



Spring 2016

President's welcome words

Sitting in the waiting room, on my bi-annual visit to the dentist, I usually like to browse through the magazines, which are usually the up market variety, e.g. *Tatler*, *Country Life*, *The Lady* etc. But on my most recent visit, these were no longer available, so I was left with outdated copies of *Hello* and *OK* magazines, purported to represent the trials and tribulations of what is euphemistically known as the "A list".

However, after a short while I quickly came to the conclusion that most photographs and articles covered birds, brides, babies and BAFTAs, not to mention the Beckhams, so the term 'B list' would seem far more appropriate.

Alongside I saw a new addition to the literature: a shelf full of books which had been left by fellow patients, and which could be purchased by giving a voluntary donation to the local hospice. Naturally there was quite an assortment of reading material but I selected one book written by a 91 year old in 2013 on the many social and economic changes throughout his lifetime.

The book, with the fascinating title of *Harry's Last Stand*, was described by the publisher as "a lyrical, searing modern invective that shows what the past can teach us, how the future is ours for the taking". Harry, or to give him his full name Harry Leslie Smith, was born into poverty in Barnsley, Yorkshire, his early

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years being spent through the Great Depression followed by the Second World War.

My initial reaction was "not another grumpy old man bemoaning his fate", but realising that much of this era was during my own lifetime, I decided to make a donation, had the drilling and the filling, then left clutching my new purchase.

The book? Well, I was not disappointed. Albeit at times political, it provided an interesting read covering many of the years through which I had lived, brought back many memories and was at times very thought provoking.

The section on education, or the lack of it available prior to WW2, covered how Harry educated himself without any formal training, and without the advantage of the successive Governments in the 1950s who introduced evening classes and adult education, along with the correspondence courses which were then becoming available in the private sector.

This proved not only thought provoking, but brought back memories and made me question my own schooling; who actually taught me the "Three Rs", the basis of all learning. Undoubtedly this came from my formative years at Sarah Robinson Infant and Junior school in Crawley. It was during those war years, when teachers, all female, coped with the constant threat of the Air Raid Warning Siren, when lessons were interrupted but continued with classes crouched under desks until the 'All Clear' Siren sounded, whilst preparing us for the notorious, long gone, 11-plus exam. Then future education and employment rested entirely on how you performed on the day: not a very satisfactory way to decide one's future.

Having passed, the natural step forward was Collyer's Grammar School in Horsham, which was regarded as one of high standing in terms of achievements.

We all have our own memories of our time at Collyer's, whether a high- or under-achiever, lessons and values learned there remain with us forever.

Perhaps my generation were fortunate: jobs were aplenty, CVs had not been required, the mere fact that you could mention Collyer's Grammar School in your application letter was enough to ensure that you were at least were called for an interview, even if not given the position. Such was the esteem in which the School was held; not only by local employers but by the community at large. I am pleased that this reputation has been carried forward over successive generations, and continues to this day.

Now, I find myself being proud and honoured to be appointed as President of the OCA for the current year. So far, I have been fortunate to represent the Association on two occasions: at the Carol Service and Prizegiving functions. I can only admire the exceptionally talented students who are carrying on the tradition of Collyer's education at the present College.

Finally it would be remiss of me if I failed to mention my predecessor Stewart Mackman for his Presidential year, and all who have gone before him, together with all the members of the Committee, who ensure that the OCA continues to flourish.

HONOR DEO.

Eric Austin

Jottings

The HIVE

Apologies for the slip of the keyboard finger in the Autumn 2015 'Jottings' that suggested the upcoming Winter Reunion Dinner marked the 50th anniversary of the first 'Hive'. It did, of course, celebrate the 60th anniversary, as correctly noted elsewhere. A number of readers noted this, including Iain Campbell, who wrote:

"I noticed in the Jottings, unusual for me to glance at anything other than the obituaries, that 'this issue marks the 50th anniversary of the first Hive'. Before celebrating this momentous occasion at the

winter reunion, please check the figures with a few other busy bees of this period. My recall, which is total, is that I was in the second world record breaking Hive in 1956/57, which makes 2015 my 59th anniversary and the 50th 2006.

