

# Old Bordenian Association



# Website Digest

November 2009

# OBA Officers and Committee

---

President: H.S. VAFEAS, Borden Grammar School, Avenue of Remembrance, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 4DB.  
Tel: 01795 424192.

Email: [hv@bordengrammar.kent.sch.uk](mailto:hv@bordengrammar.kent.sch.uk)

Vice-President: C. LAMING, 5 Roonagh Court, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1QS. Tel: 01795 426996.

Email: [Chris.Laming@POferries.com](mailto:Chris.Laming@POferries.com)

Editor of The Website Digest: G. BARNES, 9 Cross Lane Gardens, Ticehurst, East Sussex TN5 7HY. Tel: 01580 200678.

Email: [grahamjbarnes@bbmax.co.uk](mailto:grahamjbarnes@bbmax.co.uk)

Treasurer: N. HANCOCK, 28 Uplands Way, Minster, Sheppey, Kent ME12 3EH. Tel: 01795 663887.

Email: [neilshancock@aol.com](mailto:neilshancock@aol.com)

Assistant Treasurer: K. SEARS, 41 Winstanley Road, Sheerness, Kent ME12 2PW

Secretary: J. MACRAE, Park House, 1 Highsted Road, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 4PS. Tel: 01795 425364.

Email: [john.macrae@talktalk.net](mailto:john.macrae@talktalk.net)

Assistant Secretary: C. LAMING, 5 Roonagh Court, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1QS. Tel: 01795 426996.

Email: [Chris.Laming@POferries.com](mailto:Chris.Laming@POferries.com)

Membership Secretary: K. SHEA, 46 Water Lane, Ospringe, Faversham, Kent ME13 8TX.

Email: [keith.shea@crmanagement.co.uk](mailto:keith.shea@crmanagement.co.uk)

Hon. Dinner Secretariat:

A. SNELLING, Ufton Court, The Paddock, West Ridge, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1UH. Tel: 01795 471300.

Email: [ufton@lineone.net](mailto:ufton@lineone.net)

P. LUSTED, Bowerland House, Pilgrims Lane, Chilham, Kent CT4 8AA. Tel: 01227 730233.

Email: [peter@lustedsfreeserve.co.uk](mailto:peter@lustedsfreeserve.co.uk)

Website Representative: D. PALMER, 6 The Fieldings, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 4HA. Tel: 01795 422840.

Email: [david.palmer@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:david.palmer@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

Website Advertising Representative: K. SHEA, 46 Water Lane, Ospringe, Faversham, Kent ME13 8TX.

Email: [keith.shea@crmanagement.co.uk](mailto:keith.shea@crmanagement.co.uk)

OBA Governor: A. SNELLING

Hockey Representative: N. HANCOCK.

Football Representative: K. SHEA

Accounts Examiner: M. PACK (Provisional)

Other Committee Members:

S. CAVENEY, 15 Cress Way, Faversham, Kent ME13 7NH

B. GILBERT, 7 Dave Croft, Tunstall, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8LQ

M. PACK, Tithe Barn Bungalow, Carriers Road, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 3JU

S. ROUSE, 51 Galena Close, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 5LB

P.M. TAYLOR, Kinsarvik, Westcliff Drive, Minster, Sheppey, Kent ME12 2LR

Co-opted members: D. JARRETT, A.J. AKEHURST

## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| OBA Officers and Committee.....                                    | 2  |
| The old building and the move to Remembrance Avenue (Part 3) ..... | 4  |
| The old building and the move to Remembrance Avenue (Part 4) ..... | 5  |
| Guest post – Phil Goldacre .....                                   | 9  |
| Tom Baldock (Sept 6th 1927 – April 14th 2008) – Obituary .....     | 10 |
| Forty years since leaving Borden!.....                             | 10 |
| Guest Post – Along the Pyrenees .....                              | 11 |
| The Treasurer gives money away!.....                               | 15 |
| Old exam papers. Dumb down? You decide! .....                      | 16 |
| OBA Annual Dinner – 16 May 2009 .....                              | 16 |
| London Marathon – Mike Pack.....                                   | 18 |
| Football Report – 19th June 2009.....                              | 18 |
| The 2009 OBA Dinner – Full Report .....                            | 19 |
| 1965 Borden Grammar School Football First XI.....                  | 21 |
| Ex-BGS student awarded OBE .....                                   | 21 |
| New Memorial Honours Boards .....                                  | 22 |
| Speech by Headteacher at Prizegiving Day 17 September 2009 .....   | 22 |
| John Watson – Obituary.....  | 24 |
| The annual Old Bordenians World War Veterans service .....         | 25 |
| Prizegiving Day speech by Major Michael Briant.....                | 27 |
| Memories and the rubble of an Annual Dinner! .....                 | 29 |
| Volunteer ‘reporters’ required .....                               | 30 |
| The Bordenian 1964-65.....   | 31 |

This digest contains those stories that have been published on the website since the closing date of articles for the 2009 Maroon. It doesn't include articles on the website that are not suitable for a printed digest. This therefore excludes reproductions of the majority of long school photographs, old GCE exam papers or video clips. These can be accessed via the website at <http://www.oldbordenians.co.uk>.

## The old building and the move to Remembrance Avenue (Part 3)

Posted Saturday November 15th 2008

The first 2 parts of this story are available on the website, but are too old for this digest. The previous part is at <http://www.oldbordenians.co.uk/?p=146#more-146>.

The next photographs show the old school at different times and a little detective work will enable the reader to put them into chronological order. I have tried to take contemporary photographs but much of the school field has been built on to provide private housing taking up the whole corner of the plot bounded by the original road up to the school, Riddles Road and College Road. Hence I was unable to get wide views.

At the time of writing, I have not been able to identify any of the internal rooms mentioned in "Vale". I am finding that the more I write, the more there is to investigate. I do not think of time as the enemy but it certainly seems to 'fugit' very rapidly!



B. 5123 BORDEN GRAMMAR SCHOOL, SITTINGBOURNE.

The photo above shows the cricket square in good condition but I think the outfield would have caused a bit of a problem!



1878 - 1928  
BORDEN GRAMMAR SCHOOL



The last photos below are of the Headmaster's house and garden at the east end of the school with its own lean-to greenhouse.



The modern photos were taken on 25 March 2008. The buildings are now used as the Sittingbourne Adult Education Centre having previously been the Kent Farm Institute and a Teacher Training College.

Article by John Macrae

### **The old building and the move to Remembrance Avenue (Part 4)**

Posted Thursday January 1st 2009

This is the final part of the story of the move of the School to the current site in Remembrance Avenue. The Bordenian of March 1929 has this offering.

“On entering the New School”

At last, after waiting for fifty long years,  
A marvellous vision to us now appears;  
A spacious new school, done in brick, red and white,  
Our jubilant hearts give a leap at the sight.  
The great day has come, like the sun through the clouds,  
The school to a man in the Dining Hall crowds;  
“Let’s feast to the Gov’nors, who’ve turned up some trumps,  
And bring us to bliss from our present old dumps.  
Come turn out your linings and purchase good wine,  
Then solemnly join hands and sing ‘Auld Lang Syne’ “  
So heedless of rain and with arms full of books,  
Past wurtzel and bungalows, sling we our hooks;  
All eyes fixed ahead on the splendid new place,  
Sporting a silk flag, all bordered with lace.  
“Some brand new idea,” we all nod to ourselves,  
And forward we trip like a concourse of elves;  
Softly we glide, whispering praise,  
Submitting each room to our wondering gaze.

Yet, ‘mid all these splendours, who feels not regret,  
For the Borden of memories, dear to us yet?           A.W.S.

From “The Bordenian” July 1929

“The first Term in our new building is almost over, and we have settled down to the new routine with the minimum of disturbance, although workmen are still putting finishing touches to the building. The grounds in front of the School have also to be put in order, and the hard tennis courts to be surrounded with netting. The playing fields are, of course, not yet ready for use, and the prolonged drought has made it difficult to get the large field into more than a semblance of order, in spite of the use of a steamroller. Arrangements were made for the use of the ground of the Sittingbourne F.C., for School matches and first eleven practice, and the team is to be congratulated on its excellent record this Term, seeing that no small part of the Term had passed before cricket got going. The position with regard to football next Term is also causing anxiety, but everything possible will be done to provide satisfactory pitches.”

(Note that although the School is thought of as being moved in 1928, and the dates on the drainpipe hoppers say 1928, it actually began formal education on 25 April 1929 for the Summer Term.)

“This Term Mr. A. C. Howard, B.A., has joined the Staff of the School as French Master, and we offer him a hearty welcome. Mr. Howard is an Old Boy of the School.” ( ‘Jimmy’ Howard retired and left Borden officially on 31 August 1969 after 40 years – JM.)

“There are now 180 boys in the School, three having entered and eight left since last Term. There were 158 candidates for Free Place Scholarships at the examination held at the School on May 4th. A list of successful candidates is given elsewhere.”

