



# The Old Collyerians' Association

Spring 2009

## From the 'Prez'

When I left Collyer's in the autumn of 19 hundred & frozen stiff, I little thought that more than 50 years later I would have the privilege of penning this note, as current president of the OCA, for our Spring 2009 newsletter.

I was a member of the original Hive (of '55) - for those of you not familiar with this term, it was decided to select the (allegedly) top 18 or so students in year 3 and expose them to the joys of O-level GCEs in year 4. Some of my contemporaries may be reading this (Messrs. Ticehurst, Richardson, Cattell, Smith, Ehrhart, Rosen, Rees, Pethick et al) and we found ourselves in the Lower 6th. at age 14 (in my case at least) working with boys many of whom were 2 years older than me. Unfortunately I had no real idea of what I wanted to do and selected completely the wrong subjects. After 14

months of wasting my, and other people's, time I decided to jump ship.

Eventually I followed my brother Brian's lead into the brick business, where I stayed for the next 40 years. Although I look back on my time at Collyer's as less than a success, I have many good memories, especially the encouragement given me in my singing endeavours by Jimmy Hodgson which have given me much satisfaction (if not always my listeners!) in the years since. For the past 20 years or so I've also been involved at the Capitol in Horsham (previously the Ritz Cinema then Horsham Arts Centre) as one of the house management team, which I continue to enjoy, even allowing for the 'great British public'!

Collyer's has changed greatly but it is heartening to learn of its continuing success in many areas under the

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From the College: Jackie Johnston

guidance of the principal, Jackie Johnston. Of particular note is that in the 2008 Electronics A-level results the College had four of the top five students in the country.

Phase one of the latest new building work should be open later in the year although subsequent phases will no doubt be affected by the current economic conditions. Watch this space.

What are my aims for this year? Firstly to increase our membership, especially from students of the present college. In their two years' study they will probably not build up the same relationship with Collyer's that we may have done in our 5-7 years stay but I'm sure they will look back on these times with particular affection. At only £2 pa (or £35 for 25 years and £55 for life membership) it's more than value for money.

Please, if you're not already a member, consider joining our ranks.

Secondly I would also like to encourage attendance at our social gatherings. We have an annual summer reunion (this year Sunday 14th June - see page 9 of this newsletter) and on the third Saturday in November (which falls on the 21st. in 2009) the AGM and dinner at the college: an excellent opportunity to meet up with old friends and make some new ones. There should be more details elsewhere in this newsletter.

I hope you will find the contents of our Spring issue of interest. By the way, the heading is a nod in the direction of my great interest in jazz, which began in my later years at Collyer's, and to the legendary saxophonist, Lester (Prez) Young. If you have any matters Collyer's (or just want to talk jazz things) don't hesitate to get in touch with me (sturt99@hotmail.com) - it'll be really special to hear from you.

*Derek Sturt*

## J o t t i n g s

### **The John Dew Building**

Following suggestions that the first phase of the new buildings at the college should be named after Dr John Dew, the well-known Horsham GP and former Collyerian who had died not long before, the February committee meeting was told by principal Jackie Johnston that the idea had won considerable support, not least from Dr Dew's family, and would almost certainly be endorsed by the governors. The building is scheduled to be formally opened by Horsham MP Francis Maude in November.

### **Where are they now?**

We have lost touch with OCA member R.C. Joseph (1939-1941), formerly of Wimbledon; also with Dr J.D. Salt (1971-1978). He is listed as a lecturer in Bristol, though his last known address (from which the last newsletter was returned) is in Sevenoaks, Kent. If anybody can

help with Mr Joseph's or Dr Salt's present whereabouts, please contact the membership secretary. There are several more long-standing 'lost' members, several of whom have probably passed away, listed in the membership report, so if you can help with news of any of these we would like to hear from you.

### **Archives**

Following the annual dinner, the OCA collection now boasts an original OCA football shirt, previously worn by, and presented by, Jimmy Pullen.

Greg Pirie, great grandson of former headmaster William Pirie, who attended the dinner from New Zealand, was presented with a spare copy of *The Collyerian* magazine from 1929, in which Greg's father was mentioned. Greg had not been certain whether or not his father had attended Collyer's, but the archives were able to prove he

**WE NEED YOUR MEMORIES...**

**Items for the newsletter are always welcome.**

**Please send your contributions via the Hon Secretary,**

**Anthony Barnard,**

**ocawalnutclose@btinternet.com**

had, between 1924 and 1929. He had been head of St. Leonard's house, had played cricket for the school and came second in the high jump in 1928.

### Archives online

Work has started on downloading old copies of The Collyerian to the OCA web site. Webmaster Gary Jones has tried to keep the file size small to cater for those with slower Internet connections, and although the resolution is low, and print quality was not always very good in years gone by, the images seem perfectly readable on most screens. See [www.oldcollyerians.org.uk](http://www.oldcollyerians.org.uk)

### The Hive

Martin Richardson writes from Canada to say that he noticed in the autumn newsletter that four members of the 'Hive' were omitted on the description of the crest.