"Well, not exactly, but whatever; my maths was, to say the least, lightweight, but Jo Rees said 'write down anything - you may get a mark,' and I did. 46%; pass mark 45%."

Iain Campbell; (Castra Tillum) according to 'Gumby' Stockford."

But another note on the subject came from Ted Frith:

"Please hold your horses about celebrating the 50th (or 60th) birthday of the Hive.

"I was one of those whose education was affected by the War. I had won a scholarship to Sutton County School in 1938. My schooling was mucked up in 1940 when my parents left Cheam, where we lived, and moved into furnished property in Billingshurst. For a year I attended the local evacuee school in Billingshurst but in late 1941 we took an unfurnished cottage in Coneyhurst. In January 1942 my mother got me into Collyer's, where I stayed until National Service in 1948.

For my first two terms in 1942 I was in Hive B form, before going up to the fourth in September of that year. I was put into Hive B because I had no Latin. These were the days of 'Twitch' Hart, who I can still remember telling a boy called Moss that he was going backwards in evolution!

"I have to confess that I do not remember the Hive forms continuing but I can assure you that I was in Hive B. I never found out why it was so called, nor do I recall a Hive A form."

If anybody else has any recollection of this even earlier 'Hive' and what it was all about, we would love to hear from you.

Vale, former Collyerians: We were very sorry to hear from Amanda Dyson, daughter of Michael Cook, that Michael passed away on 17 January at his home in Bath, at the age of 82. Michael had been a regular attender at OCA winter reunion dinners in recent years.

We also noted the passing of two other former Collyerians of note, though neither was, as far as we know, an OCA member. Although totally unconnected, both became well known through popular television, and both had links with the world of puppetry.

Nigel Buxton, who died earlier this year aged 91, was born in Cowfold, where his father worked on a country estate, and attended Collyer's Grammar School in Horsham. He was a Normandy veteran, who in later life became travel editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, as well as a wine writer of note and author of several travel books. But according to his Telegraph obituary, he became most famous as 'BaadDad', a straight laced septuagenarian character commenting on contemporary culture in a TV show, the *Adam and Joe Show*, which was hosted on Channel 4 by his son Adam.

This anarchic low-budget comedy series, which won a devoted following with quirkily humorous spoofs performed by puppets, such as *Toytanic* and *Toytrainspotting* was devised in 1996 by Adam

Buxton with his co-host, school friend, Joe Cornish. Buxton Senior was cast in the show at the suggestion of Louis Theroux, another old school friend of Adam and Joe. As a result of what the obituary called his "blimpish imperiousness", Buxton attained a sort of cult status, and is quoted as saying: "Young people would recognise me in Sainsbury's, which was very nice."

After Collyer's, Buxton attended the Imperial Service College, Windsor, where he won prizes for English. He volunteered for military service and was commissioned in the Royal Artillery in 1943, seeing active service in Normandy. After demobilisation, Buxton worked as a copywriter in the publicity department of Shell, then went up to Worcester College, Oxford, graduating in Modern History in 1954.

After spending six months in South Africa tutoring the son of diamond magnate Harry Oppenheimer, Buxton returned to copywriting while trying, but failing, to write a novel. In 1961, on the strength of having some travel articles published in the *Spectator* and the *Tatler*, he landed a travel writing job at the newly founded *Sunday Telegraph*.

Colleagues recalled him as an elegant but aloof figure whose fastidious views on the English language were no doubt grounded in his Collyer's education. When one contributor wrote the words, "you catch the bus..." Buxton is said to have reprimanded him: "Don't tell the readers what they do or don't do; it has to be 'one catches the bus'."

Actor Peter Baldwin, who died of cancer aged 82, was born in Chidham, West Sussex, to two teachers. He and his brother came to Horsham during WW2 to be looked after by their grandmother, another teacher, and attended Collyer's Grammar School.

Baldwin was best known for the role of "dopey fusspot" Derek Wilton in *Coronation Street*, which he played for 21 years. Baldwin and equally dithery screen wife Mavis (Thelma Barlow) formed a much-loved soap opera partnership.

