



***OLD  
PALMERIAN***

September 2010

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## **CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION**

It has been a relatively quiet year for the Association. Members have continued to enjoy the use of the Sports Hall facilities at the College and some have attended the Old Boys Dinner. However, the Founder's Day Reunion Dinner has been suffering over recent years with falling numbers. Traditionally the dinner has been held on a Friday, the exception being the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary dinner in 2006 which was moved to Saturday to allow more people to attend. This year, we have decided, once again, to move the dinner to Saturday in the hope that this will have a positive effect on numbers. We have also chosen a new venue for this year, the Thurrock Hotel in West Thurrock. I hope that you will be able to join us this year as I fear that if numbers continue to drop we will lose the dinner altogether.

On a lighter note I would like to take this opportunity to thank your hard-working Committee for their excellent work over the past year. Through their effects the Association continues to run smoothly and efficiently. In particular I would like to thank Ruth Hunwick, without whom, you would not be reading this magazine.

It only remains for me to wish all of you a healthy and happy year ahead.

*Jill Snelling 1980 - 1983 (Chairman 2009-2010)*

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

We have lost contact with some Old Palmerians and have therefore been unable to send them a copy of the "Old Palmerian" and other notices. If any reader has a current address for any of the following members please contact us or ask the member to do so.

Miss Isobel Brooks	1952-59	Mrs Jean Cannon	1944-49
Mr Gary Davison	1990-94	Mrs J Manning Dawson	
Mr Darren Edhouse	1987-90	Mrs Agnes Herson	1924-30
Mr David Howard	1986-88	Mr David Hurst	1989-91
Dr Graham Ketley	1968-75	Mrs Susan Osborne	1970-77
Mr Abaya Perera	1987-88	Mr Anthony Pitkin	1951-57
Miss Elisabeth Pryke		Mr R G H Read	1938-45
Mr Andrew Reeves	1967-74	Dr Susan Sangster	1967-74
Mrs Ann Smythe	1962-69	Miss Denise Turp	1975-78
Mr Peter Warder	1944-51	Mr A M Whincup	1934-38

To ensure that you continue to receive your copy of the "Old Palmerian" please notify us of any change of address.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

6th	November	2010	Founder's Day Dinner
7th	November	2010	Founder's Day Service
9th	November	2010	AGM
8th	April	2011	Old Boys' Dinner

## ASSOCIATION SPORTS CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

### PALMER'S SPORTS & FITNESS CENTRE

The fees are:-

<b>Membership</b>	Adult	£18.00
	Couple	£32.00
	Junior 8 - 15 years	£7.00
	Concessions	£10.00
	Family	£39.00

Old Palmerians' Association members with a current membership card, available from Ruth Hunwick, will pay **only £10.00** to the **Centre** for membership.

## Fees

Badminton	55 min.	£8.20
Five a side	55 min.	£32.80
Squash	40 min.	£6.30
Tennis	55 min	£6.30
Fitness (Induction)	90 min	£20.00
Fitness Session		£4.10
Fitness Class (STEP, LTB, etc.)		£4.00

Non members pay a £1.00 Admission Fee every time they attend. They also do not receive such advantageous booking arrangements. Membership is compulsory for Fitness Suite users.

The Association has hired three badminton courts on Thursdays from 8.15 pm to 9.10 pm. This means that we pay only £7.60 per badminton court and booking is, as usual, through Ruth Hunwick on (01375) 380964.

For further details concerning the Palmer's Sports and Fitness Centre telephone (01375) 898613 or visit the website [www.palmers.ac.uk](http://www.palmers.ac.uk) and choose the Sports Centre tab.

*Ruth Hunwick*

## OLD PALMERIANS' GOLFING SOCIETY REPORT - 2009

**Don Cave**, our Captain, won the Salver at our Spring meeting with 34 points. **Colin Coe**, **Graham Loveland** and **Ray Matthews** won the various handicap categories.

We lost our matches against the College and the Old Brentwoods.

On Guest Day **Alan Gardner** retained the Association cup with 36 points. **Roger Jiggins** and his guest, D. Carroll, had the best aggregate score of 66 points.

Several new young members came with **Ben Madden** on Captain's Day. Our new Captain, **Mark Osborne**, presented his prizes and the winner of the Chalice with 40 points was **Don Cave**. **Colin Reynolds** came second with 38 points and **Graham Loveland** third with 35 points.

The President's Cup was won by **Don Cave** with 104 points. He arranged for us to play at his club in July, where we had a very enjoyable and successful time.

You will find details of our society at [www.societygolfing.co.uk](http://www.societygolfing.co.uk) using log in :william and password: palmer.

*Ray Matthews ( Hon. Sec. & Treas.)*

## OLD PALMERIANS vs COLLEGE - ANNUAL GOLF MATCH 2010

In a result that current Ryder Cup captain Colin Montgomery would have been proud of, the College scored a resounding 3:1 victory over the Old Palmerians in the annual Golf challenge match at Orsett Golf Club in June 2010.

College Captain Paul Spinks, looking increasingly like the sour faced, wobbly Montgomery, cleverly selected his team and playing order with the male/female combinations of Steve Wiseman and Katie Grant and Chris Wakefield and Sophie Roberts leading the College's challenge.

The experienced pair of big hitting Wiseman and touch player Grant simply blew away their opposition and romped to an outstanding 8 and 7 victory to put the College 1 up in the overall match.

Similarly, the calm authority and local knowledge of Orsett member Chris Wakefield helped his "rookie" partner Sophie Roberts to a comprehensive 3 and 2 victory, thus putting the College 2 up!

Then the cunning juggling of the pairings and playing order saw the College's inexperienced partnership of Sam Hartley and Rhys Porter go out in match 3. Confident that points would be gained in matches 1 and 2, the new boy pairing, despite a "nervy" start, produced increasingly assured golf to emerge convincing 3 and 2 winners.

This put the College into an unassailable lead and with victory guaranteed, the team looked to the heavyweight staff pairing of Spinks and Terris to complete the rout. Both players, however, looked sadly out of sorts on the greens and both missed a string of putts to squander opportunities their magnificent approach play had provided. This meant that the Old Palmerians' pair of ex-student Rob Hutchinson and ex-Palmer's P.E. teacher Pru Carter easily saw off the dour duo's damp display to win 3 and 2.

The final result, 3:1 to the College and as already mentioned, what would Montgomery give for a similar result in the Ryder Cup later this year?

*Paul Spinks*

## WILLIAM PALMER COLLEGE EDUCATION TRUST

Over the last year the Trust has given financial assistance to the students of Palmer's College in the following areas:

The Trust funded 50% or 25% of the cost of the trip for students to participate in visits as part of their Geography, Biology, PE, and Business Studies Courses. A wide range of other residential educational visits were funded by the Trust and these included, Barcelona, New York, Washington, Wales, Osmington Bay, Paris and London

Day visits to conferences, drama productions, galleries and concerts were part funded by the Trust who also provided Support grants and Higher Education Interview expenses to needy students at the College. The Trustees also pay for the hockey, netball, football and rugby umpire/referee fees necessary for sporting events.

**These grants totalled - £64,091**

The Trust awarded 94 prizes for achieving 3 A grades at A-level or equivalent, 56 bursaries for achieving 3 A grades at A-level or equivalent and attending university, 78 prizes for achievement at A level and BTEC, 14 prizes for 100% attendance and 37 prizes for achievement at AS level as well as 31 prizes for distinction at BTEC Introductory Diploma or First Diploma Award.

**These grants totalled - £34,300**

The Trustees are mindful of the ever changing student population at the College and hope that suitable accommodation is provided for their recreational, well being and equality needs. To help the College, the Trustees have offered to "borrow" £2million from their Restricted Capital and to contribute this sum towards the cost of more student social space but the College has been unable to take advantage of this offer.

The Trust also provided over £15,000 towards trips and visits to needy pupils who live in the Ancient Parish of Grays Thurrock and attend local schools.

The Trustees are happy to acknowledge the work of its Clerk (John Vesey) and it's Secretary (Maureen Challis) thereby ensuring the smooth running of the Trust.

*Bryan S Coker  
Chairman of the Trust  
July 2010*

## **THE STORY OF AN OPA CHOIR**

At the 2008 Founder's Day Service, Richard Wade (1960-67) met Eddie Hunt (1954-61), and Richard recalled his meeting with Margaret Nathan (née Bjorsvik) (1962-68) and Norman Harper (1963-70) at the 2007 Service. Margaret mentioned that she had sought to arrange a choral contribution at a previous Service. They then mused on the possibility of resurrecting a Palmer's' choir.

After some discussion, Richard and Eddie agreed that it would be a great opportunity to explore and challenge the excellent musical skills taught and achieved by the Schools.

The gang of four met to discuss the issues of putting together a choir from scratch and ensuring a good standard was achieved. Though it was seen that there were considerable unknowns and risks, the aim was agreed, to have a choir of Old Palmerians singing at the 2009 Founder's Day Service. The prospect and challenge were exciting.

Dividing up the roles and responsibilities was fairly straightforward – Norman, who is Sub-Organist at St. George's Metropolitan Cathedral, Southwark, would be the organist, Richard, who regularly conducts choirs and musicals, would be the conductor, and Margaret, who performs many solos, would take on the organisation of the choristers.

Would there be enough OPA singers – and a balance of voices? What about rehearsals, and the choice of hymns and anthems? Would a bunch of Old Palmerians be let loose in the Parish Church? These were a few of the many problems that were identified.

There was an immediate and eager response from singers to the request put out in the OPA Newsletter, and 24 of the finest Old Palmerian singers were recruited, all seeing the prospect as exciting. Some came from as far afield as Leeds and Devon, with the latter involving an overnight coach journey to get back in time for work the next day.

There was going to be only one rehearsal – for one hour on the Sunday afternoon just before the service. Hence, it would be of great advantage if the music chosen was likely to be familiar to the singers. Where possible some of the music was distributed via the internet a few weeks before the service. The musical choice included Vaughan Williams' "Let all the world in every corner

sing”, Stanford’s Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in C. The closing organ voluntary was J. S. Bach’s Sinfonia to Cantata 29.

The co-operation of Darren Barlow, the Rector and Ted Haines, the Church Organist was very much appreciated. Darren pulled a master stroke by inviting Monsignor George Stokes (1953-60), Director of Education, Brentwood Diocese to give the address. Hence, all the leading participants in the service had a Palmerian connection.

On the morning of the day of the Service, the weather was dreadful with torrential rain, but by the time choir members started to arrive for rehearsal it had eased, and from there on the day went quite smoothly. The excitement increased as the prospect of an OPA Choir singing at the Founder’s Day Service was becoming a reality.

This was the first time a choir of Old Palmerians had sung at the Founder’s Day Service, and the choir’s excellent performance was most appreciated by the congregation. Thanks go to all who participated and made it possible. Choir members expressed their enjoyment of singing again with Palmerians, and of their reminiscences about the singing experiences at Palmer’s.

Grateful thanks go to Eileen and John Webb who enabled us to have access to the Church, and Ruth Hunwick and Brett Goodyear for providing the catering services.

The Old Palmerians who sang were:-

Pat Evans	Margaret Derrett	Elaine Staton
Anne Cope	John Nicholls	Michael Rawlinson
Roy Cochrane	Barry Newman	Nick Hudd
Peter Goodyear	Michael Horne	Chris Mowatt
Len Bennett	Mary Friedrich	Anne Smythe
Helen Martin	Mike Smith	Lesley Cox
Stephen Rainbird	Malcolm Harper	Margaret Nathan
Audrey Mullender		

Unable to attend on the day: Jean Rawlinson, Joan Jenkins

Organist: Norman Harper

Conductor: Richard Wade

***Eddie Hunt (1954 - 1961)***



The OPA Choir In Rehearsal



All have Palmer's connections



The Gang of Four Relaxing (Scarves knitted by Margaret)

### **NEWS OF OLD PALMERIANS**

Apologies for the wrong spelling if St Catharine's College Cambridge in connection with Geoff Harrington p50 in last year's magazine.

**JULIE LAWES (1980 - 1982) MRS SIMMONS** who went to Oxford after taking four A levels at Palmer's, is now teaching in Guildford. She was a keen member of the drama society whilst at Palmer's.

**CLAIRE ANN BURGESS (2003 - 2005)** graduated in 2008 with a 2.1 Honours degree in Sport and Sport Science.

**ADAM KIMBLE (1994 - 1996)** became a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons in 2008.

**ALEX FELTON (2003 - 2005)** graduated in 2009 with a BSc Honours degree in Ergonomics from Loughborough University.

**WAYNE LEECH (2003 - 2005)** graduated in 2009 with a First Class BA Honours degree in Business Studies.

**CHARLOTTE BALL (1997 - 1999)** achieved her Doctorate in 2009.

**DARYL GENT (2003 - 2005)** graduated in 2009 with a BSc Honours degree in Computer Science from the University of Kent.

**JOANNA PEMBERTON (2004 - 2006)** graduated in 2009 with a 2.1 degree in Adult General Nursing from Greenwich University.

**CHRISTOPHER TURNER (2004 - 2006)** graduated in 2009 with a 2.1 BSc Honours degree in Business Economics from Greenwich University.

**MARK COATES (2002 - 2004)** graduated in 2009 with a BA degree in Advertising with Design and a Diploma in Industry.

**LEESON MITCHELL (2004 - 2006)** graduated in 2009 with a BA Honours Degree in Marketing.

**LOUISE CROWHURST (2004 - 2006)** graduated in 2009 from Glyndwr University with a Bachelor's Degree in Community Sports and Development.

**GEMMA GROVER (2004 - 2006)** graduated in 2009 from Bournemouth University with a Degree in Advertising and Marketing Communications.

