



***OLD
PALMERIAN***

September 2013

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CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

In January 1959 when I was appointed by the Headmaster, Mr. F. Jordan, to teach woodwork at Palmer's School for Boys I could not have envisaged that 54 years later I would be writing this Introduction for the Magazine as Chairman of the Old Palmerians Association.

I was very honoured to be nominated and voted into the post of Chairman at the AGM last November and one of my aims was to encourage a good relationship with the College. I do have an advantage in this respect as I am still on the payroll for invigilation duties and I enjoy a game of golf from time to time with the Principal, Mark Vinall.

To date in my Chairmanship year, as I write I still have five months left, it has been memorable due mainly to the following events: I was very pleased to support last years chairman, Neil Beaumont, (old pupil of mine, rubbish at woodwork, good at cricket) in providing a Plaque and Citation to mark the award of the Victoria Cross in 1919 to Old Palmerian, Gordon Charles Steele. They are now sited in the College Library and were unveiled last December.

I was pleased to obtain the agreement of the Principal to have the William Palmer Coat of Arms, which I carved for the Association from a solid block of mahogany in 1986, moved back into the reception area where I originally sited it. It has been hanging in the entrance lobby for a number of years where nobody could see it. While it was down it was cleaned and the gold areas gilded. The OPA Executive Committee agreed to cover the cost of this work.

In an effort to help the students of the College and with the agreement of the Executive Committee, I suggested to Mark Vinall that we would like to help by providing some finance for a specialised piece of equipment which their funds would not normally cover. I am pleased to report that we were able to offer the Photography Department a donation for the purchase of a hi-spec digital camera to help with their examination work and on Thursday, 23rd May, at a small reception in the Principal's office, I presented a cheque for £750 to Kerry Baker, Head of Photography.

On behalf of the OPA I would like to thank the College for their continued cooperation in respect of providing a space and the use of a computer for Ruth Hunwick, our Registration Secretary, also access to duplicating facilities for the production of the newsletter and the use of room A7 for committee meetings once a month.

I wish to thank my fellow committee members for their support and in particular, a big vote of thanks to Ruth, who holds the whole thing together.

Also, grateful thanks to our Treasurer, Brett Goodyear. Brett has conscientiously managed the finances for a number of years but is standing down at the AGM in November. Therefore we will be looking for a new Treasurer, in fact we could really do with some new faces in general on the Committee; some of us are getting a little long in the tooth! Any volunteers?

Finally, I would like to wish my Vice-Chair, Jill Snelling, all the best for next year.

John Sach Teacher 1959-1994 Chairman Nov.2012-Nov 2013

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	Mr David Hurst	1989-91
Dr Graham Ketley	1968-75	Mr Duy Lam	1991-95
Mrs Susan Osborne	1970-77	Miss Elisabeth Pryke	
Mr R G H Read	1938-45	John Ryall	1987-90
Dr Susan Sangster	1967-74	Mr John Stack	1972-77
Miss Denise Turp	1975-78	Mr Peter Warder	1944-51
Mr Gregg Whitbread	1986-89	Mr Kenneth Yeates	1965-71

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

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

3rd	November	2013	Founder’s Day Service
9th	November	2013	Founder’s Day Dinner
12th	November	2013	AGM
25th	April	2014	Old Boys’ Dinner

ASSOCIATION SPORTS CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

PALMER'S SPORTS & FITNESS CENTRE

The fees are:-

Annual Membership	Adult	£20.00
	Junior 8 - 16 years	£8.00
	Concessions	£11.00

Old Palmerians' Association members with a current membership card, available from Ruth Hunwick, will pay **only £11.00** to the **Centre** for membership. If you are not already a member you also pay a one-off joining fee of £20.00 which includes your "induction to the gym" fee which can be taken anytime in the future. There is also an excellent Membership Monthly Option.

Fees

Badminton	55 min.	£9.10
Five a side	55 min.	£38.50
Squash	40 min.	£7.00
Tennis	55 min	£6.60
Gym Session		£4.60
Fitness Class (Pilates, LBT, Zumba, etc.)		£4.50

Non members pay a £1.00 Admission Fee every time they attend.

For further details concerning the Palmer's Sports and Fitness Centre telephone (01375) 898613 or look up their website www.palmers.ac.uk/sports, or follow them on facebook or twitter.

Ruth Hunwick

OLD PALMERIANS' GOLFING SOCIETY REPORT - 2012

This year started off with a very unusual event. Nothing to do with golf directly but it was the weather. Our scheduled meeting date was cancelled by Orsett GC because the course was flooded the previous Sunday and the Essex competition due that day was re-arranged for our date. Orsett is basically laid out on sand and drains very well normally, so for it to be shut because of flooding is quite rare. Thus it was that our Spring meeting was held on June 10th. We had a good number of attendees but, as is becoming the norm, most were guests. The OPGS winner was **Nick Hudd** who won the Silver Salver, and the various handicap category Tankard winners were:- **Mark Vinall, Nick Hudd, Jas Johal and Roger Jiggins**. Guest prizes were awarded to Steve Collett, John Nash and Les Bernard.

Our match against the College on 15th May was the usual tussle – I wish. **Jas Johal** and his partner Brian Browne managed a win, **Don Cave** and I managed a half, but our other two matches lost by a ‘dog licence’ i.e 7/6, so it is congratulations to the College who won the match by 2 ½ to 1½. It was all good fun, and everyone enjoyed the sandwiches afterwards for which I must thank the Association for their kind funding.

Next up on the calendar was our Guest Day on 21st August. Again we had fewer players than last year but those who did play enjoyed the event and the meal afterwards. OPGS prizes went to **Colin Reynolds** who won the Association Cup, and **Roger Jiggins** who came second. Nearest the pin was won by **Jas Johal**. Guests who featured were John Nash first, Nick Lawrence second, and Noel Cundock third. Three other members who played were **Graeme Loveland**, **Don Cave**, and our current Captain, **Malcolm Argent**.

Another re-arranged date was our Away Day held at Upminster Golf Club on 30th August due to lack of numbers on the original date but we did at least have just enough for the later date. There was a late morning start around 10am, followed by a light lunch at the club. The successful participants were **Jake Dobson** who won the OPGS Tankard and was nearest the pin on 18th hole, and **Don Cave** who came 2nd. Best guest was Don’s partner Chris Wormleighton who won the Guest tankard. Other OPGS players were **Steve Rowe**, **Nick Rowe** and **Roger Jiggins**.

Lastly we had our Captain’s Day event on 7th October. This was very well supported due to a good number of guests invited by members, there being 32 players in total. Our Captain **Malcolm Argent** kindly provided a number of prizes for the event and the successful winners were 1st **Colin Reynolds** who won the Chalice, 2nd **Don Cave**, and joint 3rd **Dick Bush** and **Alan Gardner**. Of the guests the winner was Steve Brignell, invited by **Jas Johal**, 2nd Eddie Blair, guest of **Alan Gardner** and 3rd Nigel Lawrence, also **Jas’s** guest. The winner of the Presidents Cup, awarded to the member with the best aggregate score for the year, was **Roger Jiggins**.

I should like to record my thanks to all those who took part in our events during the year and hope to see many of them again next year. I must also thank Malcolm Argent for his captaincy this year and record that he has very kindly agreed to remain as Captain for the coming year.

I managed to get all the Old Palmerians who played in Captain’s Day to stand up, unaided as far as I could tell, so they could be photographed to confirm their actual existence - not that there was serious doubt!!



The photo shows, reading left to right, Roger Jiggins, Don Cave, Malcolm Argent, Dick Bush, Jas Johal, Jake Dobson, Alan Gardner, Colin Reynolds, Mark Osborne. The photo was taken at a suitable distance away to disguise, if any, slight physical imperfections such as would not have been present some decades ago during their period of callow youthfulness. Hopefully there is enough left of their general appearance to be recognisable as themselves to those who knew them.

My regular closing request is to anyone out there, being a former Palmer's schoolboy or College student, who would like to join us in our future events to contact me by email – rogerjiggins@sky.com – and I will provide you with all the information you need.

Roger Jiggins, (Hon Treasurer/Secretary)

WILLIAM PALMER COLLEGE EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Over the last year the Trust has given financial assistance to the students of Palmer's College and other deserving pupils who live in the Ancient Parish, as follows:

The Trust funded either 50% or 25% of the cost of the trip for students to participate in visits as part of their Geography, Biology, PE, Sport & Leisure, Health & Social Care and Business Studies Courses. A wide range of other

educational visits were subsidised by the Trust and these visits included Barcelona, Cambridge, Oxford, Arran, Berlin, France, Portsmouth, Thorpe Park, Hampshire, New York, London, Surrey, Docklands, Colchester, Winchester, Tilbury, Southend, Orielton, Epping and Chafford Gorges.

Day visits to conferences, drama productions, galleries and concerts were part funded by the Trust as were the hockey, netball, football and rugby umpire/referee fees necessary for sporting events. The Trust continued to pay half of the cost of coaches and mini buses to sporting fixtures and competitions throughout the year. Bursaries were given to students who showed prowess in their chosen fields.

Support grants and Scholarships were given to students in need and Higher Education Interview Expenses were available.

These grants totalled - £53,178

The Trust awarded prizes for excellence at A-level or equivalent. Prizes for achievement at A level and BTEC and the Legal Secretaries Course. Prizes for 100% attendance and prizes for achievement at AS level as well as prizes for distinction at BTEC First Diploma Award.

These grants totalled - £17,600

The Trust also provided grants towards trips and visits to pupils in need who live in the Ancient Parish of Grays Thurrock and attend local schools.

These grants totalled - £11,740

As is well known, William Palmer provided the land for the first school, arranged for it to be built and endowed the Trustees with property in the City of London. In 1945, the roles of the Trustees and the Governors were split with a Charity Commission Scheme providing for the Trustees to own the Land and Buildings and with the School being allowed to use the property.

The College believed that it would be useful for it to have a formal Lease of the Land and Buildings and negotiations continue between the Trust and the College.

The Trustees have decided that they are willing to provide the funds to carry out a feasibility study regarding the possibility of building a Seminar Room over the top of the existing foyer and remodelling the foyer itself.

*John Vesey
Clerk to the Trustees
July 2013*

UNVEILING OF THE PLAQUE TO COMMANDER GORDON CHARLES STEELE VC



On Friday 14th December 2012 in the Library at Palmer's College **John Sach** and **Neil Beaumont** unveiled a commemorative plaque and a permanent educational display in honour of Commander Steele an ex student of Palmer's who was awarded the Victoria Cross. Neil Beaumont, a member of the committee of the Old Palmerians' Association did the research and said: "The Victoria Cross is the highest military decoration and only 1,356 have been awarded to date and I was determined to commemorate such a brave man."

John Sach designed and crafted the plaque from Indian Silver Wood from the old Boys' School Library panelling.

Mark Vinall said: "Palmer's College is very pleased and proud to be able to honour Commander Steele with a permanent plaque that will be on display to all students in the College Library. This event was the culmination of a successful collaboration between the Old Palmerians' Association and the College and is a lasting tribute to one of our bravest alumni."

Thurrock Council's history and Heritage Officer **Jonathan Catton**, who produced the following fact sheet, was present together with students and staff of the College.

Commander Gordon Charles Steele VC
1 November 1892 – 4 January 1981

Gordon Charles Steele was born in Exeter on the 1st November 1892 into a naval family. In 1903 his father Captain H. W. Steele was Captain Superintendent of the Reformatory Ship Cornwall moored in the Thames off Purfleet in West Thurrock. The family probably lived on board with the cadets serving sentences from the London Courts for petty crimes. Gordon attended Palmer's Endowed School in Grays during this time.



In 1907 Gordon had been enrolled as a cadet on HMS Worcester moored on the Kent side of the Thames to be trained in the skill needed for naval service. He did well here being awarded the Howard Medal for meteorology and came second in the King's Medal of 1909 and in the same year was awarded an apprenticeship with the Pacific and Orient Line. In January 1916 his father suffered a heart attack and died, his wife temporarily becoming the Lady Superintendent of the Reformatory Ship Cornwall.

On the outbreak of the Great War he joined the Royal Naval Reserve and was one of the first reservists to join the Submarine service serving on board D8 for 5 months. He later served on two 'Q' ships (merchant navy ships converted in to gun boats and heavily disguised) used to attack U-boats which were attacking allied fleets coming and leaving via the channel.

On August 19, 1915, Gordon witnessed the actions of Lieutenant Godfrey Herbert RN of HMS Baralong which attacked and sank U-27 as it prepared to sink a nearby transport ship. About a dozen of the U-boat sailors survived and swam towards the merchantman; Herbert, fearing that they would scuttle her, ordered them to be shot, as they swam towards the transport and also as they climbed aboard. This sad event was later leaked and an international political scandal developed known as the "Baralong Incident".

He then was enrolled into the Royal Navy, one of the first of the RNR to do so and re-joined the Submarine Service on E2. Later he served on the Royal Oak

and took part in the Battle of Jutland. His first Command in 1917 was of Escort P63 and ended up on the sloop "Cornflower" as the Great War concluded.

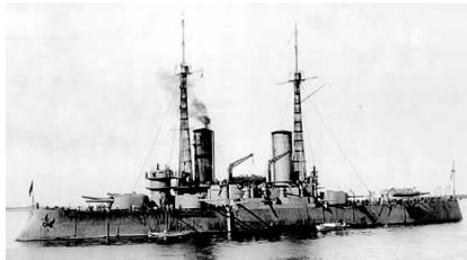


He continued his service on coastal motor boats and was part of the North Russian Relief Force when he was involved in an attack on Kronstadt Harbour. Admiralty, with the world nearly at war again after barely a

year, was concerned with the Russian Revolution now in full swing. A decision was made to do something about the threat to allied shipping that was created and compounded by the Russian Civil War. Hidden away in massively fortified harbours, the Russians were sheltering their ominous fleet of ironclads which preyed mercilessly on both convoy and hunter alike.

The mission on 18 August 1919 at Kronstadt harbour on the island of Kotlin, some 20 miles from St. Petersburg on the Baltic sea, was to attack the moored battleships of the First Pacific Fleet, including the prized Bolshevik battleship Petropavlovsk and the huge battleship, the *Andrei Pervozvanni*. Using a number of CMB, each with two torpedoes, this night time, fast hit and run action was planned to outrun the harbour defence guns and destroy the fleet. It did not go entirely to plan as the citation to the award of a Victoria Cross to Steele testifies:

For most conspicuous gallantry, skill and devotion to duty on the occasion of the attack on Kronstadt Harbour on the 18th August, 1919. Lieutenant Steele was second-in-command of H.M. Coastal Motor Boat No. 88. After this boat had entered the harbour the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Dayrell-Reed, was shot through the head and the boat thrown off her course. Lieutenant Steele took the wheel, steadied the boat, lifted Lieutenant Dayrell-Reed away from the steering and firing position and torpedoed the Bolshevik battleship Andrei Pervozanni at a hundred yards range. He had then a difficult manoeuvre to perform to get



a clear view of the battleship Petropavlovsk, which was overlapped by the Andrei Pervozanni and obscured by smoke coming from that ship. The evolution, however, was skilfully carried out, and the Petropavlovsk torpedoed. This left Lieutenant Steele with only just room to turn, in order to regain the entrance to the harbour, but he effected the movement with success and firing his machine guns along the wall on his way, passed under the line of forts through a heavy fire out of the harbour.



In this successful action another naval officer was awarded with a Victoria Cross, Cdr. Claude Dobson RN, HM CMB 31.