He became a cast regular soon after his real wife, *Play School* presenter Sarah Long, died of ovarian cancer. Becoming a leading figure in the soap and enjoying a fictional marriage helped him forget the sorrow in his private life. The role ended in 1997 when 'Derek' suffered a heart attack, in a cull of five characters by a new producer.

As well as his acting career, Baldwin and his brother became experts in the field of 19th century puppets and toy theatres, eventually becoming owners of Pollock's Toy Museum in London.

2015 Winter Reunion: on Reflection

Thinking in advance about the Winter 2015 OCA Dinner, a verse of a song came vividly to mind:

*When to the scenes of our boyhood returning
Backward our footsteps shall wander alone
Bright be our thoughts and strong be our
yearning*

As we remember the days that are gone.

This was sung, in my time at Collyer's, at the final assembly of each school year, presumably especially for that year's leavers.

Staying for the event at a budget hotel near the station, Peter Leedham and I walked down to Collyer's (on the 'wrong' side of Hurst Road) to attend the AGM held in what had been the school hall. Though it was greatly changed, we were easily able to identify the classrooms along its side - still haunted, I imagined, by the ghosts of 'Fred' Bennett, 'Gedge' Hunt and 'Oakie' O'Connor. The business was conducted, and concluded, at a leisurely but efficient pace, allowing ample time for Peter and I to collect our wives and return for the dinner.

Returning, the hall had become the bar, and we were clearly not alone in the scenes of our boyhood - half-remembered faces and voices soon became the well-remembered personalities of old friends.

This reminded me forcefully of what I had missed for 54 of the 56 years since I left Collyer's. Six years ago a number of us had returned to mark the 50th anniversary of leaving school, this time, with careful advance planning by Peter (better known to me as Ted) Ticehurst and Derek Sturt, we were there to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the first Hive, established to take our 'O' levels in four years instead of five.

I suppose that Collyer's Grammar School, as it then was, could have been thought of as an elitist institution in itself, but I was a little concerned that an apparent celebration (or even recognition) now of further selectivity might be thought of as less than politically correct - but the warmth of our reception belied this.

In addition to the aforementioned Peter T, Derek, Peter L. and myself, Roy Richardson, and his distinctively wry sense of humour, completed the



Five of the 1955 Hive intake: Peter Ticehurst, Derek Sturt, Peter Leedham, Tim Cattell and Roy Richardson - picture by Mark Collins

1955 Hive contingent, making five of the original 16 members: had other commitments not intervened we would also have been able to welcome Lawrence 'Lofty' Smith, Professor Chris Pethick, Raymond Trickey - two of whom were prevented by musical commitments associated with the beginning of Advent.

As the Dinner will fall on the same weekend next year, I understand that the President may discuss with the Archbishop a minor adjustment of the timing of the church calendar - probably with as good prospects of success as David Cameron's negotiations with the EU. It is pleasing, and perhaps rather reassuring, that only one of the original Hive is probably deceased, and really remarkable that our then Form Master, Vernon 'Ger' Davis, is still alive, and in his later nineties. Colin Stockford, known to us then as 'Gumby' {one of Old Possum's Practical Cats} the most senior OC present, had taught Latin to most of the Hive during the Second Form.

The dinner was excellent, and very good value for money, eased along for former Hive members by the kind gift of wine from Tony Barnard (for me, this went a long way towards making up for my battering at Tony's hands in the House Boxing Competition.) The President's toasts revealed a remarkable number of past misdemeanours, especially among the older OCs present. The speeches were to the point, and the incoming

President's comments prompted much nostalgia among the Crawley Mob's representatives.

Returning to the bar, and to large and competitively priced glasses of port, your correspondent and others resolved to themselves to return more frequently in future, fate permitting.

Pausing on the way out to locate the relevant Honours Boards, reflecting some of the more legitimate achievements of the 1955-6 Hive, we left, reluctantly, to walk back to our hotel, on the correct side of Hurst Road this time, bright thoughts enjoyed and strong yearnings satisfied.

Tim Cattell

2015 Reunion Dinner

In a break with tradition last year's Annual Reunion Dinner moved to the last Saturday of November and despite, or indeed perhaps because, of this, enjoyed a record attendance with 93 members and guests sitting down to enjoy a convivial evening and excellent meal.