Fifth row on shield: Roy Richardson and ? Quinn; Centre of shield: 'Pinhead' ( Derek ) Sturt and Erhart, the smoker.

Martin adds that as Derek is now president of the OCA he would prefer not to get off on the wrong foot.

### Pasty pulling

News reaches us via Mark Collins of the fund-raising activities of Steve Speczyk (1962-1970) who last autumn was one of a group who walked 250 miles from Helston in Cornwall to Alton in Hampshire to raise money for Treloar School and College. To accomplish this distance in 13 days would be a feat in itself but they also pushed/pulled a giant pasty provided by principal sponsors Ginsters!

Treloar's is an organisation that provides education and independence training for disabled youngsters and was founded in 1907 by the then Lord Mayor of London Sir William Purdie

Treloar, whose original appeal was set up to provide a hospital and school outside the city for children with non-pulmonary tuberculosis. This wasn't Steve's first walk for Treloars, having organised a 150 mile 'Dick Whittington Walk' from Gloucester to London back in 2005.

Photographs of both walks and further information on the excellent work done by Treloars can be found at the following websites:

[www.passthepasty.com](http://www.passthepasty.com) and  
[www.treloar.org.uk](http://www.treloar.org.uk)

### The sexiest OC?

Readers may be interested to learn that Holly Willoughby, presenter of ITV's 'Dancing on Ice' programme, is an Old Collyerian having attended the College of Richard Collyer in 1997/1998. She was voted "sexiest female" in the college yearbook for both years!

### Mr Palmer

John Cavell has been in touch with our secretary, saying that he "would like to get in touch with a former Collyer's teacher, Mr Palmer, who taught Engineering Drawing and was head of the Army section of the CCF back in the 1970s and 80s." (*I recall Mr G.E., known as 'Ted' Palmer in the 1960s, who was best known as a PE teacher – I was on, I think, his first Engineering Drawing GCE course – Ed*).

John continues: "As part of my CCF training, Mr Palmer taught me first aid and I remember him saying words to the effect that "if me teaching first aid results in one saved life it will have been worth it". Well, I did save someone's life as a direct result of Mr Palmer's training. I thought he would like to hear my story."

If anybody has any knowledge of where Mr Palmer is now, John would love to hear from you, via the secretary.

## 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:

Peter R Ticehurst, Flat 32, Bowes Close, Horsham RH13 5SZ.

# Obituary - E.D. Slynn

## Death of former Collyer's head

**D**erek Slynn, the former headmaster of Collyer's Grammar School in Horsham, died at the age of 89 on Christmas Eve last. He lived in Broadbridge Heath, and leaves his wife Joan and two daughters – Angela and Juliet – as well as three grandchildren.

Mr Slynn came to Collyer's in 1966 to take on the headship after his predecessor, D.J. Coulson, was appointed to a Public school position. Mr Slynn became involved in the Horsham community from the outset. He played cricket for Horsham town, and later became vice-president of the Horsham Cricket Club. He was also interested in music, joining the committee of the Horsham Music Circle, which met at Collyer's in Hurst Road in those days.

Mr Slynn had the difficult task during his time at Collyer's of overseeing the transition from a boys' grammar school to the current mixed sixth form college. It is to his credit that this was achieved so smoothly, with the help of governors, staff and students. The admission of girls to what had previously been a boys-only establishment must have been particularly difficult.

Before coming to Collyer's Mr Slynn had several other teaching posts, beginning his educational career at Dover College where he played cricket and became a keen member of the Dover Players Drama Group. His first headship was Adams Grammar School in Wem, Shropshire, where he introduced the teaching of Russian and Chinese.

Languages were another of his great passions, the flame being lit during war service, when he travelled the world. He spent time in Italy and Gibraltar where he learned Italian and Spanish, developing a love of opera in Italy, while in Gibraltar he is reported to have played cricket on the airstrip, moving out of the way when aircraft landed. He was also attached to Bletchley Park, the site of secret British codebreaking activities.

At the end of the war, he was granted class B release to return to Oxford to finish his languages degree. While at university he played cricket for Oxford, and also got married. During that time he

added Russian to his existing studies of French and German.

Initially Mr Slynn and his family lived in the headmaster's house in the school grounds until the decision was made to demolish it. He then lived in nearby Richmond Road, moving to the village of Broadbridge Heath on his retirement in 1983.

After retirement he remained active in Horsham and the surrounding areas, becoming a governor of Burgess Hill School for Girls and joining Dr John Dew (who also died recently) in coaching under-16s at Horsham Cricket Club. He also undertook coaching at Harlands Primary School in Haywards Heath.

Derek Slynn also found time to produce a short but highly readable addition to the A.N. Willson history of Collyer's, taking the story into the sixth form college era.

Mr Slynn was a founder member of Horsham Weald Probus Club. Among his other achievements were becoming a Freeman of the City of London and a member of the committee of Voluntary Services Overseas.

