



# AD-VISOR



## The Newsletter of the Birkenhead Institute Old Boys

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## Editorial

I would like to thank all those members who responded to my request for AdVisor copy. I received a lot of e-mails with excellent copy for use herein. There are some wonderful recollections, which I consider a real success for the AdVisor. If your story has not been included, then let me know, I must have lost it! It was my intention to include all stories that I received. So, send me another copy, please be patient, it will be in the next issue.

This newsletter is best read online. - In case you're wondering what the blue text means. Blue text is for Hypertext, that means text that is a link to something else, either within the document or on the Internet. So, to make Hypertext work, you need to be reading this on a computer, with access to the Internet. Click on the Blue text and it will take you to a related subject, somewhere else. Try it on [HERE](#), then on the browser click on the "Back" button to return here.

This copy of the AdVisor is online at:-

<http://birkenheadinstitute.co.uk/BIOB%20AdVisor/AdVisor%202019.pdf>

Obviously, you can't click on anything when you're reading a paper copy!

**Keith Dutton (1960/63)**

## Usual Reminder

If you've received this through the-mail, then please consider sending me your e-mail address, or even a family or friend's e-mail address, where I can contact you more quickly and cheaper than the-mail system. This is particularly useful when an Old Boy passes on, I can notify you of the funeral details much quicker. 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 e-mail address, make sure you stay in the loop. This can be done online at our website see [http://www.birkenheadinstitute.co.uk/BIOB\\_Membership.html](http://www.birkenheadinstitute.co.uk/BIOB_Membership.html).

**Web Site** [www.BirkenheadInstitute.co.uk](http://www.BirkenheadInstitute.co.uk)

As usual I've made some changes and major additions to the website. The website is at [www.BirkenheadInstitute.co.uk](http://www.BirkenheadInstitute.co.uk). As last time, it's the same basic website as before, but with additional functionality. If you write the old address of [www.BIOB.co.uk](http://www.BIOB.co.uk) you'll still find it, we still own the old address, it's set up as a "re-direct".

Although the website was working, I was not entirely happy with how it was working. So, I've re-written most of the code inline with the appropriate W3 standards. I've replaced the menu system with a new colour coded menu system, using the BI black and gold colours. In addition, I have visited Wirral Archives and scanned (almost) all their copies of the "Visor" school magazine. At present we have a total of 97 "Visor" magazines online. For those who don't know, the first "Visor" was published at Christmas 1927. You can find them here. [http://www.birkenheadinstitute.co.uk/BIOB\\_School\\_Visor.html](http://www.birkenheadinstitute.co.uk/BIOB_School_Visor.html)

My latest ongoing project is to investigate the names on the WW2 War Memorial plaque in the Central Library. As I discover information on our Old Boys, I'll be adding it to the website. Please check back at regular intervals and see how it's progressing. [https://www.birkenheadinstitute.co.uk/BIOB\\_WW2.html](https://www.birkenheadinstitute.co.uk/BIOB_WW2.html)

If anyone has any suggestions for additions, improvements or changes please let me know at [webmaster@biob.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@biob.co.uk)

My main objective when I created the website back in 2010 was to make a place where anyone looking for information about the Birkenhead Institute could look. As far as I could, I made sure that all photographs were identified, and all people in the photographs were identified. I created a system whereby all people were numbered, so that anyone who could identify someone could let me know their number and give me their identity.

## Data Security

A few words of reassurance on the data that we hold on you. All your data is held in a password protected database on a single computer. Your data is NOT held on the internet. Your data will not be shared with anyone else, without your express permission. So, if a long-lost friend contacts me asking for your details, I will not share that information with them. I will contact you with their details and ask you to contact them. Only if you give express permission at that point will I share your information, and only with that individual.

## Old Farts Day – Prenton RUFC, - Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2019

**M**ore formally known as the Former Player's Reunion Day. An opportunity to meet with your former playing colleagues, and a chance to share a beer and reminisce. Finally, any BIOB members who would like to visit the club on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October, the day after the dinner, will also be made most welcome by Prenton RUFC.

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

## **Calling all Ex Prenton, Old Instonian, and Old Rockferrian players**



## **Old Boys Reunion at the clubhouse (Prenton Dell Rd)**

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

**Club open from 1pm, buffet lunch.**

**Prenton 1<sup>st</sup> XV vs Hoylake 2<sup>nd</sup> XV**

**Prenton 2<sup>nd</sup> XV vs Oldershaw 2<sup>nd</sup> XV**

**2:30pm kick offs**

## Tollemache Road

**I**'ve still had no response to my many requests for information in general, or photographs in particular, that refer to Tollemache Road. Does anyone have any school magazines from any period, but again, 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).

## **BIOB at War 1918 – The Final Push to Victory – PART 2**

**Editor:** The following article is the final instalment and was penned by Alun Hughes (1966/73). This article covers the second part of 1918.

As with previous AdVisor's, it is based on his research for a forthcoming book about the BI Old Boys who sacrificed their lives during the First World War.

It is said by historians that from the opening day of what subsequently became known as the, 'One Hundred Days' offensive of the Allies in 1918, that they never lost a battle, but this generalisation underplays the see-saw grind against a still dangerous and well-resourced opponent and which was only really intended at its outset, to drive the German Army back to positions more favourable for the Allies to launch a final push for victory well into 1919.

The German Army was by now spread thinly now around the burgeoning area it had captured in its Spring Offensive and the reinforcements arriving from the East were not sufficiently battle hardened nor as enthusiastic for more action, as their High Command were to discover.