For many of our regular attendees - particularly those who no longer live locally - the event is something of an annual pilgrimage and a chance to revisit old haunts and, of course, return to a place that figured so prominently in our formative years. Others use the dinner as the ideal opportunity to meet up, every few years, with their contemporaries and we were pleased to welcome members of 'The Hive' - a group from the 1950s who were destined to take their O-levels a year early. Indeed one of the charms of the evening is the mix of faces, old and new, with former pupils of the old school rubbing shoulders with those who attended the college and past and present members of the teaching staff. For those like me who joined Collyer's in the 1970s it was a particular pleasure to meet up again with John Hamer - for a number of us there on the night he was not only a respected history teacher but also form master for our first year in 1JH. John is still working in education and travelling the world to offer advice and guidance from his home in Warnham.

During the evening Stewart Mackman handed over the chain of office to incoming president Eric Austin (1946 - 1952) and one of our guests Tony Paice, Master of the Guild of Mercers' Scholars, proposed the toast to Collyer's, drawing many parallels between the OCA and his own alumni association the 'Old Symondians', adding wistfully that they would be pleased to have a fraction of



Incoming President Eric Austin (right) is welcomed by his predecessor Stewart Mackman (picture by Mark Collins)

the support we get. (We are indeed fortunate to have a relatively strong membership but must not rest upon our laurels - so please do encourage any OCs you know who are not members to join us.)

Current students Alannah Marchewka and Nori Hung, members of the College Council, gave us an update on what was happening at the college and then all too soon it was time to say our farewells or head back to the bar for some late night conversation.

Once again our raffle was well-supported and raised a good sum for the OCA-sponsored prizes which support current students. Our thanks to all those who donated raffle prizes and purchased tickets on the night - and let's see if we can make it 100 attendees in 2016!

Mark Collins

Newsletters by Email

Don't forget you can receive the newsletter promptly and in full colour direct to your computer via email. If you would like to sign up for this service please contact the Membership Secretary. If you already get the newsletter this way and change your email address then please let us know.

Summer Reunion 2016

The choice of venue for our summer reunions is customarily made by the current Hon President, so this year it has fallen to Eric Austin to make the decision. He has suggested that we visit **Brooklands Museum**, Brooklands Road, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0QN.

Eric has also asked that we make the date a little later in the year so this has been set for **Sunday 21 August**, 2016. I have never been there but no doubt some of you will have been - it seems like an interesting place.

There's a lot to do there with three trails to follow: Motoring Village; Test Hill and the Track; and Airfield and Aviation, with cars, motorcycles, bicycles and aircraft on display. There is also the London Bus Museum, plus a gift shop and café. In addition, Mercedes Benz World is on the same site, adjacent to the museum, and can be visited free of charge. There should be plenty to keep us occupied until the museum closes at



5pm (Mercedes Benz World remains open for another hour). If you need more information you'll find this at www.brooklandsmuseum.com

The entry costs are Adults £11; Seniors and Students £10; Children (5-16 years) £6. Children under five go free.

If you would like to join us I suggest that we meet up in the car park at 1100am, so if you feel you would enjoy a pleasant day out please let me know just as soon as possible, either by e-mail (sturt99@hotmail.com) or telephone me on 01403 261756.

As the entry costs are reasonable the OCA will make a booking in advance and ask that you pay

on the day (cheques made out to the Old Collyerians' Association or cash) as this seems the easiest way of dealing with this. You can, of course, pay earlier if you wish.

So don't forget the date, Sunday 21 August, and I wait to hear from you.

Derek Sturt

Collyer's in Literature

At the OCA Dinner in November Nick Sexton gave a plug for his new book which was about to be published. The book, entitled *The Way to School* is on sale at Horsham Museum, M&J News in East Street, Horsham, and direct from the author, tel: 01403 265710. Cost is £8 per copy, plus £2.50 for postage.

The subject is the development of primary education in Horsham over three centuries, and it includes what was taught, discipline, pictures and photographs of past pupils, teachers and their memories. Many of the school buildings no longer exist. Many contributors were former Collyer's pupils - we understand a certain young James Pullen is featured. Nick adds that he hopes people will find the book interesting and it will bring back school memories of their education in their younger school days.