Lieutenant Gordon Steele VC was chosen to be part of the Unknown Warriors VC Guard of Honour which took place in the Westminster Abbey service on Armistice Day.

In 1929 he joined The Incorporated Thames Nautical Training College and continued there until 1957 so he was a cadet, trainer and Commandant of the establishment. During the 2nd WW he was in charge of HMS Exmouth (Ex Grays Training Ship) now being used as a submarine and minesweeper supply base at Scapa flow.

In 1940 he met, by chance, and for the first time, the pilot of the aircraft, Group Captain Fletcher, RAF, who had attacked the searchlight. Needless to say, a great time was had by all in the mess that night.

Described by one ex-Worcester boy as a silver haired, kindly gentleman who, if cut in half would have had printed right through him, like a stick of rock, HMS Worcester. A Worcester cadet himself he was a father figure to the ship

and obtained the third Worcester for The College. Captain Steele VC, who was called affectionately "Diddy" by the cadets, was not only famous as a VC holder, Gordon was much admired by not only the cadets and staff but also the London Shipping scene at large as a very Christian man. His VC is now kept at Trinity House in London

Prepared by Jonathan Catton – Heritage & Museum Officer, Thurrock Museum, Thurrock Council

For more details of the Thurrock Museum Service see www.thurrock.gov.uk/heritage/museum/

PRESENTATION OF CHEQUE TO PHOTOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT **BY JOHN SACH - CHAIRMAN**



On Thursday 24 May **John Sach** on behalf of the Old Palmerians' Association presented **Kerry Baker**, Curriculum Manager of Photography, with a cheque for £750 towards a new camera. Kerry and the College were very grateful to the Association for their generous support.

NEWS OF OLD PALMERIANS

JAMES SHAW (2010 - 2012) was published in the Independent talking about Debating matters and education in general. James is now at Oxford University studying Law.

MALCOLM FOSTER (1937 - 1943) has moved from Linford to Stifford Clays, Grays. He was evacuated with **Alan Winser** and **Michael Catton**.

Malcolm's brother is **Tony Foster** who was Chairman of the Association in 1973 to 1974.

HANNAH BARNETT (2003 - 2005) qualified as a Solicitor at the beginning of September 2012 and is specialising in Immigration.

NATALIE WILLIAMS (2004 - 2006) and **BENJAMIN SCARSBROOK (2004 - 2006)** organised the very first Thurrock International Film Festival. After returning from University with degrees in Film Studies, they decided to create a festival in their own area.

The inaugural festival ran from Sunday 24th - Saturday 30th June 2012 and showcased short and feature films of both local, national and international origin. Including the classics 'Singin' In The Rain', 'The Wizard of Oz', 'Spirited Away' and 'Indiana Jones and The Last Crusade'.

Early in the week pupils from William Edwards School spent the day at Palmer's Sixth Form College learning from A level students how to write, plan, shoot and edit a short film in one day. The College also held screenings during the festival to showcase some of the shortlisted entries, which included films from Palmer's students. The resulting short films were premiered at the awards ceremony on the last night of the festival. Audiences also got the chance to hear from an active member of the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) how and why they classify films.

Danish film 'The Good Life' had its British premiere at the festival and film critic legend Barry Norman spoke to an enthralled audience about his favourite films.

Local historian Jon Catton also gave a talk on the history of filmmaking in the borough, stretching from right back in the silent era up to modern day films like 'Batman Begins' and '28 Days Later'.

The event was a great success and will be repeated each year.

DAVID BURDETT (1954 - 1962) has written about his brother **CHRIS BURDETT (1952 - 1960)**

“From a young boy Chris has always drawn and painted. In retirement these talents have blossomed. He has had paintings accepted at the Annual Exhibitions of The Royal Society of Marine Artists, the Royal Society of Oil Painters and The Chelsea Art Society. Last year he won the Chelsea Art Society, Agnes Reeve Memorial Award for his painting of Venice in North London.

At School his talents were recognised and honed by **Len Wilmore**. They led him to read Architecture at the Bartlet School of Architecture (University College London). When **Mr Jordan** wanted a picture of a Boy in School uniform, it was Chris who was chosen to do the painting.

Chris lives in Hoo, and when not out painting he plays the Concertina in a band and is an active member of the Medway Yacht Club.”

[Editor’s questions:- What happened to that picture of the boy in school uniform, where was it hung?]

SIDNEY WYNN-SIMMONDS (1945 - 1952) is keen to hear from anyone who knew him at Palmers. He now lives in Dordogne, France and can be contacted at Maison de bourg, 12 rue de l’engin, EYMET, France or 00 33 (0) 553 23 74 03 or bookmaneymet@wanadoo.fr

He writes. “As far as memory (79 years young) permits:

Names remembered for class 2A to 5A – surnames were the order of the day and of the class: (any errors in info all my fault):

Kenneth Abbott, **Allison**, **Bill Bohm** (son of Latin Master **E Bohm**, Bill persuaded me to join OPs), **Max Bone** (son of **E Bone**, our French Master, who reckoned that boys as often deleted a correct word and substituted a wrong one as vice versa, from which he deduced ‘Second thoughts are not always the best’), **Michael Burnett** (Member of the Comfort Club, Senior Research Fellow at Queen’s University, Belfast, died four years ago), **Michael Cooper** (died two years ago), **Roland Cox** (my next-door neighbour at home, taught me piano at 12 years old, fully qualified, after Cambridge last heard of in insurance in Brighton), **Harry Daniels** (transferred from Morecombe, my closest friend throughout school, Member of the Comfort Club), **Michael Dodd** (his parents always came to church from Purfleet in pony & trap), **Guildersleeve** (regularly wrote amazing technical articles for our form magazine, which **Frank Hughes** declared to be the longest surviving class mag. he had encountered), **Colin ‘Hemel’ Hempstead** (many lead roles in G & S, member of Comfort Club), **Colin Hills** (sat next to me in 5A, always admired his neat nose, perhaps because mine was broken in an early fight), **Sidney Rosenblum** (almost the only other Sidney I ever met), **Russell** (one of the two thinnest chaps I ever knew), **Tony Saunders** (sportsman, many lead roles in G & S), **Sidney Wynn-Simmonds** (member of Comfort Club), **Alan Thomas** (sportsman, part of trio of brothers in *Princess Ida*), **‘Taffy’ Williams** (one of the nicest smiles I remember).

Those, I can recall, but would be pleased to hear from others because it was a great crowd. The Comfort Club was a more-or-less secret society of four who met at each other's houses for serious talk and sheer comfort.

I also remember getting on well with **Chapman**, who was Head Boy/School Captain in my penultimate year.

Members of staff I remember include

J O Jones who took us for Science pre-matric.

Mr Barker took us for Maths

Mr Hayston taught me to dive (I had learned to swim in the mucky old Thames as a kid) so that I could compete in House sports at Bata. We are all grateful for the work he did on the History of the School.

However, I disliked the school tie he introduced with its myriad malformed images purporting to be the school crest. Luckily I suppose ties are no longer "in" anyway. But what about re-introducing the gorgeous Old School square? With its parallel, diagonal stripes of pale and navy blue separated by a narrower stripe of royal blue it was a beauty and used to be sold by Frank West. Chaps could use it as a scarf or as a cravat, whilst the ladies could sport it as a scarf or head-scarf. I would like to place an order for 12 as soon as available."

School Days at Palmer's Boys' School:

"Of my family preceding me at Palmer's there were 2/3 uncles **George, Albert and John (Jack) Wynn** in the 1920/30s? They would not have become OPs following Bunny Abbott's ruling (3 years) as, from a military family, they all enlisted as Boy Entrants (14 years). I only recall my Grandma still laughing about the fact that Albert had been so proud of his new school cap that he insisted on keeping it on at home, even in the bath!!

I started unhappily at Palmer's because the first day featured an exam, which landed me in 2B. However, hard work and the end of term saw me transferred to 2A. My only lively memory of that time is the knocking of my knees anticipating the arrival of **Mr Michael Ojolkov** (to the staff, Mr Michael, to the boys - secretly - **Coffee-pot**, because no-one could pronounce his surname). Called to front of class on account of poor homework, I knew what was to come - 'Is this your best work?' Answer - 'Yes'. Then - 'I don't think much of your best?'. Answer - 'No, sir'. Then - 'How dare you offer second best?' Sent back to desk in public disgrace.

In the second form I was absent, sick for three weeks and Mr Michael offered six hours after school to recap. all lessons missed! Later, **Michael Burnett**, the only lifetime OP contact I retained, told me that National Service took him to Bodmin for Russian training where Mr Michael was his instructor and very gregarious too! Michael B. died four years ago after serving as Senior Research Fellow at Queen's University, Belfast.



Sidney and Harry Daniels third formers on the Royal Daffodil

By the third form, as I remember, school was fully under the leadership of **Mr Frederick Jordan**, often to be seen passing the classroom windows with his red retrievers. My normal day extended to 8 or 9 in the evening, even tho' I lived in Grays. We had a Numismatics Club, a Photographic Society and I started the 3A Chronicle, which ran with much support from class members, especially **Michael Dodd**, who by the 5th form was producing four typed and handsomely bound copies (one for each row of desks), when pressure of work overcame and I was taken on to the editorial team of the official School Mag.

I joined the chapel choir which practised twice per week and sang at morning service and at evensong on Sunday. I was also still a chorister at St Peter & St Paul's, with a Sunday Committal and Weddings (6d or a shilling) on some Saturdays. [Sidney joined the Grays Parish Church choir as a soprano when he was seven in 1940 and stayed until about 1947, by which time he was a contralto. As senior choirboy he used to enjoy going out (in cassock minus

surplice) to change the numbers on the two hymn boards. He had to climb onto the two window-sills to do so; as soon as the vicar gave him the numbers, which was usually after the main part of the congregation were seated. He is hoping to get to this year's Founder's Day Service and sing in the choir.]

Mr Smurthwaite also started a Madrigal Society with eight of us singing - eight voices specialising in Elizabethan songs.

But the big hit was when **Mr Scott**, **Mr Smurthwaite** and **Mr Jordan**, (who wanted to buy an electronic chapel organ for £1,650), started the Operatics & Dramatics Society. Our first was *Pinafore*, when I was a chorus girl. A marvellous 19th century shipboard set was created by the Senior Art Master and many gifted helpers.



Principals line-up – Pirates of Penzance

From left: 2nd Ronald Shaw, 4th Raymond Hayter, 5th Jolyon Smurthwaite, 7th Sidney - piratical maid-of- all-work, Ruth, 8th Chief Constable Harold Benson

The next year's operetta was *Pirates of Penzance* with two lead contraltos, my friend **Colin Hempstead** as a convincingly rounded Buttercup and I as Ruth, the piratical maid of all work. Only skilled coaching by **Mr Smurthwaite** enabled me to overcome my fear of audiences.



Iolanthe – The Fairy Queen Sidney makes eyes at The Sentry Harold Benson

The following year brought the biggest hit of all – *Iolanthe* - in any case reckoned by G & S experts to be their best operetta. We had the good luck that the Govt' declared a General Election timed for approx. one month after our performance - no wonder **Mr Benson's** *The Sentry's Song* about Liberals and Conservatives went down so well! **Colin (Hemel) Hempstead** had rehearsed the part of the Fairy Queen up until two weeks before opening night, when his voice broke, so it was down to me as understudy. **Mr Bohm**, who was Operatics Business Manager as well as senior Latin Master, in the throes of trying to rescue our year for matric after two or three disastrous changes of staff, opined, 'Well, Simmy, it's either *Iolanthe* or Virgil. No-one could manage both!' So I went for *Iolanthe* as queen. I remember the local press opined that the voice was OK if the feet rather large for a Fairy.

But I remember the star performance of the show being that of **Rod Cook** as The Chancellor of the Exchequer singing his *Nightmare Song*. Shows usually ran for one week with two performances on the Saturday. On the strength of success and the influence of a pending election we were able to sell out a full second week, with among others the whole professional cast of the d'Oyle Carte Company in the audience one night. I wonder if anyone else remembers the pure magic of the last night of that show. After the last two Saturday

performances the Head invited the whole cast and backstage *crew* to a party, so we left the building at approx. midnight to find the whole system of playgrounds about four feet deep under a fresh fall of snow. I guarantee that nowhere was ever such a snowfight!!



Princess Ida – Zona Sevcik, Sidney and Alan Thomas – pre-striptease!

After that I only participated one more time in the further successful G & S productions. Together with Zona Sevcik and Alan Thomas I played as one of the three anti-heroes clad in full armour over black doublet and hose, neatly slashed with scarlet. I think the 'striptease' song where we took off our armour piece by piece helped restore my standing at the Girls' school after the Fairy Queen.

I have to mention the Debating Society, which met in the library, usually, under the chairmanship of 'Booser' Hughes, which to my mind contributed as much or more to my future career as any other aspect of school.

Holidays were in the main spent working, Harry Daniels, 'Hemel' Hempstead and I cycling in summer to 'Wyfields Farm' to work 60 hrs. per week for about £5 to help bring in the harvest, the same trio and others doing two or three weeks at Christmas with the Post Office.



Cycle ride in France – Sidney, Henri & Ge-Ge de Brye de Vertamy

But one magic summer, just before matric year, Harry Daniels' father, an engineer at Shell, arranged thru' the company with the Comte de Brye de Vertamy who worked for Shell in France a month's exchange with Gerald et Henri, so that summer found us with an enormous family for three weeks in Trouville, and the last week in Paris, which did wonders for our French and our, 'til then, non-existent love-life. After more than 60 years I have re-established a connection with Henri, and Gerald's widow - we shall meet in spring.

The Sixth Form proved an interesting if rockier ride. The daft rules of the day - no Latin pass, entry to Arts sixth blocked - meant I had to choose Pure applied Maths - no probs – plus Chemistry and Physics. In earlier youth so dotty was I about Chemistry that my father re-built the Anderson shelter but

wider above ground as a nicely equipped Chemie-lab. Harry Daniels' father kindly took me on a tour of the Canvey Island labs of Shell that put an end to any ambition, and I shall never forget the introduction speech to the Science sixth. "Some of you are here because you wish to pursue your knowledge of Science, some because you did not know what to choose and some out of a love of bangs, stinks and pretty colours!!" That last was me ok! I remember well with respect and affection Mr Gallimore. He took us on an interesting tour of the Bata Factory and after that if one made a crass mistake in Maths he would look at one pityingly, and silently use one hand to emulate one of the most boring jobs in the factory, chopping soles out of the leather. We certainly got the unspoken message.



Prefects relaxing on the Tennis Lawn (background the old Tuckshop) – Left to right – Tony Saunders, Sidney – a sixth form privilege was to wear mufti in place of school uniform at choice –, Chapman (School Captain)

Our brilliant Head then introduced ballroom dancing with partners from the Girls' school with the stern admonition 'No snogging in the corridors!' We had a couple of grass courts and I played some tennis and got regularly stuck in the scoring tent in Cricket week. Examinations and their preparation apart from duties as House and then School prefect took up most of my time until suddenly school was over.

I decided to carry on farming to get fit for the Air Force, where I was due to start a short term commission in aircrew."

Career after School

“After looking after thirty cows and two large bulls and learning to drive a tractor, thank goodness the Suez crisis put the kybosh on driving schools for a few months.