R E Brend W G Brown J H Burstow S W Dane W W French K A Goddard W H Kemp R W Martyn H C Mount S H Price D S Radford A W H Shepherd H Wells  
(All these had Sheppey addresses and note the name Goddard -JM)

Published below is the whole school photograph for 1929, in 4 parts. Some of you will be able to identify a few faces, most likely from amongst the staff that made the move to the present site. What is intriguing about the photo is not necessarily the participants but what can be seen in the background at the edges. At the left hand end the houses in Albany Road can be seen. At the right hand side however only the Social Club and Berwyn

(the Bishop's house) are visible. The rest is open fields as far as the eye can see, across Bell Road and beyond. On the other side of Bell Road was Bowes Park owned by the Bowes family who lived in 'Glovers House' which stood on the corner of Highsted Road and Bell Road. The Park had a circular cycling track with an ash surface and was the centre of attraction for many events of different kinds during the late 1890's and early 1900's.





The 1929 photo shows 10 staff for the 180 boys. Compare this with the 1960 photo published earlier in the year where 426 pupils had 23 staff and the same building with only the addition of the Woodwork Room and Biology Lab. Those pupils in 1929 must have rattled around in the building compared with those in 1960!

Original article by John Macrae.

## Guest post – Phil Goldacre

Posted Sunday February 1st 2009

Phil Goldacre was at Borden from 1965 to 1970. Below are stories from the acting world, provided by him following pressure from one of his peers! Do we have any other Old Boy actors?

Phil begins: Just a couple of stories that I thought you might like. I can talk some more about actual performances if you like [Ed's note - leave a comment at the end of the story if you'd like to hear more from Phil] but I think people might be more interested in the "off stage" bits.

1. I now get a warm feeling whenever anyone mentions Bradford. That's strange, I know, but there's one thing I feel quite proud of. Christmas 1983, panto, Babes in the Wood, Bradford Alhambra. During the 'get in' week, the theatre manager told me that this was going to be the last show at the theatre. It transpired that the Labour Council had decided to close it as it needed something like £9m to keep it open. I said to several people, including the mayor, on several occasions, "that's ridiculous, this is one of the foremost theatres in the north. It's a Grade 2 listed building. They can't knock it down, It's going to cost millions to keep it in mothballs and that's just wasted money with no prospect of a return. They should spend the £9m and generate some income from continuing to stage shows." As a result, everybody in the theatre got behind the idea, got Yorkshire TV involved, collected thousands of signatures to a petition in one day and the Council reversed the decision. The Alhambra is now back to its position as one of the premiere theatres in the north of England. A very good feeling.

2. While I was in Bradford, I was invited to audition for Brookside as they needed some people for one episode who could play football (I used to play in the German leagues when I was in the Army). I went to the audition with a load of other blokes and, at the end of it, they sent everybody else away but asked me to stay for the afternoon to audition for an ongoing character. So I thought about it for 2 to 2 1/2 seconds and agreed. They called me the next day and told me I hadn't got the job, but they still wanted me so had decided to write in the new part of a local copper. Would I like to play it? Another 2 1/2 seconds' thought lead to my saying yes. On the first day's filming, we were out on a dual carriageway shooting some scenes where I was sorting out a breakdown with Amanda Burton and Paul Usher. They'd given me a normal, hired, white, Ford Escort with a Police sign and blue light double-sided taped to the roof. It was also automatic. With a double width brake pedal. So, being used to driving a manual, when I was required to drive up and stop on a mark, I, automatically, put my left foot out to press the clutch. And hit the brake pedal on which I was already pressing with my right foot. So it stopped a bit sharpish. There were then several "ker-doonk" noises as the Police sign went down the windscreen and across the bonnet, finishing up on the road in front of me. After several cries of, "Save that for the Christmas tape", they then put the sign back and we did it again. Thankfully, I got it right the second time. At coffee break, I was happily sitting in the prop car in police uniform with a sarnie, a coffee and a fag (it was cold) when there was a knock on the driver's window. I looked up and there was a truck driver asking for directions. "Hi, mate, can you tell me where xxxxxxx is?". "Sorry, mate, I can't." He showed me his delivery note. "Look, here's the address.". "Look, I'm sorry. I can't help you. This isn't a police car and I'm not a police officer. If you look behind me, there's film crew there. One of them should be able to help you out." There followed several seconds when the poor guy looked very uncertain indeed and he walked off in the direction of the crew. I looked up and there was his truck parked on the pavement on the other side of the dual carriageway. He'd been lost, seen a police car and thought, "I'm saved." He'd parked, negotiated 4 lanes of dual carriageway on foot and then been met with the most unhelpful copper in history. Poor sod.

3. When you're on tour, it's very difficult, first thing in the morning, to remember where you are. So you just tend to put on the first thing that comes to hand. The next thing in the drawer one morning was my England rugby jersey, so I put it on. Forgetting, of course, that we were in Glasgow. I was touring with the Royal National Theatre production of Arthur Miller's Broken Glass in 1995 and that week we were at the Glasgow Theatre Royal. I drove into the theatre knowing I needed some cash but didn't know where the nearest cash point was. It turned out, when I asked at the Stage Door, that it was in Sauchiehall Street. The single most Scottish street in the UK. So off I wandered to get my cash completely oblivious of what I was wearing. I got all the way down there and got my cash and nobody said a word. Walking back I passed a group of people at a bus stop. A very heavily accented voice rang out, "Hey you! Jimmy! Do you know what DAY it is?" Completely bemused, I just replied, "Thursday"

and carried on. It was only later when I got into the dressing room and saw myself in the mirror that I realised what he'd meant.

4. Every now and then you get to work with some seriously well known people. I got a job in a TV movie called The Vision with Dirk Bogarde, Lee Remick, Helena Bonham-Carter, Eileen Atkins and lots of other people very well known in the business both in the UK and the US. Frankly, when we were all sitting round a table for the read-through, I thought to myself, "bloody hell! I'm the only actor here I don't recognise!" It was scary. In fact, I was so nervous that, when I was sent the date, time and location of the read-through, I decided I would get there an hour early so that I'd be first into the rehearsal room. That way, I thought, I would be able to cope with being introduced to them one at a time when they all came in after me. Good plan. Unfortunately, there was one member of the cast who was even more nervous than I was so, in fact, I was second into the room. I walked into the huge rehearsal room at the BBC in Acton and thought, "Oh, hell. What do I say?" So I walked over and said, "Hello Mr Bogarde, I'm Phil. I'm playing Richard Jenkins." Thankfully, he was a really nice bloke and we had quite a chat before all the others arrived. It seemed a bit easier after that.

I hope I've avoided detention. Come to think of it, if I'd done the chit, I'd probably have written less 😊

Phil Goldacre

### **Tom Baldock (Sept 6th 1927 – April 14th 2008) – Obituary**

Posted Saturday February 21st 2009



It is with great regret that we record the death of Tom Baldock on 14th April last year at the age of 80. Born in Sittingbourne on 6th September 1927, he attended Ufton Lane Primary School before coming to Borden as a 'scholarship boy' in 1938. On leaving School, he trained as a Pharmacist and worked for many years at Drabbles in Sittingbourne, after which he joined Heaths Chemist at Upminster when he moved there with his wife in 1971.

A dedicated family man and a committed Christian, Tom had a major influence on so many people's lives through his activities as a Covenanter Leader. A deacon of the Baptist Church at Sittingbourne, Upminster and finally at Hornchurch, he spent much of his spare time helping young people as a Youth Leader, and in his later years he even ran the Tuck Shop at the Church Youth Club!

Tom was what used to be known as "a kindly man", a gentleman in every sense of the word ; and he led by example, never by preaching. Utterly selfless, he would go to great lengths to assist others – for instance, by going out often late at night to get medicines or driving those attending the Covenanter's Club to sports functions and camps in Cornwall. His wide experience and common-sense advice made a valuable contribution to the Old Bordenian Association's Committee Meetings which he attended for several years, despite a difficult car journey home to Upminster late at night.

Our deepest sympathy goes to his widow, Alene, and his family.

Graham Barnes

### **Forty years since leaving Borden!**

Posted Saturday February 21st 2009

Peter Lusted and Mick Pack, both OBA committee members, are contacting as many of their peers as they can to celebrate (?) the fact that 40 years has passed since they left the school in 1969 and to encourage attendance at

this year's dinner for a grand reunion. Below is an email to Peter Lusted from Rod Ballard in response. Rod was at BGS from 1962.

"Thanks very much for the mail and for getting in contact – however, I would probably have preferred NOT to know how many years have passed!

I have put the date in my diary although having spent a good 25 years of my working life in Asia, the Middle East and Central America, I have lost contact with many Old Boys although continue to pay a subscription. The story is too long (until I retire!) to put down but life has been interesting since leaving BGS – from being in Hong Kong in the early 70s, on to the Middle East when there was little else but sand and then to Central America for the debt crisis in Latin America; I returned to Asia to finance the initial developments in China when it opened up in the late 1980s and stayed until the return of Hong Kong to China before moving to Singapore and finally back to UK after our daughter completed her degree in Japan!

I am now a devout Buddhist (which I have only followed on returning to UK notwithstanding the time I have spent in Asia!) and work in developing Islamic (Sharia'a compliant) financing in Europe!

I have actually provided finance to one of the largest entities on the Isle of Sheppey on an Islamic basis – so the dharma wheel (a Buddhist concept of what goes around, comes around) has turned full circle in that having lived and been educated at BGS many years ago, I have now arranged Islamic finance (no interest is charged as it is repugnant to Shariah principles) to create jobs on the island!

So, it has been an interesting journey and I have no doubt that I would never have thought that that is where life would have taken me on leaving BGS!

