

HIGH TEA - Friday 14th July 2017

High tea was held in the Main Hall at Preston Manor School on Friday, 14th July 2017. Thirty-two former alumni showed up for the occasion, some of whom had not been back to the school since leaving fifty years ago. In addition to being served some fine tea, sandwiches and cakes, some alumni were given tours of a school that continues to evolve and change. Several emails have been received since stating how much they enjoyed the event. We had hoped for higher numbers and there was a real absence of alumni who studied here in the 1970s and 1980s. Hopefully we will see them and all other alumni at the 80th Anniversary celebrations which will take place in the summer of 2018.





Barbara Alden, left in 1959

Re: the 1954 Form 2F

I wrote in last year's summer Newsletter about the background to the establishing of our F-Form in September 1954, also mentioning that a few of us were hoping to re-connect with other old(!) classmates to celebrate our respective 75th birthdays this academic year.

We did manage to locate some other past contemporaries, not all of whom were able this time to make the reunion lunch we then held earlier this year, at The Preston Pub on Friday April 21st. We really enjoyed meeting up with those who could come, learning something of the varied paths our lives have taken. So we have planned another lunch this autumn, for Friday October 27th.

I contacted the school and it may be possible also to arrange a tour round the premises later that afternoon, after the school day ends.

Please, any former 1954 2F's do get in touch & let us know if you can join us in October.

Contact David Horwill who will collate names: dmhorwill@aol.com <DMHorwill@aol.com>

There has also been mention that the school might sometime hold its own larger alumni reunion, but as there has not been anything more definite planned yet, we decided in the meantime to organise another lunch. With such advance notice, we hope more of our classmates can keep the date free to join us.

The staff at the Preston Pub were very friendly and welcoming, and really amused by our school days' recollections!

Here are some photos of the gathering.

a) At the table



Re: the 1954 Form 2F (continued)

b) In the pub garden



Back row: L-R Geoff Brunsden, Ray Spreadbury, David Bolton, David Cardin, Michael Naisby, David Horwill

Front row: Barbara Alden (Storch), Pat Gair (Mitchell), Pat Hackett (Dixie), Florence Chambers (Cooper)

Let's hope we can have an even larger group in October!



Rayner Anthony, left in 1946

Secondary school and War

The two roughly coincided. My secondary school was Preston Manor County School. I passed an exam to get in at the age of 10 instead of the usual 11. I was apparently bright. Two teachers as parents helped a lot. I started in September 1939, which was interesting, as the school, which was only a year or so old, had been taken over as an Air Raid Precautions control centre. The downstairs corridors had been reinforced with a structure of 9" square beams, and 14" blast walls were built outside the downstairs windows. These were knocked down just before I left. That was a lot more effective than paper stuck on the windows, for stopping the pupils gawping at the scenery. The immediate result was we only turned up for a couple of lessons a week, given in the "stage classroom" which was the stage, shut off with sliding doors. We were given homework, and went away again. One lesson involved listening to a radio play of Joan of Arc, notable for her line, 'Be ye Jack the Bastard' Entertaining for 11 year olds.

By the New Year a purpose built concrete box for the First Aid organization had been sunk in the ground in a corner of the site, and we got the school back gradually. We also had shelters, which I think were excellent. Jetty piling sunk till only about three feet protruded from the ground. The space inside excavated, and the earth piled on either side. A foot thick reinforced concrete lid finished it off. And an escape hatch. One night when local residents were sheltering in one, a bomb dropped about fifteen feet away from one end, and lifted a section of roof along a few inches. Those inside were shocked, but uninjured.

I have the school magazines, The Pressman. The school motto: Munus Prae Jurae (Duty Before Right) featured on the front. They inspire memories of individuals and events and provide dates and descriptions of e.g. plays and harvest camps.