I joined the RAF, went thru’ square-bashing at Cranwell; six weeks ITS in Lincolnshire –twelve hours in Tiger Moths trying to prove I could, despite three days testing at Hornchurch, learn to be an RAF pilot rather than Navigator as selected; off to twelve weeks ITS at Jurby, Isle of Man; passed out as Pilot Officer, then flown to Canada for nine months Nav. training at RCAF, Winnipeg.



Canada - Sidney with Nav. Brevet awarded at RCAF Winnipeg, Manitoba

Got Nav. Wing, then back to UK for Advanced training, from which I was taken out (could not function at 20,000 ft - two years later a USAFE colonel recommended me to visit my German doctor, who cured sinus trouble brutally but quickly in three weeks).

Meanwhile I was sent to the 'Chop unit', where on the second night who should appear in the mess but Uncle Albert Wynn. He'd come to dinner in his Colonel's mess kit (he was at that time Commandant of nearby Donnington REME base). After that I was treated well, and while the Chop-board awaited air decision I was given the unusual job of full-time messing officer at RAF Woodvale, Lancs., where Oxford University Air Squadron was to have summer camp. It was a mess but I got it sorted in time and the whole camp went well. I was then sent to Admin. School near the Norfolk coast, where I fell in love with the subject of Law.

Graduated as a potential Adjutant, I was given my choice where to finish my two years. I opted for West Malling, where my Wing Co. was delighted to have a 'Nav' to take with him when making up hours for flying pay, and one day, realising I was ex-Palmer's, flew, quite unlawfully, three low runs, almost between the chimneys, over the school. We were flying NF14s, which was the elongated version of a Meteor to accommodate a Nav. During my last few months the Squadron held a huge Ball, to which I invited as partner **Beryl Newport** (who died visiting her younger brother in South Africa ten years ago) whom I had admired for the last five years after seeing her at our School Sunday evening service with her friend **Pamela Jordan**, our Headmaster's daughter.

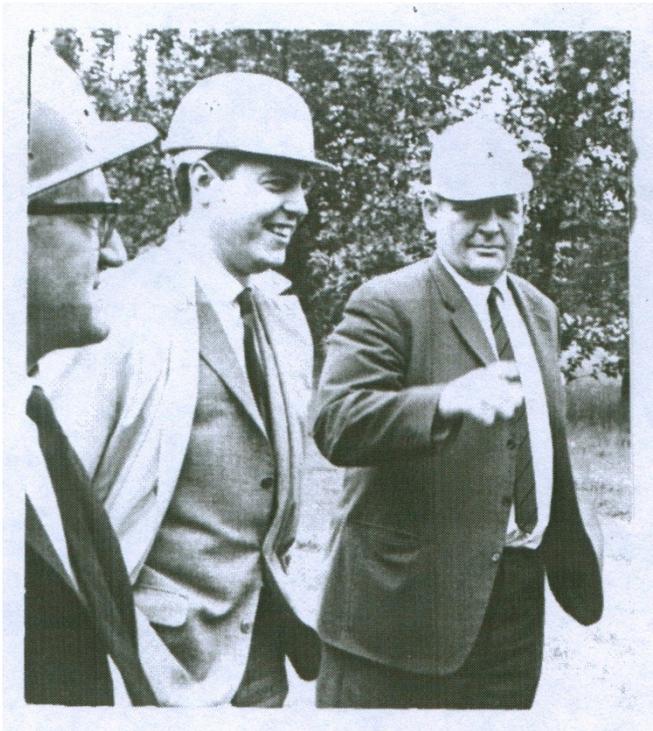
Back in Grays again I had two lovely holidays with Palmerians. **Harry Daniels**, in the interim ex-Nottingham University, invited me to go on holiday with his family for a splendid week in Edinburgh. Also about this time **Bill Bohm** organised a two-week sailing exploration of the Norfolk Broads in a 27 foot near-Gunther rigged vessel. With no outboard, when no wind you quanted, walking down two sides of craft with huge quanting poles (don't let it stick in the mud!!). Bill, the only one with any experience, captained, and the crew was **Michael Cooper**, **Michael Burnett** and me.

Bill really showed his prowess when sailing the rather exposed Horsey Mere. Mike Cooper fell overboard but Bill neatly took her around and we re-sailed past Mike and picked him up. Interesting that Bill and Mike Cooper stayed in life-long contact as did Mike Burnett and I.

After that I worked as a management trainee for two years at Thames Board Mills taking evening classes in Paper Technology at Dagenham Tech.

After two years I got wanderlust again and went to Germany, selling US encyclopaedias on commission only. I found I could train others even better than I could sell, so rapidly moved up to Crew Manager, then District Manager, then when I met my future wife her mother declared ‘no academic background – no marriage’. I happily agreed with the superboss to drop all my crews but retain the high commission rate.

I entered Heidelberg University – not having ‘A’ level German I had to ‘sit’ for three hours a seven-man board of professors to qualify. After one year studying *Kafka*, *Thos. Mann* and *Robert Musil* I passed the Certificate and after two years, the Diploma.



Inspecting a Dexion installation – with Sales Managers from Munich (left) & Hamburg (right)

Married, I could hardly pursue the previous idyll of living and dining in the best European Hotels. Uncle, now civilian and Personnel Director at GKN, offered employment, but tho’ grateful I preferred Dexion, who wanted to put me thru’ a crash course in the UK and return me to Germany. This suited me

well and I stayed with our German subsidiary, working closely with the boss with all kinds of titles but basically as leader in Marketing until 1970, when I requested a return to UK (schooling for two boys but Palmer's unsuited geographically).

Did some special projects, French West Africa and Ethiopia included. Helped transform a subsidiary gone wrong, then for three years was in charge of Middle East, North Africa before appointment as MD of the Benelux. Took redundancy, well-paid in Belgium when the Americans bought company, and became MD of Spur in Watford, then MD exports two years at Evode, Spur again, until 1983 after which I bought an old company and made Fancy Boxes for about 20 years.

Meanwhile I had always loved and accumulated books and had used weekends to stall out at the bigger Book Fairs and it is this activity, albeit re-shaped to local markets, which I continue in France as THE BOOKMAN."

MICHAEL HADLOW (1947 - 1953) has written:-

"My wife, Airlie, and I have a daughter, son-in-law and two grandsons living in San Diego and we usually spend our winters with them. During the 3 months stay we head off to Del Mar on the coast where we rent a furnished condominium.

It sits just off the Pacific Ocean and from the condo we walk to a small park adjacent to the beach and find ourselves a bench. Then we just gaze out at the ocean - plenty of pelicans and dolphins but no whales yet.

(In 1958 / 59 I was in the Merchant Navy and sailed past San Diego en route to San Francisco - where did those 50 odd years go?)

We came to the States in 1963. Our original intention was to come for one year and we came for "an adventure" and to pursue our love of American jazz. This love affair continues still and we have recently seen concert and club appearances by Sonny Rollins, Bill Charlap and the Maria Schneider Orchestra. Wonderful music!

We've lived on the East Coast since coming to America (Pennsylvania, New York City and New Jersey) but now California beckons....

Our new address from November 1st 2012 is c/o Emily Fawcett, 16041 Falcon Crest Drive, San Diego, California 92127, U.S.A. Telephone 858 312 1035

Congratulations to my old friend **William Garth Jones (1948 - 1954)** on his marriage to Desiree. Does she play Subbuteo? Best wishes to all my old school friends from 1947 - 1953."

JULIE HENBEST (1958 - 1965) is enjoying retirement and has just secured a place on the City and Guilds patchwork and quilting course, which lasts for two years.

CHERISH RUFARO MUTAMBARA (2004 - 2007) is still in Los Angeles and describes her time there as 'an incredible life changing journey'. She credits **Carolyn Jordan** and **Brian Dutton** for motivating her and making her the person she is today, i.e. someone who will follow her dream and go to Hollywood to try to make it in the Film Industry. Having started with an internship at BBC News London, she moved to the BBC World Service and then the Young Vic and National Gallery in a range of roles. Using the British Universities North America Club (BUNAC), she secured a working holiday visa to enable her to gain part-time work. Having called around 300 companies in the film business between New York and LA she managed to gain work with George Lucas as a Creative Development Intern working on storyboards and scripts as well as administration.

JACQUELINE JOHNSON (1954 - 1959) MRS CLIFFORD now lives in Sao Paulo, Brazil and has been there a year now. She is trying to learn more Portuguese, but although many words in Portuguese and Spanish are the same the pronunciations are very different, which does cause a bit of a problem.

Jacqueline remembers that while she was studying law in Montreal at McGill University and in New York at Brooklyn Law School, and Spanish in Ottawa University in years gone by, she realised that the standards instilled in her at Palmer's were of the highest order and certainly helped her through difficult examinations.

RYAN HARRIS (1995 - 1997) moved to Hong Kong in 2012.

ANNALIESE MATHERON (1996 - March 1999) wrote to the College to say:- "I will always be thankful for my time at Palmer's, not only has it given me some of the best, life-long, friends that I have, it also gave me the two Daves: **Dave Langley** - My Theatre Studies teacher - and **Dr Dave Wolstenholme**. Their passion and enthusiasm for their subjects has stayed with me and encouraged me to find that level of joy and dedication in my own work. The Daves were a huge part of the person that I am today; they taught me so many different lessons, and not just concerning their subjects, that have helped build and contribute important parts that go together to form the person and writer that I am, I often think of them and the tools that they provided me with; they are my two greatest teachers and I will always be grateful for them having taught me."

Annaliese has now completed her fourth book, *Wolflore* and has been nominated for the second time, for The People's Book Prize. Her first children's book, *Ninja Nan and Sidekick Grandad*, reached the final of this prize last year. She can be contacted via e-mail annaliesematheron@btinternet.com or by phone 01728 668264.

LUKE WALSH (2005 – 2007) was the guest speaker at the Palmer's Prize Giving 16th November 2012. He studied BTEC Business and Applied ICT while he was at Palmer's College and then graduated from Staffordshire University. He then became a Student Adviser for the University, before signing up for a Masters in Games Design at Staffordshire which he is currently studying.

The photograph shows Luke giving **George Wood (2010 – 2012)** his prize from the Old Palmerians' Association. George achieved an A* in his Extended Project, as well as an A*, A and a B in his 'A' levels, which were Religious Studies, English Literature/ Language and History. He is now studying Archaeology and Ancient History at Reading University.



MARY EMBERSON (1958 - 1963) MRS WARD writes to say that her daughter Alice became engaged in January and her fiancé Nigel is an M.P., so they are getting married in September in the crypt chapel in Westminster, with their reception in the Churchill Suite which opens onto the 'Terrace' overlooking the Thames at the Houses of Parliament. As Mary says, they are so lucky to have this opportunity and it will be an extra special occasion for Mary and all the family.

ALAN PATTERSON (1966 - 1971) was in Priestly House while he was at Palmer's, like his brother **Michael** who sadly died in January. Alan has lived in the Philippines since 1999 teaching English to students from Korea and Japan.

NORMAN PALMER (1959 - 1966) was a Professor of the Law of Art and Cultural Property from 2001 - 04, and of Commercial Law from 1991 - 2001 at University College London. He is a QC, called to the Bar in 1973, has been awarded a CBE and is a FSA. He was Chairman of the Treasure Valuation Committee 2001 - 2011, Chairman of the Illicit Trade Advisory Panel 2000 - 2005, Chairman of the Ministerial Working Group on Human Remains in Museum Collections 2000 - 2003, President of the Foundation for International Cultural Diplomacy 2006 - 2011, Expert Adviser to the Spoliation Advisory Panel 2000 - present day, Barrister at 3 Stone Buildings, Lincoln's Inn.

JOHN WORWOOD (1955 - 1962) has recently joined the Association and enjoyed reading some past magazines. His own name was mentioned in regard to South Walsham Cricket Club, which he remembers well, because being a fast bowler he loved the hard fast wicket they had there. He could also remember Peter Edrich coming out repeatedly waving bottles of milk (empty he said!) in an attempt to delay the tea interval!

John is still in touch with **Michael Horne** who lives in Coggeshall and Michael lives near **Roy Howitt**.

WILLIAM GARTH JONES (1948 - 1954) found himself absent mindedly humming a tune and then recalling some words of what he believed to be the school Cricket Song. The music was by **John Scott** and words by **Mr Smurthwaite**. He remembered two verses:-

The quickness and the steel and fire
Of hand and heart and eye
The sudden bursting of the flower
The patent mystery.

Oh willow, willow be my song
What e're the wise men say
Oh willow, willow by my song
Perennius aere.

And when the last dim overs call
And we must go our way

May we recall in paradise
Our cricket yesterdays.

Oh willow, willow etc.

Can anyone else remember the other verses?

William has an abiding memory of **Mr. Smurthwaite** at a match during Cricket Week in which he turned out for the Master's match resplendent in what I believe to have been an I Zingari cap and despite being said to be half blind, hit a series of magnificent cover drives off (again; I believe), fast bowler **Varley Gunn**. Actually, William does not believe the half blind bit as **Mr Smurthwaite** could whizz a piece of chalk with amazing speed and accuracy at any inattentive boy at the back of the class.

GRAHAM HIGH (1946 - 1953) has the same photo that appeared in last year's magazine of the South Dorm in 1951, with the names recorded on the back. He has also sent some other photos.



South Dorm 1951

Left to right Back Row:-Mick Mancer, Bob Walmsley, Andrew (Tubby) Grant, Peter Reid, Ian Whitley, Dave Moll, Kerry Langler.

Front Row:- Richard (Tufty) Adams, Bob Hawkes, Peter Bennett, Michael John Hendry, Derek Cording

Kerry Langler was the dormitory monitor who lived in Upminster, where Graham's home was and their families were friends.



East Dorm

Left to right Back Row:- R Williams, L Williams, Peter Collins, Cullen, D Pharoah

Front Row:- Risdon, Blackhurst, Vyse, Reeve, Andrews.



Graham High, P Pharoah, J Melville



Graham is 4th from the left in the front row, next to Mr. Benson, Mr. Jordan and Mr. Gallimore.

Graham was a boarder and Head Boy in 1954-1955. After Palmer's he was commissioned into the Royal Artillery for his National Service. From there he went on to Corpus Christi College, Oxford for a law degree. Then after 3 years as an articled clerk he passed his Law Society Finals and took up a post as an Assistant Solicitor in West Somerset, the firm having five offices. Graham became Senior Partner and took early retirement in 1989. The reason for his early retirement was his increasing involvement with the N.H.S., originally as a voluntary layman, but later as a non-executive director of Somerset Health Authority and Chairman. He also became heavily involved with some major Charities, like the British Red Cross Society, the Royal British Legion and Somerset Wildlife Trust.

OIDA WAIGHT (1927 - 1932) MRS FARAWAY visited Palmer's College on February 21st during half term with a member of staff from Carolyne House, Chadwell St Mary. She will be 97 in October 2013 and attended Palmer's when it was at the top of Palmer's Avenue. She remembers travelling from South Ockendon by train to get to school although at times she was a boarder. **Miss Wren** was the headmistress and **Miss Kathleen Wren** was in charge of the boarders. Ouida also remembers **Miss 'Botany' Smith** and **Miss 'Art' Smith**. She can also remember that she climbed over the wall to the Boys' side!! to get their ball back and that they had to pay 1s. 6d. per day for dinner. Ouida once took part in the Essex School Sports doing

High Jump. When she left Palmer's she went into nursing. Ouida enjoyed seeing all the old photographs and post cards of the school although she was too young to be on the 1922 panoramic photo of the girls.

The daughter of the member of staff who brought Ouida, was **Charlotte Pike** who came to Palmer's from 2008 - 2010, eighty years later. She is at University.

