



The Old Collyerians' Association

Newsletter

Spring 2006

Your President's message

As is the custom I have been asked to write an introductory piece for the Spring newsletter. Some of you may know me in my role as Membership Secretary – a position I will still hold whilst President and which I will juggle along with a job in financial administration for a large engineering company in Norfolk.

I started at Collyer's in 1974 and left somewhat abruptly halfway through my A-Level studies due to a family move to East Anglia, continuing my studies at the Isle of Ely College in Wisbech. Whilst this was a worthy establishment it was very different from what I had been used to at Collyers and something of a culture shock!

The other change that took some adjusting to was the landscape. The winding, country roads I had grown up with and used daily on my bicycle journeys to and from school were replaced by endless fields and vast skylines. However, I soon found there was much to offer in this part of the world. Cambridgeshire is said to be the only county to have two cathedrals and that at Ely must surely be one of the finest in the whole country. The North Norfolk coast also has a beauty of its own.

My hobbies include reading and listening to music – two interests I suspect I will have even less time than usual for in this busy year – as well as walking, photography and the countryside in general. I also enjoy playing badminton, a sport that I first took up whilst at the school.

My days at Collyer's were always happy ones and I have many fond memories of my time spent there: queuing all of the lunch break for a packet of 'plush nuggets' (whatever happened to them!) from the tuck shop only to be thwarted at the last moment when

Diary date

10 June

Summer Reunion - at Denbies Vineyard, near Dorking.

See Page 4 for full information.

Contact us:

President

Mark Collins

Gen. Hon. Secretary:

Anthony Barnard
118, Downs Road,
Coulston, Surrey,
CR5 1AE

Treasurer: Nick Weller,
12 North Ash,
Hawthorn Close,
Horsham,

West Sussex RH12 2BW

Hon. Membership

Secretary: Mark Collins
4 Stallett Way, Tilney St
Lawrence, Kings Lynn,
Norfolk PE34 4HT

Newsletter:

Brian Slyfield, Arun
House, Denne Road,
Horsham RH12 1JS.
and Bill Thomson.

*www.oldcollyerians.org uk -
e-mail us via the web site*

the bell for lessons rang; Hurst house assemblies with Dick Tidey; the Founder's Day service after which the school's various clubs put on displays which often included spectacular model war games in the Duckering Room; cross country runs in all weathers; and a memorable trip to Paris – the first time I travelled abroad. I also served in the army section of the CCF where under the enthusiastic leadership of Captain Palmer and Lieutenant Lawrence – ably assisted by pupil NCOs such as Geoff Muir and Pip Wilkes – I went on to gain a stripe on my arm, despite, as I was reminded at last year's reunion dinner, the difficulties I had with passing my marching exams! Central to all of this was of course the very highest standard of education which has stood us all in such good stead over the ensuing years.

I was recently reminded of the objects of our Association, which are: "to maintain amongst members interest in the welfare of the College, to promote social intercourse and sports amongst members and to support the College in every way". The OCA certainly maintains its strong links with the College and we continue to look at ways to raise our profile and hopefully recruit members from today's students. My predecessor Anthony Barnard devoted a great deal of his time to this and continues to do so in his role as Secretary. He represented the Association at last year's prize-giving and the OCA has agreed to sponsor a prize in the future. The information pack presented to students on leaving the College now includes full details of the OCA and we are also looking at offering the newsletter to current students via e-mail. Our annual get-togethers and the newsletter take care of the social intercourse so we just need to sort out the sporting side of things! Any volunteers please?

As for the future, our membership is on the decline but currently stands at 517, although we don't have addresses for over 60 members who therefore do not receive the newsletter. If anybody can help with addresses for these members then please do get in touch with me. (Tel: 01945-880236 or mcollins@rjherbert.co.uk) We do, however, need more members so please spread the word to those you are in touch with that haven't yet joined us. That way we can be confident that there will still be an active OCA to celebrate our 100th Anniversary in 2022.

I look forward to representing our Association during my term in office and to meeting as many of you as possible at our two social events later this year.

Mark Collins.

The 1940s - What a different world

This article was forwarded by Anthony Barnard, having been sent in by John Fruin, describing his reminiscences of what seem nowadays to be a totally different era, but was really only a mere 60 years ago.