Personalities include Mr Cleare, the Latin master. He was liked, though ensuring enthusiasm with his Little Willie: a marble tied in the corner of his academic gown. Lack of attention drew a clip behind the ear with it. I came second in that year. Mr Cleare joined the Navy and was on the Arctic convoys. He brought the battle ensign back from one trip. Unfolded it to display a tattered and blackened remnant, which brought a burst of laughter, followed by a storm of applause. He pointed out it had flown above an anti-aircraft gun. It still hangs in the school hall. John Abineri, who I last met on the way to work. He with the trousers tied at the knee, to do labouring, I to install car radios. He became an actor, with roles including Herne the Hunter in a TV programme. Alan Welsh, who had been a physics teacher in Ghana. One of his pupils was Khofi Anan, a Director General of the UN.

Secondary school and War (continued)

WW2. Didn't make a lot of impact on me. I didn't know the circumstances were unusual. We were on the far side of London, which meant we didn't get much in the way of raids although a bomb map of Wembley shows a solid cover by hundreds. There was rationing, but school meals were provided. For the first year I walked home for lunch, over a mile each way. In an hour, something of a rush. I was losing weight so then stayed. Lunch was in the school hall, trestle tables, 10 to a table, with a senior pupil at the head to see fair shares. Then as now I have a sweet tooth, so sweet rationing did hurt and I felt cheated when given a bar of nut chocolate. In my mind, nuts are NOT sweets. Toys were hard to get, but I liked books, and they were always available.

There were signs of American support. "Bundles for Britain" and dried egg. And a supply of drinking chocolate powder, which some bright spark decided to distribute via the schools. We all started for home with a paper bag of the stuff. Since it was an ideal missile for targeting one's fellow pupils, the pavements round the school turned brown.

After a burst of military enthusiasm among the male pupils at Preston Manor, during which one lad handed out ranks from Field Marshal to Lieutenant to anyone who would join his little group, an Army Cadet Unit was formed, I suspect against the wishes of the Headmaster. I joined, I suppose in the fourth form. This was probably against the better judgement of my parents who had been through the Great War. Daddy was in the Garrison Artillery firing 8" howitzers on the Western Front, so had first-hand experience of the nastiness. He never ever spoke of it. I was quite good with a rifle, we practised on a .22 rifle range after school twice a week, and when I tried recently, was still reasonably accurate. Not much good at drill (I never did learn to dance), I liked playing with firearms.



We had the odd field exercise, on Barn Hill where we let off thunder flashes and crackers to simulate rifle fire. A quickly learned trick was to throw the thunder flashes back before they went off, which equally quickly became dangerous when the throwers hit on the idea of waiting a second or two before throwing. We also went to a fortnight's camp at Uxbridge, and made a couple of visits to Bisley, where we fired real rifles. I enjoyed that, finding I was good at snap shooting. I remember on returning from one trip in a 3-ton truck several of us climbed on to the canvas roof, an incredibly stupid act. In fact we did more soldiering then than in the army. By the time I joined that, the war was over, and no-one really knew what to do with us. Thank God.

I became signals sergeant by accident. The company commander was the English master, who knew little about technical matters. When presented with radios his reaction was "Ah, Rayner, you do physics, you can look after these." That casual remark coloured the rest of my life, since I've been in Army communications for the majority of my career. I was sent on a Signals instructors course to St John's Wood barracks, where I had to deliver a talk on the Lamp, Signalling, Daylight, Short Range (LSDSR) and an Assistant Instructor's course at Catterick, where we learned useful things like how not to break a sledgehammer handle by hitting a peg with the neck of the shaft instead of the head.

I joined Geography and Science Clubs. After school activities were standard, in spite of the war. None of the current "It's too dangerous for the children to be going home late". I remember walking home with shrapnel from AA fire clattering on the roofs along a side road. I was also in one or two plays. Policeman in 'Storm in a Teacup'. Joseph in a Nativity play when I also managed the lights, very warm in a couple of blankets. The Lion in "Androcles and the Lion", The General in "Lady Precious Stream", a policeman in "The Farmer's Wife".