According to his daughter Angela, in the *West Sussex County Times* obituary: "His joy in retirement was spending time with his three grandchildren Anna, Nicola and Alistair, still teaching them the joys of cricket and languages."

Former deputy head, Vernon Davies, contributed to the same obituary, writing: "He was the kindest and most courteous of men to work for, and always so appreciative of one's efforts. He had the interests of all his pupils at heart, and this is how he will be remembered."

Another former member of the Collyer's staff, John Hamer, said: "I learned a great deal about teaching, educational values and human relationships – and much of this was due to Derek's guiding hand. I had the highest possible regard for him as a wise headmaster and as a warm and principled human being."

As we close for press, we learn that a memorial service is to be held at St Mary's Parish Church, Horsham, at 11am on 2 May, followed by a gathering at Collyer's.

### RECEIVE YOUR NEWSLETTER BY E-Mail

**We are hoping to hear from still more members prepared to receive their newsletters by e-mail. All monies saved on publishing and distribution, as a result of this, can be re-assigned to other useful activities of the Association. And it arrives faster, and in glorious colour.**

**To receive your newsletter by E-mail, please send your name and years of attendance at Collyer's, exactly as it appears in the Address List, to the**

**Hon. General Secretary**

**ANTHONY BARNARD at: [ocawalnutclose@btinternet.com](mailto:ocawalnutclose@btinternet.com)**

# Obituary - Geoff Brooksbank

Geoff Brooksbank, who died in January, was head of the Collyer's modern languages department from the late 1960s until the mid 1980s. His teaching style seemed to owe something to the old-fashioned comedian. There was physical business, with desks regularly suffering a passing kick. Geoff also scattered a range of nicknames randomly on his pupils. His repertoire of jokes was comfortingly small, with probably the favourite being an index finger being dug not particularly deeply into the arm of a pupil, accompanied by the question 'Am I boring you?'

However Geoff had a very good idea of what he wanted his classes to achieve. Regular learning and testing of basic vocabulary and verbs was a very important part of his lessons, but practice of spoken French was not neglected.

The benefits of his approach perhaps became most apparent when his students were no longer being taught by him; Geoff's pupils found themselves well-equipped to stand up to the rigours of Kevin West's classes, for example. Geoff's teaching also promoted long-term recall. Ex-pupils on rugby trips to France, maybe 30 years later, found themselves able to cope on the basis of what they remembered from Geoff's lessons.

Geoff was at his loudest when quelling excessive noise, "Silence" being bellowed at the top of his voice in a French accent to silence unnecessary chatter. In other ways his approach was more subtle. However he did have high expectations, particularly of boys whom he felt had a natural aptitude for French. If they failed to meet the standards that he believed they could achieve, his disappointment was quietly but clearly expressed.

As head of modern languages, Geoff was proprietorial about the subjects he supervised. He always encouraged his more able pupils to take an extra language, Spanish or particularly German, to O-level. Geoff could become rather vexed if any of his brightest third form stars were lured away to Russian by Dick Tidey.

Geoff remained in Horsham after he retired, keeping busy with voluntary work. When encountered, he always enquired not only about the situation of whomever he met, but also how siblings and parents known to him were doing. Geoff's pupils may recall the quirks of his teaching style, but they helped enhance his effectiveness. He should be remembered for taking the training of good linguists very seriously.

*Nick Weller*

## Still more memories

*Ivan Hill writes from Cardiff, in response to Bob Farren's account of Collyer's in the war years, which appeared in the Autumn 2008 newsletter. In passing on his thanks to the OCA committee for their efforts in keeping former pupils updated, particularly in sharing memories of the WW2 years, Ivan mentions that PAT, who later became a friend, and his team did a marvellous job in difficult conditions.*

Memories, generally speaking, are very precious. Though, as age advances, our recall often fails us for the more recent events whereas, those of the distant past remain so very clear.

As I read Bob Farren's account of that Wednesday afternoon during February 1943 other details flooded into my mind.

At one moment all was calm, and each of us was dealing with the task in hand. Then suddenly the sound of bombs exploding echoed through the corridors, followed by the whole building vibrating together with the sound of crashing glass. Then there was silence.

At the time I was in the corridor near the Art room. I recollect that 'Revs' together with a group of cadets hastened over to give assistance and support to those neighbours in Richmond Road. 'Hembury', our

headmaster's home, situated on the corner of both Richmond Road and Gordon Road, was damaged. Austin Willson told me that P.A.T. and his wife spent a couple of nights with them. Austin was very surprised when, taking into them the early cup of tea, to see P.A.T. smoking a cigarette instead of the usual pipe.

A few minutes following the explosion, P.A.T. appeared on the scene. He asked me to be at Crawley Station, the following morning, to prevent the boys boarding the 8.32 am train as the school would be closed for both Thursday and Friday in order that repairs could be carried out.

Whilst eager to assist in this task I trust that I did not appear too pleased.

Fortunately, this incident left few permanent scars on the building itself. I guess that few of us appreciated the problems it provided for P.A.T.