Nick Weller, our archivist, writes: I've had an email from Gary Cooper (GT Cooper). Some of you will know that he has written two excellent books about the men commemorated on the Horsham war memorial - his second book, about the Second World War, came out just before Christmas 2015. We have copies of both books in the OCA archives. Gary is now working on a third book, this one concentrating on Collyer's pupils and staff who were killed in both world wars. Obviously there will be some overlap with the previous books, but a number of pupils who came from the outlying villages or from further afield as boarders won't be on the Horsham war memorial, so would have been outside the scope of the first two books.

Gary is currently working on Collyer's names who served in WWI and plans to move onto WW2 later

this year. Nick has promised Gary assistance from the OCA archives, which will relate mainly to WW2. If you have any information relevant to this book, please contact Gary at coopg709@aol.com or 01403 241620. If writing by email, please begin the subject line with 'Collyer's'.

Not exactly about Collyer's, but former Principal David Arnold has been in touch to tell us about his latest book, *In the Context of Eternity*, or "a short history of the Christian Church."

David was Principal of Collyer's from 1983 until 1999 and still lives in Horsham. It is his first publication since *Britain, Europe and the World, 1871-1971*. The new book is 280 pages long and deliberately pays equal attention to early centuries and more recent times.

It was described by the editorial director of a leading publishing house as "a lively and readable one-volume history of Christianity, challenging the view that ancient history came to an end in the fifth century, and that nothing of significance then happened until the Renaissance".

A Cambridge Professor of History described it as "truly remarkable and exceptionally clearly and attractively written".

A senior Roman Catholic priest and canon lawyer said it was a delight and he wished he had had a copy when he was a young seminarian, while a Lutheran Professor of Theology wrote to say that he intends using it in his lectures to help explain how the Christian faith developed.

It is available for £10 from Waterstones and from Amazon.

2016 Winter Reunion: Sat 26th November

In 2015 we changed the date of the annual Winter Reunion from the third to the fourth Saturday in November, and this resulted in our best attendance in many years with 93 OCs, partners and friends attending. We have decided to continue in like vein for 2016 so this is advance notice that the Winter Reunion will be at the College on the above date.

As usual the Dinner will be in the Duckering Hall meeting at 6.30pm for a 7.00pm start, with the bar in the Memorial Hall being open from 5.30pm to give those attending a chance to have a good natter prior to the meal. The bar also remains open after the meal.

Those of you who are regular attendees will know that we do all we can to make the event as entertaining and enjoyable as possible and, perhaps, a little different from other dinners of this type. The food is always excellent and the company is pretty good too and there will be an opportunity to make some new friends as well as meeting up with old ones.

The AGM is held on the same day, in the Memorial Hall, at 4.00pm for those who can spare the time - it is usually quite a short affair taking no more than an hour.

Full details (menu, price etc.) will be included in the Autumn 2016

Newsletter and put on the website as soon as known (www.oldcollyerians.org.uk).

So, please put the date in your diaries, on calendars and in any electronic aid you may have. And, ***please don't forget***. It would be really special if we could exceed 100 in number this year.

Derek Sturt



President-elect for 2016/2017 Dave Picknell has decided that as the 2016 Winter Reunion will mark the 50th anniversary of his leaving date, he would like to see as many of his contemporaries as possible at the event. A number, over the last couple of very enjoyable reunions, have already formed a bit of a 'gang' as seen in this picture from the 2015 dinner. They are, left to right: Paul Herington, Leigh Herington, Martin Burgess, Terry Sweeney, DP, Diane Burgess, Barbara Picknell, plus Paul Siklos who took the picture. Could you, if you were one of the 1966 leavers or anybody else who knew Dave, join the gang in 2016?'

The 'Remove'

The mention in the last issue of 'The Remove' - apparently conceived as the opposite to 'The Hive' (which was the small 'elite' group of fast-track Collyer's' students) - has, not surprisingly, drawn some correspondence from Old Collyerians.