There were a few bombs in the immediate area. The nearest landed in the pub car park at the top of Dagmar Avenue, a couple of hundred yards away. It blew in the front door and my parents' bedroom window. Mummy came in to see if I was frightened. I was still asleep.

School and After (continued)

So I left school in July 1969 with six “O”-levels and three “A”-levels. I spent a year at college in Cheltenham trying unsuccessfully to become a computer programmer, then I spent four years in the London Borough of Ealing. In September 1974 I joined the Civil Service, what is now the National Audit Office. Five of these years (1977-82) I spent in Newcastle, where I was able to get on the property ladder. I was made redundant in 1988 and since then I’ve had a wide variety of jobs – Assistant Manager and Relief Manager for BP for six years, Taxi Driver for seven years. Courier and Delivery Driver (local and long-distance) for various people and freelance, for nine years. Now – at last!! – I’m retired and living a quieter and easier life, though I still keep myself busy as a film extra when I can get the work, and there is plenty about although it does have its quiet and busy periods. I took up am-dram about twelve years ago but I don’t do it much now although I’m still a member of a local group. I moved to my present home, Whitehill in East Hampshire (near the point where Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire all meet), in June 1993. I have a small bungalow, and hope I can see my time out here.

Does anyone remember Dr Mason, or any of the 1960s staff, or things like school sports days, the swimming gala at Kingsbury Pool (now sadly demolished), the sandpits, the air-raid shelters (now long-gone), Geography and Biology field trips? There is certainly some truth in the old wisdom “your schooldays are the happiest of your life”.

Steve Thirkettle, Left in 1957

V1 Flying Bomb to Boeing 747 Jumbo Jet – The Making of a Career and Beyond

It was June 1944 and I was 3½ years old. The family had moved from N.E. London (Woodford Green) to N.W. London (Kingsbury/Kenton) in 1941 to avoid some of the bombing, and to be nearer to Harrow where the government had requisitioned a small factory to enable my father to continue, in greater safety, the war work which his company had been assigned. He was Managing Director of a camera, and other optical devices, manufacturing and repair business which continued such work despite the demands of the wartime production of 35mm cine projectors and parts for airborne reconnaissance cameras.

As I was playing in the garden that June day, from the east came this strange pulsing noise and into view appeared a flying object which frightened me as I backed towards the house. Suddenly the noise stopped and I fell backwards through the half open kitchen door. I have since discovered that the V1 flying bomb I saw exploded about two miles away in Kenton demolishing five houses and killing thirteen people.

Once the war ended civilian air traffic began operations into RAF Northolt. The airfield was roughly seven miles to the west of our home which in turn was located virtually on the extended centre line of the main runway. I can remember the Douglas Dakotas and Vickers Vikings of the newly formed British European Airways and many other aircraft types flying overhead our house.

I had begun my education at Uxendon Manor Infant/Junior School in Kenton in January 1946. Over the next few years I continued to take an interest in the aircraft as they flew into Northolt and I could also see them from the school which was situated less than half a mile south of the approach path and a mile or so nearer to Northolt airfield than our home. On one occasion I even saw the (then) mighty Bristol Brabazon. Once in a while my father used to take me to Northolt to watch the planes landing and departing, and each September he took me to the Battle of Britain display at RAF Hendon.

V1 Flying Bomb to Boeing 747 Jumbo Jet – The Making of a Career and Beyond (continued)

Like many children of that era I collected stamps, cigarette cards, bus and train numbers, hobbies that I had inherited from my two older brothers. September 1952 saw the start of my secondary education at Preston Manor County Grammar School in Wembley, the same school that my brother John had just left. It was only a short distance from the Stadium. I too had managed to pass my 11+ examination. I soon made friends with two boys who were unwittingly about to set me on the first steps of a path that would lead to the most satisfying career I could possibly have wished for, although it took an unexpected but brilliant piece of paternal guidance some 4½ years later to further my journey along that path. My new found friends were already following the hobby of collecting aircraft registration numbers/letters and for the next five years we three cycled many hundreds of miles mostly within a 35 mile radius of Wembley visiting airfields near and far. Of course a lot of our time was spent at Northolt and Croydon (early days) and naturally London Airport (LAP). The family had moved to Ickenham near Uxbridge in 1954 but I chose not to change schools (and leave my friends) even though it meant a journey of an hour each way every day. Another attraction was the fact that when a strong southerly wind was blowing, inbound aircraft for LAP's cross runway took them near enough overhead the school.