During that afternoon trains on the Horsham to Crawley line had been machine gunned. David Kimpton, who lived at 'Sunnybank' in Hurst Avenue, took me to his home until it was considered safe for me to return to my home in Crawley.

There is no doubt that the years of WW2 provided a very interesting outlet for many of us. No question of ever being bored.

## 2009 winter reunion

As ever, the 2009 winter reunion dinner will be held at the College of Richard Collyer on the third Saturday in November (which, for this year, is the 21st). We are publishing this reminder so that the date can be put in the diary now – some of you have told us that by the time the application forms appear in the autumn newsletter you are already committed elsewhere.

This shows that we do listen to members' feedback, and further to this our sub-committee has been talking to alternative caterers, and has struck a deal with another company, one that has considerable experience of good-quality catering for functions like ours in the Horsham area. This should enable us to maintain the high quality of food that we have enjoyed at the last couple of dinners, with improvements in service, and, most importantly, to maintain the ticket price at the same level as the OCA's 2008 annual reunion dinner. This ticket cost compares very favourably with that charged by our fellow Mercers' organisations for their similar functions.

Although the 2009 event will be at the customary venue, there is a possibility that we may have to find an alternative location, at least on a temporary basis, when the next phases of building works at the college begin. If you have any particular wishes, or suggestions, then please contact any member of the committee. We have also been considering whether a lunch might be better than a dinner, bearing in mind the advancing years of the majority of the membership. But any changes to the traditional pattern will only happen if there is a significant demand, so once again, if you have any thoughts, please contact a committee member.

*Don't miss this opportunity to meet up with your friends from your school days.*

*If you signal your intent to attend the reunion dinner either to the treasurer or the hon. Secretary before the end of September, we will publish a list of those planning to attend the dinner in the next newsletter. This might encourage your peers to attend as well.*

*Treasurer at [clive.barham@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:clive.barham@tiscali.co.uk)  
hon sec at [ocawalnutclose@btinternet.com](mailto:ocawalnutclose@btinternet.com).*

## AGM 2008

The annual general meeting for 2008 was held at the college during the afternoon preceding the winter reunion dinner.

The event was attended by a rather poor total of 14 members of the association – many of whom were committee members. But thanks to the others who made the effort. Proceedings were, as usual, fairly rapid and informal. It was agreed that efforts should be made, via the newsletter and web site, to trace 75 or so 'lost' members for whom we have no current address.

The financial position was revealed to be healthy, so the

survival of the association should be assured despite the gradual decline in membership numbers. The committee was re-elected en masse – the only change, apart from the customary change of president, was that Nick Weller stood down from the treasurer's post, being succeeded by outgoing president Clive Barham. A vote of thanks was taken for Nick, in recognition of his work over a number of years and the OCA's present financial security.

The comparatively poor support for the winter reunion, which led to an extra charge being levied by the caterer, was discussed in 'any other business'.

## The OCA creative writing prize

The OCA creative writing prize, open to all current students at the college, and sponsored by our association, was presented at the end of 2008. As usual, the entries were judged by Old Collyerian Simon Nye, the well-known TV scriptwriter, who has been working, with the original writer David Nobbs, on an eagerly-awaited re-make of the Reginald Perrin series.

Simon tells us that the majority of the entries were poems, and although he is no expert in poetry, he was hugely impressed by the standard. He picked a prose piece 'Fish on an overturned haystack' as the winner. It was written by John Bell, and Simon described it as "heartfelt

and surprising and evocative, with some memorable turns of phrase". Simon was unable to split the next two entries, so we took a decision to award two second prizes on a strictly one-off basis. The two winners were Charlie Pritchard (especially for the poem Gertrude), whose submissions were, according to Simon, "very confident and clever ideas", and Sian Thompson, who Simon said presented an "impressive span of styles, nicely surprising."

As always, the prizes were funded mainly by the raffle at the OCA winter reunion dinner, so thanks to all who supported this effort and please be equally generous in the future.

# Winter reunion dinner 2008

**F**rom Beaconsfield to Bromley, Kensington to Kings Lynn, Maidstone to Market Rasen and Salisbury to Sheffield - these were just some of the far-flung places from which Old Collyerians and their guests travelled to assemble for the 2008 Annual Reunion Dinner. Following the AGM earlier in the afternoon a steady stream of attendees could be found heading for the bar in the Duckering Hall where old friendships were renewed and new ones made and it was here, as always, that there was the opportunity to view some fascinating items from the OCA's growing archive.

In due course we were called through for dinner where we welcomed our president and guests in the customary fashion. This year we were pleased that presidents of both the Old Mercers' Club and the Guild of Mercers' Scholars were able to join us. After grace was said we enjoyed an excellent starter of smoked salmon followed by pork for the main course and rounded off with raspberry pavlova. Gary Jones proposed the toast to Collyer's and principal Jackie Johnston responded. It was then the turn of student governor Miguel Bravo who gave an excellent speech, which highlighted some of the changes that have taken place over the years and reinforced our links with today's College. Finally we welcomed in new President Derek Sturt who replied on behalf of the OCA.