The Allied offensive was launched close to Amiens and credit was rightly given to the Canadian contingent for the success of the attack, amongst which were three Old Boys who were subsequently to lose their lives. One of these was [Thomas Henry Broad](#), one of the three brothers who were to give their lives for their mother Country. In the relative safety of the rear while resting he was killed by a shell burst while rushing to assist men preparing a meal at the camp kitchen hit by a blast minutes earlier on 17 September. He was the last of the three brothers who returned to fight to die.

As the combined Canadian, British and Australian forces squeezed the salient, as they pushed on towards their prize of Cambrai, it was while on one probing mission close to the village of Handecourt, north west of the city that [Thomas Langley Williams](#) of The King's (Liverpool) Regiment lost his life, hit by a shell while leading his men into the attack on 1 September.

The early days of the Spring Offensive had virtually wiped out the 1/4th East Yorkshire Regiment and into its ranks were pressed new, young inexperienced troops such as [George Herbert Wilson](#), who was lucky to have survived the subsequent onslaught they faced again in May, before being captured by the Germans at the end of July, just before the eventual advance of the Allies on 8 August. Not for him the imagined Stalag back in Germany, but rather a barbed wire open cage close to the front line where prisoners were exploited as slave labour. With Spanish Flu rampant he succumbed to disease on 9 September 1918.

[John Collins Meredith](#) had been a Territorial before the outbreak of war and immediately signed up to serve for its duration. He subsequently progressed through service at Home and in France to the position of Second Lieutenant, when he arrived at his new posting with the Royal Field Artillery west of St. Quentin on 1 September 1918, only to lose his life within the month on the 28th.

The second of the 'Canadian' Old Boys to lose his life was [Alexander Watson](#) who had returned to Britain and was secure in a depot posting that would have seen him out of immediate danger. He had married a girl local to the base and yet he requested to be allowed to proceed overseas in January 1918. He was involved in attempts to take the northern outskirts of Cambrai when on 29 September he passed away at the Casualty Clearing Station in an action as a result of which he was awarded the Military Medal posthumously.

The Allied actions of the One Hundred Days consisted of a series of body blows to the German Army along its front and by the time that October came, British Troops were pressing the enemy back far beyond St Quentin to the south. Among their number was [Wilfred Owen](#) but also [Albert Frederick William Semmens](#) with The King's Shropshire Light Infantry who died on the 24th, his platoon officer remarking that he was "always well to the fore and remarkably cool under fire."

In the advance towards the area around Orrs where [Wilfred Owen](#) was to meet his end, was to be found Second Lieutenant [Albert Dodd](#) of the Royal Flying Corps., Balloon Section. Despite

the obvious dangers of such a hazardous posting, because of the vagaries of war, he died when a shell hit the house in which he was billeted behind the lines on 30 October.

[William Henry Williams](#) serving with the Manchester Regiment, almost certainly fell prisoner to the Germans as part of their March offensive north of St. Quentin, probably suffering also from similar treatment to that handed out to [G H Wilson](#). He was at least fortunate enough to be removed to a PoW hospital in Liege Citadel, which is where he died in captivity on 1 November. The death of [Wilfred Edward Salter Owen](#) on 4 November 1918 as he attempted to get the men of his Manchester Regiment across the Sambe-Oise Canal, north of Orrs and key aspects of the war poet's life will be already appreciated by Old Boys because of the emphasis placed upon this aspect by the school and also as a result of the wonderful piece of cinematography produced by our Old Boys, Keith Thompson and Neil Perriam in, "The Burying Party".

One week before the Armistice and yet the slaughter went on. The German Army was melting away, its civilian population in unrest and with a German Kaiser unwilling to accept the reality of the situation. [Walter Crawford Poole](#) had left Birkenhead to become a fruit farmer in British Columbia. The family had already made one sacrifice to the War the year before when his father serving as a Captain in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve had lost his life, his ship hitting a mine in Liverpool Bay. **Walter** died on 6 November as the Canadian attack pressed home its advantage against the Germans.

The raging Spanish Flu epidemic was taking its toll at Home as well as at the Front and was to claim the life of **William John Michael (Jack) Nicholson** on 9 November while he was serving as Quarter Master Sergeant in a Home Depot. He was not included on the Brass Memorial, but this will be rectified along with the other 'missing' four on the new memorial when it is finished. He and his brother had served from the earliest days of the War and he had managed to come through Gallipoli unscathed with the Cheshire Regiment, in whose ranks he had served as a pre-war Territorial.

The War may have ended in the history books on 11 November 1918, but the ramifications of its effects lasted the lifetime of its surviving combatants and for some less than others. Another victim of the Flu epidemic was [Charles Antony Lewis](#) who also had been through the War from the very start, indeed in direct action in October 1914 as a member of the Royal Naval Division which attempted to prevent the fall of Antwerp. He then continued with his comrades to Gallipoli in 1915 and eventually through promotion ended up working for Admiralty Intelligence in Malta, before being taken to the Military Hospital in Corfu where he succumbed to illness on 17 December 1918.

The last of those recorded on the brass Roll of Honour is [Harold Ray Wilcox](#), another Old Boy whose keen Territorial service had propelled him into active service from the very start of the War. His experience of life in the trenches, combined with a wound sustained close to Trones Wood in the battle for Guillemont in 1916, had contributed to a debilitating condition which finally took his life on 13 February 1919.

In similar fashion, another Old Boy, in addition to the eighty-eight, but rightly worthy of a mention is **Phillip Evelyn Pollexfen** whose talented brother **Guy Barclay Pollexfen** was the second of the Old Boys to lose his life back in 1915. Both brothers had joined the Liverpool Scottish together, but Phillip was commissioned into the Cheshire Regiment shortly after his brother's death. Subsequently crippled and confined to a wheelchair by a wound sustained in the trenches in October 1916, in pain and depressed at the current economic climate, Phillip took his own life at home on 2 January 1932.