**VICTORIA GLOVER (2004 - 2006)** graduated in 2009 with a 2.1 BA Honours Degree in History and Performing Arts.

**RICHARD TURNER ( 2002 - 2005)** graduated in 2009 from Bournemouth University with a Degree in Forensic Science.

**CHRISTOPHER GREENAWAY (2004 - 2006)** graduated in 2009 with a BA in Film and Cinema Technologies and Media Production.

**MATTHEW TRAVIS (2003 - 2006)** graduated in 2009 from Sheffield Hallam with a BA Honours Degree in Film and Media Production.

**SUSAN FOSTER (1999 - 2001)** graduated in 2009 with a Fellowship of the Association of British Dispensing Opticians and is now a fully qualified Dispensing Optician.

**IQBAL SINGH (1989 - 1991)** is now a consultant at Maelor Hospital, Wrexham, Wales in the Urology department at the very young age of 37.

**ALISON MACDIVETT (2004 - 2006)** has worked at the Thurrock Gazette since leaving Palmer's and in September 2009 started studying for her degree at Royal Holloway University.

**SARAH SCOWEN (2001 - 2003)** has joined the Queen's Theatre's professional company of actor-musicians, "Cut to the Chase", to star in Ladies' Day in October 2009 at the theatre, in Billet Lane, Hornchurch.

Sarah, who trained at the Yvette Twinn School of Theatre Dance in Orsett and the London Studio Centre, played the role of feisty blonde, northern fish packer, Shelley, who dreams of making it big on TV.

She has performed at various prestigious London venues including Sadler's Well Theatre and the Royal Festival Hall, as well as in several productions at Grays' Thameside Theatre. Sarah also played Agnetha in a UK tour of ABBA Gold and appeared in a TV advert for T-Mobile.

She has also played a posh theatre-goer in A Murder has been Arranged at the Queen's.

**LAUREN ADAMS (2003 - 2005)** received two medals at the Goju-Kai karate world championships in Cape Town in late 2009. A total of 25 countries - including teams from Japan, Europe, Asia and Australia - participated in one of traditional karate's most prestigious international events. England had their best ever results at world championship level with two golds, three silvers and a total of eight bronzes.

Lauren achieved a gold medal in kumite (fighting) and a silver in bunkai.

**SCOTT STEVENS (2004 - 2006)** of Blackthorn Road, finished studying acting at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA) in 2009 and teamed up with his Secondary School, William Edwards School in Stifford Clays Road, to launch the Open Doors Theatrical Academy, with LIPA friend David Hutchinson in January 2010. The school is run on Saturday mornings for children aged between 6 and 18, with levels from beginner to advanced being taught in singing, acting and dancing. Fellow Palmer's National Diploma in Performing Arts student **AMI LOUISE SCRIVENER (2004 - 2006)** is also on the staff.

**SOPHIE ROUSE (2005 - 2007)** and **MEGAN WILKINS (2005 - 2007)** both received their Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award at St James' Palace in London in November 2009. The highlight of their gold award was a trip to Africa, where they both spent time living with a Zulu family in the Mabandla community tribe.

During their stay they helped paint one of the community schools, followed by a week in the African bush undertaking a wilderness trek, which involved sleeping under the stars amongst the wild animals.

**NATHAN RUTLAND (1997 - 1999)** has won the RAF Halton Apprentice Trophy for achieving the highest standard in physical education among the 122 recruits during basic military training at Halton. He was presented with his trophy by Group Captain Mark Heffron.

**JOHN WALSHAM (1940 - 1946)** has sent the following two points. “**John Webber** recalls that he and I didn’t get on especially well. I remember him clearly - he lived in Woodview in the house on the corner of Ridgeway, and was very friendly, at least for a time, with **Geoffrey Doyle**, a contemporary who had gone from East Thurrock Junior School to the Intermediate School, later transferring to Palmer’s in order to do the School Certificate. Geoff and I had been friends at junior school, regularly getting into trouble together (he it was who introduced me to smoking) but our friendship faded with the arrival of John Webber. I suspect that was the reason for my antipathy towards him, not his diminutive stature. That would merely have provided the icing on the cake!”

“I was saddened to read of the death of **Joyce Gardner**. I worked with Joyce at Manor County Junior School during the spring and summer terms of 1948. (Although I had no intention of working with children of junior age I thought I ought at least to have some experience of them.) Joyce was a lively and well-liked colleague. This was the year before Joyce went off to College, Whitelands if I remember correctly. Also on the staff at Manor at that time was **Brian Blake**, who had left Palmer’s the previous summer and was doing a year’s student-teaching before going to Borough Road College in Isleworth. I knew Brian very well, he having been a long-time member of the 3rd Tilbury Scout Troop of which I had been scoutmaster. I have never heard anything about him subsequently, other than a suggestion that he was teaching in the midlands.”

*Does anyone have any news of Brian? Please send it to Ruth Hunwick.*

**JILL CRAWLEY (1976 - 1978)** is a Chartered Accountant and Chartered Tax Adviser and runs her own company in Manchester.

**BRENDA NEWING (1953 - 1959) MRS WARWICK** also enjoyed reading the last magazine as it contained two articles about her old friends. One about her classmates **Jana Chytil** and **Anne Rogers** with whom she had a lovely long chat on the phone when Jana was over from Canada. Brenda remembers that there were several Czech girls at Palmer’s then - the **Zak** sisters - 4 of them, she thinks, **Anna** and **Marie** (who came to the 300th Open Day) and two others. She says “They were all clever girls, it must have been hard for their parents leaving their own country and starting again, having to learn

English. I think their mother worked at the Bata's factory in East Tilbury." Brenda had not got a better copy of the photo featured in the magazine, but she has sent the following which have some of the same girls. (The one in last year's magazine, turned out to be the Prefects in 1958, see Mary Poole's entry on page 17.)



Form 4A 1957

Back Row:- Gwendoline Taphouse, Eileen Greenfield?, Rosie Garwood, Barbara Kimmings, Carolyn Marshall (in all the sports teams), Pat Garner, Diane Syred (in all the sports teams), Jana Chytil, Vicky Clark?, Marion Dewar.

Middle Row:- ?, ?, Marion Marner, Meriel Thomas (acted in the Greek tragedy in the Greek Theatre), Miss Barbanel (French teacher), Form Prefect, Ann Cribb (who organised reunions before she died of cancer in her early forties and whose ashes were buried near the Greek Theatre), Barbara Halliday, Brenda Newing.

Front Row:- Rosalind Clark, Janet Steel, Diana Holden?, Sylvia Custard (acted in the Greek tragedy in the Greek Theatre), Wendy Fordham?, Mary Nicholls, Anne Rogers, ? .



Form 5A 1958

Back Row:- Jana Chytil, Pat Garner, Barbara Kimmings, Diane Syred, Gwendoline Taphouse.

Middle Row:- Marion Dewar, Brenda Newing, Miss Barbanel, Anne Rogers, Maron Marner.

Front Row:- Sylvia Custard (used to act very well in the Greek Theatre), Rosalind Clark, ?, Muriel Thomas, Joan Harris, Pat Gaynes.

*[Can anyone help clarify any of the names and/or fill in some of the missing ones? Please contact Ruth Hunwick]*

The other article was from her friend **Ged Jack** who used to travel to Palmer's with her from Bowers Gifford every day on the number 2 bus, to the 'RED HOT' Stanford le Hope and then wait for the school bus, usually a clapped out workmen's bus complete with graffiti scratched on, to their delight! The bus was often late or broke down and they would be in trouble with **Miss Leworthy** for being late. In the winter if it snowed it would dump them somewhere miles from a bus stop and they would have to walk in the dark for a mile or so - no mobile phones then or even a phone at home in those days,

but they survived!! They liked to sing all the Max Bygraves latest songs very loudly and on the way home, eat all the cookery class food which had been made (and was edible) - great fun.!

Ged and Brenda have always kept in touch. They both did their State Registered Nursing training in London, Ged at Westminster Children's Hospital (now closed) and Brenda at University College Hospital, so they could meet up every so often. They still meet up when Ged visits her family who still live in Essex.

Brenda also noted in the cycling photo **Keith Brew**'s name. He lived in the same road as Brenda in Bowers Gifford and married a U.C.H. nurse and they went to live in America. Keith went to U.C.L., the first university student they had ever had in Bowers Gifford, which caused great excitement.

Brenda enjoyed the article on the First World War veteran. She had visited Ypres in 2008 and found it very moving, so many young men killed. A lot of the teachers at Palmer's had lost their fiancés in that war and never married, but dedicated their lives to teaching - very good teachers too. It must have been sad for them though.

**STUART BYROM (1960 - 1965)** has given us many of the names for the team photos sent in by Chris and Martin Bridge last year, but we still need some more. Please go to the website and look at the names and let Ruth Hunwick know if you can add any.

Stuart is keen to contact both **Chris Bridge** and **George Clark**, so if anyone has their contact details please will they let Ruth Hunwick know. Stuart went to Newcastle University with Chris and a buddy of George.

**JAMES STEELE (1952 - 1957)** on the subject of coincidences, said that he was always amazed that when he joined the Royal Military College of Canada in 1958, the gentleman who ran the cadets' mess had a brother whose garden bordered on the bottom of his family's garden at 155 Bridge Road, Grays.

**MARY SAWYER (1952 -1959) MRS POOLE** has sent a better copy of the Prefects in 1958 and supplied some of the names - can anyone else help? Please contact Ruth Hunwick at the address given at the front of the magazine. She also sent two other photos from 1958 and we need some more names on those too.

**Pearl Randall** who was Head Girl, is in Victoria, British Columbia now and **Lorna Hawes** is in Vancouver, British Columbia and Mary herself is in South Lancaster, Ontario, not far from Montreal.



Prefects 1958

Back Row:-?, ?, ?, ?, ?, Pearl Randall

Middle Row:-?, ?, ?, Jana Chytil, Miss Shorter, ?, ?, ?.

Front Row:- ?, Madge Wardrop, Anne Rogers, Mary Sawyer, Vivian Spencer, Anna Zak, ?.



Maths group 1958

Pauline Turner, Vivian Spencer, Mary Sawyer, Miss Dougall, Mrs Padgham, Dorothy Kempley



Sixth Form 1958

Back Row:- Jean Soul, Avril Lambert, Pauline Turner, ?, Ruth Barnet, ?, ?, Pat Jones, Isabel Brooks, ?, Gillian Cassanet.

Third Row:- ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ? .

Second Row:- ?, ?, ?, ?, Miss Shorter, ?, ?, ?, Rosemary Hardy.

Front Row:- ?, Madge Wardrop, Pearl Randall, ?, Mary Sawyer, Vivian Spencer, Anna Zak, Valerie Davis

**WILLIAM (BILL) ROBSON (1945 - 1950)** was pleased to see the 1945 cricket team photo in last year's magazine, as it was the year he arrived at Palmer's. Bill played alongside some of that side, **Morris** and **Owers** at cricket and **Owers** and **Powell** at soccer after 1945, and of course the famous **Aber** who in his day was a match winner, with his off the field activities being much admired too!!!

Bill was sad to learn of the death of **Denis Rath** who he met after school days, working for the same Bank, but at different locations. They met playing cricket and soccer at the Private Banks in Catford, and played for the same side. Denis was a 'hard man' at right back in soccer and at cricket 'didn't waste time' scoring 'many' or 'not many' - not **George Ross**'s straight bat

policy!! Bill remembers being given out playing forward off an inside edge LBW by Denis. Afterwards he said in the bar ‘Sorry Bill’, but my hearing’s not the best. Denis was a real credit to Palmer’s.

Finally Bill was pleased to see **George Stone** mentioned, as he is much revered in Springfield cricket circles.

**BILL BOHM (1945 - 1952)** noted that **Peter Happé** mentioned **Mr Michael** in last year’s magazine. Bill remembers him as a really great character who taught maths. He was a ‘white’ Russian whose name Bill could not spell, but sounded like Olyolikov. When he came to Palmer’s he stayed for a few months with the Bohms as Bill’s father’s guest. Bill wondered if anyone else remembers him.

Bill went up to St Catharine’s College, Cambridge in 1954.

**TREVOR MORGAN (1952 -1958)** was very busy in October 2009 when he was organising a Rotary Operatic Gala but found time to write and send us this article.

