



# AD-VISOR



## The Newsletter of the Birkenhead Institute Old Boys

Issue 20, Autumn 2015

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### Editorial

The last year has been particularly busy for me. I decided to take on the task of re-building the website [www.BIOB.co.uk](http://www.BIOB.co.uk) myself. With this in mind I attended a night school class at Wirral Met College in using "Dreamweaver" the web authoring software. The course is now finished, as is the updated web site. It's not much different to look at, but behind the scenes it's much neater and smarter. In addition, I've fully implemented the adoption of PayPal to allow online transactions. So, now you can buy merchandise, order your dinner tickets, and make donations directly from the web site.

**Keith Dutton (1960/63)**

### Usual Reminder

If you've received this through the mail, then please consider sending me your email address, or even someone else's email address, where I can contact you more quickly and cheaper than the mail system. If there's any old boy's news, then you can hear from me as soon as I find out.

Please also remember to update me if you move address, or change your email address, make sure you stay in the loop.

### Discussion Point

I have not had much feedback from my suggestion in last year's Ad-Visor, concerning the admission of non-Old Boys to our annual dinner. Most of the feedback and most of my conversations around the proposal to widen the appeal of the Annual Dinner to certain other non-old boys has been very positive.

In particular, the idea that non-old boys who were long term members of the Old Instonians RUFC could be invited to our Annual Dinner, next year, 2016, as guests would seem a reasonable first step. How do you all feel about this? As a group, we are a diminishing species, and none of us are getting any younger. I would like to ensure the success of the annual dinner, by increasing the numbers attending, which I see as the highlight of the year. Contact me with your comments at [Editor@BIOB.co.uk](mailto:Editor@BIOB.co.uk)

### Web Site [www.BIOB.co.uk](http://www.BIOB.co.uk)

For anyone that's interested, the web site has been updated, with more consistency across the site. Technically, the menus are on a template, which means that they're all the same, and are much easier to update. Now that it's sorted, I plan on adding more content, and updating it more frequently. Please check back on a regular basis, see what's added.

## Old Farts Day – Prenton RUFC

**A**s those of you who played rugby for Old Instonians RUFC at any time in the past will know, the Rugby Club at Woodchurch closed many years ago. Most of the members at the time then joined the then Old Rockferrians RUFC in Prenton Dell, and formed Prenton RUFC. This new club is now a very successful local club, regularly running 3 teams in various leagues.

To celebrate the joint Instonians/Rockferrians history of the club the committee normally hold a Former Players Reunion Day, in the first part of each season. At the time of the newsletter I am unable to establish exactly when this will be. When I find out, I will email everyone on the mailing list with the notification.

[Prenton RUFC](#) is at Prenton Dell Rd, Birkenhead, Prenton, Merseyside CH43 3BS  
0151 608 1501

## Tollemache Road

**A**s you probably realise, I'm a Whetstone Lane kinda guy. I left the Institute in 1963, probably before Tollemache Road was even being considered for the merger with Whetstone Lane. I am very aware that all my personal memories are of Whetstone Lane. With that in mind, I would like to change the balance of the web site, to include more information and memories of Tollemache Road. This is where you come in, does anyone have any photographs or other information that they could send me, so that I can share it with the world, initially on the web site, but also in terms of future articles in your Ad-Visor.

Does anyone have any school magazines from any period, but especially from Tollemache Road, that they would be prepared to loan to me so that I can scan them for the web site? All material will be returned. Contact me at [Editor@BIOB.co.uk](mailto:Editor@BIOB.co.uk).

## Mayor of Wirral

**L**ast year, 2014, the Annual Reunion Dinner was honoured to have the Mayor of Wirral, Councillor Steve Foulkes, as our Guest. Steve was at Grange Secondary Modern, in Tollemache Road in 1971 when it was renamed Birkenhead Institute. He left in 1974. We look forward to seeing Steve at future Dinners.

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**Editor:** The following article was penned by Alun Hughes (1966/73).

It is based on his research for a forthcoming book about the BI Old Boys who sacrificed their lives during the First World War.

## BIOB at War.... a Great War

**T**he school's Roll of Honour now displayed in Birkenhead Central Library contains 83 names To read the names is incomprehensible such is the scale of the task. Yet each of these individuals deserve more than fleeting attention to reveal more of their character as well as the theatres of war in which they were tested.