As a final footnote, it should be recorded that the last of the eighty-eight to be discovered through random research is **Horace James Pugh**, who hailed from Willaston, where his father kept the village grocers' shop. It was discovered that he was one of those who fell on the disastrous opening day of the Battle of Passchendaele on 31 July 1917.



## **The Full Picture**

**T**he series of notes I have written for the Advisor over the last few years is merely a summary of the extensive research carried out. Taken in its whole, it offers a fascinating insight into the lives of the 88 as well as the nature and circumstances of the conflict into which they were thrust at that moment of time.

This I have written up into a history of the Great War from its outset to its very end, in the process attempting to capture what remains of information about the Old Boys as individuals in their family as well as Service settings. Included is the story of Ingleborough Road from its creation as positive, forward thinking celebration of the lives lost to the ten-year battle to secure justice in the face of corporate greed.

The book is in the process of being typed up and I am attempting to find out how much it will cost to publish it privately together with extensive images, photographs and maps. I hope them to secure the backing of Old Boys to assist with its production costs so that a permanent record may be left behind.

Alun Hughes (1966/73).

## **New Birkenhead Institute War Memorial**

**T**he special occasions we held to mark the completion of the first phase of our new memorial in Hamilton Square were truly remarkable in terms of the attention that was brought to the events held firstly on 4 November 2018, the 100th anniversary of the death of Wilfred Owen, when local media coverage drew a wide local crowd to witness Right Hon. Frank Field and Dame Patricia Routledge unveil our physical manifestation of Dave (D.S.W.) Jones' iconic image and then on 15 February this year when the patronage of Prince Harry and Meghan drew the attention of the World's Press to Birkenhead.

Thus, conditions were well placed for subsequent discussions with Wirral Council over use of the remaining budget to complete the memorial with the new backdrop arch and decorative screen.

The Council have as a result placed the order for the remaining work and plan in addition to add to the eventual outcome with some hedge and tree planting together with mood lighting. After discussion with the foundry that manufactured the statue, we have decided to accept their proposal for a backdrop screen which will imagine a Flanders landscape thus making visual reference to the 88 Poplar trees that were planted around the perimeter of Ingleborough Road in 1932. An explanation of the symbolism of elements of the memorial is to be placed on one of the sides of the statue's plinth.

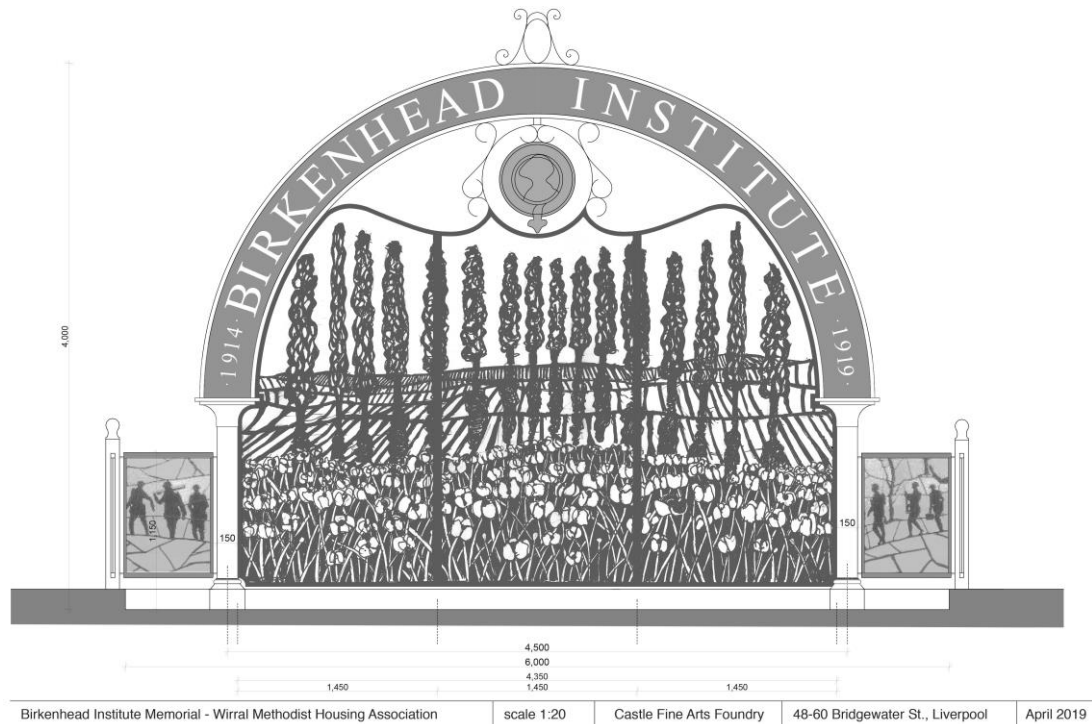
Some work remains to be done at Ingleborough Road to make best use of the enclosure and garden which represents the war memorial left there and this is something which is being given attention to at present.

The plan for the unveiling of the final phase of the memorial is set for Saturday 5 October 2019.

Alun Hughes (1966/73).

## **Old Instonians War Memorial**

Shown below is the proposal for the Arch and Screen of the new War Memorial.



## **Planting of the Memorial Tree at Ingleborough Road early in 2019.**





## **BIOB Merchandise**

**W**e still have supplies of BIOB Ties, Tie Tacks, Lapel Badges, they can be viewed and purchased on the website at

[http://www.birkenheadinstitute.co.uk/BIOB\\_Tie.html](http://www.birkenheadinstitute.co.uk/BIOB_Tie.html)

[http://www.birkenheadinstitute.co.uk.co.uk/BIOB\\_Lapel\\_Badge.html](http://www.birkenheadinstitute.co.uk.co.uk/BIOB_Lapel_Badge.html).