Rod Ballard"

## Guest Post – Along the Pyrenees

Posted Friday March 6th 2009

This is a guest post by Tim Ford.



It all started at a friend's 50th birthday celebrations in 2007, when Jay asked me how I intended to mark my own rapidly approaching half-century. 'Oh, I think I'll do the "Raid Pyrénéen"', I said without too much thought. To be fair, I'd had this ride in the back of my mind for a number of years but there always seemed to be other things that needed doing first. But now I'd said I would do it!

A word or two of explanation – the idea of the Raid Pyrénéen is to cycle from Hendaye at the Atlantic end of the Pyrenees to Cerbere on the Mediterranean coast (or vice versa) in less than 100 hours. A total distance of 720 km plus the small matter of 18 cols to climb over, totalling 11,000 m in height gained. But what goes up must come down, I told myself, trying to make it sound a little bit easier.

Fast forward to June, 2008, and I'm tinkering with the bike on a campsite in Hendaye. I've planned my route, the maps are marked up, the official frame number from the Cyclo Club Bearnais (the organisers of the Raid) is attached to the bike so I suppose I'm about ready! The only thing that is worrying me is the weather. The previous night there had been a massive thunder storm which flooded the middle of our tent to about three inches deep! What would it be like in the heart of the mountains? Other cyclists at home had told me that there was still a

chance of late snow storms at this time of year. Would this wreck all of my planning and training? I'd just have to wait and see.

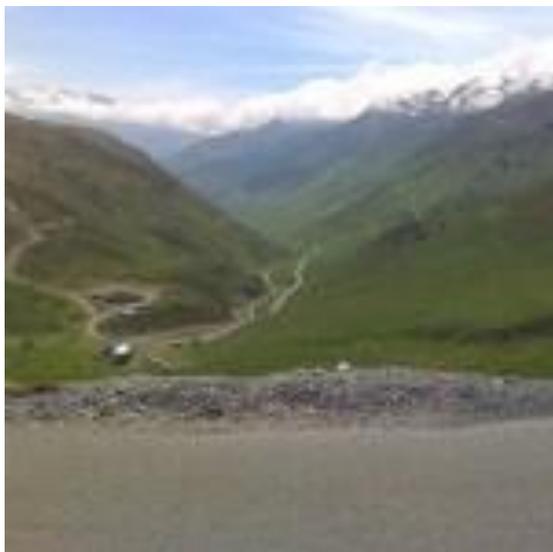
Friday 13th June

Planned distance 180km, several small climbs and one major col.

Having obtained a rubber stamp on my 'carnet de route' from the campsite office, I was off just after eight, only marginally later than planned. The first part should be easy, as we'd recce'd it in the car a couple of days before. Despite this I nearly persuaded myself to turn right instead of left at the first T junction. I'm not very good at early mornings! Disaster averted, I soon settled into the ride and arrived at the first small climb, the Col St Ignace (157m) at the same time as the rain. On with the waterproof, which rapidly proved to be about as waterproof as a colander. Never mind, I thought, I'll persuade Jay to lend me hers after today. Jay was providing 'back-up' in the car, making tea and sandwiches at pre-arranged stops (and some unplanned ones) as well as finding hotels each night. The rain stayed with me over the next small Col (Pinodeita, 176m) until the first control point at Espelette, where I had to find a rubber stamp. Spotting a Chemist as I entered the town, I thought I'd try there. No problem! I was back on the road with my card stamped in less than five minutes. Next stop was planned as St. Jean Pied-de-Port for lunch, 40 km away. I made good time and arrived to find no sign of Jay. A phone call revealed she was still 15 minutes away, so I gently kicked my heels until she arrived. Lunch over, it's back on the road heading for the Col d'Osquich (500m). Although not a big climb, it's still eight kilometres of uphill at an average of about 4%. There are signs every kilometre telling you how high you are, how far to the summit and the average gradient of the next kilometre. Sometimes it's better not to know! Once over the top, it's time to concentrate on the map for a while, get another control stamp at Tardets-Sorholus and then find out that I've got ahead of Jay again. Nothing better to do than carry on for a bit until she overtakes and I can have the cakes that caused her to get behind me! There's only about 40km left to ride today, but that includes the Col de Marie Blanque. All too soon I'm studying the profile sign at the bottom and again wondering if it's best not to know! The first part of the climb is quite easy, but it gradually gets steeper and steeper. The rain returned just as I set off, and with it the temperature dropped. Half way up and I was struggling. I was cold and suffering from serious cramp. Things didn't improve and by the time I reached the top I was a seriously unhappy cyclist. It was cold, wet, windy and just into the cloud base. A quick photo at the summit sign, on with all the clothes I had and I started rolling downhill, telling myself that there would be a nice warm, dry hotel with a hot shower not far away. It was probably one of the most miserable descents I have ever made, but fortunately it's not only good things that come to an end! After a shower and a nice meal, which included the best vegetable soup either of us had ever had, things seemed a little rosier.

#### Statistics for the day:

186km, total time 10 ½ hrs, average speed 22.3kph, 2940m total ascent, at an average of 4% and maximum 16%.  
Not bad for Friday the 13th!



Saturday 14th June

Planned distance 157km, four major climbs. After a quick stroll around the corner for breakfast, I was out of the hotel and on the road just after eight. This was still a little later than planned, but earlier than yesterday, so no complaints. After a few minutes negotiating the quiet streets of the town the road started upwards. A quick pause to study the profile sign for the Col d'Aubisque told me I had to climb 1,190m over 16 ½ km to reach the top at 1,709m. At least the gradient didn't look too bad, so nothing to do but grind away in a low gear! Eventually the summit arrived, complete with a welcome café for a coffee and control stamp. Part way down the descent there's a small climb to cross the Col de Soulor, then it's down again all the way to Argeles-Gazost, and a right turn into the Gorge de Luz. Somehow I missed the turn and ended up studying the map trying to work out where I was. Fortunately there's a road parallel to the one I wanted, but on the opposite side of the river.

Eventually I rejoined the right road and made good time to the bottom of the Col de Tourmalet. This is the highest Col of the trip at 2115m, but not the longest – that comes near the end – but still 19km. It's a pleasant day, mostly sunny with a few clouds to provide a little shade now and again. The scenery is absolutely stunning. It's quite unlike anything I've seen before, and attempts to photograph it don't seem to do it justice. I can't spend too much time admiring the views, though, as there's still a long way to go today. Slowly I work my way up the climb, watching other cyclists pass but rarely passing anyone myself! There are a lot of people out today, all on shiny, lightweight machines and seemingly using a lot less effort than I am. Ho hum. Must be because I'm heavier than they are. And I'm carrying a saddlebag with all my emergency bits and bobs in it. Extra weight helps on the down-hills, I tell myself! It must be true, as I very rarely get passed by these same riders on the descents. About two thirds of the way up, cramp starts to threaten again and I have to adopt a strategy of walking a short distance every now and again to ward it off. It works, and finally I turn the corner at the top, only to turn straight round and get back to the sunny side. There's a wind blowing up the other side and it's fifteen degrees colder than the side I've just come up. Another control stamp, a quick cup of tea from Jay and on with hat, gloves, coat and leg-warmers for the descent. Just after the first hairpin is a large snowdrift that has been cut through to open the road – a reminder that it's still quite early spring here. I have two strong memories of the descent, both involving the ski resort of La Mongie. The first was how incredibly ugly the new development is and the second was a string of rider-less horses crossing the road just below the town. Fortunately my brakes were in good order! All too soon the road starts to go upwards again and I notice something strange. My 'internal spirit level' has gone completely hay-wire. Usually, I can judge a gradient fairly well, but now what seems to be flat to me is actually two or three percent uphill! Consequently I get rather frustrated when I feel I ought to be free-wheeling but am actually having to pedal. Back to reality and it's nearly five o'clock. I'm well behind schedule and with 60km and two big climbs to go I decide to cut today's stage short. I'm climbing far slower than I'd bargained for, even without the spells of walking, so the next Col (Aspin, 1489m) will be the last one today. I'm rather bemused when I reach the top of the Col, as there are two summit signs, one claiming 1489m and another about 20m further along claiming 1490m. Maybe it's a young mountain and still growing? There's another beautiful view here, with the sun shining on flowering gorse and the road clearly visible all the way down into the valley. Worth the climb to see it! Very soon, I'm in the lovely little town of Arreau, a room is ours and – most importantly for a cyclist – dinner is being eaten!

#### Statistics for the day:

130km, total time 10 ½ hrs, average speed 16.4kph, 3715m total ascent, at an average of 6% and maximum 14%.

Sunday 15th June

Planned distance 168km. Three major cols (including the one left-over from yesterday!)