**T**he sources for research are restricted, however much can be uncovered and deserves exposure in today's light as this short summary of the lives of those lost in the first two years of war is intended to reveal.

[John Smith](#), a dispatch rider in the Royal Engineers is given the prominence given in the Birkenhead News as a result of the ‘novelty’ value of an early local casualty not two months after the end of a war that was expected by many to be over by that Christmas.

John, who cuts a proud and determined figure on his motorcycle in the photograph printed in the Birkenhead News was part of the force which had plugged the remaining gap at the northern end of the great defensive trench system that ran from the Swiss border to Ypres where it met the flooded and impassable Flanders polders.

He and his comrades faced their German opponents in October 1914 in what was to become known as the First Battle of Ypres. The British Line strained to the thinnest of threads but inordinately well trained only just held, to be saved by the onset of winter.

Not that John was necessarily the first in action in 1914. Several Old Boys were in the Royal Naval Division, a group of pre-war volunteers’ surplus to naval manning requirements and formed into an infantry fighting force by the First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill. His attempt to thwart the almost complete annexation of Belgium by the Germans by supporting Belgian forces holding the Port of Antwerp captured the public’s imagination at the time but was unsuccessful.

**A**nother popular choice for Old Boys was the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Kings Liverpool Regiment a Territorial unit colloquially named as the Liverpool Scottish and within Territorial circles they were determined that it should be seen as an elite regiment.

Head of the Army, Lord Kitchener had a poor regard for the Territorials but still, the Liverpool Scottish were dispatched to the front in November 1914, the second such regiment of Territorials to be deployed and they soon gained the respect of the regular soldiers alongside whom they fought.

**O**f the many Old Boys amongst the regiment, there were two brothers from the wealthy **Pollexfen** family. The eldest son [Guy](#) particularly was talented having won a Scholarship to Oxford University. After graduation, he took up a career abroad in the Burmese Forestry Trade only to resign in order to return to England at the sign of impending conflict.

He was clearly cut out for rapid advancement through the ranks but turned down repeated requests for him to seek promotion. At that stage in the war trenches were rudimentary and particularly in Flanders where the high-water table made them wet, muddy and unstable. Guy was shot dead by a sniper while returning to the front line from the regimental clearing station on 26 January 1915.

**N**ext to be claimed were two of the second contingent of the regiment to reach the lines some 3 days before Guy’s death.

[Angus Mont MacDonald](#) and [Thomas McNaught](#) were amongst four men that died on the same day, the 12 March 1915, Thomas a talented footballer and popular member of the regiment being shot in the neck by a sniper as he carried urgently required bandages to the aid of a wounded comrade.

**B**y this time, the plans (such as they were) for the invasion of the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey had been laid and were swinging into action. Although it was intended that the seaborne invaders should advance rapidly to capture the commanding heights, they struggled to get much further than the beaches on which they were landed.

[Allan Cameron MacLean](#) was landed with the First Australian Infantry Force on 25 April 1915, a day that is now commemorated as Anzac Day. His family were largely living in Spain and it appears that he lived in his grandfather's house in Whetstone Lane while at B.I.

Allan had set out on an exciting new life in Australia but had been amongst the first to sign up and return to help his Mother country in her hour of need.

Indications are that unlike some unlucky individuals Allan made it safely ashore, but he didn't survive the day.

**T**he men of the Royal Naval Division were landed a few days later at Cape Helles and were thrown in a heavy fight of attrition. The heat, the dead lying unburied all around, the inadequate sanitary arrangements, led inevitably to disease, particularly dysentery.

[Stanley Victor Radcliffe](#), one of a large family of boys succumbed to this. He was evacuated to the nearby island of Mudros where he died on 27 June.

Meanwhile back on the Western front attempts were being made to take the fight to the enemy and the Liverpool Scottish were in the thick of the combat, east of Ypres.

In June 1915, the Liverpool Scottish took part in a limited diversionary attack at Bellewaarde and acquitted itself well. In the eventual scheme of things it was largely inconsequential although portrayed as imaginative initiative amongst the trench stale-mate which had existed until then, the "charge at Hooze" was hailed as a huge success.

**O**ld boy [Richard Alan Robinson](#) was one of those who took part in that charge but did not return. His name is recorded on the Menin Gate. **Phillip Evelyn Pollexfen** survived the battle but was left with terrible injuries which would contribute to a tragic outcome some years after the war.