Ties are £10, and Tie Tack/Lapel Badges are £5. Postage on orders is £3.00.

Unfortunately, the Cufflinks have now SOLD OUT, there are no current plans to re-stock.

**T**hose of you who remember Jeff Edelson will remember that he would normally call in at the Rugby Club on a Saturday afternoon for a few pints. You may also remember that he usually wore an Old Boys striped blazer in the school colours. I think he must have bought it from Bibby and Perkin in Grange Road many years ago. I have been in contact with a supplier of specialist blazers to see if we could have some specially made. They are not going to be cheap, I was quoted costs for a cotton/wool blend of between £159.00 for 30 blazers to £229 for 6 blazers, all plus VAT. I'm definitely interested in buying one. Delivery would be 12-14 weeks. So, I just need to find at least 5 more Old Boys to feel the same. If you think you might be interested, let me know. There's no commitment to anything at this stage. Pictured below is a scan of a scarf made from the same material.





In addition, for a small extra charge we could have a blazer badge in silver thread, as previously supplied.



### **BIOB Funds - Update on the annual accounts 2018.**

Overall, there was a slight increase of funds. We have three sources of income, the Annual Dinner, Sales of Merchandise, and Donations. The Annual Dinner is the biggest source of income, but also the largest expenditure. The Merchandise Sales keep ticking along, The Donations are what keep us afloat. The total cost of the dinner was £2638.36, running expenses for everything else in the year was £558.79 income from the dinner (NOT counting donations) was £2688.00. The merchandise sales were £116.00, with donations of £322.00. So, overall, we were able to deposit an additional £64.71 in the bank.

In addition, £971.25 was donated to the War Memorial Fund towards the completion of the Hamilton Square Memorial.

84 persons attended the dinner on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2018

All income from the dinner (Excluding Donations) was	£2688.00
All Donations	£ 322.00
All income from merchandise sales was	£ 116.00
Expenditure for the dinner (Invoice from Caldy Golf Club)	-£2396.25
Additional expenditure for dinner (Raffle Prizes, Golf Club gratuities)	-£ 242.11
Further annual expenses (Postage, printing, stationery, website)	-£ 558.79
	=====
Deposit to bank (Added to existing balance)	£ 71.15
Deposit to bank (War Memorial Fund)	£ 971.25

Please keep the donations coming in, thank you.

The accounting period was slightly longer than I planned, partly due to my illness, and partly due to problems with the wrong value invoiced by Caldy Golf Club. They actually under invoiced,

but agreed to stick to their invoice and donated the difference of £106.25 to the War Memorial Fund.

### **Old Instonians Golf Society 2018 Pyke Cup**

Last year (2018) the Pyke Cup was again played for at Caldy G.C. and the competition was won by Phil Robinson (1950 – 1955). This year the competition will take place on the afternoon of October 4<sup>th</sup> before the Dinner at the Golf Club. It is an excellent afternoon's golf on a well-prepared course.

As with last year's dinner, I want to try and increase the numbers. If you have a friend or relative who played for the Old Boys (Football or Rugby), is not necessarily an Old Boy, and would like to play in the golf, then bring them along to the golf and dinner. They will not be eligible for the Pyke Trophy, but will be very welcome anyway.

It is anticipated that a special green fee in the order of £25 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. At the moment, tee times are available from 12.02pm to 12.34pm, additional times can be arranged if required.

Mike Hayman (1959/66), a former captain at Caldy G.C. has kindly volunteered to organise this year's event. Those wishing to play this year can contact the Mike, by e-mail at: - [haymanmike@btinternet.com](mailto:haymanmike@btinternet.com) or on 0151 334 1002. If out, leave your details on his answer phone and Mike 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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### **OBITUARY**

Brian Cadman	1947/52
John Crook	1946/51
Jack Dade	1940/55
Tony Doveston	1948/53
David Finney	1944/50
Dave Hinds	1960/63
John Trevor Hughes	1946/52
Len Rigg	1956/61
Jock Roberts	1936/42
Brian Rushton	1944/51
Bill Upton	1943/48

## Readers' Letters

The “escape” clause. - I have corrected most of the spellings, and some of the grammar, but take no responsibility for the content. The views expressed here are those of the correspondents and are not necessarily those of BIOB or the Editor. So, feel free to write to me anytime the mood takes you. It all goes in!

### An email from Trevor Stauss (Atkin 1959/64)

#### **1963 School Trip – Denmark and Sweden**



**Really Wishing We Were There!**  
(Some of us were not good sailors)

Thank you for the Early Warning request for copy for the next AdVisor received today.

This found me with some time to spare, so I thought I would send the attached photographs of the 1963 school holiday to Denmark and Sweden together with some memories of the trip, which you might consider for inclusion.

The sea trip from Harwich was to us, quite rough, with the accompanying “mal de mer”. I was one particular sufferer to the great amusement of my classmates, having set my heart on joining the Royal Navy, which I did upon leaving school and stayed for many years, and spoke to the fishes on several occasions – but that’s another story.

Upon boarding, we found that our overnight accommodation was definitely below economy class and well below decks, with about half a dozen bunks in each small sleeping area. After the ship had discharged her cargo, the large hatch covers were replaced to form the deck of our dining area. A great spread was laid out for us, of exotic looking open sandwiches and other delicacies with which we would become more familiar in the days to come.