As well as the usual formalities of the night the committee was delighted to honour retiring chair of governors Rosemary Cowley with honorary membership of the association in recognition of



Our new president welcomes the diners

well over 20 years of loyal service to the college and we were pleased to present her with a bouquet of flowers and a bottle of her favourite whisky. Honorary life membership was also bestowed on Greg Pirie – great grandson of former headmaster William Pirie (1822 - 1868). Greg was here on a visit from his home in New Zealand to research his family history and, as well as attending our dinner with his cousin, he was able to have a guided tour of the college the following week.

All too soon the formal part of the evening drew to a close. We had heard the speeches, toasted our founder, sung the school song and installed another president – the 80th since our association was founded back in 1922. The bar remained open for those wishing for a nightcap and many took advantage to carry on conversations that had started across the table. Indeed, as midnight approached beneath a clear and starry sky a small cluster of Old Collyerians could still be seen at the Hurst Road entrance exchanging stories of their times at this most wonderful of establishments.

Numbers were down a little this time round so we are giving advance notice of this year's event, which will be held on Saturday 21st November. We do hope you will be able to join us so please put the date in your diary. Why not get in touch with some of your contemporaries and use this as a chance to meet up again? The seating plan is always arranged so that those from similar years sit together and whether you come alone or with a guest you will be assured a warm welcome.

*Text and pictures by Mark Collins*



The reunion offers a chance to examine the OCA archives

# "The Frankie Vivant"

## memories of French with Mr Collins

Many of us will have fond memories of those who taught us during our days at the school or college but as the years go by those recollections tend to get hazier and much of the detail lost. Wouldn't it be wonderful to be able to revisit those lessons and hear and see again our contemporaries and those whose unique styles of teaching made such an impact on us? For those of us who started in form 1H in 1974 at least part of this is possible due to the foresight of one our contemporaries Graham Lipscomb. He produced a series of audio recordings of lessons from 1976 through to 1979 of which the teachers, and probably many classmates too, were completely unaware thus creating a completely unscripted snapshot of what lessons were really like. In Graham's own words: "who else would have been daft enough to smuggle a cassette recorder into class concealed in a cardboard box with a hole cut in the side for the microphone? It was perfectly safe though, because the box was labelled 'EGGS' in order to be totally inconspicuous!"

For my first two years at Collyer's I had the privilege of being taught French by my namesake F.A. Collins. His distinctive moustache, perhaps inevitably, earned him the nickname 'Hitler' but anybody less like the Nazi leader in appearance, stature, dress or speech would be hard to imagine, for Mr. Collins came over as a true English gentleman of the old school, well spoken, always smartly turned out and with the bearing that only comes with time spent in the services. He drove a wonderful old MG, which was also always turned out to the highest standard, and which could often be seen parked in the sloping driveway of his home in Warnham Road. The transition from Primary to Secondary School is always something of a culture shock but he had that skill of making his new charges feel at ease with lessons that were together informative, entertaining and most definitely fun. That's not to say that there wasn't respect and discipline - I still have an exercise book from those days and was clearly struggling, both with the finer points of comprehension and a leaking fountain pen, as the ink splattered and much corrected pages earned the comment "Grubby and not very good" and a requirement to repeat the exercise by the next morning! To begin with we were all assigned nicknames - I was "Cursed Collins" - and we were variously referred to as slugs and blobs, which as can be imagined at the time caused all of us great amusement. Our textbook was "La Francais Vivante" a book of stories written in the language, which he introduced to us as "The Frankie Vivant" - a name which of course stuck immediately. His distinctive style was one reason this lesson was chosen for the recording and quite unaware that his words were being consigned to tape for posterity he obliged us by reading out a list of the entire class and their nicknames. However, this was no ordinary lesson. The recording made on the 15th July 1976 was not only our last French lesson of the term but also the last lesson he would take us for, as he was about to retire after some 20 years at the school.

The following transcript is of highlights of the recording.

(The room is filled with applause as Mr. Collins enters and to cries of "speech, speech" an announcement is made that we have taken a collection to buy him some retirement gifts)

"Well first of all before I say any thank-yous, what I obviously have to do is look and give my thanks afterwards, is that right? Now I must see what these are because there's nothing quite as infuriating as the outside of a parcel is there? (The sound of rustling paper is soon drowned out by more applause) Yes, absolutely capital. I bet you didn't wrap these up yourselves. I have never yet succeeded in wrapping up parcels. The only thing really to do is to get married and get your wife to do it! So what have we got here? (tearing of paper). Oh that's fine, that's a propagator for raising seedlings. Jolly good, well done lads, I already have a greenhouse where all sorts of things are raised. Thank you very much. Many, many thanks 2H, that's just the sort of thing I'm constantly using. (more rustling of paper) Oh, tally ho. That's grand. (the next gift is a fishing bag) Excellent. Somebody is very good at wrapping up parcels. If by any chance you are ever going by Hawkins Pond or Roost Hole or Birchenbridge and you see a prehistoric MG drawn up by the side you'll know that I'm trying, probably quite unsatisfactorily.... Oh what have we got here? Oh, I say now that's really nice. Do you all know what that is? It's a fly tying vice. It's for flying (sic) tying artificial flies! (much laughter).