Unlike yesterday, I've got a few kilometres of almost flat road before the climbing starts, so I feel a little more settled when I reach the bottom of the Col de Peyresourde. Even though it's still quite early I seem to be going a bit better today – maybe I'm getting fitter! Once over the top there's a nice long descent to Bagnères-de-Luchon and then a long flat main road to the next turn, where I meet up with Jay for early elevenses. After this the roads are smaller again as I head towards two smaller climbs before the Col de Portet d'Aspet, which I'm not looking forward to, as I've already seen the profile. There are a lot of local cyclists out again today, and as I'm passing through a small town one jumps up from his table outside a café, waving and shouting to me. I immediately assume it's a secret control (there is supposed to be one of these 'unknown' controls somewhere along the route) so quickly turn round and start to rummage for my carnet. 'No, no,' he says, 'It's not a control!' I wonder how he knows about controls for a moment, and then he explains. He recognised my Paris-Brest-Paris shirt, and wanted a chat, as he'd ridden PBP, too! This really stretches my French, as we go into details of weather, how hard the climbs are and how I'm doing before he wishes me 'Bon route' and waves me off again. I'm smiling to myself for a good few kilometres and before I know it am half way up the Portet d'Aspet. The last four kilometres of this climb are shown as being at least 9% on my profile, so I'm surprised to find myself at the top without much of a struggle. I must be getting fitter!! After lunch in a lay-by full of piles of road stone, it's an easy ride on to St. Girons where I get another control stamp in a Tabac on the way into the town. Back on the road again I miss a signpost so have to wobble all the way round a large roundabout before finally spotting the right road. The section out of town was a bit depressing, with the road lined by factories, one of which I remember as making cigarette papers. Eventually, the buildings run out and the scenery becomes much more pleasing to the eye again. One more climb

to tackle today, the Col de Port, which is a good steady gradient and 'only' 12km long, and then it's down to Tarascon sur Ariege and the best room of the ride in a lovely Gite. We also had the best meal of the ride here, in a small pizza restaurant that only seemed to be open for a couple of hours each evening. I'd been thinking about pizza on the last descent, and was all ready to order one when I saw someone else's steak and changed my mind. Jay had pizza, which was very good, but I didn't regret my decision!

#### Statistics for the day:

170km, total time 11 hrs, average speed 20.6kph, 2881m total ascent, at an average of 4% and maximum 16%.

Monday 16th June

Planned distance 140km. One big climb.

One big climb. An understatement, I think! The Col de Puymorens is actually the second highest of the trip, at 1,915m, but is the longest climb – 27km from Ax-les-Thermes to the summit. There are thirty kilometres to cover before the climbing starts, though, with only a very slight rise in the road, so I can settle down on the handlebars and churn away for a hour or so. Once through Ax, the traffic gets quite heavy as this is the road to Andorra. None of it is a problem, though, as Continental drivers treat cyclists much better than our home-bred motorists do. The climb itself is another steady gradient and I'm pleased to notice that I can use a higher gear than earlier in the ride. Eventually I pass the turning to Andorra and I have the road to myself for the last few kilometres to the top. Jay is waiting with the kettle hot and after a cuppa and a sandwich I roll off down the descent. What a descent – it seemed to go on and on! There was time to take in the view, too, as roadworks were being carried out most of the way down, with traffic lights every few kilometres. In between them my speed was restricted by being in a queue that had a rather slow cattle lorry at the front, so I had time to marvel at the way the road, the houses and even a railway clung to the side of the mountains. Impressive engineering!

Later on in the day there were a couple of small Cols, and I spotted another PBP shirt just before the top of the last of them. A cheery greeting helped me to the top, and then it was downhill towards the coast. The end felt close now! I was going really well at this point – up to 40kph on the flat, and in the sunshine, too. Jay found a couple of heavy showers further up the road but they had passed by the time I got there. I thoroughly enjoyed this section, through peach orchards and interesting little villages with the bonus of covering ground at a good rate. My original plan had been to stop in the town of Thuir, but it proved to be one of those places that seemed to send you round and round in circles. Very soon frustration set in and Plan B was formulated. I continued for another 10km to a junction with a dual carriageway where Jay picked me up and we nipped up the road to Perpignan and found a room in a B+B hotel. A very satisfying day, which saw not only the shortfall in distance made up but also a nice chunk of 'tomorrows' distance covered!

#### Statistics for the day:

180km, total time 11 hrs, average speed 22.8kph, 2225m total ascent, at an average of 3% and maximum 11%.



Tuesday 17th June

Planned distance – 52km. No climbing!

Today started extremely well – breakfast started at six, so no need to eat on the road this morning, and as well as the usual croissants there was scrambled egg and bacon!! I was a little apprehensive about today as I had to arrive at Cerbere by 12.20 to complete the ride in the time allowed. It felt quite strange having to think about the time again. I was also a bit worried about the last section along the coast, as I remembered it as consisting of lots of ups and downs. I was on the road at 7.30, so had plenty of time in hand. Soon, however, I was reminded that if you have a good start it usually gets worse soon after! The first turn of the day proved to be a little elusive,

and was only discovered after passing it, turning round, passing it again and taking a dead end before realising that the tiny street that looked like it went nowhere did in fact take me the right way! Soon I was out in the countryside again and crossing a river by means of what would have been a ford if there had been more water. There was a memorable sight here of a fisherman up to his waist in the mirror-flat river, surrounded by patches of mist. Worth being up early for! Not long after this I was back in a town again as I reached the coast and another problem. The route I had planned on the map was a busy dual carriageway – no bikes allowed! After a good deal of studying the map I noticed a tiny road wriggling around the section I was barred from. It was indeed a tiny road, just wide enough for me to squeeze past the tractors that were cutting the vegetation on either side of it! Despite having to climb another 250m, I enjoyed this diversion as I had the road completely to myself and could enjoy the scenery. Back on the main road again, and back to reality, I now had to press on as I was still concerned that the up-and-down road would slow me down too much. I needn't have worried, as there was a useful breeze that seemed to be helping me along at almost every turn in the road. Just as I was trying to work out which headland I had just rounded, there was the Cerbere town sign and I was free-wheeling down to the sea front. Made it!! All that was needed now was a final stamp on the Carnet de Route and a beer. Both were found in the same place – a most satisfactory ending with over two hours to spare! Who was worried about time?

#### Statistics for the day:

51km, total time 2 ½ hrs, average speed 21.8kph, 661m total ascent, at an average of 4% and maximum 9%.

Overall, it was a thoroughly enjoyable ride, despite the bad bits on the first day. It was very hard work ( I was still 5lbs lighter a week later), but made a lot easier by having Jay as support, as I could just concentrate on riding the bike and not have to think about finding food and accommodation.

#### **The Treasurer gives money away!**

**Posted Wednesday April 8th 2009**

*The article below is reproduced from the last edition of the Maroon. For those of you who are members of the Association, it will act as a reminder of the many reasons why, once a year, you pay £10 subscription to continue to be a member of the Association. Old boys of Borden Grammar School who are not yet members of the Association – why not join. Even in these days of belt tightening, £10 a year is not a great deal to make a real difference to the extra facilities that we can make available to the school. Click [here](#) to find out more. Now, back to the article...*

What is this, you say – the man must be mad. It is not a Treasurer's traditional role; collectively they are known as tighter than Fort Knox. Let me explain. Since its foundation, one of the main objects of the Association, enshrined in our Constitution is "to assist the School and its organisations financially and in other ways", so the actions of your Committee focus on this. In recent years, our donations have covered:

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>1998</b>  | £3,000 for Library refurbishment                        |
| <b>2000</b>  | £3,000 for Belt Sander Tool                             |
| <b>2002</b>  | £2,000 towards cost of Astroturf Hockey Pitch           |
| <b>2003</b>  | £3,000 ditto  |
|              | £500 for repairs to quadrangle fountain                 |
| <b>2004</b>  | £2,000 towards Hockey Pitch/Pavilion project            |
| <b>2005</b>  | £550 for commemorative plaque                           |
|              | £1,000 for Postage Franking Machine                     |
| <b>2006</b>  | £1,534 covers half cost of Commemorative Clock repairs  |
| <b>2007</b>  | £2,000 contribution to funding Specialist School status |
|              | £5,000 furnishing new Sixth Form Common Room            |
| <b>2008</b>  | £5,000 for refurbishing Art Room                        |
|              | £1,200 new Remembrance Boards in Vestibule              |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>£29,784 over 11 years</b>                            |

Our School report might have said “Not bad, but could do better if he tries”. This then is the prime reason why the Association needs to continue with the concept of an annual subscription, even when the paper Maroon magazine has ceased and all the news is covered on the Website. The Maroon is our main expense (£1,600 after advertising revenue) and its disappearance can only mean that we have the potential to increase our donations to the School. So clearly subscriptions are our lifeblood, and we hope that all Association Members will continue to give us their support, so that we in turn can continue to support the School.

I have many back copies of The Maroon, the first being the 9th Edition (1945). It had 36 pages, surely very good during a time of rationing. The Accounts showed receipts of £28.3s.4d, with expenses of £26.2s.6d, including Maroon printing costs of £17.0s.1d. Annual subs were then 4 shillings (20p) with Life Membership 2 guineas (210p). How inflation changes everything! The Maroon is part of the Nation’s and the School’s history. This Issue recorded the return of 5 Old Boys from P.O.W. Camps and the award of numerous medals. Several Old Boys wrote from bases overseas to George Dawkins, our long-term Secretary. The annual cricket match saw D.A. Jarrett score 16 before being bowled by R. Weller who finally took 5 for 34, W. Wellard 3 for 31 and B.J. Allard 2 for 34. Brian Allard was run out for 16 and J.R. Allard hit wicket for 5.

Such is the stuff of memories and talk at School reunions! We very much hope all readers will continue to support the Association and School in any way they can.