Enough said of the lumpy nature of the North Sea and we were greatly relieved to dock next day at Esbjerg, on the West coast of the Jutland peninsula in Southwest Denmark. We travelled by train across to the small island of Funen, passing to the great amusement of the assembled company, through the town of Middelfart.

On Funen we stayed overnight in Odense, in pleasant hotel accommodation, a first for most of us and a real novelty. I remember visiting their modern and very impressive town hall, lots of stainless steel and natural wood finishes – very Scandic. We departed Odense and travelled by train and ferry to the island of Zealand where we stayed at Tilhorer Dansk Folke Ferie, holiday camp, also nicely appointed, on the Baltic Sea coast.

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Accommodation was in two person chalets all en-suite – very upmarket compared to the Britain of the 60’s.

We did brave the cold waters with a swim in the Baltic, truly exhilarating, but once was enough. Our food throughout the holiday was always excellent with many new flavours, some I have never tasted since and would love to be able to identify and recreate. We were all taken in the way milk was served in brown glass bottles, which I understand reduces the effect of light causing abnormal flavours and can also be used to differentiate between types of milk (Google is a wonderful thing!).

We had the opportunity to meet others our own age, in the village near our holiday home. Their English was streets ahead of our faltering and really non-existent Danish, but they were fascinated to hear from where we came, this being the time of Beatlemania. “Oh yes, John Lennon and I went to different schools together!” and that his cousin was a classmate. Too good an opportunity to miss.

Our visit to the Carlsberg brewery built in 1901 was very memorable with its marvellous architecture. The four granite elephants adorned with swastikas sculptured on their sides. The swastika having been used for thousands of years as a symbol of fertility and of good luck. The elephants support a beautiful tower on their backs and form the main entrance gate. Even the bricks of the main factory chimney were raised to represent a single spiral tulip.

Inside the brewery, the marble floors and gold-plated railings were the product of one founder’s devotion to art while his brother’s was to science. We were generously hosted to soft drinks by the company whose hospitality, I understand, extended to our leaders sampling the principal Carlsberg product. Absences from our return journey to Dansk Folke Ferie were duly noted!

Other highlights firmly lodged in my somewhat fragmented memory were the Tivoli Gardens and funfair, a fabulously ornate place which opened in 1843 and still very Victorian. The rollercoaster which we frequently patronised, consisted of a small train of carriages one seat wide, whose sides were about shoulder height when seated. The train which hurtled round a track at great speed, had its own brakeman who sat between two carriages to restrain the beast on the dangerous bits. During the ride the train catapulted into a tunnel and dropped like a stone, into absolute, stomach wrenching, blackness, to then climb up and out twisting and turning so that your ribs ached from being forced against the side of the small car, great fun, let’s go again!

The must-have accoutrement was a Tivoli stick, a short walking cane with red knob handle. Mine has amazingly survived the intervening 56 years and hangs as a trophy in my home office where I record these rumblings.

We visited the Frihedsmuseet - Museum of Danish Resistance in WW2, which was very active to the extent of building their own armoured car to carry the fight to the invading German Army. Despite declaring itself neutral, Denmark was occupied from April 1940 until 1945.



After a hard day's foot weary sightseeing we were pleased to discover that the railway station provided a device similar to a weighing machine. Upon this, one stood for about a minute and for few Ore was treated to the high frequency vibrations of the footplate, which re-energized and invigorated tired leg and foot muscles.

We were taken to Sweden for the day by ferry from Helsingor to Helsingborg, but I will have to leave that to someone else to relate as its details seem to be contained within the missing memory fragments mentioned earlier. It was without doubt, a landmark holiday which meant a great deal to us. Our first introduction to a foreign culture its food, architecture, history and customs and worth its weight in gold. A huge debt of thanks is owed by me and all my fellow holidaymakers, to Lenny Malcolm and Owen Hughes and others who organized it, for giving us a view of the world beyond the sea which surrounds us, even though crossing it was not the most pleasant part of the whole.

### **An email from John Jordan (1946/53).**

#### **Music at Birkenhead Institute. 1946/1953.**

We had 'singing' in the first year and possibly the second. Norman Bailey was the maestro at the piano, either in the upstairs room of the Junior School (how did they get the piano up there?) or seated on low gym benches in the hall. We sang. Then N.B. (not a bean) regaled us with a solo or two which showed what a truly talented musician he was: Manuel de Falla's Ritual Fire Dance; Chopin's Polonaise in A come readily to mind. We were truly blessed to have such a man.

Then there was the daily accompaniment to leaving the hall after morning assembly – a March of some kind. When WEW (W.E. Williams) played, it was often a rousing version of 'The War March of the Priests'. It sent the blood rushing. One was ready for the day's fray.

Christmas brought its own variation. We proceeded to the hall for carols. In particular, I remember Tony O'Hare of 3s singing the Page with Biddy Harris as the Monarch in Good King Wenceslas.

Occasionally we found ourselves being marched down Whetstone Lane to the YMCA Hall. Here the (now Royal) Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra awaited us, with either the bouncy Reginald Jacques or Herbert Bardgett to conduct. Even an Old Birkonian of my acquaintance in Tasmania still remembered 'When Mozart wrote this tune, he must have felt so happy' sung to part of the Eine kleine Nachtmusik.

But the real gem and prize picking of our musical experience was the annual parade to the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall. It must have been a real nightmare to the Staff and plenty of other people. No fleet of luxury coaches. No. We walked down Clifton Road to Central Station and boarded a train to Liverpool Central, possibly accompanied by (and well segregated from) Holt Hill Convent girls. We marched up Bold Street to the Hall. And when it was all over, we did the reverse. Does the youth of today have the physical stamina to undertake such a trek?