#### **But sir, what’s the eighth day called?**

Yes, **Eb** must have bitterly regretted that day in the spring of 1955 when he mentioned that “une huitaine” was an alternative to “une semaine” but I’ll come back to that in a moment. I just want to share a few memories of the boys whose Palmer’s career started in September 1952. And let me begin by saying “Thanks for the memories”. To every boy or master mentioned, I extend my grateful thanks for contributing to making school days at Palmer’s happy ones. 1952...that was the year when something had gone wrong with the colour of the uniforms and as a result about 50% of the new boys had to turn up on parade in a variety of different caps and jackets. What a motley crew we must have looked! With a surname beginning with M my career began in the second desk of 2c presided over by **John Scott**. When he took the register, he always took his pen cap and stood it upright on the desk while marking the register. I remember the names, **Morgan D**, **Morgan T**, **Neatham**, **Orton**, **Pettiford**, **Porley**, **Povey**...not sure who came next but a glance at “Avete” in the relevant “Palmerian” would put me right. We had **Nobby Hall** for Maths and an occasion comes to mind when **Peter Povey**, for some misdemeanour lost in the mists of time, was given as a punishment the task of writing some verses which began “There was a boy called Povey, whose home was very rovey”. We had the pleasure of hearing it read out in the next Maths lesson. I only recall one couplet – “The chalk came whizzing through the air, hit Orton on the derriere”. The said Orton was, shall I say, generously proportioned in that department and the whole class enjoyed the

interlude. In another of Nobby's lessons I managed to distinguish myself when we were being taught algebra. Having missed the first lesson through absence, I was puzzled by being asked in the next one "If an unknown number is  $n$ , what is the next number in the series?" I still think it ought to be  $o$  but even then I saw my future in the Arts rather than the Sciences. French was with **Mr Twydell** and he used to pronounce my surname and initial with a distinct stress on the second syllable giving me a not unpleasant Italian sound. For many in my class I was more than happy to answer to my new name of "Morganti". The **Head** taught us Latin, called us all "darling" when we failed to come up with the right answer and rubbed our noses on the board to ensure we got close to the conjugations or declensions he had written up. My contemporaries will remember that our first forays into this strange language were spent solely in English grammar, the rationale being that this was absolutely necessary when dealing with a highly inflected language such as Latin. I think my love of our language and my interest in all other languages can be attributed to that time back in 1952/53 when in the end of year exam "Smart, with a couple of bonuses, managed to score 100%". Well done, **Brian Smart**. We had been friends at junior school and used to travel on the 370 together. I remember an occasion when **Frank Sharp** lost his shorts for PE and after suffering the most tremendous tirade from **Tough Hendry**, had a spare pair thrown at him to borrow for the lesson. In great excitement, he made the mistake of responding "but these *are* my shorts, sir. Look, it says F S on the label". Tirade number two was even more terrifying. I just remember the minor exaggeration about the need for one's full name to be written as there were *hundreds* of boys in the school whose initials were F S. As well as two **Morgans** in the class we had two **Thompsons** and two **Wilsons**, **Alex** and **Barry**. Sadly Barry Wilson died as the result of a cycling accident. It was the first time many of us had encountered death in a boy of our age and sad to think of all the promise snuffed out in a brief moment of time. Just before I leave form 2 let me go back to our first Geography lesson with **Sam Ims**. We were given an exercise book and told to copy everything on the board entitled "The Thames Valley". I didn't know at the time that I would end up living most of my adult life in another part of this geographical feature of the South of England. The blackboard was hinged at both sides and at the appropriate moment, both wings were opened out to reveal four more "pages" to copy. I remember Sam's words at the end of the lesson. "Now, if you've got enough strength, rule off!"

Now, a few memories of life in 3a. We had **Eric "Bomb"** for Latin. In those far off days, we had a brief 5 minute break at 3 o'clock before the final period. Latin was the last lesson on one day of the week and Bomb would enter and place his battered suitcase on the desk prior to dashing up to the staffroom for a quick drag on one of his roll your owns. We would dutifully stand as the

case crashed down on the desk. “No, no, I haven’t come in yet” was the regular response. It sounded nonsense but we knew what he meant. **John Moore** took us for English and a fairly frequent homework was to learn a section from the particular Shakespeare play being studied. **Paul Stone** had a particularly good memory and frequently learnt much longer sections than we had been asked to memorise. This had the particular advantage that if you had not yet been asked to say your speech, Stone would take up valuable lesson time and you might not need to perform. **Dick Richards** was our French master and lessons occasionally got just a touch lively. **Rene Bennett**, a future School Captain, was once singled out for the question; “D’you want a fight, Bennett?” I cannot recall Dick’s response to Bennett’s answer; “Yes please, sir!” It was the duty of form 3 classes to clear the hall of chairs ready for lunch and to set them out again last period for the following day’s assembly. Year 3 boys are cunning creatures and we were no exception. We knew which masters would allow us to do the duty at the beginning of a period and we knew how to prolong the task so as to shorten the period of instruction to follow thereafter. We also knew which masters would allow us 5 minutes maximum to get the job done and when this was at the end of the school day, a couple of minutes either way meant getting home on time or having to wait for the next bus. Just one more recollection of Dick’s French lessons before we leave form 3. The boys who had done well in the end of term exam, 6 or 7 of them, were asked to come to the front and the rest of us had to ask them questions. **Hugh Aitken** (a scientist) was invited to tell us the French for “It is raining”. I can hear his response now. In a loud and confident voice the answer rang out “Ill plutt”. **Timothy Kirkup**, who was prone to dissolving into a fit of giggles, was totally unable to ask his question. At length he recovered enough to invite the team of experts to tell us the first person plural of the past historic of the verb “mourir”. Only a pair of ghosts wishing to write the final chapter of their life story would ever be in a position to need that obscure part of our nearest neighbours’ language. Indeed, in my career as a teacher of French and German I don’t remember ever touching on this tense.

Form 4 and back to Eb. Why he ever needed to tell us, I don’t know, but one bright morning he happened to mention that “une huitaine” was another word for a week. I have never come across it since but the word exists and is clearly related to the word “huit” because, as Eb patiently explained, French people counted the beginning and the end of the week so that made eight. This was not good enough for **Malcolm Croft** (another scientist). He reasoned logically that if that were so, French people had to have a name for the eighth day; not only that: he further reasoned that every week French speaking people would be out of sequence with the rest of us increasing by one day every week. His skill as a wind up merchant was commendable and “the name of the eighth day” haunted Eb for many lessons to come. Still with

French we were given masses of French verbs to learn for a written test every week and Bomb followed up with plenty of Latin verbs to learn in all their tenses, indicative and subjunctive with a good smattering of vocabulary thrown in for good measure. **Peter Dines** taught us Maths and he was the first master I can remember being absent; Archie Crump covered for him. While on the subject I only remember one other master being absent and that was **Pug Harris** who taught us Greek in Form 5. There were no courses for masters to go on in those distant days and I believe the job satisfaction was such that masters did not stay off school for trivial reasons. I believe it was **Digby** who brought into school one of those little boxes which, when inverted, made the sound on the animal depicted on the outside. It was decided that this would be used to enliven **Mr Morehouse**'s English lesson. Digby started proceedings with a long and mournful "moo" from the first row. The toy then made its planned journey being passed hand to hand to the far side of the room where the lugubrious sound was heard for the second time. Mr Morehouse was reading to us from "The History of Mr Polly" and moved slowly about the room some distance away from where the last sound had been heard. At last, thoroughly exasperated, he announced that if the wretched thing were heard again, the class would receive one hour's detention. Fair enough, we'd had our fun. But then disaster struck. The toy had just been passed to me and in my attempt to place it gently inside my desk without drawing attention to the fact that I was opening the lid, I caught it on the side of my pile of textbooks and dropped it. It seemed that an even longer, louder and more mournful sound issued forth from my desk and the now inevitable detention loomed with retribution from my peers surely guaranteed to follow. My lengthy and detailed explanations at the end of the lesson coupled with apologies for our inconsiderate and puerile behaviour were sufficient to save the day; there were even some who thought my actions had been deliberate and I was hailed as a kind of hero.

It was in 5a that we met **Gally** for Maths. Punctually at 1:15 every Monday the door of his office would shut and his steps would be heard coming down the stairs and along the corridor. The door would open and we would hear the dreaded words "Question 1". The routine was always identical. Learn the work over the weekend and be tested on it Monday afternoon. There were only two marks allowed; ten or nothing. You either knew the work perfectly or you didn't, and being close was not good enough. I was terrified of Maths and more so than ever in form 5 but Gally was an excellent teacher. He had been brought up as a classicist but his expertise in maths was second to none. I recall an occasion when we were being asked to give the definitions of certain mathematical terms. "**McDaid**, what is a point?" "Well, sir, it's so small you can't even see it." Gally's voice becomes a trifle louder and more threatening as he reminds McDaid: "A point has position but no magnitude.

What is a point, McDaid?" McDaid continues to play with fire and repeats his first definition. Gally walks up to McDaid's desk and in a voice even more frightening and threatening repeats the definition and the question. McDaid, utterly cowed, whispers:"A point has position but no magnitude, sir".

I could go on but I have detained you long enough. If you have not been too bored, or if perhaps you are an Old Palmerian who shared in some of my memories, they may spark off others which you might like to write about another time. If we ever meet up, no prizes for the first person who says: "Do you remember when...?"

**PETER HARLEY WRIGHT (1943 - 1948)** wrote in November 2009, saying he was then 78, a little frayed round the edges but still enjoying bowls instead of his first love cricket. Peter was a member of the 1948 1st XI with such luminaries as **Brian Morris**, **Ron Owers**, **Johnny Falcon** and **Derrick Gay**. His one claim to fame was playing in the final game of Cricket Week against Royal Liberty School, Romford and hitting a 6 over square leg to win the match, making his first ever 50; and to cap it all, it was his 17th birthday. Dear old **George Ross** was so overcome, he presented him with a 10 shilling note - a vast sum in those days! Of course Peter carried on for many years with Stanford le Hope Cricket Club until aged 50. He vowed to bow out with another 50 and retire. This he did. Mark you, there were a few 100s and 50s in between!! Peter feels that he and many others of his generation owe a great debt to George Ross for instilling in them the love of this wonderful game - truly a way of life. Peter now lives in Henleaze, Bristol.

**BERNICE WINSER (1948 - 1953) MRS GOUGH** worked in Grays Library with **Ruth Channing** (Mrs Chapman) when she first left Palmer's until 1955 when she took up nursing. Bernice still keeps in contact with a number of Palmer's Girls, **Joyce Matthews** who was a secretary and bursar at Palmer's; **Mary Wellman**, who lives at Bulphan; **Barbara Grieg** (Mrs Kirkcaldy); **Ann Coker** (Mrs Chalmers) who is first cousin to **Bryan Coker**; and **Joy Hanson** (Mrs Botwright), who went to East Thurrock School with Bernice from 1941 to 1948. Bernice last visited Grays in 2006 for the 300th Anniversary.

**BRIAN WEST (1938 - 1945)** was pleased to read news of **John Webber**, as he was one of a group who occasionally played informal games of cricket in 1945 on Blackshots field along with **Alan Winser**, **Roy Springham** (Brian's closest friend), **David Brown** and others.

Brian was sad to read of the passing of **Heather Rogerson** as she had played his wife in a production of Obey's "Noah" many years ago, about 1959, when they were both members of the Teachers' Dramatic Society.

**MARGARET BJÖRSVIK (1962 - 1968) MRS NATHAN** has sent us scanned copies of the Order of Ceremony for the Opening of the Girl's School in 1931, the Girls' School Magazine for 1934 - (can anyone do the crossword? Margaret has worked out most of the answers) - and the Junior Speech Day Programme for 1963. Here is one page of the Order of Ceremony; the rest may be viewed on the website [www.OldPalmerians.co.uk](http://www.OldPalmerians.co.uk)

## Grays Palmer's Endowed School for Girls

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**AUDREY MULLENDER**, who attended the Founder's Day Service in November 2009 is now a Professor and Principal of Ruskin College, Oxford.

**KENNETH BUSHELL (1951 - 1958)** and his wife were blessed with another grandson in July 2009, named Sean Robert Wilson Bushell, a brother to Matthew (11), Nicholas (9) and Vanessa (5). Ken still paints and has a new art website at [www.kensart.net](http://www.kensart.net). He has also been quite active with the family tree, which now has over 600 names.

**GEOFFREY THORNDIKE MARTIN (1945 - 1950)** is an Egyptologist, Edwards Professor of Egyptian Archaeology and Philology Emeritus, University College, London; Joint Field Director of the Amarna Royal Tombs Project for the Egypt Exploration Society and Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge.

Geoffrey was born in Aveley and after leaving Palmer's worked in Grays Library. He obtained his BA in Ancient History from University College London in 1963 and an MA from Cambridge University in 1966. He immediately became a Lady Wallis Budge Research Fellow at Christ's College, Cambridge, a post which he held until 1970, obtaining his PHD in 1969. From 1970 Geoffrey became a lecturer in Egyptology at University College, London, and then a Reader from 1978 and Edwards Professor of Egyptology from 1988 until retirement in 1993, so is now Emeritus. In 1998 he became Fellow Commoner of Christ's College Cambridge, where he is also Honorary Keeper of the Archives, Honorary Keeper of the Plate and Acting Praelector 2009.

He has participated in and directed fieldwork and epigraphic missions from 1963 to the present day in The Sudan - Buhen and in Egypt - Saqqare, Amarna and The Valley of Kings, Luxor. Geoffrey is credited for discovering a rather interesting tomb in Saqqara; the tomb that Horemheb built for himself before he became pharaoh. At the time of its construction, Horemheb was employed as a military advisor to Tutankhamen. Also at Saqqara he discovered the tomb of Mava, who worked for Tutankhamen as treasurer. At el-Amarna, he continued the work of the Egypt Exploration Society, whose examination of the Royal Tomb had to be abandoned due to political strife preceding WWII. The Royal Tomb at el-Armarna is in very poor condition due to looting and previous "explorations". Geoffrey spent a lot of time cataloguing artefacts, recovering missing pieces, and exposing fake artefacts wrongly attributed to this site.

Geoffrey has published a lot about his work in Egypt, including a children's book designed to stir interest in the subject.

**JEAN TOOLEY (1951 - 1957) MRS JONES** was honoured with a long service award to netball in 2009. About 43 years ago Jean was a founder

member of the Thurrock Netball League. Since then she has worked in both the junior and senior leagues, providing an invaluable contribution in all aspects of her expertise. Jean is one of the sport's best known figures locally and is always in demand as an umpire. The presentation was a grand affair held in Leicester, which she attended with her daughter.

She was also on the staff at Palmer's College from 1995 to 1996, teaching Foundation GNVQ students

**ALAN DAVID ELLIS (1958 - 1965)** recognised photos of himself in the ones of the 1963 Norfolk Cricket Tour on the website, sent in by **Steve Wood**. He was not there because of his cricketing ability, but because the headmaster "**Fred**" **Jordan** needed someone to clean his car and run errands for him. Alan was one of the boarders who were there for social reasons. There were three types of boarder. The majority were the sons of service parents (mainly RAF). The next bunch were the sons of successful business fathers. Then there were the rest who were there for 'social' reasons. Alan was one of those. His father died when he was nine years old, his mother suffered from MS and so the powers that be ( whoever they were) decided that Alan was in danger of running amok as a teenager. So he became a boarder and Fred was 'in loco parentis'. In fact Alan says he had a lot to thank Fred for (not only for this holiday in 1963) that he did not appreciate at the time.