Finally, a brief reminder of our Treasurers over the years:

To circa 1950, John Taylor; then Bill Wellard to 1960; Jim Stead to 1970; Peter Taylor to 1987; Trevor Ingram to 2001; Neil Hancock to date.

Not bad, only six Treasurers over 60 years!

### **Neil Hancock**

#### **Old exam papers. Dumb down? You decide!**

Posted Saturday April 25th 2009

---

We have been given a number of old GCE ‘O’ level examination papers from the late 50’s and early 60’s. These will be added regularly to the site. There are differing views on whether exams are getting easier, children are brighter or trying harder, teaching is better, etc. It is not my place to offer a view, I shall just stimulate the debate. Below is the July 1959 Mathematics ‘O’ level paper 1 for your ‘enjoyment’. [Digest editor’s note – the exam papers do not reproduce satisfactorily in the digest and have therefore not been reproduced. There are a number of old ‘O’ level papers on the website]

#### **OBA Annual Dinner – 16 May 2009**

Posted Saturday May 30th 2009

---

Almost 100 attended the Annual Dinner and the Guest Speaker was Roger Usher who left in 1967. Several of his former classmates attended and can be seen in the photos below.

A further report on the Dinner will be available later; in the meantime, if you have any more photos please send them in.



L-R: Terry Barry, Roger Usher, Will Paine, Dave Parsons, Will Pretty, Alan Snelling, Dave Sutton



L-R: Bill Usher, Roger Usher, Harold Vafeas

---

### London Marathon – Mike Pack

Posted Tuesday June 9th 2009



Following the article that appeared in this year's Maroon, we are pleased to report that Mike completed the race in 4 hours 51 minutes and 14 seconds, slightly quicker than his anticipated time of 5 hours.

He tells us that “enjoyable” is not quite the right word to describe the experience, but he would not have missed the day for the world, having been looking forward to competing in the event for many years.

Mike has been bowled over by the financial support he has received, and the £4900+ that he has handed over to the Gurkha Welfare Trust is way in excess of any figure he could possibly have imagined.

---

### Football Report – 19th June 2009.

Posted Monday July 6th 2009

Having re-read the last football report (presented to the OBA committee and included in the minutes of the meeting of 6 March 2009 – to be found in ‘The Boring Bits’ section of this site) which was uncharacteristically

optimistic and ventured to suggest that we had the very real prospect of finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> of the Sittingbourne 5-a-side League (Div 2) I have to report, and this will come as no surprise to the many avid readers of past football reports, that in fact we finished 6<sup>th</sup> or to the more unfeeling, last.

However, statistics do not tell the whole story. The team that finished a mere 2 points ahead of us and on which we had inflicted a couple of drubbings during the season, dropped out of the league four weeks from the end of the season (due we are told to some HELLO/OK style problem involving the WAGs) to be replaced by an entirely different team which then went on a bit of a winning spree allowing them to move off of bottom spot on the last day of the league fixtures. To rub salt into the wound, two members of this new team had left Borden two years ago and played for the Old Bordenians until last season.

We did manage a little more success in a couple of the cup competitions where we managed to progress beyond the first round but in both competitions we were then unlucky to be drawn against the team that won the first division for the third year running. Even then we went down fighting and in one game we were beating them at half time.

But despite our final position we are not too downhearted. We have picked up points against all the teams in our division apart from the team that eventually finished top and we have performed well against teams from the top division in the cups, so we are capable of playing well and if we can become more consistent then we (to borrow a phrase used in most of my school reports) can do better.

Our demise from the euphoria of the last football report was due partly to our inability to field the same goalkeeper from one week to the next, but for the coming season we have a volunteer. After just three pints and a bottle of Chateaufort du Pape at the OBA Dinner, Dave Palmer declared an infinitesimal but nevertheless detectable interest in the goalkeeping position and before the Real Madrid representatives sitting at the next table could react we had secured his signature on a gravy-stained menu. Despite this aged acquisition we are at last managing to attract younger players to the team and this has allowed some of the Old Guard to retire gracefully from 5-a-side football and will ensure that the Old Bordenians Football Team will continue for the foreseeable future.

The Sittingbourne 5-a-side league is now being run by a larger and more enthusiastic committee and our progress can be followed in the local press from next season when it prints results and tables and on [www.soccerweekend.com/league/index.asp?LeagueID=3867](http://www.soccerweekend.com/league/index.asp?LeagueID=3867) .

As for the OB Veterans 11-a- side team, whose members show no sign of retiring gracefully or indeed at all (Peter Lusted has even come back out of retirement!), we look forward to playing the next in our series of extremely occasional fixtures in September.

Keith Shea.

## **The 2009 OBA Dinner – Full Report**

Posted Thursday July 23rd 2009

This year saw the Dinner moved to May as a trial run. Showing a full understanding of modern examination techniques by offering a multi choice (well two!) answer, Graham Barnes, our MC for the evening, asked by a show of hands from the gathered throng their preferred dinner date. May was the undisputed favourite. This was because:-

1. nobody understood the question,
2. Old Boys who preferred March had boycotted the meal,
3. there was a danger that the Dinner would take place on both dates,
4. everyone was keen for Graham to sit down.

Graham firstly said how sad he was that John Macrae could not be with us and asked everyone to send their best wishes on the "Get well" card. Thanks were given to various people for their activities on the Committee – Rick Harris for all his work as Membership secretary, a role from which he was retiring (again!). Volunteers to take over were asked to attend a demanding interview process after the dinner. Mention was also made of Dave Palmer and Ryan Jarrett for bringing the web site to life, and Alan Snelling and Peter Lusted for organising the Dinner.

Harold Vafeas, our President, then reminded everyone of the changes to the Maroon – it would in future be an ever evolving magazine on the internet. This was necessary not only due to costs but was also the way forward to reach more Old Boys. He made special mention of our former maroon Editors, three of whom were with us that evening – Denis Jarrett, Chris Laming and Graham Barnes. In a slight change from tradition he asked Bill Usher to introduce the guest speaker, his nephew.

Roger Usher said how good it was to see some of his old mates at the dinner who were with him on the top table. He felt the school had both changed and yet remained unchanged. He had come to the school after the 11+ from Milton – this was an unusual and dangerous progression. He always ensured for his own safety that he removed his school cap when in Milton. He enjoyed sport at school and showed he learnt the art of delegation early by just passing the ball to Dave Parsons when playing football. He avoided hockey as he would otherwise have lost all street credibility in Milton.

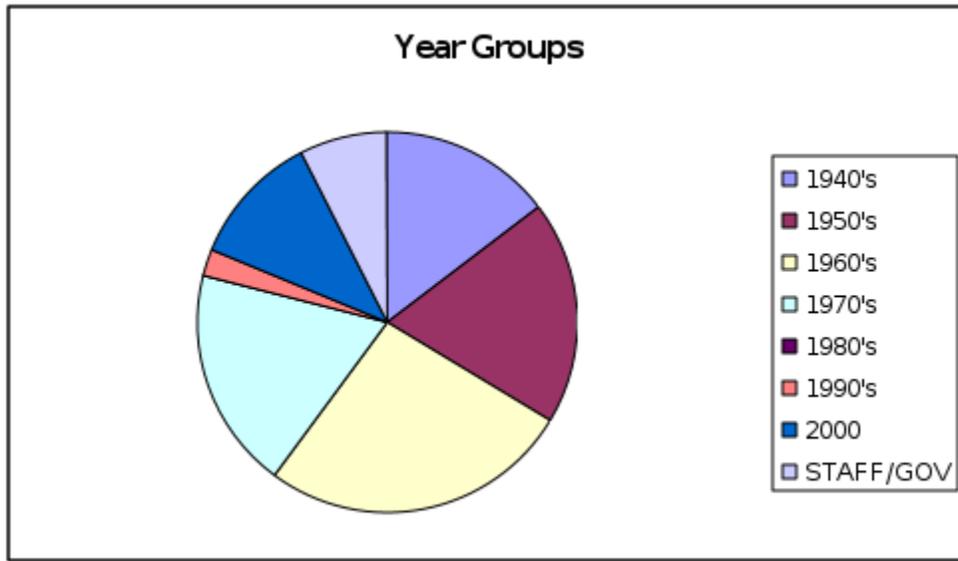
With many amusing stories he recounted his life after BGS. He thanked Terry Veal and John Macrae for coaching him through Maths and Physics "A" level, from which he moved onto Physics at university, concentrating on cosmology. He found he was not suited to academia where you learn more and more about less and less. He joined Whitehall during the cold war where training courses concentrated on the need to avoid blond Russian females. He spent 15 years in the Civil Service as a private secretary and confirmed the accuracy of "Yes Minister".

He then joined Cooper Lybrand where he worked with another Old Boy, Peter Allen, before moving on in 2001 to the Adams Institute (International) as MD. The institute works with developing countries especially on financial aspects. Democracy means different things in different countries and often although elections are free tribal majorities dictate results. Roger is now Chairman at the Institute. Finally in time honoured tradition he toasted the OBA.