Our minds turned, at the time, to the Greyfriars stories by Frank Richards, featuring Bunter, the 'Fat Owl of the Remove'. In that case, the term seemed to refer to almost a 'dumping ground' for duffers, who might have held back the brighter pupils, but whose parents were willing to pay the public school fees anyway. Surely, we thought, Collyer's would never countenance Bunter types.

It seems the Collyerian reality was rather different. After all, an institution that awarded merit marks for transgressions already had a track record in misleading names?

Chris Weall (1966-1973) wrote: The Remove was alive and well in 1971. It was there for us who did not pass enough 'O' levels first time round to get into the sixth form. It only operated if there were people such as me who had blown most of their 'O' levels. I ended up there as a result of playing far too much football, cricket, basketball as well as being in the CCF.

It was presided over by Ted Palmer in the drawing office next to the workshops. I know that there were at least three of us that year, one of whom, Paul Muggeridge, was best man at my wedding but cannot recall whether there were any more of us.

I retook a number of subjects that year as well as starting Geography 'A' level and Art 'O' level. I remember a conversation with Derek Slynn at the

time saying I wasn't up to higher education - I was subsequently able to prove him wrong.

On leaving in 1973 with a few further 'O' levels I joined Redland Bricks working for Brian Johnson, an Old Collyerian who had contacted George Henderson looking for a trainee manager. After a year doing many of the jobs in the brickworks, Redlands sent me to North Staffordshire Polytechnic for a three-year sandwich course. As part of my course I ended up doing degree level inorganic chemistry, having spectacularly failed 'O' level! Whilst there I met my future wife Sue. We married in 1978 and set up home in Southwater.

In 1984 having left Redlands we moved to Dorset which my father regarded as the "graveyard of all ambition" as it was - and is - such a great place to live. 31 years later we are still in the same house, seen our two cricket mad sportaholic sons leave home and escape to London. I was fortunate enough to be able to retire last year having spent my whole career either manufacturing or selling building materials.

The Remove proved that Collyer's was not all about pushing people to Oxbridge and was ideal for people such as me, who otherwise would have ended up leaving school when, I for one, were not ready to do so.

Richard Richards was one of the first to experience the Remove. He writes: "I was highly amused by the reference to the Remove. I can say I was delighted to be in the first group of boys to be placed in the Remove after messing up my O levels first time around." He has contributed the article below:

From Bottom to Top or 'The Remove Fights Back'

Surely so! There was a superb form set up in September 1966 called the Remove. The Jottings refer to it inaccurately as "a 'bottom' form" although there was no doubt that the first incumbents - about 12 young adults - probably had very fine looking posteriors (enough said).

Immediately prior to 1966, the practice was that those fifth form boys, who had disappointing results at O level and had under-achieved by their

own standards, were allowed to remain one more year at Collyer's and were generally placed in 5B. The newly formed Remove not only included those boys but also in its first year at least two who arrived from elsewhere.

I have no idea what management thinking was behind setting up a separate form in 1966, but as one of the first occupants I was very pleased to be in the Remove and it worked extremely well for me.

Through sheer hard work and dogged determination I managed to get four grade 7 results at 'O' level in the summer of 1966, which was a failure by the smallest margin; I passed three others and got a grade 9 in General Science, the latter being predictable. I had wanted to go into the sixth form to study languages - French and Spanish, two of my three passes - but with that set of results it was not an option, so I was allowed a second bite of the cherry.

The form room for the first Remove was the Technical Drawing room and our form master was 'Ted' Palmer. I have not forgotten his talk to the Remove on our first day back in September. Apart from pointing out we had been given a chance to put things right, he also offered to treat us like responsible young men, as sixth formers would be treated, provided we, in return, acted responsibly like young adults. In particular we were allowed to use the TD room before school and during breaks and to eat packed lunches there, on condition that we behaved responsibly whilst using the room!

We were quite a diverse group of lads in the Remove, but everyone accepted the challenge and Ted's trust in the small group of us was vindicated. Ted turned out to be an excellent form master for the Remove in many ways as he not only gave us encouragement to better ourselves when necessary, but left us to get on with it as well.