In August, a Russian ship was intercepted by a British converted Isle of Man steamer the Ramsey, commanded by Old Boy, [Harry Raby](#). As the ships approached each other at close quarters the suspect vessel, lowered its Russian flag and revealed its true colours as a German raiding vessel, the Meteor, which sprayed the Ramsey's bridge with machine gunfire. Harry went down with his ship in true seamanship tradition.

**M**eanwhile back in Gallipoli, the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment containing many Old Boys who had enlisted in Birkenhead in August 1914 were thrown into a further amphibious landing to force proceedings against the Turks, this time at Suvla Bay. Sadly, lessons which should have been learnt from previous experience were not and chaos ensued.

[Stanley Gomer Roberts](#), whose father was to be instrumental in the construction of the pavilion at Ingleborough Road fell on 12 August and [John Henry Burns](#) survived only long enough to be taken so ill with dysentery that he was evacuated back to hospital in Egypt where he died on 15 October. Meanwhile [Raymond Hodder Falla](#), a pre-war employee of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board working for the Army Service Corps on the peninsula was killed on 20<sup>th</sup> August

**A**nd so as 1915 drew to a close with no expectation of how long it would last or if it would ever finish, the B.I. toll stood at 11 killed in 16 months.

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**Editor:** The following two articles were written by Rob Wood (1953/60)

Rob, together with Alun Hughes, and Dean Johnson have been instrumental in ensuring that the memory of the BI Old Boys who fell in the First World War, and were remembered at the Ingleborough Road playing field, are never forgotten, now that the playing field has been sold for housing development.

## **HISTORY OF INGLEBOROUGH ROAD MEMORIAL PLAYING FIELDS**

The following information is contained within the following publications:

- School Jubilee 1889-1939
- [A History of Birkenhead Institute 1889-1949](#)
- [Birkenhead Institute Its Foundation and Growth. 1889-1949](#)
- [A History of Birkenhead Institute 1889-1959](#)
- [UNITED KINGDOM NATIONAL INVENTORY OF WAR MEMORIALS](#)

Initially a plaque in remembrance of the Old Boys killed in the First World War was presented by Alderman Solly and unveiled in March 1920 by Major- General Sir Reginald Barnes K.C.B.

The plaque containing the First World War poet Wilfred Owen's name is now under the commemorative window on the stairs at the Birkenhead Central Library

In 1925 seven acres were purchased at Ingleborough Road for the Birkenhead Institute playing fields.

Previously the School had played its games in many places firstly in Wilmer Road. The Old Archery Ground in Birkenhead Park, Port Sunlight, Prenton (where Carlaw Road now stands), Higher Bebington (on the site of The Wiend)

The field was levelled and sown and all that was needed was a pavilion, a want that was to be supplied by the Old Boys' in 1926 , for it was decided that this would be a fitting Memorial to the Old Boys' who had fallen in the First World War.

At this time there was a great movement nationally by the civil populace to remember the victims of the First World War. A committee was formed and a Playing Field Fund established.

Various fund raising activities were then undertaken to raise money. These varied from drama presentations to a bazaar. There were no lottery grants or object one "quango" funding in those days.

Through the generosity of the Old Boys and the hard work of the Staff the foundation memorial stone was laid by Alderman G Solly on the 17<sup>th</sup> April 1926 and formally opened on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1926 by the Mayor of Birkenhead Mr R. P. Fletcher who accepted it on behalf of the Corporation, just in time for Armistice Day.

Mr F Seward in asking the Mayor to accept the Pavilion on behalf of the Corporation, said **"he felt sure that the boys who laid down their lives would have wished the Memorial to take the form of a sports pavilion and playing fields"**.

The fields were known as **"The Mount Road Memorial Ground Ingleborough Road."**

The Architect was a Mr Thomas Taliesin Rees who gave his services free. This was most appropriate since he was an acquaintance of the Paton family whose son S A Paton was a school friend of Owen's and unlike Owen had survived the First World War. He was also a major shareholder of TRFC when the Club became a limited company in 1913.

The ceremony was followed by a football match between the Old Boys' F.C. and Old Holts.

The Headmaster's flag staff was erected in 1930.