We were introduced to the instruments (the big drum and its reverberations was a particular favourite) and we

cheered the piano movers on the stage. If not exhausted, we probably enjoyed the actual music and learned something.

A School near me, for some reason, blasts forth some kind of pop music at 1.40 each afternoon which can be heard streets away. It cannot be good for the hearing and do the pupils really get a worthwhile musical experience which will last a lifetime?

I did, thanks to music at B.I.

### **An email from Keith Thompson (Cohen 1972/78)**

#### **Wilfred Owen**



Keith Thompson and Neil Perriam (back row third and fifth) on set in Calton Hill, Edinburgh.

Neil Perriam and Keith Thompson (both 1972-78 Cohen, Tate) produced The Burying Party film about Wilfred Owen in time for the Centenary Commemorations last November.

The film, directed by Keith's son Richard Weston has won 16 international awards and was shown as part of Frank Field's event series last November and is still being shown at private views across Wirral and in places along the Owen trail – Edinburgh, Oswestry, Shrewsbury, East London, Joncourt and Ors in France.

The production team have been invited by the Wilfred Owen Association France to show it at Ors where Owen fell at the battle of Sambre-Oise on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1918.

A Director of Sine Wave Media, Keith Thompson said: "It was a great honour to speak at the Annual Dinner 2018 and also to be present at civic events including the unveiling of the DSW Jones designed statue. The feedback for the film has been really strong with some very positive reviews and awards. We hope BI Old Boys will enjoy our portrayal of our most famous alumnus. We would also welcome any fellow BIOBs who would like to attend the screening over at Ors."

If there is enough interest, both Keith and Neil would be happy to screen the film at a suitable venue prior to the Annual Dinner on 4<sup>th</sup> October. Much depends on the demand for such an event and anyone interested should contact [info@sinewaveshowreels.com](mailto:info@sinewaveshowreels.com) The film is also available by live streaming at

<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/theburyingparty>

## **An email from Philip Ronald-Price (Atkin 1960/67)**

### **Memories of B.I. – In 1960**

Tempus fugit, as they taught us in Latin, and I find it hard to believe it will be 60 years next year when I first set foot in my new Grammar School in Whetstone Lane! To coin another Latin phrase, I received no quid pro quo for this article, and I will try to add as many puns and Latin or French phrases as I can, especially because French was my best subject, reaching a Grade 1 at GCE Ordinary Level! I think I can definitely say 'C'est magnifique!', thanks to my French teachers Mr Thompson, Mr Hall and Mr Phipps.

Therefore, having begun my 7 years at the school in 1960, having passed my 11 Plus exam, I found myself in Form 1B, and recall Mr Thacker standing at the front of the class telling that 'You boys think you know it all, but you don't'. All the master's wore the black gowns in those days too, and I would see them sweeping up and down the long corridor with their gowns flowing behind. Where do I begin to sift through the mists of time and recall some of those 7 years as an Atkin house student. I will go through some of the most memorable moments, however.

Dave Jones was our Form Master, and to my surprise, at the end of my first year at the BI, I came top of the class, which meant I automatically went in the A stream from year 2 onwards. Names of pupils that I remember well were Keith Martingell, Laurie Hartley, Roy Snook, Peter Ramsdale, Peter Watson, Martin Grover, Alan Elliott, John Reid, and Alf Strange. The Masters that I remember well in the early years were Mr Thacker, Jerry Hall, Len Malcolm, Mr Shaw, Mr Webb, Mr Squires and Mr Hall. Of course, Mr Squires, aka Squinty as he was called, taught me Latin, but because he struggled to maintain control in the class, there were frequent missiles being flung around the room, such as ink pellets and rubbers!

I recall one morning in assembly when Mr Shaw sat down at the piano ready to play the morning hymn, I think it was 'Men of England', which we often sang at our school. After he lifted the keyboard cover, no notes could be played because someone had put milk bottles in the piano! Mr Malcolm was seething and promised to expose the culprit, but from memory, nobody owned up. Friday afternoons usually ended with double music, and again, PEB, or Mr Shaw at the piano in the hall, with us all sitting on the long wooden benches. Michael Wood was causing problems on this particular day, and PEB was becoming very annoyed! The final time Wood caused a distraction, PEB slammed down the piano lid, stormed over to him, and gave him an absolute thrashing! He ended up quite tearful, but he never did it again!

I recall that music lessons often took place in the lower basement near the back door of the school too. As was tradition, PEB would do Carol practice there, and would write all the words on the board so we could copy into our music green books, to be used at Carol Concert night.

Mr Phipps and Mr Thompson taught French, my best subject. Later on, Jerry Hall took over, and although he was a fearsome teacher, he liked me because I was always good at the subject. Woe betide anyone, however, who did not do their homework!

Mr Phipps also presided over a school pupils' concert once at Beechcroft. It turned out to be a great show, and my memory of this was pupil Pye from one of the senior forms, dancing to 'Green Onions' by Booker T and the MGs.

Joe Townsend took us for Chemistry, and although he was a lovely guy, he often left us to read our books and he disappeared into the small chemistry back room. I was shown in there once, and they had some dangerous chemicals in there, including concentrated Nitric Acid and Potassium Cyanide!

Mr Malcolm was a great teacher and taught me physics for O and A Level. He was strict, but a likeable man, and I recall him saying to me once when I was choosing my subjects for A Level 'Be a realist, Price'.

Other memorable events were the time someone tried to burn down the school by setting fire to material under the Physics Lab wooden stairs. I think this was around 1964. I also recall playing endless games of 'Tick' in the big playground and seeing that old bell above us with its rope dangling down. Pupils would sometimes try to hit it with stones! The other things were holly bushing and bog washing, which thankfully, I managed to avoid!