JOHN HAYSTON (1958 - 1965) writes to say that he is married to Chris, lives in Hampshire, has three stepdaughters, seven grandchildren and - yes - two great grandsons. His sister :-

JENNIFER HAYSTON, MRS LEGGE lives in Cheshire with husband Rob and has two sons who are both married. Their cousin:-

PENNY WRIGHT (1958 - 1965) MRS ALEXANDER lives in the middle of nowhere in New South Wales, Australia at Coolabah (of the famous tree) and has a pet kangaroo and sheep.

JANE PEASE (1981 - 1982) MRS TYSON is now the Business Manager at Lansdowne Academy. She is also studying for her Honours Degree in Pure Mathematics with the Open University, having already obtained her Joint Degree in IT and Maths. She still finds time to continue with her music!!

DAVID ELMORE (1938 - 1944) has sent us this article:-

PROGRESS

I don't consider myself as being 'old' - "getting on a bit" I would probably say if somebody asked. And yet ... and yet...I meet constant reminders of the fact that things have progressed in so many ways since I came into this world.

Take the telephone, for example. In my youth hardly anybody had one; now, nearly everybody has one. Then, nobody carried them about (because they were too heavy and anchored to a fixed point.) Today? Well you see what I mean.

Big improvements have been made in personal banking. Opening hours of 10 am to 3 pm five days a week have been replaced (thanks to ATMs and 'telephone banking') by 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There's progress for you!

When I started driving a car, filling up with petrol was easy; the man at the garage did it for you. Now you have to do it yourself, but you don't have to

hand over any cash. Present your credit card and wait a month or two until the day to pay arrives.

The business of making a cup of tea has altered considerably for most people. The basic requirement used to be:- a teapot, tea-cosy, cup, saucer, spoon, tea-strainer and a tin of loose leaf tea. Now all one needs is a mug, spoon and a teabag. Progress of a sort, you could say.

When the idea of Direct Debits was first mooted, I and practically everyone in the banking business felt it was the end of the world. The thought of companies being able to dip their fingers into our bank accounts was - well, unthinkable. But the system was introduced, caught on, and now it's general practice. Panic over.

Not so long ago, PUZZLE was the in-word; it cropped up everywhere. Turn on the TV and many channels would be showing quiz programmes. Every newspaper contained a crossword puzzle. Churches had quiz evenings, pubs drummed up business by advertising Quiz Nights, and magazines had pages of Puzzles. So I thought I'd end this article with something similar. My question is:- "What do ball-point pens, skateboards, credit cards, Premium Bonds and shopping trolleys have in common?" Answer - they didn't exist when I was born. That's progress. Q.E.D.

ALAN TRUSLER (1952 – 1959) writes:-

William Alma Cooper, my great-uncle, was born on the 7th August 1894. He attended Tilbury Council School until July 1907 and was then transferred to Palmers as a Day-Scholar with his fees being paid by Essex County Council. His academic achievements are listed on the Roll of Honour Board, currently placed in the library at Palmer's Sixth Form College. He is listed as passing:- Cambridge Local Examinations

1910 Junior First Class Honours

1911 Senior Second Class Honours

1912 London University Matriculation

According to the records, he left Palmers, as a pupil, on the 30th July 1912 but there is a point of confusion because he appears to be listed as a Student Teacher in the school. My grandfather, W. A. Cooper's brother, told me (many years ago) that WAC had taught at Palmers. In any case, by December 1914, he was teaching at Tilbury Council School because he applied for permission to enlist which was not granted by Essex Education Committee.

The date that he eventually enlisted is unknown, at present, but his Pay Book – picked up on the battlefield – shows,

a) his Date of Attestation as 9th June 1915

b) he was in Le Havre on 17th November 1915, ready to go to the Front
He had joined the Prince of Wales' Civil Service Rifles, 1/15 Battalion London Regiment.

Later in WW1, conscripted men were put into any part of the Army where men were needed but the CSR were allowed to continue to select their entrants! During his time at the Front, WAC wrote letters to the Grays & Tilbury Gazette which were published up until his death at High Wood on 15th September 1916.

He writes about, an aerial battle, a mutual truce, mining activities, the Kaiser's birthday, and comments on the deaths of two other Old Palmerians, Lieut Tweedie-Smith (RFC) and Cprl. Kennedy. He gives a strong opinion on conscientious objectors and other observations about the conditions on the Somme.



Grays & Tilbury Gazette
from microfiche)

19th December 1914

(Transcribed

ORSETT EDUCATION COMMITTEE

4th paragraph

WANTED TO ENLIST.

The County Committee wrote stating that they could not see their way clear to grant Mr. W. A. Cooper, of Tilbury Council School, permission to join H. M. Forces.

Grays & Tilbury Gazette
from microfiche)

29th January 1916

(Transcribed

WARFARE IN THE TRENCHES. GRAYS MAN'S INTERESTING ACCOUNT.

Pte. W. A. Cooper, Civil Service Rifles, 15th London Regt. Writes. Both at home and out here I have been an interested reader of your weekly publication and more so out here where reading and writing are the sole means of passing away what leisure time there is while in the trenches.

At present we are situated in a place reminiscent of recent victories. The village and surroundings bear signs of utter desolation. The houses, now heaps of ruins, the roads, shell-torn and muddy, the little British cemetery dotted with wooden crosses upon which rests a cap or tunic - all these represent *what* warfare brings in its train.

On the whole, operations seem mainly to consist of bombing attacks, the throwing of grenades, both bomb and rifle, trench mortar warfare, and the inevitable shelling and occasionally there is an attack. Both sides, at present, seem to content themselves with a "give and take" warfare. For instance. Fritz sends over a few trench mortars. Then we retaliate. Anon come some of the grenades, the usual returns. These last two instruments of warfare are especially adapted for use when the trenches are near. They drop right into the trenches while shells from a greater distance usually fall less near. The trenches on an average are about 80 yards apart and thus bombing with trench mortars and grenades play a greater part in trench work. There is, of course, the moral effect of shelling but when an army as the Germans are is 30 ft. below the ground, there is no moral effect! The German dug-outs are ideal. Of course artillery played a great part when the Germans were on the move in the early stages of the war but now both sides are thoroughly entrenched deep below ground.

The Bosch seem to have a peculiar penchant for underground warfare. Mining plays a great part in their affairs and the dugout comes in prominently. The other day, while resting in one, we detected the sound of picking in the distance - you can hear a long way when below the surface. The result was that we discovered the Bosch had mined halfway towards our line. Countermining was commenced: the object being to blow up their mine before it reached our line and to thus establish a sort of "no-man's land" between instead of a crater for the enemy to occupy and fortify.

The other night while on sentry, three German bombers occupying one of their saps gave themselves up. I suppose, like many others they were heartily sick of the war. At present affairs seem to assume every day "active monotony". There is the usual trench warfare, the usual shelling and the usual patrols at night. While on the latter, detection by the enemy must be avoided. You creep along - up goes a German flare and if you are not "nippy" and fall flat instantly, you are silhouetted and a machine gun opens up on you. Speaking of machine guns reminds me that the Germans usually to the fore in most things have failed to match our standard in machine guns. We seem now to enjoy the superiority both in numbers and rapidity of fire. You can always tell a German machine it fires less rapidly. With regards to night flares, the Germans are excelled by the French, who seemed to use a flare kept aloft by means of a parachute.

I read in your paper" H.O.C." tribute to the late Cprl. Kennedy. As an Old Palmerian, I read the tribute with interest. I have met the sergeant of his platoon out here, and he spoke of him in glowing terms as a man, a Briton, and a soldier.

The weather here at present is relatively English, wet and changeable, but always when in the trenches, cold. I suppose lack of exercise accounts mainly for this.

Grays & Tilbury Gazette **12th February 1916** **(Transcribed from microfiche.)**

CELEBRATING THE KAISER'S BIRTHDAY

Pte. Mr. W. A.. Cooper, Civil Service Rifles writes as follows 'The Bosch have been particularly active in this region and almost along the whole line, making desperate attacks to break through. Artillery engagements have been continuous. Strange, to say, on the Kaiser's birthday, we were subjected to an unusually heavy bombardment, which lasted through the ensuing two days. They send over heavy shells and minenwerfers, (*German name for short*

range mortars) commonly known as aerial torpedoes. The latter fall almost perpendicularly and explode with terrific force. They were pretty liberal too with lachrymatory shells which, by reason of the gas they contain, makes one's eyes fill with tears, hence the name 'tear shells'. The gas, being heavy, hangs about in depressions for days afterwards. The other night just after sunset, the Germans attacked on our one side. It was a magnificent sight – at least from a spectacular effect. The continuous flashes from the guns, the flares thrown in the air, the rapid fire from our rifles, the sustained rattle of the machine guns – all, in short, to make a truly wonderful spectacle. It is sufficient to add that our sustained rapid rifle fire was sufficient to put the Germans to flight.

Life here is not without the occasional humorous touches. Frequently fresh troops come into the line for instruction in trench life, for there is a trench routine. An Irishman was being told what to do, when, imagine the sergeant's surprise as Paddy with sublime ignorance asked "and at what time, sergeant, do you charge every day?"

The weather here has broken up badly; high winds and rain prevail, making the tenure of the trenches uncomfortable. I have been reading today of the Zeppelin raids over the Midlands. Their campaign of 'frightfulness' is apparent everywhere. Even out here they frequently send over heavy shells into populated districts, behind the firing line, and for no military reason. Often the official communiqués contain mention of the taking of saps (*saps were temporary, unmanned, dead end utility trenches*). Sapping goes on continuously when open warfare is not progressing. The Germans along their whole front are tunnelling out 40 yards or more. They dig a pit at the end, knock in the ground overhead and the result is a saphead. Our engineers do the same and when the saphead from one side approaches the one from the enemy, then the fun commences. The sap heads are filled with bombers and bombing continues all day. In conclusion, I hope the time is not far distant when the war will terminate in victory for the Allies.

Grays & Tilbury Gazette
from microfiche)

11th March 1916

(Transcribed

ENGLISH AND GERMAN AIRMEN FIGHT

Pte W. A. Cooper, 'A' Company, Civil Service Rifles, 15th London Regiment writes from Flanders.

We are supposed to be at rest but the present state of affairs has rudely interrupted the same. Twice men have been called during the last few days to

go and help the engineers at mine laying. Meanwhile, the rest of the brigade have trekked to a place 10 miles along the front. Since I last wrote, the Bosch have been very active. Along the English front, at present, he seems content to explode a mine at intervals. A week ago, Fritz exploded two just to our right. Another London territorial battalion was holding that part at the time. Both craters, however were occupied by us. It appears that the Germans are attempting and developing by a stage an offensive along the whole line. It seems, somehow, that in the very near future there will be a tremendous clash.

Today, I had the pleasure of witnessing an air duel in which a German and Englishman participated. The English airman succeeded, after wonderful manoeuvring in coming at right angles to his opponent and pouring a hail of bullets from his machine gun full at the Bosch. Then the latter commenced a headlong fall to the ground. His last flight!

We have had a particularly heavy fall of snow, it having lasted about four days. This coupled with the intense cold has rendered the conditions very unpleasant for all of us.

**Grays & Tilbury Gazette
from microfiche)**

25th March 1916

(Transcribed

BETTER WEATHER

Pte. W. A. Cooper, Civil Service Rifles, writes acknowledging receipt of the Gazette. He adds:- The weather from being cold and snowy has suddenly changed for the better. We have just shifted our posts and are busy repairing the trenches.

**Grays & Tilbury Gazette
from microfiche)**

1st April 1916

(Transcribed

STORY OF A MUTUAL TRUCE. REMARKABLE NARRATIVE OF FRATERNISING

Pte. W. A. Cooper, a former Grays man in one of the County of London Regiments, writes an unusually interesting letter expressing thanks for the Gazette. Describing the transfer of his corps to a different part of the line, he says, they are now in hilly country, and adds: The villages have been razed to the ground. One small place changed hands twelve times during the struggle between the French and Germans, and up to a month ago, fierce fighting took place here. There are practically no trenches. Every thing has been destroyed by the terrible effect of the artillery which, apparently, was concentrated in this region. Not a trench remains and skulls and bodies are very numerous.

The results of the great struggle is there are no trenches and, consequently, both sides are working with feverish haste to construct them. So bad is the ground that the digging of decent trenches is impossible and the line of shell holes has had to be joined up to serve as a trench. Considering the state of affairs, the ordinary trench warfare is impossible until each side has finished digging.

It might seem strange to the reader but along this portion of the front a kind of truce prevails. We know that as their trenches are unfinished, we could wipe them out with artillery fire: the Germans could do the same to us. Thus there is a “mutual unofficial suspension of hostilities” while each side works with feverish haste to become reasonably entrenched.

As a sharpshooter and observer, I went in that capacity to work along the front. Imagine my surprise when I saw the Bosches sitting on the parapet. In places, we are about eight yards from them. Later they came out over the top towards us and we approached them in like manner. Personally I gave one chap a tin of jam and received a loaf of black bread, some German cigarettes and tobacco and German newspapers in exchange. I have all these articles actually in my possession as “souvenirs”. These unusual events will seem difficult to believe and certainly the position is unique. In fact, until I went out and actually spoke to them, I disbelieved the tales I heard from the other fellows. As the day wore on we played mouth-organs and entertained them while they did the same in return, playing English tunes. Our officers spoke at a distance of ten yards to their officers. We found out that they were the (*censored*) Prussian Regt. I always thought the Prussians, in particular, hated the English. This suspension of hostilities only extended along a front of about 800 yards and away on the sides the guns and rifles were at work. But just along this small piece of front where the absence of trenches rendered trench warfare impossible, it seemed as if each side recognised that it was better to close hostilities for a time. There is a race then to see which side will finish the trench work first. If we do, we start warfare if they do we are “in for it”. Certainly, the position is unique. How long it will continue remains to be seen. Several of the Prussians could speak English. I said to one “Hullo Fritz, what do you think of the war? Are you fed up with it? “No!” was the ready response. They are fine big fellows these Prussians. One thing I noticed in particular, they wanted news of Verdun. One of our officers gave the man a heap of English newspapers. As time wore on, each side became more daring. Our fellows were carrying trench bombs in the open and they came quite close to us and buried the dead. I took good care at first to have a bomb handy when I approached a Bosch but it was entirely unnecessary.

Two nights ago, a German came over and surrendered. During the day he came out and told the chaps that he would give himself up in the evening.

“Only” he said “I can’t do it in the day voluntarily as if they see me I should get shot when I return to Germany after the war”. He came over at night and we captured him in the open. I didn’t find out his name but he worked before the war in a London bakery.

The weather lately has been very cold. Snow is falling and it makes the conditions very bad. There are no dug-outs yet and the men get what protection they can from groundsheets, overcoats and the ever useful sand bag.

Since I wrote the above, I’ve been there again. Today we’ve been snow-balling one another. Difficult to believe but a fact.

Grays & Tilbury Gazette **6th May 1916** **(Transcribed from microfiche)**

TILBURY SCHOOL TEACHER’S EXPERIENCES

Pte. W.A. Cooper, County of London Regiment, a former school teacher at Tilbury Council School writes: Since my last communication when I spoke of certain fraternizing, due to extraordinary circumstances, things have undergone a remarkable change. There are now no exchanges except of artillery and bullets; no head is shown above the parapet unless the owner has decided beforehand that he is of no use in the army. One might inquire why such a truce ended with dramatic suddenness. For the simple reason that the trenches had been completed on each side, and normal conditions again prevailed. The trenches in our sector are quite close, so that shelling, at least of the firing line, is a rarity.