Old Boys present were (alphabetically):-

Tony Akehurst, Peter Allen, Neville Amos, P J Baker, Roger Barber, Graham Barnes, Robert Barnes, Sam Barnes, Ian Baron, Terry Barry, Greg Barry, Peter Bedelle, Paul Bedelle, John Bishop, Michael Briant, Phillip Bromwich, Roy Brunnsden, Phil Bryant, Andy Bushell, Martyn Calder, David Carey, Frank Cassell, Shaun Caveney, Tony Clayton, James Cole, Cliff Cork, Peter Cotton, Jim Cox, Steve Crick, Robert Dammers, Bob Doucy, Alexander Earl, Andrew Edney, Keith Fairbrass, David Feaver, Bob Field, Giles Ford, Tim Ford, Matthew Freeman, John Friday, Barry Gilbert, Ian Goddard, John Godfrey, Neil Hancock, Nick Hannon, Lee Harding, Paul Hayler, Ian Hazell, Ken Heaven, Ray Hill, Alan Hill, Dave Holmes, Alexander Holton, Crispin Humm, Denis Jarrett, Stewart Jarrett, Ivor Jones, Rob Kemsley, Francis Knox, Chris Laming, Peter Lusted, Richard Mills, Marion Minhall, Ruth Minhall, Andrew Newman, Mike Pack, William Paine, Dave Palmer, Charlie Parkinson, Dave Parsons, Greg Pope, Will Pretty, Barry Roberts, Sean Roche, Terry Saunders, Ken Sears, Keith Shea, Bryan Short, Alan Snelling, Dave Spicer, Marc Stewart, Dave Sutton, Michael Symons, Peter Taylor, Brian Tyler, Bill Usher, Roger Usher, Harold Vafeas, Terry Veal, John Watson, Bill Wellard, Andy White, Terry Whitehead, Les Wilding, Tony Young.

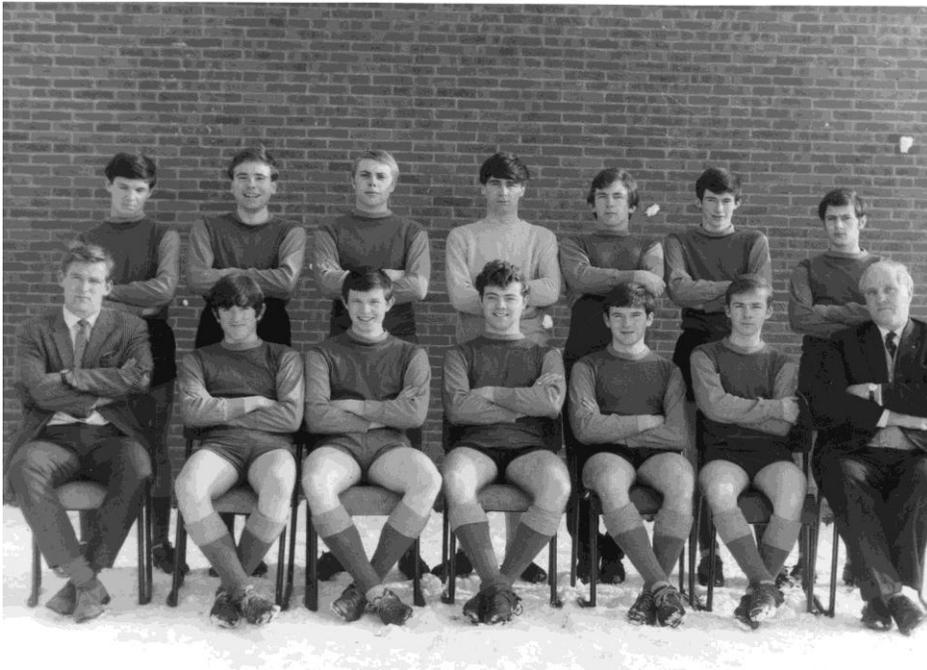
We still have a great void during the 1980's (none present) and 1990's (2 present), and what a shame that our successful Hockey Club is noticeably absent. For those wanting to know who ate all the pies, a Pie chart is shown below:



Next year's Dinner has been fixed for 15 May 2010

### 1965 Borden Grammar School Football First XI

Posted Thursday August 6th 2009



This photo was taken in winter 1966 and shows the undefeated 1965 Borden Grammar School football First XI with coach and maths teacher David Walters and Headmaster George Hardy.

**Back row (left to right):** Paul Beer, Henry Nye, David Heathfield, Keith Ayles, Paul Akehurst, Roger Usher, Roger Fahy.

**Front row: (left to right):** David Walters, David Parsons, David Wood, Mark Wilson, David Carey, Phil Wyatt, George Hardy.

### Ex-BGS student awarded OBE

Posted Saturday August 22nd 2009

Although this news about Brian Shrubbsall is a couple of months out of date, better late than never!  
[http://www.kent-online.co.uk/sittingbourne\\_messenger/news/2009/june/17/former\\_borden\\_boys\\_obe\\_joy.aspx](http://www.kent-online.co.uk/sittingbourne_messenger/news/2009/june/17/former_borden_boys_obe_joy.aspx)



Last month, Year 13 students celebrated their A level results. There were outstanding individual and departmental achievements with a total of 47% of grades at A or B. This made results day a relaxed and joyous day for students and staff.

A number of Year 12 students achieved encouraging results at AS level. They have the talent to achieve outstanding results and now need to be ambitious and disciplined in seeking to achieve this. It will, at the same time, need consistent good effort from many in the year group to achieve potential in 2010.

In Year 11 excellent GCSE results were achieved by a number of boys. 23 attained 8 or more \*A/As while 40 achieved 5 or more. This resulted in 37% of all grades at A\*/A, the best return to date. We expect great things from this year group. The challenge for current Year 11 is to be the first year group to reach 40% A\*/As. I do believe that you can achieve this, and by doing so provide an excellent basis for your progress at A level and beyond.

At A level, more than 60% of English and Spanish students achieved A or B grades and almost 90% of French and Geography students did so. At GCSE more than 60% of History, Maths and Statistics students achieved A\*/As as did 5 of the 6 music candidates.

In July we thanked a number of staff for their work at the school.

Miss Tyler and Mr Collins our Graduate Trainees have taken up posts at Rochester Girls Grammar and the Chaucer school.

Mr Weller who, after A levels became our PE Technician, begins his degree course.

Mrs Williams, who led the Sports Leaders Awards programme is working at Highsted.

Mr Harvey has taken up a post at Invicta Grammar School.

Mrs Holl who was an influential and positive force within the school, not only in languages but also in terms of guidance to students and work with Primary school pupils has retired.

Mrs Preston is now Head of Art at Sir Roger Manwood Grammar School. Throughout her 6 years at Borden she provided inspiration in Art and Sport.

Three long serving members of staff have retired from full time teaching.

Dr Wilcox, who joined the staff in 1983, has worked with enthusiasm and energy in Science and more recently in ICT. He has agreed to come in on a part time basis this year to complete an A level Computing course for which we are very grateful.

Mr Holl, who joined the school in 1979 has developed languages as a real area of strength at Borden. The Year 10 and Sixth Form visits to Spain have provided wonderful experiences for students and five Heads of Modern Foreign Languages at other schools in Kent were trained by Mr Holl. We wish him and Mrs Holl a long and happy retirement.

Mr Smith, who joined Borden in 1971 is noted for his modesty, knowledge and hard work. He too has returned to complete an A level course in Economics this year.

A few weeks after last years Prize Evening the school was inspected. The Ofsted team judged the school to be firmly good in all areas. We were very pleased with the report. The challenge this year and beyond is not only to maintain all that is good but also to address areas where we know we can be better.

One of the highlights earlier this year was the Building Schools for the future day in February. On this day students in all age discussion groups led by members of the Sixth Form discussed what a future school might look like and what could be done to create the best future learning environment for students and staff. It was a very successful day and visitors to the school commented upon the imagination, co operation and positive approach of Borden's students. Schools in Sittingbourne and Faversham are part of Wave 6 for BSF. Headteachers had been told that preliminary discussions with KCC architects would take place this autumn before meeting began with the architects appointed for the design stage of the project. There has been a delay as one of the main contractors withdrew. Last week a KCC press release announced that Kier Group plc has replaced Telereal Trillium within the scheme and a meeting for Swale Heads would be arranged in due course while work on the proposals for second phase projects in Gravesham and Thanet will immediately commence. When there is firm news regarding Swale I will of course share it with you.

Good learning and positive relationships are at the core of school life. Much has been achieved in the past few years by students, staff, parents and governors working in their different ways for and within the school community. There is still much to be done but we approach the aims of improving learning and strengthening good relationships confident that the foundations for future progress are secure.

Before concluding I wish to register my thanks to the staff of the school for their dedication throughout the past year. Teachers and support staff have worked together to provide an interesting curriculum, support for students, and an exciting programme of educational visits and adventurous activities.

### **John Watson – Obituary**

Posted Saturday October 3rd 2009

The very sad news recently was to learn of the unexpected death of that stalwart of the Association, John Watson, on 7th June. Particularly so as he had attended the Annual Dinner in May where, in typical fashion, with glass in hand he entered into the enjoyment of another splendid evening – with ready wit, a fund of stories and real pleasure he obtained from returning to the school.



He was a committee member for many years until very recently. He and Alec Stride resurrected the Sheppey Dinner in 1994 after a long absence. The dinner had been very successful in the 1930's but faded soon after the war. The dinner has now become a part of the Association's calendar and when Tony Crosse provided the entertainment, a must was his rendering of 'Sweet Georgia Brown' performed especially for John – with encores!