The article in the Autumn 2004 newsletter has prompted me (eventually) to pen these

recollections of a bygone era. Bill Thomson wrote about his journey to school via the Henfield/Horsham steam line. My memories from 1941/1947 very much include that rail link.

As an evacuee from London I had a spell as a Crawley boy and also lived in Horsham. My father was killed in the army in 1940 and my mother drove an ambulance in the Blitz, so consequently

my home base, for my career in Collyers, was my grandparents' home in Lancing, on the coast. My memories of the tank engine and two coaches, which plied between Horsham and Brighton, remain vivid as at half terms and seasonal holidays, I boarded the train to Shoreham and changed there for Lancing. A ten-mile restricted zone applied from the coast to near Henfield. This area housed thousands of soldiers practicing with live ammunition on the Downs and being based all around the small towns in the area.

As a thirteen/fourteen year old, whose main ambition was to become a soldier (subsequently achieved) I was fascinated being in the carriage crammed full of Canadian and British troops who gave me chocolate and became my heroes!

Nowadays, we often drive through Partridge Green, Steyning and other villages, going over and under the old railway line which was so characteristic of the rural branch lines working in the first half of the last century.

Many years after Collyer's I had dealings with Dr Beeching, and his merry men, and saw at first hand the planning of the destruction of these small transport links for the rural community. By then, I was no longer a soldier, but working for EMI in the record/music company, and we were doing a deal to use the newspaper trains to deliver our records, all over the UK, using the red star parcels service.

My other method of proceeding from school (Horsham) to my grandparents, on some weekends, was to cycle, aged 12/13, on a trusty Hercules bike, either on the A24 or via the lanes and Henfield. Although I blush now to admit it, my choice of route depended on how strict the checkpoints for the 10-mile restricted coastal zone were at the time. Although as a schoolboy I would always be let through, little did the guards realise that in my saddlebag would be,

2inch mortar shells (unexploded), live .303 ammunition and thunder flashes used by the army to simulate grenades, as they were extremely loud.

I would collect these with my mates, during highly unauthorised visits to the Downs to seek these items, after they were discarded by weary soldiers returning to camp after the day's exercises.

At school I would give or trade these items with my pals. We were very lucky not to have been killed or injured, and probably I was then in as much danger as I was when in action, ten years later, against enemies of the King and Queen. I was a keen member of the school's ATC unit under Austin Willson, but always regretted that there was not an army cadet unit at that time.

I made very poor use of my time at Collyer's, which I have always regretted. My visits, after assembly, to Mr Tharp's office were far too prevalent, and I am sure that he was delighted when my time to leave arrived, and I cannot blame him. However, much to my amazement, when I wrote from Brecon in South Wales, to tell him that I had been selected to apply for a commission in the Welsh Regiment and needed a 'testimonial', he was most gracious and far more complimentary than I deserved! Luckily, the army sorted me out and I gained, somewhat later in life than usual, a degree of common sense and discipline, which I had resisted as a 'Jack the lad' schoolboy!

During the second half of my working life I ended up as Chairman or Managing Director of several major record/music corporations, so the combination of Collyer's, the war and the army must have worked.

I read the newsletters with great interest and would like to take this opportunity to convey my best wishes to my old classmates, in the 'A' stream from 1941 to 1947.

Summer Reunion 2006

This year's Summer Reunion will be held on Saturday 10th June at Denbies, England's largest vineyard, (situated just north of Dorking on the A24) and afterwards at the nearby Stepping Stones bar and restaurant.

The afternoon starts at 2.45pm with a tour of the vineyard by road-train. This is followed by an indoor tour of the winery, which concludes with a free tasting of some of the wines produced. The cost is £9.25 per head for the two tours and partners and adult guests are welcome. Both the tours are suitable for wheelchair users but we regret that pets are not admitted.

Denbies also has a garden centre, a small art gallery, an excellent gift shop and a restaurant serving light refreshments all of which have free admission and you are welcome to arrive earlier to visit these. After the tours we will be going on to Stepping

Stones where drinks and meals may be purchased (food served from 7pm).