This though is rather a negative advantage, as it provokes the use of other instruments of warfare, the bomb, rifle grenade, trench mortar, (a very deadly weapon), and mine. In places, merely fifteen yards separate the two front lines and so mining is frequent. The other day, we exploded a mine in their lines, doing some damage. Several times our front line has been systematically bombarded with trench mortars, grenades, etc. The supports or communication trenches too have undergone periodical bombardment with shell fire.

Two or three times our firing line has been battered about badly. Of course, this necessitates night working parties, which are not entertainments as the word might imply. Enemy rifles are trained on the places broken down by fire during the day, and at night when these places have to be repaired, rifle fire and shells provide music for the party. These so-called working parties are notorious out here. Sometimes it means a walk through shell holes full of

water usually, to the place to be repaired. Perhaps you are spotted. Then comes the shrapnel over, and machine gun fire while you fall flat on the ground, be it muddy or not. On such journeys as these you instinctively pick your way over the ground. Maybe, you fall in a hole up to your neck in water and mud. Up you get and stumble over the barbed wire, till you wonder whether all the elements have conspired to prevent your progress. You arrive eventually at, say, a trench to be deepened. You jump in water up to the knees as usual. After clearing away the water and removing some of the slush you perhaps knock something hard. Often a shell or unexploded bomb, or a skull, the latter quite frequently. So much for the working party.

I read with regret of the announcement of the death of Lieut. Tweedie-Smith. I knew him well while I was at Palmers. It is such things as these which embitters one against the conscientious objectors. It is evident that they have a conscience. Why not place them out in "no man's land" at night and let them erect the barbed wire? It would be splendid work for them for they would be protecting the lives of real men in the trenches: they would be stopping the shots coming over, and, lastly they need not take the lives of the Bosches. What splendid work this would be, for it would certainly justify the conscientious objection. It makes one sick out here to read of them. I should imagine if they ever do come out they will receive a warm reception from the men.

The weather lately has been very bad. We've had quite a week or so of rain on and off.

Grays & Tilbury Gazette **20th May 1916** **(Transcribed
from microfiche.)**

WHAT MINING ACTIVITY MEANS.

Pte. WA Cooper, County of London Regiment, formerly of Tilbury sends the following graphic account of mining operations at the front.

The first night we were in the trenches when the Huns exploded a mine. Owing to the close proximity of the trenches, their own trench was damaged more than our own. The following night another one went up quite close to it and damaged our communication trench and front line. I happened to be about 30 yards to the right of the scene of the explosion, thereby obtaining a splendid view. In the official communiqués one often sees the statement, "mining activity about----". On this particular night there is a sudden tremor. One seems to be in a small boat in a squall at sea. After several seconds, which seem hours, the ground suddenly yawns open, a huge sheet of pale

yellow flame shoots high in the air; hot gases, sable and white gust out. With dramatic suddenness, our machine guns open fire on the crater formed, our riflemen sweep the front with rifle fire; our artillery have picked up the target and are shelling the supports with high explosive shrapnel. The Germans, too, are shelling our supports. Over the top come a few Huns making for the crater, several fall, the rest seem to evaporate or return. The infernal din is maintained for an hour or so. Everyone is highly strung.

All night both sides are watching should anyone try to occupy the lips of the crater. Recollect the phrase, "A little mining activity." Reflect upon the results it brings in its train. After a night on the *qui vive* with no sleep the following day is given over to trench mortaring. A grenade comes over, 'Tis easy to recognise the pop of the rifle, and ridiculously simple to listen to the bang just behind your ears. During the day parties are repairing the trenches knocked about during the night before.

And so another day wears on until dusk. This is the time we stand to. I leave it to the readers to imagine the state of ones nerves after the preceding affairs. It's stand to, and we are all awaiting the "once nightly." Seven o'clock and the same sickening rocking of the ground; two mines explode this time. We throw a "barrage" of curtain fire on their supports. They do the same. The same as last night. One suddenly discovers oneself leaning over the parapet blazing away excitedly. During a period of seven days as many mines were exploded just on our front. It was a gruelling time, and when the men were relieved for a few days spirits were rather low, for in vain you looked for your pals.

During the few days' rest you go up to the trenches on the celebrated night working parties. While away from the trenches for a couple of days one fully appreciates the rest. This is the time when one puts one correspondence in order. Perhaps there are a dozen or so letters to answer.

The weather lately has been very warm. I see the Germans have profited by the same to lose a few Zepps.

Grays & Tilbury Gazette **11th November 1916** **(Transcribed
from microfiche)**

TILBURY TEACHER MISSING.

Corpl. W. A. Cooper, London Regiment, has been officially reported to be missing. He will be remembered as a former teacher at Tilbury Council School and those who have from time to time read the graphic letters which he

used to send to the Gazette will join in hoping some satisfactory news may soon be received of him.

His letters were always full of interest, and he successfully endeavoured to impart some idea of the conditions under which the troops were living. As a sharpshooter and observer must have been invaluable, for his written observations showed great aptitude for the work.

[Ed - W A Cooper is remembered, in France, on the 'Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme' and, in Palmer's College, on the WW1 Memorial Board situated in the Library]

JILL SNELLING (1980 - 1983) won the Best Actress award for her role as Vivien Collings in "Erica and Me" at the Brentwood Drama Festival in September 2012, beating talented opposition. Adjudicator for the festival John Scowen said "It's such a hard task to choose a winner as this year the standard was particularly high, but Jill's performance warmed everyone, especially the visiting dignitaries." Jill was delighted with the award as she had been nominated several times before in other festivals but this was the first time she had clinched the award. Jill has been acting and directing for the Thurrock Courts Players for many years.

REBECCA KENYON (2005 - 2007) chaired the debates held in the Thurrock Council Chamber as part of national Democracy Week in October 2012. Twenty six young people and councillors from across the political spectrum took part in Your Voice - Your Debate. The debates were entitled: Was the Olympics worth the money? and Should the Police be armed? Both topics had been chosen by Thurrock Youth Cabinet members and both provoked passionate and informative debating.

Rebecca is a former Thurrock Youth Cabinet member and Member of Youth Parliament.

OLD PALMERIANS ESSEX LUNCH LADS

TREVOR BOND (1948-55) writes:-

"For some years now a lunch club has been running. Never heard of it? Then read on and you might wish to join our merry band.

"We meet in pubs approximately once a month for nine months of the year. We number from six to a dozen or sometimes many more. Most of us were at Palmer's at the same time, so yes, the talk is all about memories in the late

Fifties, early Sixties – masters we loved, respected and, yes, sometimes hated, school buildings in which we worked and played, school captains, house captains, prefects (which earned you a cap tassel in your house colour - red, yellow, green, maroon and blue or, white if you were chosen to the high honour of school prefect – poachers turned gamekeepers! Marlborough (red) always claimed bragging rights if not victories!

“Interesting that, only this year there is focus on great British names re stamps, memorials etc. Palmer’s Boys School led the way by naming their school houses after such great Brits as Addison, Priestley, Shaftsbury, Marlborough and Brooks – men who determined Britain’s great power.

“Perhaps one has to lay the blame of meeting in pubs, as we do now, at the door of the wonderful **George Ross** who, master of English, one time deputy head and cricket doyen, always insisted that sixth formers were “grown-ups” and therefore entitled to down a pint – not least on all those wonderful cricket tours to Norfolk. George – we raise a glass to you at every lunch! The Essex Lads have made a pilgrimage to G.V.R’s grave in Orsett churchyard.

“The hostelrys where we meet are chosen by **Eddie Hunt (1954- 1961)**. Mostly, they all delighted in our visits and have shown us great hospitality. There have been some oddities which I assure any old boys reading this, were not of our making. For example:

- *One pub burnt down immediately after our lunch
- *Another pub was vandalised immediately after our visit.
- *And another closed down immediately after we thanked them for their hospitality.

“We will not dwell on those circumstances, none of which, as I insist, were a direct result of our visit.”

Eddie takes up the story:-

“It all began on a typical summer’s afternoon at the girls’ school! It was the Millenium Open day, and the boys’ school had been knocked down many years before.

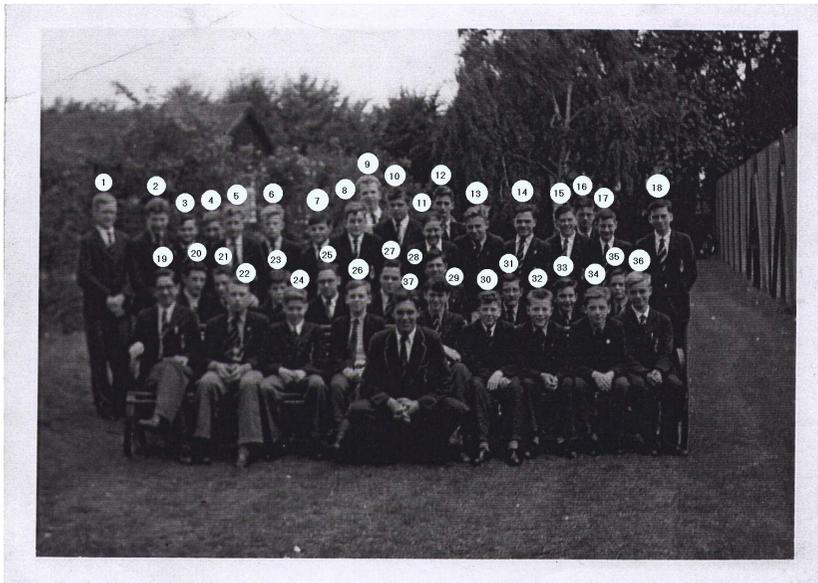
“**John Nicholls (1954-1960)** recognised a signature in the visitors’ book. Could it be? It wasn’t.

“Anyway, he left a message that he would like to meet with me. Amongst the greetings and much “My, I haven’t seen you since 1960” and “You haven’t changed a bit”, we decided to meet for lunch. And that, dear readers, is how the Old Palmerians Essex Lads lunches began.

“Little did we dream that this would lead to international acclaim, with guest diners all over Essex and even from Hertfordshire.

“John and I possessed a photo of Form IVA of the 1956-57 vintage, and agreed that we would attempt to track down as many of those in the photo as we could, and get them to come along to the 2006 300th Year celebrations.”

The names are all there.



"Form IVa 1956-57".

Form IVa 1956-57 (Photo taken by Mr R.T.Jones (Form Master), next to the tennis courts)

Back Row, left to right: 1. Malcolm Williamson, 2. David Simmons, 3. Colin Carey, 4. John Corner, 5. Alan Hollis (N), 6. Michael Walker, 7. John Nicholls, 8. Steve Pinnock, 9. Eric Mogensen, 10. Len Bennett, 11. Peter Waterman, 12. Les Simpson, 13. Alan Whyman, 14. Mike Pipes, 15. John Murray (N), 16. Eddie Hunt, 17. David Mooring, 18. Chris Jenkins.

Front Row, left to right: 19. Steve Housden, 20. A.C.Affleck (N), 21. Jack Love (N), 22. Brett Goodyear, 23. John Milner (N), 24. Richard Boatman, 25. John Goodwin, 26. Chris Day, 27. Tony Pipes, 28. Clive Collis, 29. Mike Adams, 30. Terry Davies, 31. Dicky Watts, 32. John Hinton, 33. Nigel Offers (N), 34. Mervyn Bone, 35. John Hodgson (N), 36. Barry Newman.

'N' denotes no contact. If anyone has any news of these we would be pleased to hear.

“Tragically, Mervyn Bone was killed in a motorcycle accident, aged 18, and is buried in North Stifford churchyard. He was greatly missed by his father, the master **E.L.Bone**.

“While there were the annual visits of the school photographer who took individual pictures, there were never any official school form photographs. We have to be grateful to R.T. for taking this photo of IVa.

Eddie adds: “There are 36 members of IVa in the photograph, and contact has been made with 24. The first breakthrough actually occurred at the Open Day. A chance bit of earwiggling led to meeting the sister of **Mike** and **Tony Pipes (1954-1961)**. And a short while later, email contact with Mike in Canada, and Tony in California was established. This led to a reunion at The Treacle Mine, some 40 years after last seeing Mike and Tony. Mike was also in touch with **Malcolm Williamson (1954-1961)**. Unfortunately, they were unable to come to the 2006 celebrations.



"A reunion lunch with the Pipes twins, Oct 2001 at the Treacle Mine, Grays".
Left to right: Eddie Hunt, Tony Pipes, John Nicholls, David Mooring, Mike Pipes and Len Bennett (all 1954-1961).

“Fortunately, a number of the OPs regularly attended the Old Boys Dinner. These were recruited, and they in turn had contacts.

“At some point, it was decided to hold lunches, rather than wait a whole year before we met again. The idea was to take advantage of the dining offers that were appearing in a number of national Sunday newspapers offering two or three courses at a sensible price. This led to many visits to pubs all around Essex, and to some memorable occasions.

“One such occurred while lunching at the White Hart in Coggeshall. **Stephen Pinnock (1954-1961)** got up suddenly from the table and approached a couple on another table – it was **John Moore** and his wife Maggie. Such a coincidence. We met again with John and Maggie at the White Hart. John mentioned that **Michael Horne (1955-1962)** lived in Coggeshall, and subsequent contact with Michael saw him join the lunch group. Michael mentioned that **Roy Howitt (PT master in the mid-Fifties to early Sixties)** also lived in Coggeshall, and again we are pleased that Roy joins us for lunch when the venue is near to his home town.

“Roy was in touch with his PT colleague **Tony Hendry** and we were delighted that Tony joined us for a lunch in Witham to celebrate his 80th birthday. More celebration and reminiscing occurred when we met up again for **Roy**’s 80th birthday, which was reported, with photo in the 2011 Old Palmerian Magazine.

“As a group, we have extended our getting-together beyond just pie and a pint. We also attended John Moore’s commemoration service in Wickham Bishops.

“The singers from Durham who were coming to form the choir were unable to arrive in time as it was at the time of a spell of very bad and windy weather, which had disrupted road travel. So, true to the music tradition started at Palmer’s – and by John - there were enough OPs to form an impromptu choir.

“And this was all cemented with a good turnout from Form IVa for the 300th Garden Party with many friendships being renewed. We continue today, trying to hold a lunch on the third Tuesday of each month.

“You were not in Form IVa? Neither was I, says Trevor, but more of that later. Any old boy of the school (OPA member or not) can share our fun and will be welcomed, in particular any OP who may be visiting or passing through the area. One such itinerant has been **David Bishop** who has lunched with us on several occasions on his European Tours from Melbourne. Essex is the usual lunch base but we have strayed beyond and new locations are welcomed. A case of ‘Have Appetite, Will Travel’”.

Brett Goodyear (1954-1961) says: “Over fifty years ago I left Palmer’s Boys with barely a backward glance, thinking I was off to achieve great things, in some exotic career. Well, I never did that but, I have had the consolation in recent years of meeting a number of “Old Boys” several times a year for lunch. Not only do I look forward to the pleasure of their company, but also, discovering places new to me (thanks to Eddie and my Satnav!)”

Regular luncher is **Neil Beaumont**, who attended Palmers sometime after the Form IVa pupils. Neil is known to get lost (or at least arrive last – a contest with **John Goodwin (1954-1961)**) - when Neil travels from Hornchurch to the Essex outback. He admits: “I was never the brightest pea in the pod at Palmers but loved every minute at the school.” He is too modest to own up to being such a good cricketer at Palmer’s, he went on to represent Essex Second XI.