At the risk of going on too long, I will end with a funny memory. I was doing History for O Level, and I was writing about the Balkan conflict. In my essay, I wrote, quite unintentionally 'The subject races of Bosnia-Herzegovina were revolting'. Mr Evans, who was teaching, called me to point it out, and we both laughed at the double entendre I had written!

Finally, getting your new green notebooks from the little hatch by the front of the school was a real test! Mr Hall ferociously told anyone who hadn't filled every little space in their old book to come back when it was full!

Looking back all those years ago, however, it turned to be a great Grammar School education, which has served me well over the years. I wouldn't change it or ever regret it! God Bless all those wonderful Masters and pupils who were there during my time at the school.

After going to the final sad day of the school in the 90s, I decided to set up a special web site in 2008 for the school, called 'Spirit of Birkenhead Institute'. Over the last 11 years, I have received so many wonderful stories, articles, photographs and memories, which I have added to the site. Please feel free to have a look, as there are several additions to the site, because I received so many items! The main site is at: -

<http://www.freewebs.com/birkenheadinstitute>

or at: -<http://bispirit.webs.com>

## **An email from R E Wood (1954/60)**

### **School Dinners**

Living in Bidston took the 28 bus nearly 40 minutes to reach Whetstone Lane back in 1954 when I started at the Birkenhead Institute, so my parents decided I had to stay for School Dinners.

I had experience of school dinners at primary school, so I thought I knew what to expect, I was quite wrong.

I think at the time it was 5 shillings a week (25p in present money). This was paid every Monday morning to our form master.

The School dining hall was in the garden of the Junior School. At lunch time those boys staying for dinner lined up in the playground and made our way to the

Dining Hall. This was a utility style building of precast concrete with wooden benches and tables.

As we entered, we were met with the smell of cabbage and potatoes. Each year was allocated a table so there was a mixture of years to each table. This mainly consisted of six to eight boys per table with a teacher or prefect at the head. The kitchen serving area was halfway down the hall off to the right.

My first year 1954, pupils took it in turns table by table to queue up at the serving hatch to be served their meals. Our head of table that year was Nancy Price (call me Madam not Miss).

Dinner consisted of a main meal usually Monday mince, Tuesday stew, Wednesday pie, Thursday hot pot and Friday fish. In the summer salad would often be on the menu with the odd caterpillar and other bugs hiding in the lettuce. The main meal would be followed by a pudding and custard, semolina or the dreaded tapioca (frogs spawn).

There was always a rush to get one's dinner down so you could get out to play football in the yard A form versus B form. Particularly in our year, as one B former who brought sandwiches would pick on the most unathletic A form boy, play one aside and leave the A form with a formidable handicap of goals by the time we turned up.

Christmas lunch was the highlight of the year Turkey and all the trimmings followed by Christmas pudding.

My first Christmas lunch was particularly memorable when one pupil asked Nancy Price "would madam like stuffing". The crack across the poor boy's head resonated around the dining hall. Corporal punishment had not been banned in those days. The boy was also given 100 lines, the school motto in Latin and English:

Doctus in se semper divitias habet.

The wise man has riches within himself.

This was not easy to achieve with two days before the end of term so the boy had to resort to the "black market" supply of lines provided by two boys whose names I cannot reveal for legal reasons but let's call them Joe and Brian.

These were two entrepreneurs who did not attend morning prayers and had set up a lucrative side-line providing line for those boys who had failed to have them ready to hand in after assembly.

But back to School dinners. Another highlight at dinner was when Len Malcolm brought his radio in for us to listen to the test cricket England V Australia.

Everything went smoothly under the control of Nancy Price, however she was replaced by Ernest Victor (PEB) Shaw the music master as head of the table. His presence brought a new philosophy to the dining table and to the dining room in general.

Firstly, he introduced "equitable share of the crust" policy. This entailed cutting every pie or tart in what became known as the Union Jack style. The pie/tart was cut corner to corner then length and breadth ways.

This became a matter of great interest to the surrounding tables and everyone in the dining hall stopped eating while the "ceremony" took place, particularly when he applied the rule to the skin on the custard. It was held in such respect that one callow youth decided to stand to attention while it took place. However the matter got out of hand when someone produced a copy of the "I spy" book of flags and offered it to PEB Shaw to select an alternative. The other problem we had with PEB was he

was a very slow eater this meant inevitably we were the last table to leave the dining hall.

While on the subject of PEB Shaw he decided to collect Craven A cigarette coupons so he could acquire a tape recorder for the music room. He needed about 5000 to achieve this so he became a chain smoker to the point his glasses were fogged over with nicotine and he had the permanent odour of tobacco on his clothes.

Round about the forth year we changed the dining procedure, instead of all queuing up to be served at the kitchen hatch the meal was served up in green vegetable dishes which were collected by two nominated boys on each table, first the main course meal and after by the dessert.

With PEB Shaw in control our table would still be eating our main course while other tables had finished their desert and, on their way, usually with a smile on their face in our direction.

Because the dining hall walls were simply emulsions, Nancy Price decided to turn us into prospective "Banksy's" when we were in the fourth form by having us paint murals on the walls with a music theme. I chose a calypso band as the West India's cricket team were on tour.

The Birkenhead Institute web site has a number of photographs of the interior of the dining hall and the murals can be seen in the background including my calypso band.

When you compare the variety of choice in school meals today and the problem of obesity in school children School Dinners at the Birkenhead Institute were not that bad and left us with some fond memories.

**An article from the Birkenhead History Society Magazine April 2019 by Rob Wood (1954/60)**

### **Old Instonians Memorial Hamilton Square**

As part of the Wilfred Owen centenary commemorations, a new statue named "Futility" after his poem of the same name was unveiled on the 4th November 2018 to coincide with the centenary of his death.