Please send a cheque for £9.25 a head, with a stamped addressed envelope, to the Hon. Treasurer, Nick Weller, at 12, North Ash, Hawthorn Close, Horsham, West Sussex. RH12 2BW. Cheques should be made payable to The Old Collyerians' Association. Please make it clear that the cheque is for the Summer Reunion and indicate if any of your party is a wheelchair user. In order to advise final numbers all applications must be received by Friday 26th May.

Or if you simply want to come along for a drink in the evening join us from 5.30pm at Stepping Stones (Tel: 01306-889932) which is on Westhumble Street just past the entrance to Denbies going north on the A24 from Dorking. (Look for the road signs to Westhumble station)

Mark Collins

AGM and Winter Reunion

Last November saw the customary Saturday afternoon and evening of the OCA's Annual General Meeting followed by the winter reunion dinner. I was pleased to have the opportunity to attend these - the first time for several years, as the customary industry event abroad that takes place around the same time had been moved to another city, earlier in the month, and I had travelled over to England from France for another industry client's *Beaujolois Nouveau* event (how bizarre is that?).

The opportunity to meet those I had not known before, and even more so to renew the acquaintance of those I had not seen for years, was most welcome. Little changes though, at least as far as the AGM is concerned. The OCA is still very much hampered by lack of new people to serve on the committee. Although there is a steady trickle of new blood, the owners of which fortunately allow themselves to be persuaded to stand for election or co-opting, it is sorely evident that the lack of willing manpower prevents so many good ideas from reaching fruition. Although all this talk of AGMs and committees makes everything sound rather formal, the opposite is most definitely the case. Nevertheless, the committee is very much aware that the OCA needs to evolve, in order to match the way that Collyer's itself has evolved since most of us attended the school, and there are some excellent proposals on the table.

The Reunion Dinner is a slightly (but only very slightly) more formal and structured affair, customarily held in the student common room (formerly the 1960s gymnasium). The 2005 event was distinguished by the very full top table, with a near-complete

complement of invited guests, from the college and other organisations with links to the OCA, such as the Mercers' Company. The meal was good, the company excellent, and the speeches not too long and far more relevant and interesting than I recall from some previous events. We witnessed the changeover of president (from Anthony Barnard to Mark Collins), took wine with the new president, and managed to sneak in the alternative words to the school song.

The event made a useful profit for the Association, thanks mainly to the raffle.

Reunions only happen twice a year - so if you are not in the habit of attending them do give one a try. The summer event is fully described on the previous page, and the winter event will be notified in the next (autumn 2006) edition of this newsletter.

Bill Thomson



Jottings



Following the mention in the last newsletter about George Stiles, the editor received an e-mail, asking "who he?" from George Styles. Who indeed? We apologise to George for the misplaced vowel.

Geoff Harmer (1958-1965) e-mails to say: "I read with interest your remarks in the latest newsletter on methods of gaining new members. Here is a possible method.

"The same situation affects many such organisations. An effective method that was used by my old employer's staff organisation was to send an e-mail to everyone registered on Friends Reunited website who was not a current member. This costs just one person's subscription to Friends Reunited (£10, I think) and allows you to e-mail all those registered against Collyer's, admittedly on a one-by-one basis. By this means you can target the mailshots by year of leaving Collyer's since that is how Friends Reunited arranges its information.

"You can also leave announcements on

the their web site. Friends Reunited can be found at www.friendsreunited.co.uk."

It sounds like a good idea, and is one that the committee is actively pursuing.

Another item that is actively being pursued by the committee is the re-creation of OCA-sponsored prizes for Collyer's students. One area which is lacking in recognition is creative writing, and this is the first subject for which the Association is to be offering a prize. It is hoped that a prominent former pupil in this area will give his name to the prize, and negotiations are in hand - watch this space for further details.

The OCA web site is in process of being completely revised and revamped by Gary Jones, for which many thanks are due. Meanwhile, the college's own website has undergone a facelift, with enhanced links to the OCA.

We are always interested to receive news of our members and other former colleagues - please contact the Secretary or the editor (details on page 1).

Editor's note:

We welcome Brian Slyfield to the editor's chair. Brian is a professional publisher, so we hope to expand the newsletter in terms of both quantity and interest. I have enjoyed putting together these pages, but having to do it from overseas, I am well aware that it loses a certain something. Brian is on the scene in Horsham, and will be attending committee meetings and OCA events to gather information for us. Please keep Brian informed.