Pig & Whistle, Chignall Smealy, photo taken by Brett Goodyear

Left to right:- Eddie Hunt, John Goodwin, John Nicholls, Michael Horne, Neil Beaumont, David Mooring, Peter Goodyear, Trevor Bond.

He says: “About five years ago I attended my first Old Palmerian dinner and there I met several old boys with whom I am now in regular contact. These

were former students I had never met before but with whom I immediately struck up a rapport.

“Eddie Hunt was one of those. He invited me to join the monthly lunch club, most members of which are of the 1954-61 vintage. At 63, I am the youngest!

“I reckon that since then I have been to about 30 such lunches. In so doing I have visited parts of Essex I never knew existed and dined in some of the oldest pubs and inns. From Chignall Smealy to Threshers Bush, Bishops Green to Messing and Billericay to Halstead. Hands up if you can match that!

“A minimum of six, often a maximum of nine or ten. The banter is the same, conversation not always dominated by things Old Palmerian but, inevitably, memories are stirred; old times, former masters and historic buildings (now sadly all gone).

“Meeting Tuff Hendry and Roy Howitt on the occasion of their 80th’s has been a magic moment for us all.”

John Nicholls recalls the lunch club beginning:

“I left Palmer’s in 1960 and, apart from occasionally hearing about the College in the course of my work with a neighbouring college in Chelmsford, I had no contact with my old school. But, in the early 1990’s my wife, an habitual reader of the births and deaths columns of “The Times”, read the notice of George Ross’s death. She read it out to me, “the late Deputy Headmaster of Palmer’s Grammar School for Boys, Grays, Essex” and asked me: “Did you know him?”

“My memories of English lessons with George came pouring back - poetry from Palgrave’s “Golden Treasury”, plays by Shakespeare, George Bernard Shaw, Goldsmith, novels by H.G. Wells, Angela Thirkell, classic fiction such as “Lorna Doone”, and more. George introduced them to all of us.

“I had nostalgic thoughts of Palmers’ and decided that I would try to locate the OPA. I got in touch with Ruth Hunwick who at that time, worked full-time at the college, and rejoined the Association in 1995. I first went to the Founder’s Day dinner, but it was at the old boys’ dinner that I had the privilege of renewing acquaintance with **Edward Moorehouse** who took us for English in IIB, our first year. **Dai Davies** was there also although he never taught me as we had **Peter Townsend** for ‘A’ level chemistry.

“It was interesting to talk to these stalwarts of Palmer’s and catch up with news of some of the other masters we had. Sadly Messrs. **Gallimore**, **Bone**,

Bohm and **R.T.Jones** had died but some, such as **“Felix” Moore**, **Tony Hendry** and **Roy Howitt** were still around, and I am delighted to have met them again.

“I did attend the old boys’ dinner at Orsett Hall but met no one from my year at Palmer’s until, at the Millenium Garden Party I noticed Eddie Hunt’s entry in the visitor’s book.

“My wife, (not an Old Palmerian), and I were just about to leave, but on seeing Eddie’s name I decided to hunt(!) around for him and we duly met later in Chelmsford, where I worked and was convenient for Eddie in Billericay.

“We had a lot of catching up to do - 40 years had passed since we left the school. We both possessed a photo of form IVA which we believe was taken by “Tubby” Jones our form teacher in 1956-1957. Eddie and I continued to meet for lunches in Chelmsford and Southend every month or two. Some time was spent in identifying and naming all the boys. We made up our minds to see if we could track down as many of them as possible with a view to meeting in 2006, at the garden party to celebrate the 300th anniversary.

“About two thirds of the 1956-1957 IVA met then and some stayed on for the celebrations at the Oddfellows Hall in Grays. By now **Eddie**, **Brett Goodyear** and **John Goodwin** had joined the OPA Committee, and several of us were meeting at various hostelries in Essex every month or so, and the lunches settled into their now regular format.

Trevor Bond adds: “I joined the group only lately in recent terms, meeting Eddie through the 300th Anniversary committee when I agreed to be press officer – despite the fact that we live only half -a-mile away from each other in Billericay. Our paths at Palmers never crossed but, since joining, my retirement has taken on so much more fun.

“Like Neil Beaumont I hail from Hornchurch – one of only four from North Street school in 11-plus year to choose Palmers – what a great decision!

“For health reasons, I “lost” a year – and ended up in a brilliant sixth form with the likes of school captain **Don Cave** (another Hornchurch lad), **Norman Harris**, **Ted Pryor**, **Simon Small**, **Derek Lobley**, **Roger Noble** and many more – that having spent my formative years with such brilliant scholars and sports stars, **Glyn Jarrett** (school captain and outstanding cricketer), **Tony Carr** (who went on to get a Varsity Blue at soccer), **Ken Bannister** and **David Bryant** – to name a few.

“At 77 now, I am the Senior Member(!) of the lunch group and a few years older than the resident group. That did not stop Eddie inviting me on board. A common denominator was that we all shared the same masters (give or take a few) and the same memories of the school we treasured.

“Most of us went on from Palmers to great credit to the school and our masters. University claimed many and rightly so. “Education has benefited by many of our group having been acclaimed as outstanding teachers and school heads.

“Me? Much to that quite brilliant headmaster, **Fred Jordan**’s disgust, I chose journalism (a non-professional profession!) and that is why the Essex Lads Lunch group thought I was the best person to write this article. I defer to the readers!

“So to the nitty-gritty. Reason for wanting other old boys to know what we get up to. Fun: Yes, we have a massive amount of that. The lunches, held in hostelrys around Essex and take in the travel needs of those who come from north of the border (Chelmsford) or from the southern states of Grays and Purfleet (Thurrock by any other name). Share and share alike. Silly old men playing with toys? Rubbish – No? It is our way of trying to keep tradition and the name of Palmer’s alive and kicking in a fun way. Anything wrong with that?

“Nostalgia: It never stops. From memories of having to swim naked in the school pool to flogging round the sports field; to cross-country runs down and back along Rectory Road – always via that mud-splattered climb by the cemetery (I cheated – sure many others did) and leisurely days during Cricket Week when, if you were not playing, you were “ordered” to retire to the boundary to be seen there. With your latest Latin prose of course!

“Or, THE MASTERS...**Gallimore**, brilliant if you were good at maths, destructive if (like me) you were a dunce; **Benson**, knees bend and the inevitable geography comment: “You are all a total disgrace. You do not even know what is the capital of Australia”. - “Sydney, sir.” “Boy, Sydney does not begin with a “C” and end in an “A”. Back to your desk”

Or **Frank Hughes**, when I finished the inevitable essay on my day in London, said: “We rushed into the train”. To which, having awarded me a full 10/10 added: “I hope that it did not hurt.”

Or **Bone**, French without tears, who cycled to school and was so terrified of taking his hands off the bars, used to signal left or right with the appropriate

foot. Or **Bohm** who beat out “Amo, amas, amat, amamus, amatis, amant” with what I swear was a baseball bat. (*From Eddie: A note to he in the photo who shall remain nameless, for now: – present tense of sum is not sum, sus, sut, sumus, sutis, sunt! He knows who he is!*)

“I was an art student – the brilliant science guys have their own such stories and memories, hopefully produced here in context of this article.

“As Eddie has said, we honoured two great PE masters, Tony Hendry and Roy Howitt on the occasion of their eightieth birthdays – proof that we combine our fun with serious business.”

“But, back to the beginning. Palmer’s exists now in name only – boys’ wonderful buildings long been erased and now an old people’s home (perhaps where we should all end up!); girl’s school – a sixth form college where, while the name lives on, the history has long gone and recognised no more. Standards? Applaud the success we must, but grieve about the loss of past times. The Old Boys’ dinner is still a magic event in keeping all that alive thanks to **Mike Smith** and just this April, numbers increased. A bonus.

“We all did history (to some level). And what frequently dominates our lunchtimes is the history of one, Sir William Palmer, our founder.

“**Michael Horne (1955-1962)**, who is involved in the Discovering Coggeshall project, says: “I’ve discovered a lot about William Palmer from the Essex Records Office. He was the son of Sir William Palmer of Warden in Bedfordshire and his wife Dorothy. Documents relate to his work as a JP in Thurrock in the 1660s and 70s and one magnificent one about a burglary at his house in Grays in 1689 with a list of all the stolen articles, including a portrait of King Charles I. Man accused found not guilty; contents never recovered. I have never seen or heard of that before or reported about.”

“A gem to come from casual pie and pint in a welcome hostelry.

“**Mike Yates (1957-63)** responds: “I have not been to recent lunches but remember them well. Most memorable was Michael’s guided tour around Coggeshall that culminated in his house with the faux (Trompe L’oeil) windows. I have been back many times with my wife and completed the same walk (excluding Michael’s house).”

“Most of us went on the annual cricket tour to Norfolk under the firm touch of George Ross - players, cooks, bottle-washers. It remains a constant subject over lunch.

“I tell one story (no names and apologies if I have told it before in these columns). Match at Castle Rising. Person concerned not chosen to play, but told to prepare the evening meal. No problem. But this was out in the open in Keswick Park, just outside Norwich. Meal of the day – steak suet pudding. Team struggled home, match abandoned because of torrential rain, soggy and desperate to eat a hearty meal. Sat down, began to eat – then immediately began a rush to the nearest bushes to throw up. Seems, the cook had used a bucketful of sugar instead of salt – well, it looked the same colour!!

“That same member, who, in a profligate cricket career, had managed only to captain the school seconds and play one match in Cricket Week, added to this disaster a year later, when, having left school and working in a “gap” three months in Norfolk, he offered his services to Mundesley CC against the school in the annual tour match. Batting at No.6, made seven not out against the school’s best bowlers – the brilliant **Brian Fayers** – while Norfolk farmer Norman Cripps clouded an agricultural century at the other end in a stand of 120 plus - the school lost. “Tuff” Hendry’s comment: “You have brought great shame on Palmers.” I stand named and shamed.

“Just one such tale, one such memory of many shared around a pub table, all true and retold over many wonderful lunchtimes.

“Many names are missing (apologies to them). They have all been part of an ongoing tradition – keeping the name of Palmer’s School alive and kicking in a small yet significant way. Where would we all be today without OUR school.

“We would love to see new old boys join us for lunch – from any years, the more diverse the better. We meet the third Thursday of most months. There is no commitment, and if you come to just one lunch and decide it’s not for you, that’s OK. Drop an email to eddie.hunt@lineone.net

“We look forward to seeing you.”

JANE SAXTON (1966 - 1972) MRS PEAFFORD celebrated in January 2013 with her husband Alan when they heard he had been awarded an MBE in the New Year’s Honours List for his services to people with Cornelia de Lange Syndrome and their families. He founded the CdLS Foundation, after his daughter was diagnosed with a mild form of it in 1986. Alan also supports many local charities and he is chair and governor of Treetops School in Grays.

ROGER PEEK (1956 – 1963) has sent this photo of the Athletics team with as many of the names he can remember. Can anyone help where he is not sure, or with the missing names? Please let Ruth Hunwick know.



Palmers School Athletics Team 1958

Front Row:- Neil? Macdonald, Fred Goodey, Roger Peek, Paul Skinner, Ray Williams, Doug Smith Dick West, H J (Joe) Kennard, Malcolm Coombes, George Tarrant.

Second Row:- Phil Munday, Rene Bennett, Dick Bush, Alan Gooch, Alan "Tubs" Grant, Mick Mancer, Ralph Comber, Glyn Griffiths, David Andrews.

Third Row:- Alan Groves, Brian Bareham, Albert Brown, Alan Trusler, Gordon Dimmock, Henry Grant, Peter Longhurst, David Staines, Mick Higgs, Norman Cowie, Maurice Dixson, Bill Read, ? Hodgson, Mr Roy Howitt.

Fourth Row:- ? Revill, ? Pipes, ? Beard, Chris Holmes, ? Davies, ? Webster, Stuart Young, Colin Taylor, Bill Brown, ? Pipes, Morgen Morgensen

Back Row:- ? Walton, Stan Page, Pete Povey, Frank Hart, "Jasper" Smith, Pete Hayman, Tony Nockles, Leonard C Bennett.

The trophies in the picture are, on the left, the Bickersteth Cup, which was competed for by Essex & possibly London & Hertfordshire schools. It was a

field events competition with points awarded for the top 3 (or possibly 6) places and also a point for achieving the standard for your event. In the centre is the District Sports Cup, with the Bata Relay Shield in front of it. The four smaller cups were the individual cups for members of the Bata relay team. We do not know what the cup on the right was for.

DUNCAN FALLOWELL (1960 - 1965) has written “*How To Disappear: A Memoir For Misfits*”. It was published in 2011 in hardback, awarded the PEN/Ackerley Prize for memoir in July 2012 and has this year been published as a paperback. He achieved ‘O’ levels at Palmer’s, was a member of the School Choir, on the Committee of the Music Society and left to go to another school. He left Magdalen College, Oxford in 1970 with a degree in History.

F G Bird has sent two photographs of his father **GEORGE ROBERT BIRD (Apr 1894 – Dec 1900)**. The first one was taken in 1903 when George was 19 years old.



The second one is of the football team for the 1895 – 1896 season, which is a wonderful addition to our archives, as it had all the names on the back. Research has found them all in the Entrance Examination book and so we have the full names and the years they started.

When George started in 1894, there were 62 pupils in the school paying 6s 8d Domus fees and £1 13s 4d School fees making up £1 6s 8d Governors fees and 6s 8d Masters’ fees. When he left in 1900 there were 126 pupils and the fees were the same except the Domus fees had risen to 8s 8d. George then joined the family business of bank and office fitters and furnishers, J Carter & Co., 12 Lime Street, EC3 and later became a partner with his father.



Back Row:- Thomas (**Tom**) Robinson Shutes, George Robert Bird, Alec Gordon Harvey, Edmund Ainsworth Dawson, Ernest (**Ernie**) Muncy Horncastle.

Front Row:- Arthur Frederick Guy, George Bailey Sansom, Charles Claudin (**Claude**) Harlow, Frederick Dupont Lee, Edward (**Teddy**) Hollis, John R. Percival (**Percy**) Mears

F G Bird also sent some examination papers for 1900, belonging to George, two Palmerian Magazines, one February 1914 and the other March 1915 and a Girls' Sports Afternoon Programme July 1900, where the prizes were presented by Lady Dimsdale.

George had four sisters, three of whom also attended Palmer's:- **Lilian Constance** and **Ida Rose**, who both sat the entrance examination on the 5th March 1894 and **Marjorie Iris Bird (May 1908 – July 1910)**.

Two cousins of George, **Horace William Bird** and **Ernest Jesse Bird** both started at Palmer's in September 1895. Horace left in July 1899 and became an electrical engineer and Ernest left in July 1902 and went into banking. In 1901 Ernest took his Cambridge Local Honours examination and achieved First Class, First Division, Distinguished in Religious Knowledge and was

Champion Athlete of the Boys' School. Sadly Horace was killed in the Ilford train crash on the 1st January, 1915.

THURROCK SWIMMING CLUB MARKS ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Orsett Hall hosted Thurrock Swimming Club's 50th Anniversary Celebration Dinner with a turnout of nearly 100 people. The dinner celebrated the last 50 years of the club since it was founded in April, 1963. Guests that attended from the past and present included **Herbie Adams**, the head coach in 1963.