**The eighty eight poplar trees to honour those pupils who lost their lives in the First World War including Wilfred Owen were planted in 1933.**

A film was made of the event and shown to an audience of parents, friends and Old Boys to raise further money for the Playing Field Fund to enable the ornamental entrance archway to be added in 1933 again through the generosity of Old Boys.

The remaining funds were used to set up the Old Boys Memorial Prize awarded every Speech Day. In 1938 a bell was donated by Mr & Mrs Luton in honour of their son and a bracket to hang it by R.N. Smith. The playing fields were used by the school and in their early days by the Old Instonians Rugby Club.

**F**rom its history the site is rightly listed as the Birkenhead Institute Memorial Playing Fields (UKNIWM REF 15527) with the United Kingdom National Inventory of War Memorials and the Imperial War Museum as a First World War Memorial along with the eighty eight poplar trees planted on the boundary to honour the former pupils from the Birkenhead Institute who died in the First World War

After the closure of the School the playing fields were acquired from Wirral Borough Council by Tranmere Rovers FC on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1995 in exchange for some industrial land in Hurrell Road Bidston plus a sum of £25,000.00.

When Tranmere Rovers acquired the playing fields they fully undertook to accept the covenants imposed in the Deed of Exchange of 30<sup>th</sup> August 1995 which amongst other things protected the status of the Memorial Ground as a playing field.

The memorial arch was removed by Tranmere Rovers in 2001 and has not been located or replaced since. Tranmere Rovers applied for planning permission on the site which was granted in 2013 subject to certain conditions.

### **INGLEBOROUGH ROAD MEMORIAL PLAYING FIELDS UPDATE**

**N**ow that Planning Consent has been granted for housing on the Playing Fields a small group of us have been involved in influencing proposals for a proper consideration be given to the sites cultural and historic significance.

With this in mind we contact the new owners of Tranmere Rovers, Mark Palios and his wife and at last got a response to our request for a meeting. This was arranged by David Armstrong the Deputy Chief Executive of Wirral Borough Council. This confirmed the Old Instonians as an interested party to the proposed development at Ingleborough Road.

**A** separate meeting was held with Bellway Homes who intended to develop the site to further confirm Old Instonians as an interested party in the development of the site.

In December 2014 the Council Cabinet met to lift the covenants on the playing fields.

Members recognised the cultural and historic significance of the playing fields and consequently as part of the condition of lifting the covenants they insisted on a suitable memorial being provided in Hamilton Square the site of the current Civic Remembrance and allocated £90,000.00 for it from the sale of Ingleborough Road.

Further funding could be forthcoming from the War Memorial Trust and other interested parties including Old Boys if they so wished.

**W**e developed this idea and proposed to David Armstrong that a memorial garden might be created in Hamilton Square incorporating some of the following elements:

- **Parts of the pavilion carefully removed from the site, including the foundation stone.**
- **Fence around the garden designed to symbolise the trees planted at Ingleborough Road in memory of the fallen.**
- **A sculpture of an exhausted soldier using the well-known illustration by Dave Jones in Jeff Walsh's book on Wilfred Owen. A miniature replica is in the process of being made and we hope to have this on display at the dinner.**
- **Resetting of the entrance gates under replica of the Memorial Arch.**
- **Visual interpretation of the themes of the poetry and in recognition of Wilfred Owen.**

Further meetings have been held with David Armstrong and David Ball, Head of Planning and Regeneration.

**A** draft Architects' drawing by Michael Paddock has been produced and attached to this article however further details and information are now required by David Ball and we are then process of preparing this for the Council's comments.

Bellway Homes have now purchased the site and submitted a detailed Planning Application to Wirral Borough Council. We are not satisfied with their proposal for the proposed memorial and we are arranging a meeting with them to discuss the matter and our proposals.

This would include:

- **Naming of the development.**
- **Positioning of an interpretive /commemorative panel of the sites history.**
- **Street naming.**

**W**e feel we have come a long way from the time when no one wanted to recognise or talk to us over our concerns and believe our proposals will be a fitting memorial both to the Birkenhead Institute School, and the fallen pupils in the First World War commemorated at the Ingleborough Road Memorial Playing Fields.