My first visit to the Farnborough Air Show was in 1953 and one way or another I've not missed one since. Our home in Ickenham was just a short distance from Denham airfield and, as most scheduled operations out of Northolt had ceased by 1954, offered a close alternative when pursuing my hobby of collecting a/c registrations. One September evening in 1955 I was snooping around the hangars when a man approached me and asked me what I was doing. Expecting a telling off I nevertheless thought I might as well be honest, tell him about my hobby and apologise. My honesty earned me my first flight – a few circuits at 800 ft – in a Taylorcraft Plus D registration G-AHUG. How could I have possibly imagined that 40 years later I would be making my final landing at Heathrow as a British Airways Boeing 747-236 Senior Engineering Officer. The third man on the flight deck of a jumbo jet

My education continued at grammar school into my fifth year (1956/57). Apart from mathematics, English language and to some extent the sciences, I didn't really excel at anything although I was fairly average in most subjects including sports. My GCE 'O' level expectations were not great (I eventually gained five passes) and my career aspirations non-existent. My eldest brother Alan was by then a well-established career officer (ground engineering) in the RAF and my brother John was employed in my father's business. Any dreams I had of becoming a pilot were just that, dreams, as I believed that all pilots originated from the RAF and I had no interest, at that time, in joining any of the Services, and anyway I did not believe I was anywhere near clever enough. I knew that, like the younger of my two brothers, I would be expected to leave school after my 'O' level term and find employment either in my father's business or elsewhere. It was then that the aforementioned "unexpected but brilliant piece of paternal guidance" was forthcoming. My father suggested that, as I was so interested in aviation, I should write to the airlines asking what manner of employment/training they could offer a 16 year old school leaver. I chose to write to British European Airways (BEA) who responded with the advice that a commercial or engineering apprenticeship might be of interest to me. After some consideration I dismissed the idea of a commercial apprenticeship and opted for engineering. When subsequently completing the application form I had to choose which of their five aircraft engineering disciplines I most preferred. In total ignorance of anything technical to do with aircraft I rather naively chose airframe. Following a successful interview I was offered a 5 year apprenticeship inaircraft electrical engineering. I am forever indebted to those "three wise men" who interviewed me.

V1 Flying Bomb to Boeing 747 Jumbo Jet – The Making of a Career and Beyond (continued)

So it was that I began my apprenticeship on September 9th 1957. In those days it was quite normal for employers to send their apprentices to other companies for their initial training and BEA and BOAC had been doing so for several years. Typically airframe apprentices went to aircraft manufacturers, engine lads to engine manufacturers, instrument trainees to Smiths (Instruments not Crisps) and radio lads to Marconi but for some strange reason the electrical apprentices were dispatched to a Royal Ordnance Factory at Radway Green half way between Crewe and Stoke on Trent. From 1958 in house training for all the apprentices of both BEA and BOAC intakes became the norm and the following year were combined. One unusual feature of my apprenticeship and of the electrical apprentices in the years before me was an exchange of two apprentices at the start of their 3rd year with two apprentices from an aircraft electrical components factory in Merthyr Tydfil in South Wales.