"2H this is extraordinarily generous of you and quite unexpected. I'm not by any means accustomed to having presents from a form. Generally speaking providing a boy doesn't act despicably as I walk past I'm quite happy, so having something of this sort is really a very big surprise and a very great pleasure. I can't go round and say one of the regular things that every time I tie a fly or go fishing I'll think of 2H because obviously I can't but thank you very much indeed. I've never, as a say, had a present like this from a class before and I'm most extremely grateful. I do assure you that these are things that I shall use an awful lot as I do propose to fish and I do propose to tie my own flies which is not as expensive as buying them.

"The haversack I'm using at the moment for fishing purposes is.... well I had it when I was in the army, one of those heavy canvas ones which I was issued with I think in about 1920. It is getting a little past it's prime now, it's worn very well but time does pass and it did go a long way. It started off in Bulford camp; then it headed off to Wales, then it went to Woolwich to the Royal Artillery depot and after that it landed up in the Royal Artillery base depot in Cairo in Egypt. It then pottered all around the Middle East for the next four or five years and I still have it! But I think it's time to be pensioned off. In any case it's a lot smaller than this one and doesn't have pockets on the outside. Very many thanks indeed.

"Now let's read this through. Did you type this up?"

(There then follows a list of his favourite sayings -

'Beastly Barraclough, Blobs, Blobblings, Cursed Collins and Comley, Cor, Cor and/or Blimey, Daffy Dawson, Foul Franklin, Grisley Grealy, Horrible Hempstead, Hyper Blob, Hyper Blot, Hyper Slug, Imbecile, Lamentable Lipscombe, Measly Muggidge....)

"You missed one out - 'dimbo' (much laughter) Jolly good. Well done. I never realised I made so many remarks. I must say I do like to study literature. 'Cor and/or blimey' as you say. Jolly good and many more thanks.

"Well I must say this makes it a singularly happy ending to a couple of years where we haven't really managed to fall out. I hope you have as splendidly peaceful a time as you go on and I'm pretty confident that you won't have an awful lot of difficulty in coping with the ordinary matters of French because the 'Frankie Vivant', which you all know really well by now, is really a much better preparation for third form work than the other book we had, which although it covers a lot of ground is terribly vague and never quite certain where it's going. So I'm pretty sure that you'll find the basic work that's in you will stand you in good stead. Do you know what forms you're going to be in because the second form tends to split up? There's another 'Francais Vivante' on the same pattern going on further with different sorts of stories, which is in the bookcase there so you may indeed find that you'll be using that.

"But I think you shouldn't have too much difficulty and good fortune go with you. Good fortune go with you, if it comes to that, in the remaining years because Collyer's is going to change a bit isn't it. I think it's a shame. I'm not at all certain that the chaps who come here from some other school for their sixth form work will finish up quite so well off as the chaps who've been here and I think that on the whole there's a feeling about a school that's been going together for a long time, where everybody knows everybody, that you don't get in some other institutions. I'm not quite certain whether I'm going to be bullied into saying goodbye to the school tomorrow or whether I'm going to be spared that one. Valedictory speeches are not

really my strong point nor do I very much like making them. But I think I would say to you that one of the things that always struck me about Collyer's is it's an extraordinarily friendly place. This is something which has been mentioned time and time again when we have students come in and spend a couple of terms here. Now a student anywhere is on a pretty poor wicket, isn't he? He's anybody's game. He hasn't got any real authority and all sorts of people are going to play him up. Well we get them here and time and time again they say life is very friendly here and how they get on very well with all the classes and nobody really makes too much of a nuisance of themselves.

"Well, having a friendly sort of atmosphere like that really helps an awful lot because although I may have called you slugs, sluglings, sluggles or sluglets it hasn't really been necessary for me to point a quivering finger and say 'Go and get the cane!' - not that we do that here. At the last school I was at we had a cane and a book and you only had to mention it once and there was silence from the whole classroom that could be heard across three blocks. Then somebody got the cane and the whole school subsided.

"Well there you are 2H, very many thanks. I'm very grateful to you and I'm happy to have taught you. I'll be keeping a weather eye open for you - that's a saying you don't hear very often, it's a bit nautical isn't it? - and you'll be able to plot my movements by the prehistoric MG as I don't expect I shall be getting anything else.

"And now we have the terrible problem of what to do over the summer holidays! Happy days! Come the 7th of September I'm going to go off on another holiday to Scotland and I'll probably send you a postcard saying 'It's lovely here - wish you were with us' or something.

"What you're going to see later today is an old MG with a chair strapped to the roof because this happens to be my chair not a school one you see!

"Well there we are. If I don't see you again 'Good luck!'"

*Mark Collins*

## Summer reunion 2009

Sunday 14th. June 2009 - Weald & Downland Museum, Singleton, West Sussex.