Herbie (Richard Walter) Adams started at Palmer's in September 1951 in Brooks House and left in July 1958, having taken his 'A' levels and been awarded a County Major Exhibition to attend Southampton University. He had represented his House in Football, Cricket and Swimming, being the Captain for House Swimming. He represented the School in Swimming and Chess and was in the School Choir and was a School prefect. He received his School Colours for Swimming in 1956. He also represented the County in Swimming and Chess. Richard Adams joined the Boys' School Science staff in the Autumn Term 1961 and also became a Housemaster (one of four) in his old house, Brooks, starting in 1961 - 1962 academic year. **John Sach** remembers him teaching Biology. He continued his interest in swimming by coaching swimming for House, School and Town. He left at the end of the Summer Term in 1969 and became Head of Biology at a Comprehensive School in Bristol.

CHRISTINE CARROLL (2000 - 2004) was awarded her BA Honours Degree in English Language and French in 2012.

MICHELLE CHOATE(2002 - 2004) was awarded her Master of Arts in Dance Studies by Roehampton University in 2012.

MICHAEL COLEMAN (2008 - 2010) was awarded his BA Honours Degree in Film Studies in 2013.

REBEKKA DRAKE (2008 - 2010) was awarded her Degree in 2013.

ROBERT A. DAY (2007 - 2009) was awarded his Bachelor of Science Degree in 2013.

HELP REQUIRED

We have been asked for information on a teacher, who was at the Boys school from 1960: **Mr Elliot Ashe** who taught French. If you can help, please contact Ruth Hunwick, details at the front of the magazine.

BIRTHS

Congratulations to:-

HAYLEY SCHOFIELD (2000 - 2002) MRS LANDER and her husband Richard on the birth of their daughter Ava Helen in April 2012.

RYAN BENTON (1996 - 1998) and his wife Sarah (neé Carter) on the birth of their son Nathan Drew on 11th June 2013, a brother for Seth.

WEDDINGS

Congratulations to:-

EDWARD MARIN 2000 - 2003 who married Sarah McDonough on 31st March 2012.

JANET MITCHELL (1953 - 1960) who married Walter Hall at Orsett Hall on 13th May 2012. They met when sitting as magistrates in Southend Court. They have moved to Tolleshunt Knights, a village near Tiptree, just down the road from the famous Jam factory. Jan was previously Mrs Featherstone.

ELIZABETH WILTON (1953 - 1960) who was married in 2012 and is now **MRS RICKS**. Elizabeth was previously Mrs Housego.

CERYS FARRIER (2002 - 2005) who married Roy Bronze on the 23rd May 2013 at The Old Rectory, Lower Dunton Road, Dunton Wayletts, Brentwood. They went to Greece for their honeymoon.

CHARLOTTE BECKLEY (2003 - 2005) who married Glenn Webb at the Grays United Reformed Church in Bradleigh Avenue, Grays on the 11th May 2013. Their reception was at The Park Inn, North Stifford and then they went to The Manor House Hotel Activity Centre in Devon for a week.

OBITUARIES

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

JUDITH AITKEN (MRS SMITH)	1951 - 1957	20 February	2012
GEOFFREY BATTERSHALL	1944 - 1951	April	2012
DENNIS HEARN	1937 - 1941	17 May	2012
ROSEMARY WATSON	1947 - 1955	July	2012
JACK AVERY WARWICK	1932 - 1938	late	2012

MR. J RICHARDSON	1968 - 1972	09 October	2012
GEOFFREY PLAYER	1925 - 1934	26 October	2012
ROY HERBERT DENNING	1946 - 1952	22 November	2012
MICHAEL DENNIS PATTERSON	1965 - 1970	29 January	2013
HAROLD JAMES LUDLOW	1932 - 1937	14 February	2013
KEN SPRINGHAM	1946 - 1951	17 March	2013
KATHLEEN TAMPKINS (MRS HARPER)	1933 - 1939	23 March	2013

JUDITH CONSTANCE AITKEN (MRS SMITH)

Judith died on the 20th February 2012 after a short illness. She was the oldest friend of **Beryl Roeper (1950 - 1955) Mrs Hall.**

GEOFFREY BATTERSHALL

Geoffrey died in April 2012. He followed his father **George Battershall** as a student at Palmer's, attending from 1944 to 1951. He had very fond memories of his time there.

Geoff moved to North Stifford with his family in 1938. He had an idyllic childhood there in spite of WW2. There was the Mardyke and the chalk pits to play in and dogfights to watch overhead as well as Scouts, Youth clubs and the freedom of the surrounding countryside.

He went to Culford Road School for his primary education. His Mother taught there but this did not lead to him having any preferential treatment from her. He was cuffed by her as soundly as anyone else in the class for bad behaviour. This happened frequently as he was by no means a goody-goody but the cuffs did him no lasting psychological damage and probably helped him to concentrate on passing the 11+ exam and being accepted at Palmers.

Life at Palmers started in the first week with tests in English, Maths and General Intelligence so that the boys could be streamed. Geoff was put into the "A" stream and continued in the higher stream throughout his school career. He was in Priestley house for which he played football and cricket.

Some special school memories are:-

Playing cards or shove halfpenny between courses at lunch.

Homilies from local clergy at assembly. The Rev. Pearce was the boys favourite as he was amusing and was also District Commissioner for the Scouts.

In Singing lessons the boys were divided into Ducks, Nightingales and Larks. During the Doodle Bug raids, Hitler's attempt at frightening the British into submission was simply, ignored by the boys and staff of Palmers who just carried on with lessons as normal.

Swimming in the school pool was followed by a cold, naked dash back to the main building to change.

The "A" stream took School certificate in 10 subjects in their fourth year at the School.

After A-levels Geoff went on to take his degree in Chemistry at London University followed by National Service as a Radio Mechanic working on tanks in Libya.

On his return to GB he worked as an Analytical chemist in the Pharmaceutical industry before changing course and becoming a Chemistry teacher which he enjoyed in spite of the embargo on cuffing the pupils. He found that a well timed explosion worked just as well! Eventually he held the post of Head of Science at a Nottingham school for 20 years before severe arthritis caused his early retirement.

Geoff and his wife Rene moved to Colwyn Bay where he enjoyed the best years of his life. Although the arthritis was a problem he indulged his love of walking in the mountains, his many hobbies and his interest in botany and did a lot of work on the botany of North Wales. It was on a botanical outing that he met by chance a fellow Old Palmerian, **John Woolliams**. They had many happy chats about the school and both regretted its demise and the destruction of its buildings. They both acknowledged how much they owed to the School.

Death came mercifully quickly and without protracted illness at the age of 79 and Geoff enjoyed life to the end. At his funeral it was said that he got a lot out of life but gave a lot to it.

MR. J. RICHARDSON

Mr. J Richardson, who taught Chemistry at Palmer's Boys' School from 1968 until 1972 died on the 9th October 2012. His wife **Mary Pirrie (1940 - 1947)** **Mrs Richardson** taught at the Girls' school during the same years.

GEOFFREY BLYTH PLAYER

Geoffrey died on Friday 26 October 2012 early in the morning at the care home where he had been a resident for just over a year. He was aged 96 years.

His funeral was held at the Basildon Crematorium, Bowers Gifford on 15 November 2012 and donations instead of flowers were given to the St John Ambulance. Geoff had been the Grays Divisional President from 1963 until the mid 90s.

ROY HERBERT DENNING

Roy was born on the 2nd December 1935 and died on the 22nd November 2012 aged 76 years. His funeral was held at Southend Crematorium on the 6th December 2012. He attended Palmer's from 1946 to 1952.

MICHAEL DENNIS PATTERSON

Michael or "Floyd" to his friends was at Palmer's from 1965 until 1970 and in Priestley House. He died at work in Brentwood on the 29 January 2013.

HAROLD JAMES LUDLOW

Harold James Ludlow, known as **Jimmy**, died on 14th February 2013 from a heart attack at his home, aged 92 years. He had lived in Maldon, Essex since 1987 and had been pre-deceased by Myrtle, his wife of 58 years, several years earlier.

Whilst it is sad that he has passed on and will be missed by his only daughter, Christine and grandchildren, Matthew, Alison and Sarah; he did have a long and fulfilled life, and was active and he achieved his wish, in being able to live independently to the end of his days.

KEN SPRINGHAM

15 October 1935 – 17 March 2013

Ken Springham was born and grew up in Grays and was educated at Palmer's 1946 - 1951. Although he was not outstanding in the academic or sports line Palmer's was to be a good grounding for his future and he did enjoy his time there.

He wanted to be a lumberjack and was bitterly disappointed when he was not allowed to go to friends in Canada who offered to have him stay during the war.

Finding it difficult to live up to his elder brother's achievements he decided he would be a pharmacist and joined Boots the chemist in Grays. His National Service was deferred but eventually they found 'just the job' for him in the Royal Army Medical Corp. Apart from the basic first aid, his main assignment was.....packaging medical supplies! After the regulatory two years and having met Brenda he returned to his former job. Unfortunately the foreign language qualification requirement eluded him and having been told by his future ma-in-law that he would not be able to keep a wife on £5. 10 shillings a week he upped and joined the quality control laboratory at Thames Board Mills.

Several jobs and promotions later and now with two lovely sons he joined a company marketing heavy duty board. Starting as a sales engineer and ending up as Managing Director. During this time he travelled regularly to New York and also Japan; this time being joined by Brenda who said he wasn't going without her!!! (We were treated like royalty.) Suddenly, with the demise of the president of the parent company and the following shake-up, Ken was directed to make 60% of his staff redundant. This troubled him greatly and he, together with a colleague, decided they would start two companies both involved in packaging. These are still running successfully today, one being managed by his eldest son.

Ken played hockey and was President for the Thurrock Hockey Club's 75 year celebrations. He was also Master of the Old Palmerians' Lodge

Ken was always an active person and when his youngest son completed the London Marathon Ken decided he would do the same the following year. The girls at Anisha Grange will know if he decides to do, or not do, something, that's it!! So he did it!!!

Meanwhile he and Brenda have walked the Thames Path, the West Highland Way and climbed Ben Nevis and Snowdon. Having outgrown their canal boat and the inland waterways they learned to sail. Sailing in flotilla holidays around the Mediterranean, and making several channel crossings in their boat. One in particular cumulated in a hairy 'hooley' up the Thames in a Force 8!!

Both he and Brenda also acted as guides for partial sighted and blind people on walking and activity holidays. One to Morocco - an amazing experience but it is difficult to convey the vivid colours of the souks and the shapes of the mosaics. Ken also went skiing with them in Andorra only to have to be evacuated from the hotel because of an avalanche.

Now with three beautiful granddaughters he enjoyed watching them grow up and taking them to Lapland and Disney Paris. That was ten years ago!!! How time has flown!

Ken had a stroke in 2000. Fortunately he recovered except for his communication skills and his reading ability. Never the less he and Brenda continued their walking holidays with friends and holidaying in Australia, Kenya, the Caribbean and with cruises to Norway and the Mediterranean.

In 2008 we were lucky enough to enjoy our Golden Wedding Anniversary celebrations with friends and family.

With the onset of dementia Ken's deterioration increased and despite a will of iron and a hand grip to match he finally died on 17th March 2013.

Brenda, Mark and David were overwhelmed when a hundred people came to share in the service for the celebration of his life. We were deeply grateful for their support.

We loved him so.

Brenda Springham (née Faraway) (1946 – 1950)

KATHLEEN MURIEL TAMPKINS (MRS HARPER)

Our mother was born on 12th February 1922 at 95 Cromwell Road, Grays, a small 3 bedroomed Edwardian terraced house. She was to live there until she was 79. Her father was a docker. Her mother, had been “in service” but of course was now a housewife. Kathleen was the youngest of four children. She was the first person in her family to pass the scholarship and go to Palmer's School, attending from 1933 until 1939 She enjoyed the school very much, made a lot of friends there and loved learning German, Latin and other academic subjects. She was even a huntsman in “As You Like It” with a line to say. She often used to talk about Palmer's and the things she did there. I particularly remember the story of how the headmistress, Fanny Wren, used to sit in front of a class, eating a full English breakfast. Kathleen learned to play the piano (not very well!) and loved singing soprano in the choir at London Road Methodist Church and for a time in Thurrock Choral Society. The Methodist Church was always a very important part of her life.

Kathleen did well at Palmers and passed her General Schools Examination with exemption from matriculation, which meant she was qualified to go to university. However, this was a step too far for someone of her background. I think she would have liked to train as a teacher. She stayed on at school for a while and then left to work in a clerical post in the Prudential in Holborn, London. She enjoyed working in London and liked to show us around the city when we went up for the day from Essex. While she was working there the

Second World War started. She travelled to London daily during the blitz and often told the story of the day St Paul's was bombed.

At about this time she became engaged to Arthur Harper, also from the church, who was about to be conscripted into the army. Soon after, she was also of the age to do war work. She worked and lived in London, Croydon and Golders Green, at the aeroplane manufacturer Handley Page, and trained as a draughtsperson. She enjoyed living and working in London and made several life-long friends. She kept some of her drawings of aeroplane parts which she often proudly showed us. Towards the end of the war her mother became very ill and Kathleen had to come back to Grays to look after her. She took a part-time job at the Food Office, dealing with rations, and, like many other women who had had professional training or done "men's" jobs during the war, never used those skills again.

Arthur came back from the war in 1946 and Kathleen's mother died in August of that year. Kathleen and Arthur were married on 30th November and lived at no. 95 to look after Kathleen's father who had emphysema. I arrived nearly a year later and she had the pleasure of coping with a new baby and a demanding, ill, grumpy old man. Although I am sure that Kathleen would have loved to have at least a part time job or career, she firmly made herself subscribe to the belief, common at the time, that she should be a full time wife, mother and carer. Having nursed her mother until she died, Kathleen did the same for her father, putting up with his bad temper and cleaning his false teeth; not nice when you are pregnant and have morning sickness.

My grandfather died when I was 4 and a half. Soon after, my brothers Norman and then Malcolm were born. Mum made sure that we had all the things we needed for a good education. We were encouraged to read and do imaginative play, and had piano lessons as soon as we could read. Mum made us aware of popular classics in books and music – although she only had time for Mills & Boon's escapism herself. There were lots of books around and we went to the public library regularly and listened to serialised Dickens and other books on the radio. We had no television – unlike most other people after the coronation - until the mid sixties when I persuaded Mum and Dad to get one so I could see the Wars of the Roses on BBC 2. There was, of course, also singing in the church, Sunday School and the church choir. Money was rather tight at home; Dad was at first a wages clerk and later the cashier at Hedleys, later Proctor and Gamble, and there wasn't much to spare. However, Mum was a good cook who had had to cope during rationing and Dad had an allotment where he grew vegetables & fruit. Mum was good at making jam, bottling and pickling as well as pressure-cooking cheap cuts of meat.

Kathleen was a very creative person. She enjoyed making cakes, especially victoria sponges, wonderful bread pudding and pumpkin pie. She also made amazingly decorated gingerbread house cakes and treasure island cakes among others, for birthdays. She was a good needlewoman and made curtains and clothes and did embroidery. She made nearly all our clothes. For a teenage girl in the 1960s her idea of suitable clothes was extremely embarrassing – no way was I allowed mini-skirts. She earned a small amount of money by altering clothes at home for the local dress shop. I still have her Singer sewing machine, formerly her mother's and over 100 years old. She knitted a lot of things. She also had a quirky and absurd sense of humour, I think probably from her mother whom we never knew.