During my apprenticeship I spent a short time in both the electrical and instrument overhaul and repair workshops but most of my time was spent on sections dealing with final clearance back into service of aircraft off major checks, minor maintenance checks, and defect rectification of aircraft pulled from line service and requiring hangar space. Aircraft types included DC3's, Viscounts, Vikings, Comets 4B's, Argosy Freighters and very occasionally Herons. In addition to aircraft electrical systems, I learned to maintain and service installed instruments and autopilot systems – radio/radar remained a separate discipline. I also spent a short spell in the Project and Development Branch of Engineering, such experience usually being reserved for Student Apprentices. Academically I achieved an ONC in Electrical Engineering but failed my final HNC examination. I did receive a couple of awards for my earlier level of academic success. Nevertheless my final report stated that I was an apprentice “who should go far”; I did indeed go several million miles.

I completed my apprenticeship in September 1962 and was offered permanent employment with BEA as an Electrical/Instrument tradesman. In fact I rejoined the shift where I had spent much of my apprentice training time during my final two years. It was the beginning of a further 14 very satisfying years during which time a number of very significant events occurred in both my working and personal life.

1. 1963 I applied for RAF aircrew – completed the full selection procedure at Biggin Hill but was finally turned down – no reason given. With hindsight – thank you RAF.
2. 1964 I gained my Air Registration Board Ground Engineer's Licence with Electrical endorsement.
3. 1964 I was invited to an informal interview with the Senior Development Engineer (Autopilots) – nothing came of it.
4. 1964 I applied for the post of Technical Author in the Project & Development Branch and was successful.
5. 1964 Marriage.
6. 1966 I decided that working in an office was not for me and transferred back to my old job in the hangar. I was promoted to Electrical/Instrument/Autopilot Inspector within three months. Aircraft types now Viscount, Vanguard, Comet 4B, Argosy Freighter and a growing fleet of Trident 1C's
7. 1966 Daughter was born – She has been an Air Traffic Controller for over 27 years now.
8. 1967 I extended my ARB (CAA) Licence to cover Instruments and Autopilots.
9. 1968 Son was born – He has held various jobs within British Airways Operations and is currently a senior manager with TAG Aviation at Farnborough.
10. 1970 A radical change of work practice was introduced – the duties of Inspectors/Chargehands combined - to be known as Supervisors and responsible for signing off (where qualified) work carried out by them and the tradesman under their supervision. Issued with uniforms with gold braid, we were required to assist, when necessary, our colleagues covering flight operations/ engineering at Heathrow Central Area.

V1 Flying Bomb to Boeing 747 Jumbo Jet – The Making of a Career and Beyond (continued)

11. 1970 I began a course of private flying lessons at Booker Airfield (Airways Flying Club) but abandoned the idea after a few months.
12. A change in the Air Navigation Act in the early 70's meant that aeronautical engineers with a background other than that of engine/airframe could become licensed flight engineers, so in early 1973 I applied to BOAC and was accepted for the next planned Cadet Course. However due to cut backs in operations due to the oil crisis at that time the course was put on hold. I was told I could retain my present job within BEA.
13. Late 1973 saw further promotion (despite my cadet flight engineer's course being indefinitely on hold). I moved to flight operations/engineering in LHR Central Area as a Section Supervisor (aka Assistant Foreman) in charge of a team of Electrical, Instrument, Autopilot and Radio Supervisors and tradesmen servicing and defect rectifying almost solely Trident 1C, 2E and 3B aircraft – other aircraft included BAC 1/11 and Merchantman (Vanguards converted to Freighters). It was also “hands on” for me too – I was in my element but still had the prospect of a Flight Engineer's job.
14. 1975 I was approached by Engineering Management with the proposal of a Management Training Course. I had no hesitation in declining.
15. 1975 and towards the end of the year BOAC decided the conditions were right to begin to expand flight operations thus requiring an increase in the strength of it's Pilot and Flight Engineering workforce and so I was offered a place on the second Boeing 747 cadet course starting in May 1976.