Alan would be very pleased to hear from any of his old schoolmates and his telephone number is 01462 895708 and his e-mail address is [alandellis@hotmail.com](mailto:alandellis@hotmail.com)

**DAVID ELMORE (1938 - 1941)** has sent us this article:-

### **BANKERS NOW AND THEN**

I am writing this at a time when the work 'Banker' is held to ridicule by practically everybody. The government, the press, the TV people, the unions - they all cannot say a few words without mentioning those terrible people who have brought the country to the edge of ruin and caused the recession (or is it depression, or perhaps catastrophe?) There's no doubt that, by making decisions which turned out to be foolhardy, the bankers caused their businesses to lose millions (or billions, or trillions) and made countless workers unemployed. Probably the worst aspect of their tenure of office was the fact that they awarded themselves huge bonuses for meeting so-called 'targets' which they themselves had laid down.

This subject particularly interests me because I was once a banker - not, you understand, a person drawing a huge salary and receiving astronomical

bonuses for doing the job I was paid to do. No, I was a clerk earning £87 10s a year and I have spent many an hour recently comparing today's bankers with those I came into contact with. Take the age factor; currently men (and women of course) can reach the top of their profession at an early age. Then, they were old men because all the younger ones were away fighting for their country.

In those days there was an interesting method of remuneration. Once a year, a manager had to compile a report on each member of his staff. Not after a heart-to-heart talk, but in secret and the report was never seen by the clerk. If the manager felt so inclined he could recommend to the Secretary of the bank that the member of staff received a rise.

Although banks' annual balance sheets were audited, they did not necessarily show the true position as they have to these days. Boards of directors didn't like the yearly profit figures to go up and down - they preferred a steady increase from year to year (I don't think the idea of a loss ever entered their heads!) They achieved this by the use of "hidden reserves" which was quite legal then. If, one year, a bank's profits were exceptionally large, a proportion would be tucked away in other figures, so that if the following year's profits were lower, they could be shown as higher by using some of the hidden reserves.

Ah, happy days!

**GARY LITTLECHILD (1965 - 1972)** has sent us this article.

### **LIFE AFTER PALMER'S**

#### **1973 – 1976: Accountant, Ford Motor Company, Brentwood.**

I started my working life in the rather serious profession of Accountancy, working at the Ford Motor Company HQ in Brentwood. For a young man of 19, the money was excellent but the hours were long. In my 3 years, I worked 48 hours straight through on two occasions and frequently worked 18 hours per day at month and year end 'balancing'.

Active sport was a big passion in my life at that time, playing the seasonal sports of football and cricket and the all year round sport of Karate, in which I was awarded Black Belt, was British Junior Champion and was selected for the UK Squad for the European Championships in 1974. With all of the overtime at Ford's and the demands of my sporting life, something had to give.

So, I left Ford's to train to become a sports teacher.

### **1977-1997: British Army Officer**

During my first term at college, one of the tutors suggested that, as I enjoy outdoor, physical activity, I ought to consider the Army.

I turned up at the Army Recruitment Centre, Romford and said to the Sergeant that I wanted to become a Physical Training Instructor (PTI). He asked me if I had any O Levels and what school I had attended. I told him and he asked me to take a seat while he called for his retired officer boss. In strode the retired Colonel, who then told me that I wasn't really interested in 'knees bend, arms stretch' and that what I really wanted was to be was an officer. I don't know why, but I agreed with him and after a couple of weeks found myself at the Regular Commissions' Board (RCB), Westbury, Wiltshire for 4 days' of aptitude tests and interviews. They seemed to like what I did and said, as 2 weeks later, I was no longer Mr Gary Littlechild but 24464091 Officer Cadet Littlechild of Arnhem Company, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst under the command of Major Andrew Parker-Bowles, the then husband of the Duchess of Cornwall.

At Sandhurst, I was like a dog with two tails: Apart from spending some considerable time in the Guardroom for failing to realise that the Company Sergeant Major's hysterical screaming for some minor infringement during a Sovereign's Parade rehearsal was actually not his attempt at crude humour but rather a point to be taken seriously, I enjoyed every moment of my 14 months of Officer Training. I joined as many of the Clubs and Societies as I could fit in from most of the regular sports to goose shooting, beagling and Scottish Country Dancing (there were several girls' finishing schools in the Surrey/Berks. region). I won a flying scholarship and obtained my pilot's licence. I also managed to wangle a 6 week's exchange visit to the Australian Army Officers' Academy at Duntroon.

After training, I joined my first regiment in Germany and spent the next 20 years in various regimental and staff appointments, including a spell of special duties finally achieving the middle order rank of Major. In 1994, I had an exchange posting to the Sultan of Oman's Armed Forces cancelled and replaced with a mundane staff tour in Andover. The Posting Branch felt that they owed me a favour and, since I never went to university after Palmer's, they sent me to Cranfield School of Management, where I took my MBA and Chartered Marketing exams. On completion of these courses, I decided that I needed another career change.

After about a year of boredom as Group Sales and Marketing Director with an engineering company, Kvaerner, I was approached by the United Nations to open up an office in Brussels to be the UN Representative to NATO and the European Union, specialising in Civil-Military Coordination.

### **1999 - 2006: United Nations**

My life with the UN was full of travel and excitement. 2 weeks after I assumed my appointment in Brussels, the Kosovo Crisis began and I found myself deeply involved in that flash war for a few months. Almost immediately after Kosovo ended, I found myself in East Timor, followed by one hot spot or other emergency after another – Iraq, Afghanistan, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, SE Asia Tsunami, Kashmir Earthquake etc.

In total, my Army and UN careers have taken me to over 70 countries, 14 wars and numerous 'natural' disasters.

### **2006 – Present:**

My UN contract expired in December 2006 but my life of travel continues as a security consultant for the MOD, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, various other governments and organisations. But, this is more as a hobby, taking up just a few months each year. My main employment is in the construction sector, where a couple of friends and I have set up our own company manufacturing a 'zero carbon' building system: The Mantle Building System.

Clearly, I enjoy variety and change in my daily working life and I do not intend to retire.

### **OLD BOYS' ANNUAL DINNER, ORSETT HALL, 26 MARCH 2010**

In March of this year I made a speech at the Old Boys' Annual Dinner, proposing the toast to Palmer's College. Although I did not use notes, the following is compiled from memory. Of course, I cannot convey some of the physical actions that accompanied the words:

“In November last year, my oldest and closest friend and fellow Old Palmerian, Jasjit Johal called me and said that he had been asked by Mike Smith to ask me if I would propose the toast to the College.

At first, I thought this was a bit of a 'wind up' as I hardly knew Mike and the other Old Boys' 'management'. But, having been assured that it was a serious

invitation, I wondered what I might say. Tales of masters or school mates from my time at Palmer's would have only limited relevance to most here tonight, although it's good to see a few from my year (1965). My thoughts turned to what I learned at School, therefore.

I confess to being a bit of an 'Oik' at school and not very academic. However, I do claim the scholarly honour of coming last or second from last every single term for 5 years in Latin until Pug Harris finally lost patience and persuaded me that I might look elsewhere for an O Level.

On deeper thought, I realised that I learned some non-academic things, 'Lessons For Life' that have served me well and repeatedly during my careers as an Army Officer and as United Nations Representative to NATO and the EU. These careers have taken me to 70 countries, 14 wars and many natural disasters.

The first of these lessons is to be able to make and take a joke. Laughing hysterically as Winnie Phillips pummelled my shoulder for my latest gaffe taught me that there is always a funny side to every situation.

In my early days in Northern Ireland, I was a junior officer on the Belfast Brigade HQ Staff. One of my tasks was to brief the Staff on the significant events of the previous 24 hours. In those days, the enemy funded itself by armed robberies. There were so many robberies that it was Brigade policy not to brief on any below £2500. On one occasion, I was before a particularly stressed Brigadier and his equally stressed staff. I described a billiard hall heist of the day before by 2 men of just £850. As soon as I mentioned the amount stolen, I could see the old man's fuse burning. But I continued, stating it was all in 10p pieces. He turned to the Brigade Major and gave him a look that asked "Is this officer mad?". Undeterred, I continued and said that the robbers had made their getaway on foot. It took a second or two for the picture of their escape to form in his mind. He relaxed, laughed and I had a relatively hassle free remainder of my 4.5 months' tour.

Another time, I parachuted into a Pacific lagoon with the Australian SAS. The drill for water jumps is that at a couple of hundred feet you release the buckle and sit on the harness until you hit the water. You throw your arms back to clear and then surface. Fairly straight forward, but a bit to think about on my first water jump. As we were in the aircraft approaching the drop zone when the jump-master turned to me and said "At the mouth of the lagoon fish breed. Because fish breed, sharks feed but don't even think about it, a dinghy will soon pick you up." 'Yeah right' I thought, 'I won't think about it'! Anyway, my exit and release went OK. But, as I was sitting in the harness, looking

down, I noticed a black shape about 16 ft long swimming close to my splash point. I surfaced, the dinghy gathered me but, worried about the other parachutists following, I shouted “Shark, Shark!”. We swished over to the ‘shark’ to find that it was seaweed swaying with the current. I had been drifting towards it during my descent, not it ‘swimming’ towards me. My mistake cost me a few Fosters and a few leg pulls, that night.

Like many other 11 years old boys starting out at Palmer’s, I had to travel on a bus, a train and a bus each way from my home in Rainham to school and back. Every day was a mini adventure, therefore. This daily experience taught me that life is full of adventures to be enjoyed and every day offers a new experience to be had.

During the East Timor emergency, I was sent at an hour’s notice to the Island and told to “Open up the Eastern half of the country”. My role was that of a Regional Governor, although I had no formal authority. In typical UN fashion, I was told that I was on my own. I had no money, no vehicle, no accommodation, no radio, no local contacts but told “Just to go an ‘open up’ the country”. Worse, I knew that the Militia groups, who had massacred so many of the population, were still operating there. After a short pause, I recalled that if I could cope with my daily journeys as an 11 year old; or later, if I could go into Armagh or Mogadishu, and enjoy those experiences, then I would cope with and enjoy this challenge too. And I did, thoroughly.

A couple of years later, in the Liberian capital, Monrovia, part of my role was to negotiate with the besieging rebel groups to secure safe passage across the front line for aid convoys. Contacting and liaising with General Shareef, aka ‘The Cobra’ by admiring his Real Madrid shirt and Timberland boots was also quite an adventure and not as difficult as being on the wrong end of one of ‘Tuf’s’ explosions.

These lessons from Palmer’s have served me well. We are about to hear from The Principal, Mark Vinall that not only does Palmer’s College still have a good academic focus and reputation. But, the wider ‘Lessons for Life’ are being nurtured too.

I thank you for your patience and I ask you to be upstanding to join me in toasting ‘The College’.”

**ROGER KEY (1970 - 1977)** is now a member of the Corporation and the Audit Committee. He has organised a £500 prize - **The Deutsche Bank Community Award** for the student who has undertaken most voluntary work with Palmer’s College.

**DR PETER HAPPÉ (1943 - 50)** sent in the following

**From War to Peace: 1943-47**

When, at the beginning of September in 1943, a hundred or so eleven-year old boys were assembled in the school hall in order to be tested and sorted out into three streamed classes, one could say that, in the wider world, the tide of war had turned. After the successful offensive at El Alamein in 1942 and the battle of Stalingrad which ended the defeat of the German 6<sup>th</sup> army early in 1943, there was now hope that the war would be won by the Allies and there was no longer any reason to anticipate an invasion of the British Isles. But that did not mean that we were not to be affected by the risks and hardships of war over the next two years. Settled into three classes which did not change a great deal over the following four or five years, we continued to be subject to a mixture of inconvenience and danger. Besides the still persisting enemy action, the war affected the curriculum and the cultural life of the school, and it also had an impact upon food and travel.

As far as hostilities were concerned we were still subject to air raids. Because of the superiority of RAF Fighter Command most raids now happened at night, as the Germans made use of the River Thames as an aid to navigation towards London. We still had to make uncomfortable decisions at home on many nights about whether to sleep in the cold and damp of the air raid shelter in the garden or the comfort of our more dangerous beds inside the house. Though there were still many minor raids, the worst period followed the rejoicing over the invasion of France on D Day in 1944, when to general surprise more and more doodle-bugs, Hitler's so-called revenge weapons, came over day and night. Grays and my home in Langdon Hills were in the area of high risk. In the school buildings the classroom windows were half boarded against possible blast so that the light came in at the top but you could not see out at ground level. Curiously I do not remember ever being evacuated from class, as I had been in Singapore, a few years earlier, but I do remember sitting in my desk and hearing the unmistakable buzz as one of these weapons went overhead. There was no time to go to a shelter. **Mr Michael** said there was no need to get under the desk until the engine cut out. It didn't. As the German position grew more and more desperate we also had to cope with the V2 rockets in the last phase of the war. These came without warning, though we soon learned the grim truth that if you heard the bang it meant that the rocket was falling somewhere else. These were very dangerous weapons, all the more so for their psychological effect.