Speaking personally, it was the year in which I started to really enjoy my time at Collyer's. I don't recall any put-downs for Remove members from any of the incoming fifth form group, who turned out to be a great bunch of people. I made amends and at the end of the year I had seven 'O' level passes, including higher grades at French and Spanish, and although I failed General Science I did manage to pull the grade up to 7, a small achievement in itself! I entered the sixth form in September 1967 and had two more good years at Collyer's. During my last years I was made a House Prefect for St Leonard's and scored for both the second and first cricket XIs. I even got to bat twice for the second XI, although the less said the better as I was not very good at playing cricket. By 1969 my time at Collyer's had set me up well for the future.

As for the rest of the Remove, I believe only one other member stayed on for the sixth form, but I don't recall anyone from the previous year's fifth form who did not succeed in bettering their 'O' level results. I wish I could remember all the names of the young men who were in the first Remove, but those I can recall are Lawrence (Butch) Ash, John Elias, Craig Gershater (from the US), Alan Griffin, Nigel Parker and Ian Smith. Can anyone else help with the missing five or so names?

Richard J Richards

Guild of Mercers' Scholars

The Guild of Mercers' Scholars was established in 1947 as the Civic Guild of Old Mercers by ex-pupils of Mercers' School. The Guild had the stated aim of encouraging former pupils of the School to become Freeman of the City of London, and Liverymen, and to select, if possible, a Livery Company appropriate to their own trade or profession. The Guild is run along the same lines as a Livery Company.

When the Mercers' School closed in 1959, the source of new members was restricted and the Guild was in danger of decline, so it was decided to extend membership to alumni from other schools in the Mercers' Cluster. In 1971 members of the OCA were

invited to join, then in 1985 it was agreed that ladies could also join, and Collyer's provided the first female apprentice. Since then membership has been extended to husbands, wives and relatives of alumni. In 1987 the Guild had 125 members including 22 from Collyer's and 15 relatives of members. Even with membership

being offered to an expanding number of schools and colleges, in 1988 the Guild decided to appoint Court Assistants, to each member establishment, who were responsible for recruitment of new members. Today membership is open to pupils, relatives and associates of the following schools; Abingdon, Dauntseys', Mercers', St Paul's Boys, St Paul's Girls, and Thomas Telford; to Walsall



Academy and the Colleges of Richard Collyer and Peter Symonds.

The Guild provides opportunities for apprentices to learn about the City and its Livery Companies and, at the age of 21, to become Freemen of the City of London and Guildsmen. Outside of the Apprenticeship scheme, former pupils and associates, from the above schools, colleges and academies, are also encouraged to become Freemen and Liverymen, and to select, if possible, a Livery Company appropriate to their own trade or profession.

It was in 2006 that the Court, responsible for the day-to-day running of the Guild, with the blessing of the Mercers' Company, changed the name to the Guild of Mercers' Scholars, thus more widely reflecting the membership of the Guild in the 21st century.

The Guild, which is managed by Court, and is structured in a similar way to the livery companies, is headed by the Master who is installed for a one year term of office, at the annual dinner held in October each year at one of the Livery Company Halls in the City of London. The dinner is a very grand affair and well worth attending.

The Master, aided by the Social Assistant, is responsible for selecting and arranging a number

of social events throughout the year, which often provide access to places of interest that are not open to the general public. Recent visits have included: attendance at the 'Ceremony of the Keys' at the Tower of London; Windsor Castle; 41/42 Cloth Fair (built between 1597 and 1614 - this is the only house in the City of London to have survived the Great Fire of London in 1666); the church of St Bartholomew the Great (which has been used in many films including *Four Weddings and a Funeral*); and the Shoreditch Bell Foundry, to name just a few.

As a School Court Assistant I provide the liaison link between the College and the Guild, being responsible for processing membership applications for both Apprentices and Guildsmen. Each year well over 3,000 sixth form pupils at the member establishments are eligible to become apprentices and tens of thousands of alumni are eligible to become Guildsmen, so competition for places is fierce. In recent years, in order to lower the age profile of the Guild, recruitment of apprentices has been made a priority, but there is still the room for alumni to become Guildsmen. Anyone wishing to join should, in the first instance, contact me at: akbwalnutclose@btinternet.com.

Anthony Barnard

Membership

**Due to data protection considerations,
membership changes etc
are available only to members of the Association**