Bill Thomson.

College news

College jazz night

Collyer's Jazz Band and singers held a concert on Wednesday evening 15 March in the Duckering Hall as a fund-raising event towards the tsunami appeal. The College is helping rebuild a tuition centre in Rajanagar, India in association with Earth Aid Asia. Rajanagar is a Dalit, or low caste village in Tamil Nadu of around 110 families. These families rely mainly on casual construction work and prawn fishing, though this has been detrimentally affected by the tsunami.

The tuition centre is used for the village pre-school, after-school Tamil tuition and Earth Aid English Tuition. It is also a meeting place for women's self-help groups which are working to set up their own small businesses and loan schemes. The centre is in need of extensive repair and redecoration to make it a welcoming and secure place for the children and adults of Rajanagar to meet, work: and learn.

Money collected will go towards extensive repairs to the centre, such as redecoration, replacement of doors and window frames, and ensuring the electrics are safe and in good working order. Additionally furniture and floor mats will be supplied. and a mural will be painted on an internal wall in conjunction with the children who attend the centre.

A busy time

This has been the busiest time of year for the College. Students have just received results for modular examinations taken in January and they are working on their course work, after Easter they will have

started on revision for final exams in the summer. The college has also seen a number of successful visits by students, with the historians going to Russia and the Spanish department having completed the first of their exchanges by visiting Hellin.

The college has seven students from the Leisure and Recreation department currently in China, and soon to come are the visits to Hollywood by the Media department and the German exchange. Finally, Easter saw the College's annual skiing trip.

Other recent activities have included the College dance event on the two evenings of 23-24 March, when students showcased their practical dance work to a public audience.

End of term was marked by Founder's Day on 31 March – a particularly noteworthy event this year as it was the last church service presided over by Canon Derek Tansill, who has now retired. The College's chosen charity this year was the new Y centre in Horsham, and the speaker was Alex Cloke.

Brian Slyfield

Membership news

Names and addresses of individual members, new joinings, changes of details, deaths etc are available only in the printed version of the newsletter due to data protection restrictions. We thank you for your understanding.

*Please help make this newsletter interesting - we want to hear your memories of Collyer's and your former co-students, news of what has happened since leaving, and your ideas for the Old Collyerians Association's future. We would be particularly pleased to hear from those who attended Collyer's since it became a sixth form college. Please get in touch with Brian Slyfield (see p1) or e-mail us at:
newsletter@oldcollyerians.org.uk.*

The Richard Collyer Masonic Lodge and Chapter

The Richard Collyer Masonic Lodge is almost as old as the OCA having been formed in 1927, while the Chapter is a mere junior having been formed in 1958. Both are very active organisations and meet regularly at Horsham Masonic Hall. The Lodge members would be delighted to hear from any old Collyerians who would like further details or who might be interested in joining. Full details may be obtained from:
Robert Phillips, 1 Mona Cottage, Minffordd, Llanfachraeth, Holyhead, LL65 4UR.

HELP US MOVE INTO the 21st CENTURY

Receive your newsletter by E-mail.
Send your name and years of attendance
at Collyer's, as shown in the address list,
to the
Hon. General Secretary
ANTHONY BARNARD at:
barnardak@mistral.co.uk

The Guild of Mercers' Scholars

The name of the Civic Guild of Old Mercers has been changed to The Guild of Mercers' Scholars, to reflect that membership of the Guild is open to anyone who has been a scholar at any of Mercers' Company cluster of schools/colleges.

The Installation Dinner for the new Guildmaster, Old Collyerian Robert Smith, will be held on 1st June at Armoury House. Anyone interested in joining the Guild can obtain details from the Guild's Old Collyerian representative, Anthony Barnard, whose address is 118 Downs Road, Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 1AE.

The OCA Committee would like to thank all contributors to this newsletter - we encourage others to share their memories, anecdotes, experiences and opinions to ensure that future editions are full and interesting. If space has prevented us using your submission this time, we will try to use any unused material in later editions. The next newsletter will be published in Autumn 2006.