The preparations for the invasion of France in 1944 had an uncomfortable consequence for those who travelled to school. All around Grays there was a

huge accumulation of military vehicles which were parked on the roads. The main road towards Southend, now the A1306, was closed and our bus had to make a long diversion around Stanford-le-Hope and Mucking. The buses themselves were also a problem because many of them were now museum pieces, and also there were not enough of them. To begin with in 1943 there were no school specials and we had to find (standing) room in the service buses running from Chelmsford to Tilbury Ferry. I spent many hours in my first year waiting in Grays market for a bus that got me home at 6.30 p.m. After D Day these difficulties gradually eased. One abiding memory, however, was the sight from the upper floor of the old school building on the hill of the huge accumulation of ships around Tilbury docks as they prepared to join the invasion force.

There were no school uniforms because clothing was rationed. The menu for lunch was not appetizing. There was a certain Dickensian grimness on the faces of the cooks, and I am sure that they must have had the greatest difficulty in keeping us fed because of the rationing. This was the period in the war when the threat by U-boats to imports by sea was at its highest. The story was that the cooks merely dipped the meat into the pie or the stew and then withdrew it for use on another day. One enterprising but indignant boy carried out tests to see how high he could bounce his rubbery pudding.

Looking back I think now that the greatest impact of the war, however, was on the curriculum and the timetable. Perhaps those who were managing it were conscious that the boys might eventually have to take part in the fighting as soon as they left school. There might also be a practical advantage in familiarity with military culture and discipline. There was no sport at all on the timetable except for an occasional school football match, and I never discovered how the staff decided who was worthy to be picked for such events. The gym and the swimming pool were closed for the duration. For the two years under wartime conditions the teaching was very concentrated, particularly in a curriculum heavily loaded with science, mathematics and mechanics, and I suppose these all might have been a valuable build-up for various technical and combat roles in the armed services. There was no option system before we reached the matriculation examination in 1947. History and Latin dwindled to one period a week and were thus not taught as examination subjects. Those who wanted to study them in the sixth form later had a good deal to make up. Another feature was that the teaching workshops were closed. I think this may have been because of a shortage of the material necessary for practical classes, but it had the effect of making our education that much more theoretical.

The most notable characteristic of the timetable, however, was the amount of time given over to military training. On two afternoons a week we in the

junior years took part in cadet corps activities. For the older boys this happened on three afternoons, and on some days more than half the boys and a considerable number of the masters came to school in khaki. The headmaster, the Reverend H. Aldridge Abbott, wore the uniform of an army padre on those occasions. From their insignia it was apparent that some of the masters, some of whom were veterans of the First World War, also had roles in the Home Guard.

There was one softer area in this military regime. There was no music teaching on the timetable, except for one period of singing per week in which we sang traditional songs, but the cadet unit did generate two bands: one with bugles and drums for the juniors and one with a wider range of brass instruments for the seniors. We were trained by elderly musicians from outside the teaching staff. The highlight of our musical year was the parade day in the summer term. Then the school field, normally used for drill and weapons training, but not for sport, was the site of a parade for the whole school, divided into platoons, each lead by a member of staff. The bands gave time to the marching about, and a visiting senior officer of the regular army took the salute.

In the absence of male staff in the services we had some women teachers, who always seemed very effective and whom we liked very much. But most of the staff were older men, often with reputations going back to the First World War. For the majority of our lessons, except for a very few practical science experiments, we remained fixed in our desks, but Mrs Smith, who taught us English in the first year, did at least have us read Shakespeare in parts at the front of the class. One did have a sense of a hierarchy amongst the staff. Most of those who taught us in the junior years did not teach the older boys. One custom which developed gave great comfort. At the time the most popular radio programme was Tommy Handley's ITMA. This was a series of comic sketches usually reflecting the trials and irritations of wartime life, interrupted by characters who introduced themselves with their own catch phrases. It became our aim to attach many of these names as nicknames to members of staff; and so we had a Mrs Mop, a Sam Scram, a Colonel Chinstrap and a Funf.

When the war ended some staff returned to the school from active service, and the women teachers quickly disappeared. It was noticeable, though, that several of the new teachers were rather ineffective and had difficulty in maintaining discipline. I suppose there were some who were finding out the hard way whether teaching was for them or not. The curriculum remained largely the same apart for one important exception. It became necessary, we were told at an assembly of the whole school, that the cadet unit must now be

voluntary. When those who did not wish to continue were invited to leave the hall, virtually everyone departed, leaving, it was rumoured, about 12 determined characters. The unit could not survive such a loss, and it quickly disappeared completely.

At the same time, in the now vacant space on our crowded timetable, sport appeared. During the war we had heard of school houses from time to time, but they were not really a significant part of our lives. The coming of peace saw the revival of the house system which was now used as a basis for arranging internal sports competitions. The gym and the pool were reopened. I think it must have taken quite a time for the cricket pitches to be restored, because the first practices I remember taking part in, during the year 1945-6, were on a voluntary basis at Blackshots field after the school day. As the school swimming bath was quite small, it quickly became a pattern that the annual swimming competition was held at the Bata swimming pool in Tilbury. Cross country runs were organised, sometimes at Orsett. The boarding house was reopened. The prefect system was also given new importance, and school uniforms were introduced with new designs and a new badge.

In general the cultural life of the school was uplifted. Plays were performed by the boys in the evenings, and there were public music concerts given by professional musicians. **Mr George Ross** was the abiding influence in the development of cricket week and later of the cricket tours in the school holidays which were undertaken for many years afterwards. One of the new teachers was **Mr Frederick Smurthwaite**, who set about building a Gilbert and Sullivan tradition. This took some time, but by 1948-9 some of us, now sixth formers, were involved in some very popular productions under his leadership. Close to this a school orchestra was set up and gave concerts in the hall. The school magazine, called The Palmerian, reappeared.

Many of these changes must have been a consequence of the arrival of the new headmaster, **Mr Frederick J. Jordan**. The oddest thing was the disappearance of **Mr Abbott** who had been in office since the First World War. I do not remember that there was any farewell event to mark his many years of service to the school. During the war those successful in obtaining a university place were allowed to spend one year of deferment there before they were called up. It was expected that they would return to their studies when hostilities came to an end. This happened to one particular friend of mine who was in the sixth form in 1943. With the coming of peace Mr Jordan did a great deal to increase university entry, and he had a very successful campaign to send boys to Oxford and Cambridge.

In 1947, four years after our arrival, my class took its matriculation examination. We had been together in a time which had seen remarkable

changes in the life of the school. Though the curriculum itself did not change very much in these years, we were then able to enter sixth form courses which, more specialised, gave us scope to choose what we wanted to study. **Mr Becker**, a young German specialist, was appointed, but I think the strong bias in favour of science subjects must have continued for some years. Certainly from my class, which now divided according to individual choices of subjects, the sixth form groups which were formed were far larger on the science side than for those of us studying the arts courses.

We had seen some very difficult times which caused much anxiety and apprehension, but we were also lucky to be alive in that dawn which was the coming of peace. There was now so much to enjoy and so many opportunities inviting our acceptance – and we were still so very young.

**JOHN HALL (1950 - 1956)** would like to get in touch with anyone who remembers him, especially **George Kubanek** and **James Pettigrew**; he can be contacted at [gillandjohnhall@btinternet.com](mailto:gillandjohnhall@btinternet.com) John plays golf at Ferndown in Dorset, where **Harry Keyes (1931 - 1937)** is a member. Golf and the old school can lead to a long life!!

**SIDNEY BULL (1942 - 1948)** was pleased to see the photo of Upper 6B in 1948/9, in last year's magazine, sent in by **Colin Peplow**. Sidney is number 2 in the front row and **Andrew Salisbury** is number 9 in the front row. [Ed. We are always grateful when members take the time to write in with extra information.]

**P. MICHAEL RIISAGER (1946 - 1953)** has written a book entitled "Letters to Kaia - Adventures of A Danish Boy in England During WWII and After", because when his grand-daughter Kaia was 8 years old she asked him "Granddad, did you have a luggage label tied round your neck when you were evacuated?" The book contains, among many other things, Michael's memories of Palmer's. He particularly remembers one occasion when the choir and some masters and their wives went by coach to Cambridge to sing in the chapel at King's College, Cambridge. Michael purchased a snake whilst there and was bringing it home in a 2 lb jam jar. Unfortunately it escaped on the journey home in the coach and caused much consternation, although it was successfully recaptured.

The book can be obtained from Amazon.com, or the publisher, 'AuthorHouse' which also markets an e-version or by contacting Michael.

Michael would like to receive news of anyone who remembers him at [pmichaelriisager@hotmail.com](mailto:pmichaelriisager@hotmail.com)

**RICHARD TALLBOYS CMG OBE (1942 -1946)** has also written a book, entitled “Encounters of a Diplomatic Kind”, which was published in 2009 by The Memoir Club, Durham (Tel: 0191 373 5600). It tells the story of his life from 1962 when he became an Australian Government Trade Commissioner, through 1968 when he joined the Foreign Office as a member of the British Diplomatic Service, until 1987, when he retired. Palmer’s is mentioned in the Preface with pride and affection.

**RICHARD GORE (1948 - 1953)** joined Palmer’s School in September 1948 and was in Addison. In the first year he was selected to take part in the School Choir. In January 1949 he was offered a part in the chorus of the ‘Pirates of Penzance’. In 1950 the School performed ‘Iolanthe’ and in this opera he played the part of a Fairy in the chorus! ‘The Gondoliers’ was the chosen opera for 1951, in which he again sang in the chorus. Other Old Palmerians with whom he remembers rehearsing were **Peter Scott, John Hull, Brian Gay, Raymond Hayter** and **Bill Easton**. Many Masters also took part including **Mr. Frank Hughes, Mr. Harold Benson** and **Mr. Philip Ross**, and **Mr. Smurthwaite** was the Producer/Director.

Richard was also a great lover of sport, and joined the various teams for football, cricket, cross-country, and chess club and enjoyed them all. He has sent in two photographs



Palmer’s Junior Cricket XI of 1951

Back Row:- Toft, Steadman, Carr, Reeves, Gore, Small.

Front Row:- Moore, Gunn, Blakemore, Abel, Noble.



Pirates of Penzance 1949 Dress Rehearsal

**PENNY WRIGHT (1958 - 1965) MRS ALEXANDER** lives in Coolabah, New South Wales, Australia and has sent us this article.



*Penny is the niece of John Hayston (History and Housemaster) and cousin of Jen (now Legge) and John. She emigrated to Australia in 1969 and refers to herself as one of the last £10 Poms.*

We are graziers. It is 3km from our homestead to the front gate. The property is 6,000 acres. Our largest paddock (translation – field) is 2,000 acres. It is 75km to town and 250 km to a traffic light

To the east of us, towards the coast and rain, the properties are smaller: to the west the properties get bigger and bigger, the distances greater, and people and roads fewer.

To the east graziers talk about how many sheep they can run to the acre: to the west they talk about how many acres/square kilometres/square miles they need to run just one sheep.

The postman delivers mail three times a week to our box at the front gate. To the west the postman does a weekly mail run and has a refrigerated truck to take ice-cream milk etc. Further west the mail, ice-cream and other supplies are delivered by light plane.

I have met one mother who travels 60 km from the homestead each day just to meet the school bus - that's 240 km a day, 5 days a week.

The School of the Air has now been replaced by real time schooling on the Internet. The Internet is also a huge boon to the children in the outback towns. It has given them the opportunity to study subjects that haven't been available to them before, as they hook up with classes hundreds of kilometres away.

**But to start at the beginning:**

*"They planted trees around the homestead so that they could see the wind blowing and not just hear its eerie sound."* **Barbara Hayward** (geography) describing the vast wheat plains of New South Wales to our class after her visit to Australia and New Zealand. It stayed in my mind.

I left Palmers' in 1965. I spent three years in London - the Beatles, Carnaby Street, miniskirts, David Bailey, Mary Quant, Twiggy - studying photography at the Poly. in Regent St. and then another year working for an advertising photographer in his large studio in South Kensington before emigrating to Australia and working as a photographer in Sydney.

**The Opal Hunters**

Weekends and holidays were spent exploring. We became very keen on looking for opals and travelled as far north as Duck Creek in Queensland and as far west as White Cliffs in NSW looking for "colour". Lightning Ridge was very much a frontier town. No tourists. Not even a laundromat. There was one pub and houses made out of



David Brown tractor cases, beer bottles and petrol cans. (Today these are curiosities for the tourist and the rest of the town looks like a Sydney suburb). Many people lived in tents or caravans. They were from all walks of life. Some with money: most without. No television, but conversation and games of chess. Swimming in the piping hot town baths - artesian water - no cold

water in the town, not then. No electricity either. We didn't go there in the summer when it was likely to be 50C in the shade (if you could find it), and too hot for the paraffin refrigerators to work.

### The Photographer

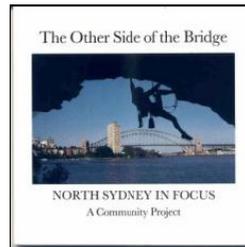
As the manager and photographer of a large advertising agency in Sydney I photographed everything from pop stars to Coco Pops.

*On commercial assignment in a Newcastle (NSW) coal mine.*



The agency moved to a splendid new building and the architect asked me what I needed. He actually listened to me and drew up plans from my specifications for studio and darkrooms without alteration!

A pro bono Bicentennial project for North Sydney Council kept me busy organising a photographic competition for the people of North Sydney. We gave out 1,000 rolls of Kodachrome and then had 36,000! slides from which to select photographs for a book and an exhibition.



The 1988 Bicentennial Day celebrations were good fun and found me working as part of the Kodak team of photographers. One of my photos was chosen for the front cover of their souvenir book and the Queen asked for six more copies for the family please.



## Sea Change



Sailing became part of our lives and I won the Woody Point Trophy in my ancient Dragon. (Quorum for the Club: 2 people and a bottle of champagne).