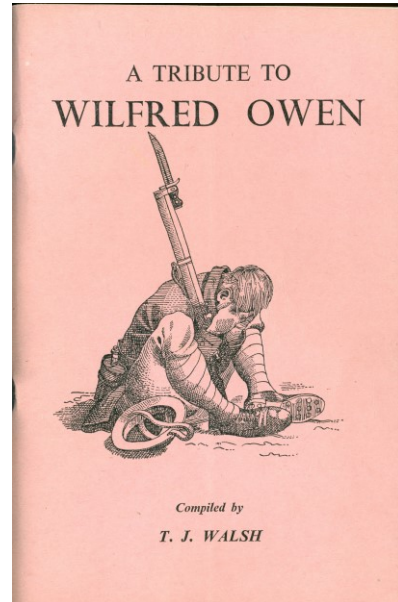
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rev	date	description	by
<b>status:</b> PRELIMINARY			
<b>client:</b> Mr Alun Hughes			
<b>project:</b> Birkenhead Institute Old Boys Memorial To The Fallen - "Futility"			
<b>drawing title:</b> Indicative Perspective Sketch			
<b>drawing no:</b> 15039-100			
<b>scale:</b> NTS sheet: A3			
<b>date:</b> 10/06/2015 by: DH checked: MP			
<b>paddock johnson partnership</b> architects Studio 2, The Victoria, South Street, North Wirral, Wirral, Cheshire L49 7EJ • 0151 463 1234 • 0151 463 1666 • info@paddockjohnson.com • www.paddockjohnson.com			

**Editor:-** Things have moved on, and in the last few days I've received the attached photograph from Alun Hughes (1966/73). This is the model made for us for the purpose of generating a bronze statue which forms the centre of our proposals for Hamilton Square. We have sent our initial sketch to the Head of Planning and are awaiting his comments before progressing that further. (Alun Hughes, Rob Wood, Dean Johnson).

The model is based in the DSW Jones (1940/85) drawing "Futility" made for Jeff Walsh's book on Wilfred Owen (1900/07). "[A Tribute to Wilfred Owen](#)".



## **OBITUARY**

Ray (Charlie) Lamb (1938/45)  
Ron Harris (1942/47)  
Tom Norton (1933/39)  
Air Commodore Cecil Alldis (1923/35)  
Harry Gahan (1955/60)  
Vic Smith (1952/58)  
Walter Hurst (1943/48)  
Ray Williams (1948/49)  
Tony Hudson CBE (1942/50)



## Old Instonians Golf Society 2015 Pyke Cup

Last year (2014) the Pyke Cup was again played for at Caldy G.C. and the competition was won by Brian Riley (19). This year the competition will take place on the afternoon of October 2nd before the Dinner at the Golf Club. It is an excellent afternoon's golf on a well prepared course.

As usual, it is anticipated that a special green fee in the order of £20 for non-members (of Caldy G.C.), as charged last year, can be arranged with the Club for this year's competition.

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

As usual, those wishing to play this year can contact the organiser, Arthur Howarth, by email at:- [arthur.howarth@btinternet.com](mailto:arthur.howarth@btinternet.com) or on 0151 336 1026. If out, leave your details on his answer phone and Arthur will get back to you. Don't forget to leave your own phone number.

The golf is a pleasant outing in good company and enjoyed by all that play.

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### APPLICATION FORM FOR THE ANNUAL DINNER

Please return the completed form to :-

**Keith Dutton**  
11 Finstall Road  
Wirral  
CH63 9YW



I will/will not be attending the Dinner at Caldy Golf Club on Friday October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015

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)

SCHOOL YEARS AT B.I (To arrange SEATING Plan).....

Any Special Dietary Requirements.....

Any Special Seating Requirements.....

Alternatively – use 

I am trying to encourage more Old Boys to attend the Annual Dinner, and I am aware that some of you no longer live on the Wirral.

With that in mind, I have approached local B & B establishments and local hotels which are relatively close to Caldy Golf Club, with a view to negotiating special rates.

The response was poor, the only success was the Peel Hey Guest House. Please mention BIOB when making your booking.

The Jug & Bottle is much less expensive, and has Real Ale.

Otherwise, just look on the internet, there's loads of accommodation on the Wirral.

Hopefully there will be other Old Boys staying in the same establishment, so you could share a taxi to/from Caldy Golf Club.

[Peel Hey Guest House](#) Frankby Rd, Frankby CH48 1PP 0151 677 9077

£95 Bed, special deal, breakfast included.

[Jug & Bottle](#), 15 Mount Ave, Heswall, Wirral CH60 4RH 0151 342 5535

From £45 B & B