John attended the school from 1943 to 1950. He joined the RAF for his National Service as a medic, caring for the injured personnel being evacuated by air from around the world back to the UK. He qualified as a civil engineer and, after some time in local government, worked in London for the Chemical Industries Association becoming a leading authority on the movement of dangerous chemicals

and the disposal of poisonous effluents.

A frequent traveller to all parts, he said he was recognised by Customs and Immigration staff at Heathrow interested to know his destination that day. Being based in London, other Old Boys working in the city found themselves with John in dubious locations – but no prosecutions followed!

He later worked as Safety Officer for the chemical company AKZO, ran the newsagents at Sheerness Railway Station, was a security officer at Sheerness docks and studied for a psychology degree at Kent University. In

retirement, he was an active member of Probus in Sittingbourne, becoming Treasurer for a number of years and then President.

He was interested in music, particularly the big band sound of the 30's and 40's (Glenn Miller music featured at his funeral) and he was vice chairman of the Sheppey Organ Club for 12 years. His thespian skills were legend on may organ club holidays.

His deep interest in education extended beyond Borden; he was a former chairman of Rose Street Primary School (Sheerness) Board of Governors and a governor of Danley Middle School for many years. He was a local councillor for a Minster Ward, but often found himself in conflict with the party machine in that he felt his constituent's interests were more important than political dogma. Not surprisingly, he resigned and put more effort into his Masonic lodge activities.

He is survived by three daughters and four grandchildren.

### **The annual Old Bordenians World War Veterans service**

**Posted Saturday October 3rd 2009**

The annual Old Bordenians *World War Veterans* service took place at the School on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009 in front of the New Memorial Honours boards. Denis Jarrett welcomed veterans, colleagues, Governors, Staff and senior pupils of the School. He gave a stark reminder of the suffering and dedication of those who died during the Second World War and the impact it has on the family and friends of those involved. He also brought into perspective that they were pupils of our School just going about their normal business but then caught up by external events.

The Services were represented by Denis Jarrett (RAF), Brian Reynolds (Navy), and Bill Wellard (Army); and other veterans attending were Garth Doubleday, and Geoff Hattie.

Bryan Short took the Service which was followed by one minute silence after which the names of the Fallen were read by Bill Wellard.

Full details of the Service are included in the Programme – this is available on the website, but is not suitable for reproduction in this digest, unfortunately. Details of next year's Service will be announced in due course. Some photos of the event are reproduced below.



From left to right: Graham Barnes, Bryan Short, and Denis Jarrett.



From left to right: Brian Reynolds, Bill Wellard, Denis Jarrett, Garth Doubleday and Geoff Hattie.

From left to right: Karl Willson, Conor Pavitt, Sam Holyoake (School Vice-Captain) and Denis Jarrett.





From left to right: Garry Mulligan (Assistant Headteacher, Head of Sixth Form), Graham Barnes (Vice-President OBA), Sam Holyoake, Conor Pavitt, Denis Jarrett, Karl Willson, Brian Tyler, Yvonne Herbert (Governor), Alan Snelling (OBA Governor), Bryan Short, Christian Collins, Bill Wellard, Brian Reynolds, Garth Doubleday and Geoff Hattie.

(Thanks to Tim Hewett, Staff Governor, who also attended and took the photos.)

### **Prizegiving Day speech by Major Michael Briant.**

Posted Wednesday October 7th 2009

I must start by offering my thanks to the Headmaster for asking me to speak this evening. This is certainly an honour, and one that I never imagined would be gifted to me. My wife said that I had to be funny, but we will have to see where that goes, and how far I err away from my script. Interestingly Mr Vafeas found himself in an unwinnable situation this evening. With the choice of my close friend, Cris who is serving as a Major in the Parachute Regt, and myself, the boy who left Borden at the age of 16, defying calls to follow the traditional A level and university route, I honestly realise how lucky I am to be stood here this evening. Cris would be here but he is currently overseas having parachuted into the Pegasus Bridge memorial celebrations. He offers you all his apologies; unfortunately for you all he is much funnier than I am.

Of course this evening is about you, but I want to spend the next 10-15 minutes offering comment on the world from Briant's perspective. I have always been taught never to say or write a message that you would not want to appear on the front page of the Sun, and also never to trust a journalist who uses the term 'off the record'. What I say tonight are my thoughts, I will not get political, and hope not to see myself on the front page of the East Kent Gazette in the morning.

I am in total admiration of you all, and congratulate you on your achievements tonight. I had a difficult time at Borden. I had an elder brother who was blessed with the brains of the family, and I was resigned to follow in his footsteps. It did not take me long to realise that I was an individual, with my own ambitions and my own goals in life. When the Army Schools Liaison Officer visited Borden in 1991, Briant junior believed his hype. I should have known that the Tina Turner 'Simply the Best' soundtrack and the armoured vehicle bouncing through the sand dunes were probably too good to be true. The tanks are great fun, but I have not had the pleasure of seeing Tina in Iraq or Afghanistan. Cris also believed the hype, he stayed here for his A levels, took a gap year and then joined the Army. As I constantly remind him, that makes me a year senior to him, and really he should be calling me sir. Some hope. We have remained friends ever since, he was my best man in 2000, and now works with me in Bristol. He will deploy to Afghanistan next year, and my prayers will be with him.

The Army has been good to me. My wife says I am a kid who has never grown up, and that I am still playing soldiers. I know that she accepts how dangerous the job now is and I have learnt that the family undoubtedly suffers more when we deploy on operations. We want to go. It is our job, what we joined up for and what we believe we are paid for. My wife and daughter did not sign up, but often have to endure the hardships that I put them through. I must publicly thank them for that. I have been fortunate enough to serve on operations in Iraq, Bosnia and Cyprus, in addition to visiting an array of other countries. I have served on a number of assistance tasks in the UK, from fireman's strikes through to aiding the police search for the victim of a particularly nasty murder. Currently I work in the executive responsible for providing equipment to our troops. You will have seen us in the papers, any piece of kit will be intrinsically linked to us from submarines to blankets and bullets. We live in exciting times, with troops committed now, overseas, on operations that are both dangerous and politically sensitive, and it is for those men and women who I have the utmost admiration. In fact that is one of the main reasons that I wanted to speak to you this evening. I passionately believe in what I do, not for political reasons, but I am committed to serve my country, and that includes doing what I am told to do, by whoever is in power at that time. I do what I do because I believe it is right, and that is the message that I want you to take away. Whatever you think or hear about what we do, remember that these soldiers are all humans, brothers, sisters, mums and dads, and please support them through their difficult times. There are more and more casualties every day, and we all have friends who will not be coming home. One of the hardest things I have ever had to do was knock on a stranger's door, and tell her that her son had been killed in Afghanistan. It was probably one of the most emotional things I have ever done, but probably one of the most satisfying. Don't get me wrong, it was far from easy, but I could be there for that family at their most difficult time, and do my utmost to help them. All I could do was treat this family as I would want my own treated if we were to find ourselves in a similar situation. They did not blame me or the Army, they knew that their son had died doing the job that he loved. That brought it home to me and all of my closest colleagues, my friends and my family. It could happen to any of us. I will undoubtedly be deployed to Afghanistan. I am reassured that my daughter's school in Newcastle supports my family, and understands the difficult position that we are in. All I ask if that you are ever in a similar position, and find yourself in contact with service personnel or their families, that you do the same. Please treat them as humans, and spare a thought for the position that they may be in, and the sacrifices that they may have made. Sorry, that all got a little bit emotional.

When I decided to leave Borden at the age of 16, I had the support of my parents and a number of members of the school staff. I completed my Army entrance exams when I was 15 ½ and was selected to study A levels at Welbeck, the Army sixth form college in Nottinghamshire. Although not a conventional route, I knew it was the right route for me and have not looked back. I remember sitting in the hall on my last day of school, with 5 other boys who had decided to leave at the same time. I often wonder what has happened to them. I hope that they are well. I suppose I am trying to say that you should not worry too much about academia. I almost heard the sudden intake of breath from the staff then. Let me quantify my comment. Academia has its way of catching up with us all at the right time. I am completing a distance learning masters' degree now, something I never thought I would do, especially having never studied for a degree. You may feel that a year out is the right thing to do, or that it is the right time to find a job, or start an apprenticeship. I can't tell you that you are right or wrong, but you must pursue your chosen path in life. I thank my parents and those members of staff at the time for helping through one of the most difficult decisions of my life. In particular I would like to publicly thank John Macrae. Many of you will have heard of John, some will have met him. He is a stalwart of this school, a legend who now finds himself fighting his own battle with cancer, and I offer him my thoughts and prayers at this difficult time. John supported me, and we had some very grown up chats about life, the world and everything. We must now support him.