In January 1976 I transferred to BOAC (it was not considered to be a change of employer by then) and, to satisfy CAA and BOAC requirements, I had to spend 4 months as a “mature engine/airframe trainee” covering many aspects of the 747's servicing and maintenance (in service to major overhaul). May 1976 (a very hot summer) saw the commencement of my Cadet Flight Engineer's course at BOAC's Cranebank Training Centre. The 12 cadets comprised of 5 ex RAF Flight Engineers, 1 ex RAF Navigator, 1 civilian Flight Engineer from another airline, 1 Flight Simulator Engineer and 4 BOAC/BEA ground engineers – two of them engine/airframe, two of them (me included) electrical/instrument/autopilot.

We spent four months of technical training during that very hot summer of 1976, followed by about four months of training on the flight simulator before it all started to come together from February 1977 during a further four months of actual flight training. May 1977 saw the occasion of my final route check and certification as a CAA Licensed Flight Engineer (Engineering Officer as BA preferred to call us).

Between 1977 and 1995 I flew the B.747 Classic (Jurassic as it was affectionately known) throughout the world until my final flight landed at LHR from San Francisco on 16th November '95 and I retired four days later from BA at the tender age of 55 (then BA's flight crew normal retirement age). I made the decision not to seek a flight engineer's job elsewhere.

Since my retirement in late 1995 I have continued my passion for indulging in sport and, although I gave up squash in my thirties, tennis soon after I retired and racquetball more recently, I continue to play golf once or twice a week and badminton twice a week as well as some table tennis and soft tennis most weeks. I have regularly played badminton for a period of almost 50 years.

V1 Flying Bomb to Boeing 747 Jumbo Jet – The Making of a Career and Beyond (continued)

Since retirement I have been a volunteer mini-bus driver (until reaching 70), involved with a local Horticultural Society and served on the committee for 20+ years and helped to run a very active over 50's (now more like over 65's) social club with a membership of over 130 for 15+ years. More recently I became a member of Farnborough Air Sciences Trust Association (two or three years ago) and since January 2017 have become a volunteer at their Museum. At the Farnborough Air Show in 1996 I took a temporary paid job for each day of the show driving courtesy cars all around the show site and other places within the airfield boundary – I have repeated this at every show since. Every August Bank Holiday weekend I help to conduct tours around the "Dunsfold 747" at the Wing and Wheels Show. An added bonus in my life is that for the last 30 years I have lived in Church Crookham and just 2 miles from, and on the extended centreline of, the main Farnborough runway.

I hope to continue with all the above activities for as long as my health permits including travel using my retired staff travel concessions and cruising (in ships) with my wife and friends.

Oh and I nearly forgot..... I was reading the local paper's job vacancies page four years after I had retired and spotted something that could not have been further from the 38 year career I had completed and the world of aviation which I had so enjoyed. The advertisement was for a Casual Deputy Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages for the County of Hampshire. What made me apply I have absolutely no idea but I got the part time job. Eleven years later on reaching age 70 I chose to retire. During that time I probably registered well over a 1000 births and a similar number of deaths, I also registered something in the order of 1500 civil marriages. There were other duties too. If asked what gave me the most satisfaction (and it was a very satisfying job in every respect) then I would have to say it was to stand in front of a bride & groom and just their two witnesses and the Registrar in the Register Office, or the same, with maybe as many as 180 guests at some lavish approved venue, and conduct their Marriage Ceremony. I completed several hundred such ceremonies.

We cannot see the future, we cannot change the past. I have enjoyed all that I have done (even Crown Court jury service).

Mike Ellis, left in 1954

Life During and After Preston Manor

My life at the Manor was somewhat checkered. I did not thrive until the 4th Form. I joined the Manor two terms later than my class. I missed such important content that I seemed to be always failing. I was in the "A" stream where there were some very smart kids and did poorly in comparison to them. In retrospect I think I just gave up. There came a turning point. At a Butler all-house meeting I was one of three boys paraded in front of everyone for letting Butler down—I had five "gammas." Gammas were assigned to kids who were not trying, and their gammas were all subtracted from the house total of "alphas" in the inter-house competition. Facing the shame of letting Butler down induced a firm resolve to avoid this fate during the next term. Result? No gammas and three alphas. Cruel though it was, it worked. Cutting to the chase, I left the Manor with A levels in Chemistry, Botany and Zoology.