Mum was very keen for us all to pass the 11+ and go to Palmer's, which we did. Grammar school gave us the opportunity to go to university and I was the first person in the family to do so, followed by my brothers. Mum was encouraging, but couldn't help us much as she knew nothing about it. We were fortunate that as Dad's salary was still not large there were generous grants.

Although Kathleen never had a career she used her intelligence in many ways. One example was when a car park was built at the bottom of Cromwell Road without fences to stop cars driving out dangerously straight over the pavement. She organised a petition to get the local council to deal with this, which they eventually did. She was also a church steward and I remember her having to step in one Sunday when a local preacher was unable to turn up. She chose and delivered at very short notice a programme of hymns and readings for an impromptu service.

In the 1960's Kathleen realised that a new club for younger women at the church was needed. She didn't want it to be called the Young Wives Club as it was in some other churches as she didn't want to exclude unmarried women, or anyone else –even men! So she called it the Home-Makers' Guild and for many years organised sessions and speakers of interest mainly to women.

When in 1977 I had moved to Lincoln with a baby and a toddler and knew nobody, I found out about a local mother and toddler club where I could go for company once a week and the children could play and make friends. This was a great help to me, and when I told Mum about it she started one at the church. It was very successful, and both that (now carer and toddler club) and the Home-Makers' Guild are still flourishing, a wonderful memorial to her.

When she no longer had young children at home, Kathleen finally went back to work part time in a coal merchant's office and Flint's travel agents. She obviously enjoyed being outside the home. Although she had always

encouraged me to qualify as a teacher I don't think she was ever reconciled to my having children **and** going to work.

She retired when Dad did. Soon afterwards he became ill with lymphoma and she cared for him until he died in 1990. After she spent so much of her life caring for others, we are very grateful for the excellent care she received from the nursing home where she spent her last years.

Kathleen always loved being with children and was a super Grandma to her seven grandchildren. She was always very proud of them and their achievements. After Dad's death she travelled abroad for the first time ever, to Norway – her first and only journey by aeroplane - and France. She continued her church work, visiting her grandchildren and enjoying her weekly session at the mother and toddler club. Unfortunately, it was here in 2000 when she was 78 that she fell and broke her hip. After an unpleasant time in hospital and a few weeks rehab she returned home with carers, but found things very difficult. None of us lived near enough to pop in. Her neighbours were very kind and some good friends gave her lifts to church. A great sadness for her was that after her fall at the mother and toddler club she was told that she could not go back for health and safety reasons. Eventually it became clear that she was not getting the care she needed in Grays and we reluctantly decided that she must move away to be nearer one of us. She did not want to leave the house and town where she was born but bowed to fate. At first she lived in sheltered accommodation in Southampton but had to go to a care home when her failing memory meant that she was forgetting to take medication or eat properly. In 2006 she broke her other hip and had a very bad experience in hospital, not being properly fed and having bedsores. This exacerbated her dementia and she became aggressive and refused to walk again. She was moved to the nursing home in Romsey where she was very well cared for until the end. For quite a long time she was distressed if taken out of her comfort zone and did not appear to recognise us. One great sadness is that although we brought her two lovely great grandsons to see her she did not appear to be aware, and was not able to attend or know about happy family occasions and the achievements of her grandchildren.

She died on 23rd March this year. At her funeral service in Southampton one of her grandsons was organist and a family choir consisting of her children, grandchildren and their partners sang her favourite anthems and hymns. A few days later she was buried with our Dad in Grays Cemetery followed by a lovely reception at Lodge Lane Methodist Church.

Margaret Harper (1959-1966) (Ms Derrett)
Also on behalf of Norman Harper, (1963-1970) and Malcolm Harper (1968-1974)

THE COLLEGE YEAR 2012 - 2013

College Highlights for 2012-13 – A snapshot of the last academic year.

August 2012

Students continued to achieve excellent results at the College gaining a 98% A-level pass rate, a 1% increase from last year. A massive 25 subjects gained a 100% pass rate with 70% of students gaining A*-C grades and a fantastic 43% of students gaining A*-B grades.

This year saw three students gain places at Oxbridge - **Lize Stam, James Shaw** and **Liam Carrrick**.

BTEC and secretarial courses continued to improve with impressive pass rates.

September 2012

The term kicked off with enrolment which saw over 2000 students enrol. This meant that the College's target of 2046 was successfully achieved.

The College were present at the Orsett Show and the Havering Show, both of which generated a lot of interest and helped to promote the College.

BTEC Sports and Business students were worked through their paces by the local army who came in to offer hands on team building activities.

September also saw the launch of the College's new updated corporate identity, which resulted in the College returning back to the much loved 'Blue'.

October 2012

It was a busy month with the College being invited to a number of school events. The borough held it's very first 'Opportunity Thurrock' event attended by all local schools The event was very busy and it was great to see so many pupils regarding the College so positively.

The College held its very first CILEx parent presentation to inform parents of what opportunities the course offered and the help/support available.

The annual student 'Your life' fair attracted a number of exhibitors and was well attended by students.

The October Open Evening was its busiest attracting over 3500 students/parents/guardians. There was a great atmosphere and many parents commented on how welcome and inviting the College felt.

November 2012

Following a trip to Auschwitz-Birkenau, **William Oliff** and **Beth Winslow** were profoundly touched by what they learnt during their visit and decided to organise a special tree planting memorial to honour Holocaust victims.

The annual Prize Giving was a great success with 264 students being awarded prizes for academic achievement, attendance and work in the community. The majority of prizes are provided by the William Palmer College Educational Trust, who generously give a huge amount each year to the students in prize money and help with financial assistance in other areas. This is a unique benefit that the College and its students are fortunate to have.

Photography students got the unique opportunity to take part in a community photography competition during their trip to the Royal Opera House Production Park in Purfleet. The quality of entries was high and the winner chosen was none other than one of the College's Photography students. **Molly Browne** got the sensational opportunity of shadowing world renowned Photographer Clive Barba as her prize.

Charity work continued at the College with the newly elected Student Executive hosting an event for Children in Need, which raised over £300.

December 2012

Students taking part in this year's Next Top Boss competition had the fantastic opportunity of spending the day at DP World to complete the Business Challenge.

The panto was hugely popular with primary schools from as far as Hadleigh coming to see the show.

A special plaque and citation was unveiled towards the end of the year in honour of Commander Steele, an ex-student of Palmer's, who was awarded the Victoria Cross.

The Principal also welcomed MP Jackie Doyle-Price to the College. She was able to see the superb new facilities at the College and speak to students and the Principal.

January 2013

The College was successful in securing funding from Sport England to recruit a College Sport Maker; who will aim to raise sports participation amongst students. New activities have been introduced including Zumba and Dodgeball.

Due to the severe weather during the month of January, the numbers attending the January open evening were slightly low. However, this did not affect the number of applications received.

Students across the College were invited to a presentation by global firm Ernst and Young, who hand-picked the College to promote their college leavers programme. Over 100 students attended the lunch-time session.

February 2013

This year's Excellence Days were attended by year 9 pupils. The feedback was exceptionally positive and attendance numbers increased by 23%.

The website was re-skinned to line up with the College's new brand identity. The College's external signage was updated along with the Sports Centre, which also underwent a rebrand. The Sports Centre was extensively refurbished after gaining £1.5m in capital funding in 2012.

March 2013

The Student Executive hosted its annual pamper event which raised money for a local toddler who was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy. The event raised £180.

Six years on and the College is still proud to sponsor the Staff Training and Development category at the Thurrock Business Awards, which this year also brought about new College links with Barclays Bank.

The Extended Project Exhibition did not disappoint with a range of work from students being showcased from artefacts, research pieces to performances and field investigations.

April 2013

A networking and presentation evening was this year's format to the Next Top Boss Awards. Nine of our students were invited to attend the awards held at The Park Inn Hotel. Palmer's student **William Oliff** was the winner of the Employer's Award for his enthusiasm and contribution throughout the challenges.

More charitable work was undertaken by 10 students who raised over £1000 by completing a 10 mile walk for Pancreatic Cancer.

The annual careers fair was very popular this year by exhibitors and students.

The Student Executive teamed up with the Learner Voice group to host a 'Have your Say' day for students. It was an opportunity for students to feedback on the services offered by the College.

May 2013

Palmer's College was honoured to welcome five Senegalese MPs whilst on their fact finding mission to Thurrock. They toured the College and spoke to students and staff.

The Old Palmerians' Association kindly donated £750 to the Photography Department to help purchase a much needed camera, costing £1800. Chairman, John Sach presented the cheque.

Media students **Jacob MacQuarrie** and **Billie Forbes** were praised by the Next Top Boss Strategic Board for producing a promotional video for the competition to help encourage more young people to participate.

Level 1 and 2 students were congratulated at special awards afternoon to celebrate the achievements of the College's vocational students.

The annual Sports Awards celebrated the success of all our sporting students.

June 2013

After securing £1.5m of capital funding, building work started to completely transform E-block. Despite the building works, over 880 year 10s were welcomed during Liaison Week.

A new Parent Information Evening was held for the first time for the parents of students joining the College in September. Over 350 parents attended and very positive feedback was received.

Celebrations for National Sports Week were in full force with a range of sporting taster sessions being offered to students as well as a mini-Olympics and BBQ.

July 2013

Over 1200 turned up for Palmer's Day One which was very encouraging.

The College's Critical Thinking events for years 7 and 8 were all attended and enjoyed by pupils from local and out of area schools.

The last event for the College before the end of term was the July open event which attracted over 400 year 10 pupils and their parents.

NEWS AND CHANGES OF STAFF

Over the October/November half term 2012 **John Sach** rehung the restored and re-gilded shield that he had made many years ago; in the reception area above the Welcome to the College.



Congratulations to:-

Kelly Ryan (Psychology) who was married in the Summer holidays 2012 and is now **Mrs Kelly Doré**. She is expecting twins and went on Maternity leave at Easter 2013.

Isabel Roberts (Media Studies / Communication and Culture) who was married in the summer holiday and is now **Mrs Isabel Moss**.

John Chandler (Graphic Design) who has written and illustrated a book, *Picking up the Threads*.

Published by Pitch Publishing, it's a light-hearted look at some of the weird and wonderful reasons behind the choice of some of the world's famous and not-so-famous football strips. *Picking Up the Threads* is an illustrated look at more than 150 teams; from Brazil to New York Cosmos and Manchester United to Dagenham & Redbridge - and the tales behind their choice of colours - the book includes entries for every English and Scottish Premier and Football League club, as well as leading international, foreign and non-league teams.

It features hundreds of pictures to illustrate the text detailing the history of why various teams wear the football strips they do, as well as a detailed history of the England team strip and three-lions crest.

Ryan Hodgson who heard in October 2012 that his bid for £105,000, over a 5 year period, from Sport England had been successful. This bid was to finance a new member of staff to be known as the College Sports Maker, whose role at the College will be to link FE Colleges with community sport opportunities in order to widen student participation in sport. The person will report to Ryan who is currently working with our students on various sporting programmes mainly during the lunchtime.

This is a fantastic achievement as only 150 places have been awarded nationwide.

Tracey Elder and **Sue Gray** who were appointed in January 2013 as joint Curriculum Managers for AS/A2 Psychology to cover for **Becky Blair** whilst she is on maternity leave.

Amir Girnary who has been appointed Assistant to the Curriculum Manager Level 3 BTEC Business starting after Easter 2013.

Paul Lorence who was appointed IT Support Engineer at the beginning of March 2013.

Saran Millane who has been appointed Curriculum Manager for Biology starting in the Autumn term 2013.

The following staff have joined Palmer's either at the beginning of or during the first term September 2012. **Dr Neil Allan** (Curriculum Manager for English), **Miss Danielle Aukett** (Sport), **Mr Chris Butler** (Media), **Mr Matt Chapman** (Music Technology), **Mr Alvaro De Carvalho** (Mathematics), **Mr Shakeel Deriwala** (Business), **Mr Ben Holbrook** (Curriculum Manager for Chemistry), **Mr David Slade** (Curriculum Manager for Dance), **Miss Sinead**

Bannister (Assistant Technician for Media & Film), **Mrs Charlie Hooper** (Deputy Librarian), **Mr Dave Lewis** (Study Plus - Scribe), **Mrs Mandv Monksfield** (Student Supervisor), **Tom Spinks** (Study Plus - Learning Support Assistant), **Amir Girnary** (Business Teacher) and **AmyCole** (Study Plus - Learning Support Assistant). In November **Miss Lorraine Turner** joined Palmer's as Assistant Finance Officer.

On the 1st January **Derrick Griffiths** joined Palmer's as Assistant Principal (Teaching, Learning and Quality improvement). His previous post was at South Essex College as Head of Quality Improvement. Also at the beginning of January **Miss Kay Goody** (Art & Design Technician), **Mr Steve Hancock** (Student Supervisor) and **Mr Navin Seneviratne** (College Sport Maker) joined Palmer's. College Sport Maker initiative is funded by Sport England to raise student participation in sport and reduce the drop out of young people from sport, especially at 16 - 18 years old. The College is fully backing this initiative and believes that sport can improve the social well-being of its students. Within the college, Navin's main aims are to:- Increase participation levels in sport throughout the College. Link with community sport opportunities. Assist National Governing Bodies in implementing initiatives in the College. Provide a wide range of extracurricular sporting opportunities. Provide sports leadership awards and coaching courses. In February Palmer's welcomed back **Claire Causton** (Learning Support Assistant) based in Study Plus. In March **Mrs Kathleen Brugioni** and **Mrs Sobia Khan** both joined Palmer's as temporary Media Teachers. In April **Miss Emma Borkin** (Business Studies), **Mr Bernie Helm** (Handyperson), **Mrs Vicki Johnson** (English), **Mr Elliot Lyons** (IT Technician Apprentice) and **Mr Sam Staples** (Psychology) joined Palmer's.

Once again we have had a number of staff leaving during the year 2012 - 2013. In October **Lynn Yerlett** (Finance Office) left after 7 years 6 months to go to work in the Finance and Resources office of Bournemouth University. In November **Perry Horner** (Vice Principal) left after 11 years 2 months to go to Australia. At the end of December **Sally Willett** (P.E.) left after 18 years 6 months and **Amanda Morris** (Psychology) after 5 years 4 months. In February 2013 **James Newman** (IT Support Analyst) left after 8 years 6 months. At Easter **Eddy Archer** (Handyman) retired after 11 years 9 months, although he is returning to cut the grass etc. round the College for 10 hours per week after the holiday. At Easter **Lydia Cooper** (Business Studies) left to pursue other interests, after 5 years 7 months. In July **Margaret Aldridge** retired as Curriculum Manager of Biology after 37 years, **Angela Davey** (Biology) retired after 25 years, **Bernard Savage** (BTEC Science) retired after 13 years, **Bela Lovas** (ICT & Mathematics) left after 11 years to teach in Spain, **Becky Blair** (Curriculum Manager Psychology) left after 11 years,

Lorraine Blue (PE) left after 7 years, **Paul Watts** (Learning Consultant, Study Plus) retired after 6 years, **Tracey Elder** (Joint Curriculum Manager, Psychology) left after 5 years 8 months to set up Psychology at an independent school in Surrey), **Hayley Garner** (Psychology) left after 2 years to go back home to teach in Northampton, **Lauren Spinner** (Psychology) left after 2 years to do a Masters degree, **Karen Conran** (Curriculum Manager Business) left after 1 year 6 months and **David Slade** (Curriculum Manager Dance) left after 1 year covering maternity leave.

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