**Figure 1** The Duke and Duchess of Sussex unveiling the new memorial.

The statue forms part of the new Birkenhead Old Instonians War Memorial in Hamilton Square at the junction of Hamilton Street and Duncan Street. The statue is by local artist Jim Whelan and cast by Castle Foundry of Liverpool in bronze using the "lost wax process". It is based on a drawing by local artist DWS Jones, an Old Instonian, and a former teacher at the Birkenhead Institute. Many people attended the event including the Mayor and Mayoress of Wirral, along with many Birkenhead Institute Old Boys, descendants of the 88 former pupils who died in the First World War, and guests.

The formal ceremony consisted of the following:

A reading by five Old Instonians of the names of the 88 former pupils killed in action during the War. A recitation of a poem specially composed by Silvia Hughes for the event. Dame Patricia Routledge (patron of the Wilfred Owen Centenary commemorations) recited Wilfred Owen's poem "Futility".



**Figure 2** Close-up view of the new memorial.

Finally, the Hon. Frank Field MP for Birkenhead, and also President of the Birkenhead History Society,

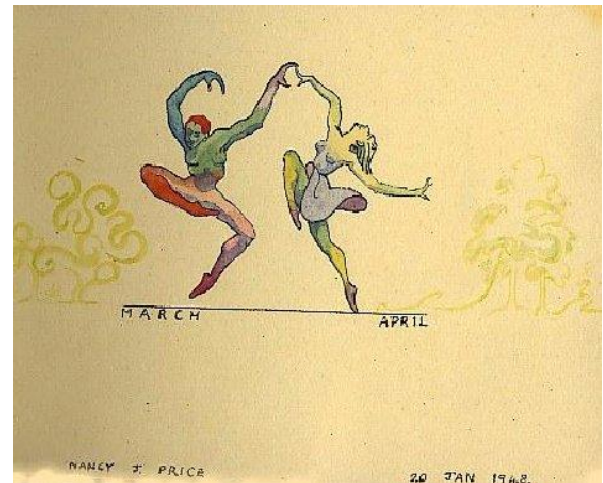
unveiled the statue. The statue is on a plinth constructed of facing bricks from the pavilion which formed part of the Institute 's Ingleborough Road Memorial Playing fields. To the rear has been placed the original foundation stone from the pavilion. The front has a bronze image of Wilfred Owen with a copy of his poem "Futility". The side panels, which have yet to be completed, will consist of appropriate inscriptions.

The statue was also a focus of attention on Remembrance Sunday 11th November 2018, when a number of people placed wreaths on the statue together with that of the Old Instonians.

### David Silcock (Atkin 1942-48)

#### **Nancy Price**

The attached drawing came to me through Walter Hurst who has now passed on. It is obviously one of a series now lost. I cannot remember her doing the sketch even though I was there at the time. I thought it might be something you might find a space for in the Institutes memorabilia as it is very personal, and she was a much loved by many who were there at the time.



### **Missing Members**

This is a list of members about whom I have no contact details. If anyone recognises them could they contact them and ask them to contact me with their details. Alternatively, they could complete the application form online at: -

[https://www.birkenheadinstitute.co.uk/BIOB\\_Membership.html](https://www.birkenheadinstitute.co.uk/BIOB_Membership.html)

(the space is actually \_ underscore)

#### **Members without Contact Details**

<b>Known As</b>	<b>Surname</b>
Peter	Igglesden
Steven	Hewitt
David	Petie
Alan	Pearson
Kurt	Beesley
Andy	Merry
John	McKie

## Annual Dinner 2019

I am still hoping to increase the numbers for the annual dinner, this year on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October, as usual at Caldy Golf Club. Last year's dinner with an attendance of 84, was a huge success, largely down to the increase in Old Boys from the Tollemache Road years.

So, as the last few years the theme is **Bring a Friend**.

If you'd like to go to the dinner, but perhaps feel that you wouldn't know anyone there, then the answer would be to bring all your (ex-school) mates with you. Over the last few years, several groups of members organised their own tables, which made it much easier for me, and was very successful. Ideally tables will sit 8 to 10 people, if you can't make 8 or 10, then try a 4 or 5 half table, I'll put another small group with you.

As usual, you can pay by bank transfer, or send me a cheque. Just let me know who is part of your group. Don't forget, if you're travelling a long distance and staying over, there's a normal fixture at Prenton RUFC on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October. Visitors would be most welcome.

### APPLICATION FORM FOR THE ANNUAL DINNER

If you wish to attend, then please apply and pay online,

See

[https://www.birkenheadinstitute.co.uk/BIOB\\_Annual\\_Dinner.html](https://www.birkenheadinstitute.co.uk/BIOB_Annual_Dinner.html)

or return the completed form to: -

**Keith Dutton**

11 Fininstall Road

Wirral

CH63 9YW



I will be attending the Dinner at Caldy Golf Club on Friday October 4th, 2019

Time 6.30pm for 7.30pm.

Dress: - Jacket and tie or Lounge suit and tie.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

E-mail ADDRESS.....

TELEPHONE NUMBER..... (Including dial code)

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

Any Special Dietary Requirements.....

Any Special Seating Requirements.....

Please enclose a cheque for £35.00 made out to BIOB or transfer £35.00 to Sort Code = **30-15-52**  
Account = **03162233** Account Name = **Birkenhead Institute Old Boys** remember to include your name  
in order to identify the payment.

If paying by Bank Transfer, please send an e-mail confirmation after doing the transfer to  
[webmaster@BIOB.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@BIOB.co.uk) - Donations for the draw will be most welcome.