That year we also moved, becoming part of a water access only community on Pittwater north of Sydney. Still only an hour's commute, but the first part is by boat.

## Working on the Water

I retired from photography after twenty years with the agency and, in 1992 husband, Steve, and I bought a yacht brokerage on Pittwater. In the next few years we added a yacht charter company, a sailing school and a real estate agency selling boat-access-only houses. I enjoyed my clients immensely. One of them will always be remembered for making his deposit for the purchase of his house on his credit card! When he first came to view houses with me he said that he hoped I didn't mind, but he'd brought his swimming costume with him and could he have a swim whilst we were over there?! (Well if it helps to sell him a house why not? But what other Real Estate agent would receive



such a request?) So he had a swim, bought the house and then asked me to find tenants for the house. We didn't see him for a few months but then I took him over the water to see his house. We were invited in by the tenants and stood chatting until I looked round and saw that the pontoon was empty. It took me a moment to register that my boat

wasn't there! It was sailing down Elvina Bay. "Don't worry Penny" said my client, the swimmer, "I'll get it!" But there was a faster way, and he followed me along the peninsula, down the ferry steps, behind our neighbour's house, past Fred's boathouse to our jetty where my boat was just coming to rest in to its normal docking position on our pontoon. It had obviously just decided to go home! Other stories from that era include the house that was attacked by cockatoos, the law clerk who passed himself off as a surgeon and the tenants who woke up to find a pig in bed beside them!

### Tree Change

In 1998 we bought a 2,000 acre property 6 hours drive west of Sydney and set about sheep farming. The idea was to travel back to Sydney at weekends to go sailing, but we love it so much in the country that we rarely go back at all. We found ourselves on a steep learning curve for the first few years, but because we were starting with a clean slate, we tended to be fairly innovative and soon had the neighbours checking out what we were up to. They laughed at our alpaca sheep minders until they saw how effective they were. They weren't very complimentary about our Dorpers (What? No wool?). Dorpers are South African meat sheep particularly suited to the semi arid conditions in which we live. Two of our

rams were Champion and Reserve Champion at the first national show. To show them today we would have to present them snowy white, beautifully coiffed, trimmed, shampooed and brushed.



We also run Merino sheep with the help of our trusty Kelpie sheepdogs, Gem & Sam.



And we love shearing time and all the activity and the smell of the wool shed.

## Orphans

One of my greatest joys came from hand rearing lambs. This is Millie and just a few days old. Her Friesian appearance comes from crossing a Merino ewe with a Dorper ram. The following year Millie came out of the mob to see me in the yards. Sheep have a great memory for faces but they get confused if you change your appearance by wearing a hat! Later I was thrilled when she introduced me to her first lamb.



*A group of motherless lambs waiting patiently for their tea.*

They were not allowed in my garden but after tea we'd all go for a walk. There would be Oliver, the Bichon, a couple of cats, the alpaca and anyone else who happened to be around.

Dorper, Noah, is bringing up the rear and still unsteady on his feet after recovering from a six week long paralysis of his hind legs and back. Besides a daily injection of antibiotics, I also dosed him with comfrey "smoothies" – his milk blended with fresh comfrey and anything I could find in the medicine cupboard that I thought might help. Against expectations he made a full recovery, but I'm afraid I turned him into a bit of a mummy's boy and he always preferred rams to ewes!



### **Chloe the Joey:**

She is absolutely the best pet I've reared and after six years we're still the best of friends. When she was first brought to me, the soles of her great feet were black and



shiny showing that she had never been out of her mother's pouch. The nights were very frosty so I made her a pouch out of two parkas into which I zipped her at dusk. She took to it readily and would dive in head first and somersault on to her back where she would lie contentedly holding her back foot with her front paw whilst sucking her big toe!

Chloe has always had complete freedom but chooses to live with us. Her greatest friend is Sam the sheepdog with whom she grew up. They often race with one another and she likes to think she's helping with the sheep work too. She sleeps next to Sam's kennel. I get a hug and a groom every morning and sometimes a playful kick. If she stands up on the tip of her toes and the end of her tail she is almost my height. She has a particular liking for dog biscuits, bread and banana skins.

Kangaroos are not endangered. In fact they've never had it so good. All the watering points and pastures put in by farmers for their livestock have vastly improved conditions for the roos too. Their numbers are down a bit at the moment because of the drought. They are superbly adapted to their environment and in hard times they just don't reproduce, but they quickly make up their numbers in the next good season. They are able to lope along effortlessly because their insides act like a pump and, on each bound, air is forced in and out of their lungs. Seeing a great mob of them bounding across the paddock is like watching a scene from Jurassic Park.



*When I married Steve, I gained two wonderful step-daughters, both of whom now have daughters of their own. This is our granddaughter, Samantha, making friends with Chloe.*

## **Drought & Flood**

For the last eight years we've been battling the drought – the worst in over a hundred years in this part of Australia. It's not that we haven't had any rain, but there's been a lot less of it and at the wrong times. Creeks, wetlands and rivers (even the mighty Darling) have all dried up, and the water table has dropped alarmingly. With less feed for the animals, stock numbers are the lowest they've been since the early years when sheep were first introduced to Australia. We've had some violent weather including rain storms that washed out fences, and dramatic dust storms. But this is Australia and it is a land of extremes.

At the time of writing (April 2010)

The run-off from Christmas rains in central NSW and Queensland has finally reached and filled the Menindee Lakes via the Darling River. The lakes have been dry for 6 years and it looks as if the water might reach the Murray and even Adelaide. Meanwhile the flood waters from huge February rains in Queensland are creeping down through NSW on a front 50 miles wide. It's being taken up by the Paroo River and its associated channels west of the Darling. The Paroo is the only undisturbed river in NSW (no irrigation, dams, man-made interference) and it's doing what it's done for eons: it is directing flood water southwards filling up lakes and wetlands on the way. Most years it eventually peters out and the surface waters gradually dry up until the next time. There's so much water this year that it looks as if it will actually join up with the Darling for only the third time in recorded history. The property owners out there are ecstatic. There's going to be feed around for years to come.

## **Rain:**

In Elvina Bay we had 14 inches in one day - 7 in the last hour between 4 and 5 o'clock. The creek flooded, the whole mountain side looked like Niagara Falls. Our boats all



sank. (Sydney has more rain than London. London has more rain days).



When the River Mole flooded we were cut off from our mob of sheep for five days. They survived but two alpacas were poisoned when they browsed on some oleander growing in the remains of a garden by a ruined hut.

### **Fire:**

In 1994 we lost 18 homes in our community of 48. Ours was severely singed: the wood preservative baked on like glass, a beer bottle exploded in the kitchen. This is all that remained of “Possums Bush”, next door. The Bush Fire Brigade and The Water Police were fantastic. Due to their efforts no lives were lost. The boat house from which we had just started to operate a boat repair business also burnt to the ground. On the waterfront nearby wooden oars were charred from the heat alone but of our Nylex boat tenders there was no sign – not even a puddle of plastic. They’d all evaporated.



*All is confusion as  
the fire barrels  
over the  
escarpment  
consuming  
everything in its  
path.*



**Australia**, as a continent, is still hard to comprehend - it's so BIG, and apart from the coastal fringes, so EMPTY of people. I could only start enjoying it once I had stopped comparing it with England and started appreciating it for its own sake. The colours of the land, the clarity of the light, the vastness of the sky and the immensity of it all were so foreign to me. There are no little old pubs, ancient churches and no sense of history. There is however a feeling of timelessness about the land which can even be felt on the outskirts of Sydney.



Chloe the kangaroo and Sam the sheepdog on our morning walk.

**GILLIAN WEST (1976 - 1978) MRS JONES** took 'A' level Music with **MARK ANTHONY TURNAGE (1976 - 1978)** and they were taught by **Miss Margaret Whittlestone**. He was 50 in June 2010 and Gill met him at an evening concert to celebrate his birthday, in Liverpool in May. He is a renowned British composer whose music has achieved world wide acclaim. He is currently composing an opera which will be performed in Covent Garden at the end of the year. He has fond memories of Palmer's, particularly of his music teacher and taking part in the Gilbert and Sullivan Operas in 1977 and 1978. He also wrote music for a school play produced by Morene Griggs, "Victorian Melodramas".

### **HELP REQUIRED**

Following our request for information concerning the guardianship of infants on page 51 in last year's magazine. **John Walsham (1940 - 1946)** supplied

the following interesting information. Before the war the Divisional Education Office of the Essex County Council responsible for schools in this area occupied premises in the grounds of the old Quarry Hill School, immediately opposite the Ritz Cinema. In an air raid during the blitz the school and the Education Office were damaged, the latter so badly that it could no longer be used.

With no pupils boarding at Palmer's Boys' School during the war, the Divisional Education Office was accommodated in rooms on the first floor, to the east of the headmaster's house and overlooking the river. How long the office remained there before moving to Upminster Court in Hall Lane, Upminster, I do not know, but I remember having to go to the office at Palmer's for some reason during my teacher-training course, c. 1947.

The notice of application for the adoption order as quoted, lacks a comma after the words "the Essex Education Committee", the reference to Palmer's being there simply to give the then address of the divisional office. Finally. The statement regarding the adoption is incorrect. It would have been the County Council which was appointed as guardian to the child, the Education Committee of the Council having no responsibility other than for the county's schools.

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**Geoff Battershall (1944 - 1951)** writes to say that the photo on Page 60 last year was not Upper 6B, but School Prefects 1948/49, as **Gordon Bannister** and **Brian Chaplin** who are the last two boys on the back row were in 6C, the same as Geoff.

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Does anyone know the whereabouts of **Jane Hunter** who was in the photo of IIII on page 33 of last year's magazine, sent in by **Hilda Simonds**? If so please contact Ruth Hunwick at the address given at the front of the magazine.

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Does anyone have news of **Bob** and **Winnie Jesson**? Bob retired as Head of Physics in the late 1970s. If so please contact Ruth Hunwick at the address given at the front of the magazine.

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Does anyone have news of **Michael Borrett** who taught German at the Boys' School from around 1960? If so please contact Ruth Hunwick at the address given at the front of the magazine.

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Alan Webb is looking for a very dear old friend of his **Jackie Cox**, who was at Palmer's from **1952 - 1957**. Alan is in his 70s now and she would be in her late 60s and he would love to hear from her or anyone who knows of her, to find out how life worked out for her. He can be contacted via his daughter Rebecca on [bec@chimpy.com](mailto:bec@chimpy.com) Jackie is seen here in a school photo taken around 1953-1954 in the back row on the far right.



(Editor's note:- Can anyone positively identify the date and form of the photo and the names of any others on it?)

### **BIRTHS**

Congratulations to:-

**JOHN PHILLIPS (1988 - 1990)** and **EMMA BODLEY (1991 - 1994) MRS PHILLIPS** on the birth of their son Thomas on 8th August 2009, weighing 6lb 15ozs.

**MICHAEL STURGESS (1985 - 1987)** and his partner Claire Rumsey on the birth of their daughter Melissa Belle in October 2009, a sister for Jessica.

**MICHAEL GILL (1989 - 1990)** and his wife Julie on the birth of their daughter Amy Grace on 10 January 2010, a beautiful sister for Nathan.

## WEDDINGS

Congratulations to:-

**TERESA LORD (1994 - 1996)** and **GREGG STUBBS (1996 - 1997)** who were married and honeymooned on the island of Santorini, Greece, on Friday 14 August 2009 and then returned to Stanford Le Hope.

**LYNSEY BAYFORD (2000 - 2002)** who married James Burst on 15 August 2009 at Stock Brook Manor in Billericay. The newly-weds honeymooned in the Maldives and then returned to East Tilbury.

**KELLYANN JEFFERY (1996 - 1997)** and **MICHAEL WEIR (1995 - 1998)** who were married at Friern Manor in Dunton on 19 July 2009.

**JADE GODFREY (2000 - 2002)** who married Brett Barker in Mexico on 23 July 2009 and then returned to Orsett. The couple had a blessing at St John's Church in Tilbury on 15 August 2009.

**LIESL RICHARDSON (1996 - 1998)** who married Stuart Honour at the Fennes, in Braintree in September 2009.

**MICHAEL NOTLEY (1998 - 2000)** who married Beverley Blackwell on the 9th September, 2009. Michael is a police officer and can never forget his anniversary - 999! They were married at Zucchini in Paphos, Cyprus.

**SAMANTHA JOANNE HARRINGTON (1998 - 2000)** and **LUKE GUIDOTTI (2000 - 2001)** who were married at St Catherine's Church in East Tilbury on 21 August 2009. They honey-mooned in Cozumel, Mexico.

**NICOLA TAPSELL (1994 - 1996)** of Richmond Road, Grays, who married Andrew Horsman of Frobisher Close, Laindon, at St Peter and St Paul's Parish Church in Grays, on 15 August 2009.

**SARAH LEEMING (2003 - 2005)** who married Kevin Gilley at Friern Manor in Dunton, then jetted off to a new life in Dubai.

**SALLY MARLTON (2002 - 2004)** of Corringham, who married Wayne Miles on Saturday 10 October 2009 at the Fennes, Braintree, Essex.

**LISA CHALMERS (1995 - 1997)** and **STEVEN WARNER (1991 - 1992)** who were married on 9 October 2009 at the Prince Maurice Hotel in Mauritius. They celebrated at Dunton Hills Golf Club on their return.

**DAVID CLEWLEY (1996 - 1999)** who married Claire Humphrey at the Du Rougemont Manor in Brentwood on Friday 20 November 2009. They honeymooned on a cruise around the Canary Islands.

**CATHERINE MALIN (1994 - 1997)** who married Richard Clarke at Bulphan Village's St Mary the Virgin Church on 20 December 2009. They held their reception at Friern Manor.