Adults £8.95

Over 60 £7.95

Students & Children 5 to 15 £4.70

Children Under 5 Free.

Meet there at 11 a.m. - for those who wish, on to The Partridge Inn, Singleton for lunch (approx. 2 p.m.). Alternatively bring a picnic lunch.

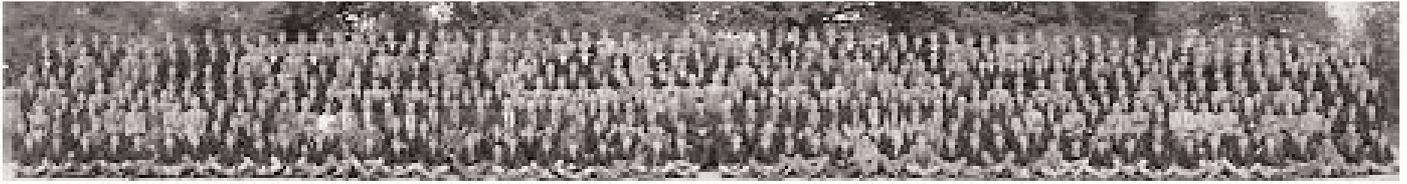
Cheques (payable to Old Collyerians' Association) to Clive Barham, 18 Hill Mead, Horsham RH12 2PU.

If more information required, please look on line at [www.wealddown.co.uk](http://www.wealddown.co.uk)

The picture shows one of the buildings on display at the museum, the medieval shops from Horsham



# Collyer's in 1956



Collyer's was very different in the 1950s when I was a pupil there. The biggest difference, which became apparent when I first revisited in 1998, was the sheer size. As a boys-only grammar school, with competitive entry through the 11-plus examination taken at primary school during the sixth year, there were only about 500 pupils (compared with 1400 now), with some 90 pupils entering the first form in three classes each of 30 students, who were very quickly 'streamed' by ability in the main subjects. And there you remained until you took O-level examinations at the end of your fifth year. After that, fewer than half of the pupils remained to continue studies in the lower, and finally upper, sixth forms, to take A-level exams. Typically fewer than half of the sixth form leavers went on to study at university, or one of the six colleges of advanced technology that had been established for students wishing to follow a career (mainly in engineering), where a course split between formal study and work placement was followed. This meant that from a group of roughly 100 boys joining Collyer's, in a good year, fewer than 30 would go on to university with no more than six going to Oxbridge.

In the 50s there were fewer than 20 subjects taught at Collyer's to both O- and A-level, compared with over 100 today. Woodwork was the only technical subject taught, and there were no vocational courses. The other significant change is the quality of the facilities and accommodation that is now available. In the 1950s, apart from the main school building, which is now mainly administration, with a few classrooms remaining around the hall and in the two-storey section behind, the only other custom built unit was the science block, to the left by the Richmond Road entrance. To the east of this was a Rugby Fives court and then a dilapidated corrugated iron sports changing room, which accommodated the whole school on cross country day. The remaining classrooms were pre-fabricated buildings either of concrete or timber construction.

Each morning at 9am prompt, all of the students and staff whom you see in the picture from 1956 would squeeze into the hall for morning assembly before teaching started at 9.15. At that time the classrooms opened directly

onto the hall so it was a little larger than now, but it was still a tight squeeze. As well as assembly, the hall was used for PE, boxing, until it was decided that a parquet floor is not the best surface on which to conduct the sport, school drama productions and annual dances organised by the sixth form pupils.

I have fond memories of arranging for one of the local dance bands, which performed regularly at the village hall dances around Horsham on Saturday nights, and organising snacks and soft drinks for the occasion.

Sport was a regular activity for all pupils, and not just those undertaking a course in related subjects, and much of the sports field area that was available then has been taken up by college buildings and a car park. I only remember one pupil with a car, an old (even for those days) open Austin Seven, from which he removed the steering wheel as an anti theft precaution. More than half of the pupils were members of the school Combined Cadet Force (army, navy and air force), which met on Fridays, had their own 0.22 calibre rifle range and had an annual field day, when they went on manoeuvres and attended a two week summer camp on at a working military facility, in my case an RAF airfield. I was lucky enough to be captain of the school shooting eight and competed in regular postal competitions and at the national range at Bisley.

Everyone wore school uniform comprising grey trousers (shorts in lower school) blue blazers with the school crest on the pocket, white shirt and tie and a school cap. The cap for the school prefects had a gold tassel on it, and woe betide any pupil who was caught improperly dressed, without a cap or with a tie at half mast, a far cry from most students at schools where uniform is still worn today.

Collyer's has a long tradition for achieving extremely high academic standards and the Old Collyerians Association is proud to be associated with the College of Richard Collyer that still, without having the luxury of being able to select the brightest pupils from the area, still achieves the highest possible standards at all levels. 2008 saw the College achieve its best ever results: congratulations from us all.

