that I got to know members of their staffs and, through them, some of their weaknesses. It always ends the same way: when my friend reaches the end of his tether he says "Well, they are still both open". To my credit, I say nothing but I know what I am thinking - no sixth forms, both flooded with girls, the "new education" and, in a strange way, I am not sorry that B.I. is no more. I put on my rose-coloured spectacles, get out my numerous photographs and dream of times past. I thought my days of giving reports were well and truly over but I will give one more. Report on Birkenhead Institute - "While not perfect, in the main was successful for over a hundred years and certainly provided the framework for many friendships". Who would have forecast that the lad who entered B.I. in 1934 would in 1999 have the honour of asking fellow Old Instonians to stand? I propose a toast. "To the spirit of Birkenhead Institute".

Annual Dinner 2011

The Dinner last year was superb and everyone remarked on the excellent standard of the meal. We have just received this years menu's, and they are at least the equal of last years but the price has gone up. I think that we should retain last years standard but that will mean a price increase I am making the price £28.00, but I think that everyone will agree that this is still good value for a Dinner to this standard i.e. Starter; Main course; Pudding; Biscuits and Cheese; plus coffee also three bottles of wine on each table.

Web Site www.BIOB.co.uk

An overview of the web site, and plans for the future.

[Photo Gallery](#) - a gallery where most of the photographs are stored. Currently, the categories are Miscellaneous, School Boxing, School Staff, School Cricket, School Rugby, Old Boys Rugby, School Prefects, School Speech Day, School Sports Day and Memorabilia.

[Whole School Photographs](#) – a gallery where the long school photographs are stored. Currently showing the following years ca. 1927, 1934, 1943, 1946, 1949, 1951, 1953, 1955, 1957, 1960, 1965 & 1968.

[Links](#) – To some relevant external web sites, currently [Philip Ronald-Price](#)'s excellent web sites. [The Wilfred Owen Society](#), [Dean Johnson's Wilfred Owen Sites](#), and [Jeff Walsh](#)'s special tribute to Wilfred Owen.

[History of B.I.](#) – Two "Visor" magazines 1889 to 1949 and 1889 to 1959. Foundations and Growth 1889 to 1949.

[School Holidays Abroad](#) – Copies of "Collective Passports" from 1955 to 1972. Various school trips to European destinations.

[“Visor” School Magazine](#) – Various magazines, in full. Earliest is Christmas 1933, latest is July 1972.

[“Ad-Visor” BIOB Magazine](#) – All 16 news letters since first publication in 1998.

[Old Boys Rugby](#) – Some newspaper cuttings, mostly the Birkenhead News, from the 1960’s. Mostly written by and collected by Colin Westwater. A Golden Jubilee history by Alan Steedman, written in 1985. A match program for the Golden Jubilee celebration. A link to Prenton RUFC.

[BIOB Golf](#) – Information and list of past winners of the Pyke Trophy, now played on the same day as the annual dinner.

[BIOB Tie](#) – Information on the BIOB tie.

[BIOB Cuff Links & Lapel Badge](#) – Information on the proposed cufflinks and lapel badge.

Contacts – Contact details for the editor of the newsletter, your very own [Harry Burkett](#), and the editor of the web site, the up and coming youth policy, in the form of [Keith Dutton](#).

Plans for the future include, rewriting the web site using “Frames”. I am also looking into the possibility of setting up a “Paypal” account and enabling on-line payments for merchandise, including ties, cufflinks, lapel badges and annual dinner tickets, and of course, on-line donations.

Facebook

We have an exclusive [members group](#) on social networking site Facebook. You can keep in touch with other Old Boys by joining our group. This link should get you there <http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/All.BIOB/>

We are currently campaigning to stop the Tranmere Rovers housing development at Ingleborough Road.

Mike Worthy has also set up an open group focussed on this objective, but with open membership (not just Old Boys). This group can be found at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/239970272710761/>

In addition, there is an on-line petition to support the Save Ingleborough Road campaign. If you haven’t already signed it, then please do so, at <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/save-ingleboroughroad/>

Finally, if you live on the Wirral, please write to your local councillor, and express your feelings about Ingleborough Road. The local councillors have a big influence on planning matters, so let’s get as much support as we can. Time is of the essence, the planning decision will likely be made sometime in September, so please act now!

Wilfred Owen
PRESS RELEASE
August 2011

From Brookside to the frontline - Dean Sullivan brings war poet's story to the stage.

Actor **Dean Sullivan** famous for creating the legendary '**Jimmy Corkhill**' character in the soap opera **Brookside** brings his latest production to Port Sunlight in September.

One of Merseyside’s most respected and recognised personalities Dean is to direct and narrate the **Wilfred Owen** musical '**Bullets and Daffodils**' at **The Lyceum, Port Sunlight**. Created by Dean’s name sake songwriter **Dean Johnson**, who performs the score to the musical, it tells the story of the life of the great **WW1** poet in Birkenhead and sets Owen's iconic poems to music. Says **Dean Sullivan**, “I am offered projects all the time but when I came across this I had to get involved. **Wilfred Owen** is such an important poet and has strong local connections. With the run up to the anniversary of the beginning of **WW1** in 2014 the timing of this musical drama is perfect. It’s definitely a long way from being Jimmy on the close.”

Two performances of Bullets and Daffodils take place at 2.00pm and 7.30pm on Saturday 24th September. - Tickets are available from The Wilfred Owen Story, 34 Argyle Street, Birkenhead, Wirral CH41 6AE. 07539371925 and at Port Sunlight Museum and Garden Village, Kings George's Drive, Port Sunlight, Wirral CH62 5DX. 0151644 6466

For more details see www.wilfredowenstory.com

For further information please contact
Dean Johnson, Argyle Street address above.

APPLICATION FORM FOR THE ANNUAL DINNER

Please return the completed form to :-

Harry Burkett
13 Prenton Farm Road
Prenton
Birkenhead
CH43 3BN



I will/will not be attending the Dinner at Calday Golf Club on Friday October 7th 2011
Time 6.30pm for 7.30pm.

(For those attending please enclose a cheque for **£28.00** made out to **BIOB**).

Donations for the draw will be welcome.

Dress:- Blazer and Flannels or Lounge Suit.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

Email ADDRESS.....

TELEPHONE NUMBER.....
(including dial code)

YEAR OF BIRTH.....

Any Special Dietary Requirements.....