**KELLY DOVER (1996 - 1997)** and **SCOTT HARRIS (1996 - 1998)** who were married at Friern Manor on 24 October 2009.

### **OBITUARIES**

We are very sorry to have to report the deaths of the following Old Palmerians, and we extend our sympathy to their families:

<b>RONALD KING</b>	<b>1933 - 1938</b>		
<b>ALFRED JOSEPH SMALLBONE</b>	<b>1953 - 1958</b>		
<b>ANTHONY STRATTON</b>	<b>1931 - 1940</b>	16	December 2007
<b>JEAN STEWART (MRS DIXEY)</b>	<b>1942 - 1949</b>		April 2009
<b>UNA DINES (MRS WADE)</b>	<b>1935 - 1940</b>		April 2009
<b>HOWARD ANSELL</b>	<b>1948 - 1955</b>	05	April 2009
<b>ALAN JOHN MURRAY</b>	<b>1944 - 1950</b>		June 2009
<b>RONALD GOOCH</b>		20	August 2009
<b>NORA BENNETT</b>	<b>1926 - 1931</b>	13	November 2009
<b>(MRS GOODYEAR)</b>			
<b>TONY BENSON</b>	<b>1940 - 1946</b>	15	November 2009
<b>ROY GRUMBALL</b>	<b>1941 - 1945</b>	07	December 2009
<b>ERNEST COX</b>	<b>1937 - 1943</b>	05	February 2010
<b>ERNEST HEWITT</b>	<b>1941 - 1947</b>	11	June 2010

I apologise for an error in last year's magazine:- **MARGARET CRAWLEY'S** married name should have been **MRS ROSS**, not Mrs Roff as printed on pages 62 and 65.

**Ken Hewitt (1941 - 1947)** is still in touch with **Gordon Ross**, who was a very close friend at school. Gordon and Margaret went to Los Angeles in around 1960 when Gordon took a post at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he became a Professor. Their daughter is Ken's godchild, and she also is a medical Professor.

I also need to apologise for the fact that this obituary for Denis Rath should have been included in last year's magazine.

**DENIS RATH (1962-1968)**

(Noted in 2009 Magazine)

Denis died in April after a brief illness. He left a widow Stephanie and four children.

He was one of four children of **Richard Rath (1924-1930)** who each went to Palmers. The others being **Heather (1959-1966)**, **Carol (1964-1969)** and **Kennedy (1966-71)**.

His time at Palmers was marked by success in football and cricket, and he was a popular pupil. He left after lower VI to join a City bank, where he worked until retirement.

Denis was a very keen and competitive sportsman, and took an active role in his bank's social activities, becoming captain of the golf team among other honours. He was skilled in bringing out the best in other players.

His funeral in Chelmsford was attended by over 200 friends and family. He will be much missed.

*Kennedy Rath*

**BARRIE LAWRENCE 1921 - 2009**

(Noted in 2009 Magazine)

Barrie was born in Chadwell the son of parents who were both local school teachers.

He went to Palmers School from 1931 to 1939 and was very proud of his education there. He was a committed member of the Old Palmerians.

After school he joined the army at the start of World War II. Barrie's army service was the only time in his life that he left the Grays area so he really was a 'local lad' in every respect.

On leaving the army Barrie worked as a sales engineer for a number of well known oil companies including Duckhams and Tecalemit.

In 1955 he married Gwyneth Willams, a teacher and they lived in Grays. Gwyn, a gifted pianist was the accompanist to the Leigh Orpheus Male Voice Choir. She shared Barrie's life and interests until her tragic early death at the age of 52.

Locally Barrie was a member of Round Table and later the 41 Club.

But two interests dominated Barrie's life, Thames barge sailing and rugby football.

He was a long time member of the Thames Barge Sailing Trust and was Commodore for many years until becoming Life President. He and Gwyn spent many weekends sailing barges around the Essex coast. He was a very hands-on enthusiast.

Thurrock Rugby Club was the other consuming passion, he played regularly from after the war, at Stanford-le-Hope and he was very proud of the fact that he continued turning out for the Vets until after the age of 56. Barrie was Chairman of the club for many years and a fixture in the club house until ill health kept him at home in the last years of his life. As Barrie's job took him all over London, Essex and East Anglia, he was able to follow the wider rugby field, attending mid-week matches and was well known in the rugby scene beyond the Thurrock club house.

Barrie's funeral was held on the 4<sup>th</sup> June at St.Thomas' RC church in Grays. The service was taken by his nephew, Father Andrew Headon and there was an impressive turn out from Thurrock RFC members past and present, the Sailing Barge Trust, friends and relatives.

There was a reception afterwards at the Thurrock RFC club house.

Barrie's body was interred in his parents' grave in Chadwell-St-Mary cemetery.

*Denis Headon (brother in law)*

### **PETER TONGEMAN (1937 - 1945)**

(Noted in 2009 Magazine)

My brother Peter Tongeman died on the 12 March, 2009 after a short illness.

He attended Palmer's from 1937 - 1945 having joined in the Prep. He always spoke of Palmer's with affection and was grateful for the education he received during those years which stood him in good stead all his life.

On leaving school he worked for a short time in the Office at Bata's and then, following Army Service, he entered Spurgeon's College in 1950 and began training for the Baptist ministry.

The first Church he pastored was at Ramridge in Luton - starting in a wooden hut and going on to build a brick church building with voluntary labour. He also pastored Churches in Northampton and New Milton. In between and following these two appointments he spent several years as Young People's Secretary for the Baptist Union and Area Superintendent for South East England. As he reached retirement he was elected as President of the Baptist Union - a one year appointment. Teachers take heart! One master was known to remark at some point in Peter's school career "Tongeman, there is one thing you will never be, that is Archbishop of Canterbury!" He perhaps would be interested to know that Peter became the Baptist equivalent!

Peter met and married his wife, Ruth, while he was in Luton. Incidentally, her sister-in-law, **Enid** (née **Buckett**), who sadly died a few years ago, was a Palmer's girl. Peter was very much a family man and his wife, Ruth, supported and shared with him in all his work. He was proud of his two sons and in the process of time, their wives and his six grandchildren and they enjoyed many fun activities together.

On retirement they moved to Romsey - he continued to preach regularly and became Moderator of one or two Churches, who were without a Pastor. He liked to travel and enjoyed leading Holiday groups including some to the Holy Land. Subsequently he was asked to be Chaplain on three 'Saga' cruises, which they found fulfilling - the last one just a few months before his unexpected death.

He had many hobbies and kept fit gardening, walking, swimming and cycling. He and Ruth acquired a tandem and became well known travelling round on it visiting different Churches in his year as President, and holidaying! Peter had a love of music and poetry - he played in a small local orchestra and at an early age started writing his own poems. Some were just meant for family and friends and we sometimes would receive a fun verse on our birthday, but his more thoughtful ones were published regularly in The Baptist Times.

Peter lived a long and full life to the glory of God and seemed unchanged by the years. He had a keen sense of humour and was always fun to be with. Having reached the age of 70 (three score years and ten), he valued his last nine years and regarded them as a bonus and was still serving the Lord in an active way until his final illness. It is fitting that, in his weakness towards the end, some of his last words were "I have had 79 good years and I just want the Lord to take me home". His faith was firmly fixed in his God and His promise of an eternal home and we can be assured that that is where he is now.

*Brenda Doye (née Tongeman 1951 - 1957)*

The following poem was written by Peter in January 2009 when he seemed to know/feel that he was not going to get better. He actually died of cancer but it was not diagnosed till the day of his death.

### **Loss**

I've drunk the fresh, wild air on distant hills,  
I've gulped each biting breeze along the shore,  
I've sipped the perfumed breath of hyacinths -  
But now I cannot breathe them any more.

I've strode by rugged paths to many a peak,  
I've trodden undulating coastal ways,  
I've strolled the quiet forest glades and lanes -  
But now are past inspiring walking days.

I've preached to congregations, large and small,  
I've spoken with the lowly and the great,  
I've taught at length until my voice is hoarse -  
But now, poor voice to enter in debate.

What once I took for granted is diminished,  
My breath, so easy, struggles now, in pain,  
My limbs once supple, have grown weak and stiff,  
My voice, once clear, I call upon in vain.

My joys are memories of what has been.  
And yet, upheld by vistas of the past;  
Sustained by love that will not let me go,  
Hope reigns supreme for what's to come at last.

*"Written when I was ill with a severe chest infection wondering if this was the end of life."*

*Peter Tongeman*

### **JOSEPHINE SORRELL (1949 - 1956) MRS WEBB**

(Noted in 2009 Magazine)

A Memorial concert for the former chairman, Jose, of the Thurrock Operatic Society has raised £2,000 for charity. The Rose of England concert was staged at the Thameside Theatre in Gray in memory of Josephine Webb, who died suddenly in January 2009.

The proceeds from ticket sales went to one of Jose's favourite charities, the Rainham Marshes RSPB nature reserve. Society chairman Ken Baker presented the cheque at the reserve's visitor centre.

He said: "The money will go towards forming a new major habitat project. The RSPB proposes to install a plaque on that area in memory of Jose, who was also one of their regular voluntary workers."

### **JEAN STEWART (MRS DIXEY) (1942 - 1949)**

Jean died in April 2009 of a heart attack the day after she and her husband Ken had celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary with their family in London.

**Dorothy McArdell** first met Jean in September 1945 when Dorothy joined 4L at Palmer's. Jean took Dorothy 'under her wing' and they remained friends until her death. Jean lived in Wales for a number of years after the family had had to transfer there because of Ken's job at the Royal Mint, when their two daughters were of early Secondary school age. Dorothy saw them frequently when they lived in Upminster and then a few times when they were in Wales and will always treasure their friendship.

Dorothy continues to keep very busy, being involved in Church activities, having various duties. She also attends Surrey Teachers Retirement Association meetings and the Redhill U3A, where she leads a "Beginners French" group and is a member of the German group.

### **UNA DINES (MRS WADE) (1935 - 1940)**

Una died in April 2009 at the age of 85 years. She was a contemporary of **Don and Ella Littlechild** and wife of Dennis.

*Dennis Wade (1936 - 1942)*

Dennis also says that there are still three people who started at Palmer's in 1936 living in College Avenue, Grays:- **Bryan Coker**, **Ron Dines** and himself.

### **HOWARD ANSELL**

Howard Ansell died on the 5th April 2009 after suffering from Lung Cancer for a few months at the age of 72.

### **ALAN JOHN MURRAY**

Alan was born on 25 August 1933 and went to Palmer's from 1944 to 1950. He died in June 2009 at the age of seventy five. He was a baker of Marks and Murrays in Grays, then in King Street in Stanford le Hope and then in Harleston in Norfolk.

His wife Margaret lived in Connaught Avenue, Grays, as a child and they were still in contact with Peter Dines when they moved to live in South Elmham, Suffolk.

### **NORA BENNETT (MRS GOODYEAR)**

Nora died on the 13th November 2009. The cremation was held at Corbets Tey on Friday 27th November followed by a service of celebration of her life at St. Cedd's Church, Stifford Clays.

### **TONY BENSON**

Tony died on Sunday 15th November 2009, aged 80, in Elizabeth Fry Ward, Basildon Hospital, after a short illness. His funeral took place at Corbets Tey Crematorium on Thursday 26th November and his ashes were interred in his mother's and father's grave in Chadwell St Mary Cemetery.

Tony was born in Little Thurrock on 29th April 1929, the only child of Harold Benson, who taught Geography at Palmer's. He attended East Thurrock Primary School, Palmer's and then went to Queen Mary College, in the Mile End Road, part of the University of London. He worked for de Havilland, which later became Marconi and then British Aerospace, on the research and development of the Blue Streak Missile System. He lodged in Bushey, Hertfordshire and returned home at weekends, retiring in about 1996.

Tony wrote a book, which was published, entitled "Sir Thomas Beecham - A Calendar of his Concerts and Theatrical Performances" for the Beecham Society. It may be because Sir Thomas and Tony shared the birthday date the 29th April that drew Tony to undertake this mammoth project. His other interests included family history, where he helped his first cousins once removed on both his mother's and father's side, tracing and ordering certificates and Naval History. He was also a life long member of the Orsett Golf Club and played a few holes there only a few months before his death.

## **John Webb 1939 - 1945** writes:-

I knew Tony Benson from an early age; our parents knew each other, I know not how, and we would go on holiday together in the years before the 1939-45 war. He was a year below me at Palmers (1940 – 1946) and we had less contact then and after as he went on to Queen Mary College and then to work for de Havilland Aircraft Company in Hertfordshire. I recall his simple demonstration, using only a table tennis ball, of both how a cricket ball could be made to swing and an aircraft wing to provide lift (it's a question of differing air-speed on opposite sides).

Tony was a very able pianist but he rarely if ever played in public. When going to a classical music concert with him he would offer a pre-concert tutorial with a miniature score whilst he illustrated the particular passages to look out for on his piano. Mozart was his favourite composer and Sir Thomas Beecham his favourite conductor. He had for years been compiling a list of the concerts which Beecham had conducted throughout the world and was fond of repeating many of his witticisms such as 'Barbirolli is a kind of musical Malcolm Sergeant' hitting two of his contemporary conductors with one stone. Tony also owned a large, wide ranging collection of records and DVDs.

He contributed articles to the Thurrock Local History Society's Journal, Panorama, including an account of the concerts held in Grays in the 1940s and 50s by C.E.M.A. (a pre Arts Council organisation). He actively researched his mother's family, the Davis's, who operated a brick-works in Little Thurrock during the 19th century, and this also produced an article for the Journal.