Teachers are a funny breed, I speak with some authority, my mother was a teacher in this area. It can be a thankless task, but equally gratifying when you see the fruits of your labour such as we do tonight. As public servants who have dedicated their lives to others, I associate with them, and would again like to publicly thank those around this room, please do not forget that without them you would not be here tonight. For all of us, it is immensely satisfying seeing you all sat here. I have trained 16 year old soldiers, and seeing a confident soldier marching off the square after a period of training, is one of the best feelings in the world. For us all to be sat here watching you, your parents, the staff and those of us looking in from the outside, it is refreshing to see young adults who strive to excel in their work, and who can be publicly recognised for it. Between you and the soldiers I have trained and those who I fight next to, I can be reassured that the world is in good hands for the future. We are all living in difficult, unpredictable times. Is this something to worry about, I think not. Ask your parents, your grandparents and their friends and they will all be able to tell you of difficult times. What must endure is your

enthusiasm and positive attitude to succeed in whatever you decide to do. I chose to leave this school early and join the Army. Maybe green just suits me. It is not wrong to make your own choices in life, you may not decide to join the Army and you may have your own life plans. Don't try to be someone else, just be you. All I ask is that whatever you do apply yourself to the task fully, strive to be the best, and always do what you believe and in your heart know to be right. Listen to the people around you; they have amassed a lot of experience, will always have your best interests at heart. Make sure you enjoy yourself; too many people forget life is meant to be fun.

I will come to a close soon. I know that I have failed in my task to be funny, and I can but apologise for that. I hope that I have portrayed the Armed Forces in a positive light, and that my message has been passed. Please support our troops, knowing that we have support in our actions does mean a great deal to us all. Our deal is to support you. You all deserve that support this evening, well done.

As soldiers we are taught to live by what we call the Values and Standards of the British Army. These should not come as a shock to anyone; they are Selfless Commitment, Respect for Others, Loyalty, Integrity, Discipline and Courage. Why do I raise these? Because I do not think they are a million miles away from the values and standards that we as Bordenians are also encouraged to adopt. You would not go far wrong if you understood these and applied them in your own lives.

I will stop, I am even boring myself. Thank you again for allowing me to bore you, and I hope that you enjoy this evening and all that it represents. It is for you, and is our opportunity to tell you how good you have been, and to encourage you to do even better in the future. I know that you will not let us down.

### Memories and the rubble of an Annual Dinner!

Posted Friday October 16th 2009

Denis Jarrett, a long standing OBA member and former editor of the Maroon, has provided an original menu from the 1954 Annual Dinner and an associated article from the 1972 Maroon, concerning the demise of the location of that dinner – the Bull Hotel restaurant.



ALAS, POOR YORICK (from Maroon 1972)

“Where be your gibes now? Your songs? Your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar?”

Yorick, of course, was a fully paid-up member of the Old Bordenian Association, and well might you contemplate the wine list which he and many others like him thumbed through annually in the hope that the white-coated Watson would see you, hear you, and sometimes remember to serve you.

Well might you ponder and mourn such desolation. For here was established the annual reunion dinner presided over in turn by William Murdock, Arthur Claydon, and George Hardy. Annual dinners in the school dining hall are nothing new – George Hardy saw in the first of our post-war dinners there, and what an occasion that was!



Bull restaurant - now Roman Square

But it is at the Bull, somewhere among that rubble and debris, that Yorick lies buried with the applause, the crepe-paper Association colours, and those damned seagulls circling eternally the foam-flecked rocks in their huge gilt frame behind the main table.

Seagulls or not, how I long for a taste, once again, of that tomato soup in the days before Heinz had learned to count up to fifty-seven. How I savour another cut of that roast beef, which had not been processed, pre-packed, and reheated, served with a searing portion of that genuine horseradish sauce which scoured your nostrils like sandpaper. And when the vegetables came late – as they always did – there was the ever attendant head waiter Kirby, in tails, quietly assuaging with hotel Hilton grandeur until you felt that, for you, delay was a personal service.

Those were the days when the after-dinner speech, like good vintage port, mattered, and when heckling was looked on disdainfully rather than encouraged. There was time then for a vote of thanks to the Press, and time too for their response; a time when local journalists actually attended and reported the proceedings, and took care to see that initials were right, let alone their shorthand. Those were the days of Dawkins and Taylor, and of raconteurs like Tempany, and of Old Bordenians like Yorick.

They were also the days of Sarah the receptionist; the long-legged, tall and enigmatic Sarah, who nested with a telephone in a little glass and wood panelled partition in a corner of the dining room. Sarah never did learn to speak quietly, ever, and you had to accept Sarah as you did the less articulate seagulls.

Then there was Gladys who watched us pack her tiny Tudor Bar to capacity, a struggling mass of elbows and liquid reunion. Gladys it was who indicated when young Yorick had had enough (or too much) and Gladys it was who kept an eagle eye on her son-in-law, Gerald.

Lay down the wine list and leave poor Yorick to his dusty dreams. There is among that tumbled rubble too much of us. And when the rafters fell with a crash and the dust rose in choking clouds, had you listened, you might just have heard the last toast of 'The School' and, briefly, seen visionary, fleeting figures whom once we knew and loved.

EDITOR (of the Maroon at the time, Denis Jarrett)

### **Volunteer 'reporters' required**

Posted Thursday October 22nd 2009

Recent weeks has seen much activity on the Website with even the inclusion of old film footage. As news of the Website reaches Old Boys we hope that you not only sign in on a regular basis but also feel keen to contribute articles, news, photos, updates or whatever you feel is of interest to Old Boys. It is your website!

As Committee Members we try and maintain the original intentions of the Association as well as providing a forum and modern version of the Maroon for Old Boys. We are not trying to compete with the likes of Facebook, Bebo, YouTube etc. but more run alongside and even have links into these.

We cannot possibly be in touch with every member personally so we are setting up a small group of Old Boys behind the scenes – one from each decade – to contact their contemporaries for articles for the Website. This we feel will give a good spread across the ages and ensure a steady trickle of new items. Please support these “volunteers” and put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard. Handwritten articles are welcomed from those who feel left behind by technology.

If you do not have a computer at home you may of course never see this article (Website Digest note – you have now!) but you can view the website at any local library or location providing public access to the internet. Just contact us for a password.

So far we have covered the 1940's with Dennis Fowle, the 1960's and 1970's with several Committee members, and the 1990's with Ryan Jarrett our Website guru. If you would like to step into the fray for the missing decades please contact us, before we contact you! Email us at [webmaster@oldbordenians.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@oldbordenians.co.uk) or send hard copy to the Secretary, John Macrae at Park House, 1 Highsted Road, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 4PS

Peter Lusted

## **The Bordenian 1964-65**

Posted Wednesday November 18th 2009

---

We have been loaned a number of “The Bordenian” magazines covering the years 1960-1966 and I shall reproduce selected articles from these magazines over the coming months. If site visitors have material from an earlier or later era, please let us have them to share on the site.

The Bordenian – Issue 74 1964-65

### *Notes and News*

#### AUTUMN TERM, 1964

At the opening of the year we welcomed five new members of the staff : Mr J T Macrae, an Old Bordenian, who returned to teach Physics; Mr T J Cross – Geography; Mr D L Davies – Spanish; Mr C A Mills – Latin; Mr A W Clayton – Physical Education. M Akhurst was appointed School Captain, with Ansell, Blackmore, Fowle, Jordan, Oates, Priston, Smart, Stanley, G. Taylor and Walker as Prefects.

Soon after the term opened we joined with the Girls' school in a performance of “Patience”.

The Sixth Form Science Conference was again held.

During this term the “Sunny Smiles” collection for the Dr Barnado's Homes passed the £100 mark.

Mr Bates produced this year's school play: “One Way Pendulum” by N F Simpson. This recently written play was a box office success, and was judged to fulfil its description as “a farce in a new dimension” although many were left pleasantly puzzled.

Akhurst, who captained the 1st XI Football team, was picked with M Wilson to represent Kent Grammar Schools. We offer our congratulations. P Taylor captained the 2nd XI.

#### SPRING TERM 1965

Akhurst captained the 1st XI Hockey. The 2nd XI was again without a definite captain.

This term – for the first time – a House Weight-Lifting Competition was introduced. We hope to see the new enthusiasm continued next year.

Mr Lancaster organised the Arts Festival. Poetry reading was introduced as a new event.

In the Hockey Festival the school celebrated as the School XI beat Chatham House and went on to win the tournament for the first time in some years.

The Prefects played the Girls' School at hockey – a memorable if not too serious match.

The two school journeys at Easter were to Czechoslovakia with Messrs. Davies, Howard and Sowden, and to Devon with Mr Veal and Mr Cross.

#### SUMMER TERM, 1965

Akhurst captained the 1st XI Cricket, whilst D Wood was captain of the 2nd XI.

Parents day enjoyed better weather than last year. The Junior Play was, for the first time, acted entirely by the 1st form and was universally enjoyed.

The Sports this year were won by Barrow in a very close finish. Fewer records fell.

Mr Lancaster and Mr Mills are leaving us. Mr Lancaster will be remembered for his organisation of the Arts' Festival and his fine innings against the Prefects' XI, quite apart from the enthusiasm he brought to teaching History. He is to take up a post in Madeley College of Education, Staffs.

Mr Mills successfully introduced R.I. as a GCE subject in the school. He contributed to Junior Sport – the Masters will lose another of their outstanding cricketers. With his B.D. degree he is leaving to take up a post in Redland College of Education, Bristol.

We shall be sorry to lose both Masters and we wish them good fortune in the future.

This year's *Bordenian* was prepared and edited by D.Carey, U.6A, and A. Friday, L.6Sc.

#### **End of Digest**

*The next digest will include all articles posted on the Old Bordenians Website that are suitable for a printed format from 1 December 2009 to 30 November 2010.*

*David Palmer*  
*OBA Website Committee*