*Anthony Barnard*

## Guild of Mercers' Scholars

Simon Hills, Guildmaster, has arranged several social events for 2009 which include a visit to St Paul's Triforium, the Colonel's Review at Horseguards Parade, a visit to Titsey Place and Gardens, a visit to the Shuttleworth Collection, and finally the 2009 Installation dinner on 28th October at Farmers and Fletchers' Hall.

Anyone interested in joining the guild can obtain details from the guild's Collyerian court assistant, Anthony Barnard, at 1 Walnut Close, Yalding, Maidstone, Kent ME18 6DH.

*Lawrence Windwood*

# M e m b e r s h i p

**Due to data protection rules,  
names and contact details of  
members are included only in the full  
version of this newsletter, available to  
paid-up members of the OCA**

# College success on and off the field

After clocking up the best ever examination results in 2008 the college is looking forward to another record breaking year in 2009. However, in 2009 the high level of achievement has spilled over onto the sports field.

The Spring term provided an emotional rollercoaster for a number of teams and student athletes. Success, adulation, elation, heartache and disappointment have all been felt during the term.

The college was again due to have a solid representation at the British Colleges National Finals at Loughborough over the Easter Holidays. Team members pulling on the South East women's Rugby shirt included Rebecca Harrison, Maddie Chapman and Felicity Howes-Yarlett, to take on the other eight regions across the country, while Cali Stanton and Ben Trout were representing the South East swimming, capping an incredibly successful year for the Collyer's swimmers. Callum Hillicks, Matt Wooldridge, Ben Trout and Jonathan Blythe brought back the England schools' medley relay gold and freestyle relay silver at the England championships. The highly talented quartet had won a national title whilst at Tanbridge House School, and continued their reign over the relay arena under the Collyer's banner, beating esteemed sports schools such as Milfield School. The college is very proud of this national title and credit goes to the boys in what is a fantastic achievement.

The football squad had an eventful but on the whole successful Spring term. The first XI looked to be down and out for the year early on in the term, having crashed out late on in the Sussex cup quarter final away to Varndean and nine points off the top of the league. However, a string of highly professional and classy performances saw them storm up the table to win the first XI West league for the second year in a row. They were due to face Hailsham in the semi-final of the league play-offs, described as the make or break game of the season. The team was boosted by the development of George Magnus, Tom Hoole, Pat O'Sullivan and Adam Hutchings who all made first team appearances for Horsham Town FC. The 2A XI and 2B XI both overachieved, to the delight of the management. The 2As lost valiantly in the semi-final of the Sussex cup and the 2B XI showed great grit to pick up second place in their league. This led to a play-off quarter final clash against Imberhorne, which they narrowly lost, but the game capped off a great year for the second year team who had a great camaraderie. The ever present Batchelor twins, joker of the pack Aiden Chase, goal machine Olly Huddleston and captain Josh Edes had a big part to play in their season and the college would like to thank them for their efforts.

The basketball team produced more performances of note throughout the term, enough to sneak into the Sussex league play-offs. There they met the formidable opponents of Bhasvic, who ran out

worthy winners. However, the team should feel that reaching the play-offs is enough indication that the season was a successful one. They will now be looking to next year to build on their development.

The netball team have endeavoured throughout the year and the A team finished the season with a very respectable performance in the Burgess Hill tournament, where the girls did the college proud. A great double win for the A and B team against Sussex Downs Lewes was the highlight of the term in a fantastic performance by both teams. The B team showed great character all year and will be looking forward to building for next year.

The Rugby team had the largest peaks and troughs of all the teams this year, with inconsistent performances throughout. Despite disappointing losses to Chichester High in the league and Sussex cup, the team has played out of their skins on a number of occasions, toppling Yeovil away in the British Colleges cup, Sussex Downs Lewes in the league and the quite outstandingly epic victory against a highly rated Worthing side. When 20-3 down, a stern talking to from coach Hugh Packman saw the team rise from the ashes to produce a devastating second half display to win the game 27-25. The desire, determination and endeavour the boys showed was of huge credit to them and gave the college a very satisfying win.

The hockey team had a hugely positive season as the team continued to look as strong as it has ever done throughout this term. Some dominating performances were coupled with a few disappointing ones, however, the signs are there for a great year ahead. A highly talented and enthusiastic set of first year students will ensure there is a great base to move onwards and upwards. Credit goes to Steve Grout who captained the side, ably aided by Emily Jones, Ros Keefe and Josh Humphries.

Through new government funding via the Youth Sports Trust, the college increased its sporting provision and enrichment activities by putting on trampolining (Monday) and yoga (Tuesday) classes, as the college hopes to increase sporting participation across a wider range of students. There is a hope that more students will take the opportunity to try something different and get more active. The sports department is looking into a fun athletics programme, including an 'old school' sports day event and sport hall athletics for the enrichment of the students. The gym again had significantly higher numbers, which has been aided by the two fitness instructor apprentices, Craig Tarrant and Michael Nash, who have greatly improved the running of the gym.

The Summer term is, unfortunately, limited for sports by the exams. However, the college is partaking in a number of cricket, tennis and rounders fixtures.

(Taken from the college *Contact* newsletter by Anthony Barnard)