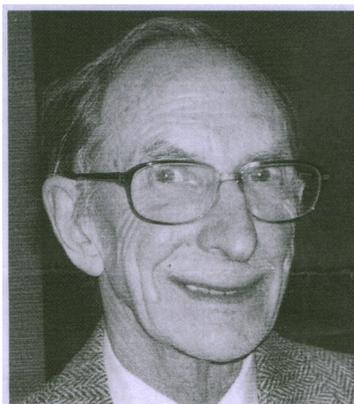
He was equally meticulous in his following of cricket, especially Essex. When attending a match at the various county grounds he would keep the score in a scoring book and could remember all the great moments of the matches he had attended. Later he followed it on the television.

His interest in military history was largely concentrated on the ships and aircraft of World War I and he had a number of copies of Jane's Fighting Ships, the annual review of all the world's navies. As with all his interests his memory and recall of every detail was quite outstanding. The army of that period was of less interest to him but he contributed an article for 300 Years of Palmers on the Palmer's Cadet Corps and its visits to the Western Front after the 1st World War. His father, of course, was Harold Benson, who taught geography at Palmers, but Tony was always discreet about anything he might have heard concerning the staff and school.

Tony had a wry sense of humour. The music for his funeral (which I assume he had chosen himself) was typical of his attitude to life. We first listened to The Lark Ascending by Vaughan Williams, we sang All things Bright and Beautiful and we left the Chapel to Begin the Begeen.

Tony Benson was born in April 1929 and died in November 2009. He never married.

### ERNEST WALTER COX



Ernest Walter Cox, a much loved and respected resident of Billericay, died suddenly on Friday 5 February 2010, four days before his 84th birthday. Ernie was born 9 February 1926 in Grays, lived in West Ham for a few years, before returning to Grays. His primary education was in Grays where in 1937 he attended Palmer's Endowed School before commencing University in 1943; two years later he became a teacher. He married Renée in 1962 and had two children Sandy and Graham, in May 1998 his grandson Thomas William was born.

It was in the field of education that Ernie made his mark becoming headmaster for the first time in 1956, reputedly one of the youngest in Essex, at East Tilbury Primary School. Eventually he was appointed Head of Sunnymede School, Billericay in 1963, a position he occupied for 25 years. When he retired in 1988 he received a letter from Essex County Council Education Authority thanking him for his service to education which had spanned 43 years, 32 of which had been in the position of Headmaster, probably the longest serving Head in Essex. Following his retirement he became a Governor of Mayflower County High School and, later, the Chairman of the Board of Governors.

Outside of school Ernie's activities were many. Perhaps one with far reaching implications was the production, in conjunction with The Mathematics Panel in Essex, of a document entitled "The impact of Modern Mathematics in Primary Schools" which was published, used in schools and about which he used to lecture. There were many more activities too numerous to mention. For instance he was an active member of the committee for the Advancement of State Education and a committee member of the Billericay Education Trust, but a club for which he had a great deal of affection was the Billericay Rotary Club. During his time in Rotary Ernie was President, Secretary, Almoner and chairman of various committees including chairman of the Vocational Committee. In this capacity he organised mock interviews for school leavers, the Young Inventor of the Year competition, Young Chef of the Year competition and Public Speaking competitions for young people. In 1996 he was awarded the prestigious "Paul Harris Award" for dedicated service.

There is more, but this brief biography gives some idea of the type of man Ernie Cox was. His life was the personification of the Rotary motto "Service Above Self", a true professional and a perfect gentleman in every meaning of the word. All those who knew him, will sorely miss him.

### **ERNEST JAMES HEWITT**

Ernest, born on 31 January 1930, died on the 11th June 2010 at the age of 80 years. His funeral was on Tuesday 29th June at the Methodist Church, Lodge Lane, Grays, followed by his Committal at South Essex Crematorium, Corbets Tey. He was a founder and loyal member of the 2nd Grays Boys' Brigade and The Blue Ambassadors for over 50 years. He had also been a most loyal member of the Association for a very long time.

**Ken Hewitt**, his cousin, was born 7 days earlier and they both lived in Tilbury, before Ernie moved to Grays. They were both in the A stream throughout Palmer's and Ernie taught in a Methodist school in Portsmouth before going to College to become a qualified teacher. Ernie then taught Mathematics in Thurrock for many years and was also a Local Methodist Preacher.

Ernie became a Free Mason at the age of 62.

Ken celebrated his 70th to 75th birthday with Ernie and his cousin **Marian Sawyer** who was 3 months older. Then shortly after that Ernie had quite a bad stroke and after a few years went into Grays Court Nursing Home in Grays.

*We hope to publish a fuller obituary next year.*

## **THE COLLEGE YEAR HIGHLIGHTS 2009 - 2010**

This year has been another fantastic year for student success and achievements. Below is a snapshot of the highlights at Palmer's College.

### **August 2009**

The year began with another pleasing set of results for the College with success rates at 97% for A-levels and 100% pass rates for the BTEC National Diplomas. 24 out of 38 A-level subjects gained 100% pass rates with 68% of students gaining A, B or C grades.

A-level student Sonny Smart spent the summer in Brazil as part of Gordon Brown's Fellowship Scheme, after leaving Palmer's College with 4 As in Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Maths.

### **September 2009**

A record number of 2196 students were enrolled. The term kicked off with a visit from 'Theatre Is' to headhunt talented students at Palmer's to perform in a live show at Thameside Theatre.

The Careers Service held their first Higher Education Fair in a long time. The event attracted a number of HE institutions.

The Maths Department also teamed up with the Careers Service and held a 'Maths Picnic' in the Upper Student Centre for students interested in Mathematical careers.

### **October 2009**

The College hosted its very first International Baccalaureate (IB) open evening, which attracted a number of students and parents.

160 BTEC Sport and Business first year students experienced an intensive and action-packed three days of team building with the help of the local Army.

The College's first of two open evenings attracted over 3000 potential students and their families.

Two students raised over £900 to help save a struggling social club for adults with learning difficulties.

### **November 2009**

The College supported the celebration of 'Colleges Week' with our 2<sup>nd</sup> year IB students working with Treetops Sixth Form students to paint a mural in the school's grounds.

First year IB students dressed up in Halloween costumes and sold 'Halloween themed' snacks. They raised over £100 for the Wings of Hope Charity.

The annual prestigious Prize Giving Ceremony did not disappoint with over 250 students being honoured with prizes.

A group of male teaching staff binned their razors, to support 'Movember', to grow moustaches to help raise money for The Prostate Cancer Charity.

### **December 2009**

'Sleeping Beauty', the 2009 annual pantomime, entertained thousands of local school children and members of the community, raising £1000 for the St Luke's Hospice during the last show.

The Student Executive hosted an evening of 'PalmerZ Got Talent', which was a great success raising hundreds of pounds for Exec's chosen charity. The panel included teaching staff and our very own Corporation member Frank Smith.

### **January 2010**

A-level student Lottie Thompson celebrated her fourth consecutive gold medal at the National Finals of the 60th English Schools Diving Championships in Manchester.

A number of students helped to report on various success stories across the borough on behalf of the Thurrock Learning Partnership.

### **February 2010**

Palmer's College signed up to Thurrock's Next Top Boss as a member of 'Team Thurrock'.

The first year IB students spent a week fundraising on campus for the Haiti Appeal and raised approximately £364.40.

Business Technology students gained valuable knowledge at the very first 'Enterprise in Education' event. The event consisted of workshops looking at job applications, CV's, interview skills with each student undertaking a one to one interview with a Thurrock employer.

### **March 2010**

The Principal attended a celebratory event for the highest performing and most quickly improving colleges in England at 10 Downing Street.

The College's fantastic liaison programme kick started with six Excellence Days and two. 3 day, Cambridge Initiative events.

Six students studying A-level French at Palmer's College took part in an Anglo-French student conference about Climate Change, held in Sèvres (outside Paris). **Jessica Pham** made a particularly impressive contribution to the debate speaking at length in French about Climate Change.

Six students from the Business Technology Dept recently completed two weeks' work experience at SJ Berwin LLP in London, a leading international law firm.

### **April 2010**

David Cameron, leader of the conservative party and now PM, visited Essex as part of the general election campaign. His rally was held at the College which had been recommended by the local authority.

The Next Top Boss Roadshow was launched at the College with over 100 Palmer's students registering to enter the competition.

The annual Extended Project Exhibition was a huge success with a variety of student talent being showcased.

### **May 2010**

The second annual Sports Awards Ceremony was held at the Orsett Hall and included 27 prize winners, all of whom were awarded trophies by local hero Danny Crates. The sporting success continued with A-level student **George Lilley** being selected for the under-18s England Hockey Team.

The annual Careers Fair and 'Moving on Up' event attracted high numbers of students with excellent ongoing support from employers, recruitment agencies and educational institutions.

The Law Department introduced a student-led peer mentoring scheme, which received very good feedback from the students being mentored and their mentors.

### **June 2010**

The College saw its busiest period in June, with exams coming to an end, over 700 year 10s on campus as part of Liaison Week, and the annual art and design exhibition.

Second year A-Level Applied ICT students attended an awards presentation to celebrate their course achievements. The students completed a games

programming unit as part of their course, which involved creating a prototype game and front end system in the style of a classic 1980's coin operated arcade machine.

### **July 2010**

Everyone was in high spirits at the end up term, firstly because the first cohort of IB students achieved a fantastic set of results with eleven of the group of eighteen achieving grades exceeding 3 A grades at A Level. Then over 1000 new students attended Palmer's Day One and finally hundreds of students enjoyed the annual charity Fun Day, organised by the Student Executive, who raised over £2500 during the year for their charity 'Make a Wish Foundation'.

The Performing Arts students wowed a packed audience at this year's Horndon Festival.

The College's continuous work over the year with the Royal Opera House has provided valuable experience and opportunities for our performing arts and music technology students. Students have produced soundscape compositions and the Libretto for the opening of the Royal Opera House Production Park in Purfleet.

The English Department rounded off the year by scooping a prestigious award. The Department was awarded the Prince's Teaching Institute Mark in recognition of the work done for the Trust's Schools Programme.

*Varsha Patel*

### **NEWS AND CHANGES OF STAFF**

Congratulations to:-

**Melissa Davidson** (psychology teacher) who was married during the summer break 2009 and is now **Mrs Marnock**.

**Cindy Mannering**, (Head of History) who was appointed as Programme Leader for PGCE/ Cert-Ed. in October 2009. She initially led the new Higher Education Team through to validation in January 2010 and then went on to prepare for delivery of the programme. Cindy was also married on 23rd December 2009, at the Plough House in Bulphan, to Ashley Barber, who is an armourer. She is now **Mrs Barber**, so double congratulations. They went to Wales for a few days then, but their main honeymoon was in the summer 2010 when they went to Lake Garda for a couple of weeks.

**Steve Watterston** (PE) who was appointed as the Quality Nominee for Vocational Courses in January 2010.

**Alistair Dunkwu** on gaining his Level 5 in Leadership from the Institute of Leadership and Management.

**Jeanette Mudd** who was appointed as Risk Assessment Advisor for the College in February 2010.

**Becky Bentley** who completed a triathlon in March, raising money for 'Make A Wish'. Every penny was hard earned in a wet, muddy, steep, rocky and exhausting event.

**Amanda Bitmead** who was married in Cyprus over the Easter break and became **Mrs Morris**.

The following staff have joined Palmer's either at the beginning of, or during, the first term. **Fola Omoniwa** (Science to cover **Saran Millane**'s maternity leave), **Michael Sommers** (Assistant Caretaker), **John Green** (Assistant Caretaker) **Sean Kingston** (E-Learning Resources), **Vicky Neagen** (Counsellor - Study Plus) and **Julia Loraine** (Administrative Assistant, General Office). **Kim Gardner** (Learner Information Officer) joined us in January. In February **Ian Richards** (Senior Library Assistant) and **Mel Jupp** (Curriculum Support, Main Office) joined us.

At the end of the Summer Term, staff who left were **Goldie Gibbons** (English) after 13 years, who is taking up a teaching post at SEEVIC, **Alastair Woodruff** (French) after 10 years, who is taking up a teaching post at Grays Convent School, **Pauline Johnson** (Learning Support, Counsellor) taking early retirement after 11 years, **Steve Taylor** (English) after 9 years 8 months, moving into private education, teaching at The Brentwood School, **Colleen Dicks** (History) after 9 years, who has taken early retirement, **Carol Rintoul** (Learning Support) after 7 years, who retired, **Mark Nicholson** (English) after 6 years, returning to his native Sheffield to teach, **Jenna Harrington** (Health and Social Care) after 2 years 8 months to take a Masters degree in Creative and Professional Writing at Roehampton University, and **Olive Law** (Mathematics) after 1 year and 8 months.

## **RETIREMENTS**

**CAROL SAGEMAN** retired at the end of January 2010 after 22 years at Palmer's. She started as a Welfare Assistant and quickly became a Senior Library Assistant. It is true to say that the Library that exists today would not have happened without Carol's support and commitment. She has been a real asset to the College and will be much missed. Carol was held in high regard with warmth and affection by her colleagues and we all wish her well for the future.

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1955 - 56 W O Watt  
1956 - 57 E F Gunn  
1957 - 58 L Rennie  
1958 - 59 R S Howard  
1959 - 60 Major R L J Bailey  
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1962 - 63 D J Littlechild  
1963 - 64 P E V Davey  
1964 - 65 G W J Martin  
1965 - 66 G H Gray  
1966 - 68 G E Trollope  
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2001 - 02 Ms J Snelling  
2002 - 03 S Rowley  
2003 - 04 R. Key  
2004 - 05 Mrs R Hunwick  
2005 - 06 Mrs S Jones  
2006 - 07 F Smith  
2007 - 08 M Smith  
2008 - 09 E Hunt  
2009 - 10 Ms J Snelling