There was another critical event. In the winter of 1951-2 British athletes were busy preparing for the Helsinki Olympics. One of the coaches for the British athletics team was preparing the Olympic hammer-throwers and needed a gym for his throwers to train. The Manor had been a dorm for the 1948 Olympic Games in Wembley Stadium and was known to the athletics folks. The coach asked to use our gym on Friday nights after school. Our PE/Math teacher, Mr Sharman, agreed on condition some Manorians could join in. The coach asked for some big fast kids and I was one nominated to learn and train with the Olympians. So after my daily stint as a grocery boy at the nearby Pearks store, I returned to school to join the hammer throwers.

Life During and After Preston Manor (continued)

By a quirk of genetics I turned out to be especially suited to the requirements needed to throw the hammer. The hammer is a steel ball on the end of a 4' long wire. It is launched high into the air and it travels a long distance before creating a small crater on landing. The outcome was that after a few years I was the national champion setting records that lasted years. Thanks to Preston Manor, in a few years I went from five gammas to being a British Olympian.

“A” levels were completed a few weeks before the end of the term and I had the prospect of a job that would put my knowledge of zoology to work. I asked if I could leave early. Granted. So the next Monday I showed up for work at the West London Coroner’s Court morgue to help with post-mortems. I had dissected all kinds of animals as part of the Zoology curriculum, and this job was really just dissecting a much larger mammal. My job was to prepare bodies for the pathologist - no more details are necessary. Needless to say the suburban kid from Kingsbury learned a lot about the real world that summer.

Next Her Majesty invited me to join the RAF. I decided I should be a fighter pilot. The RAF decided otherwise and made me a medic, probably because of my job experience. I was also much involved in RAF athletics. Two years later, Corporal Ellis was demobbed. Next stop was Loughborough College, now University, to study what we now call kinesiology. After a while a fellow British athletics champ and I decided to design a training and studying schedule similar to the ones we used to prepare for a major competition. We mixed our training in with studying every day with the goal of graduating with honours. Being prepared worked and we did.

This report are going to speed up now. I taught school for about three years, then I was appointed to the faculty at Loughborough where I had a job helping manage a hall of residence and doing research on Industrial Fitness. I had very limited understanding of how to conduct such research. I recognized that not being able to do one’s job was dangerous, so I decided I needed to go to where these skills were taught at that time—the USA.

I went to study at the University of Illinois (U of I) with my wife, Margaret, my new son David and a baby-sitter (my Mother) so Margaret could work and help pay the bills. We lived in Graduate student housing while earned my MSc and then was invited to study for a PhD. Three years later I graduated and was appointed to head up a research lab in U of I’s Children’s Research Center. This was a wonderful job that culminated in service as Acting Director of the whole Center. I liked managing and changed course. The new path involved managing an academic department, a School, and finally a stint as Dean of the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences at U of I, my American alma mater.

I am now living in a lovely retirement community in Portland, Oregon, USA.

So, why am I telling you all this? Simple. I want to share with you my gratitude for the academic experiences and opportunities that Preston Manor offered me. Our school and its people laid the ground work that changed my life immeasurably.

Thank you Preston Manor!



Stafford Burrridge, left in 1945

I was born on 18 December 1930 at Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex.

When WW.2. broke out I was living with my parents at the address, as above, where I was born. My Father had his own relatively prosperous luxury business up until then but that all collapsed at the time of the Munich crises. Before that I went to a private kindergarten school & a private school in Hindes Road. Harrow When the war broke out my Father lost most of his money (as well as his house) & that was the end of private education for me!!

My father had served in WW1 & was too old to serve in WW2 but, being very patriotic (& also requiring a job!) volunteered for war work and finished up working at Bridgend, South Wales where my education continued (school number 3). Somehow or the other, in 1941 I passed my 11 plus due possibly to the severe punishment handed out to pupils if they misbehaved (a cane across your knuckles can be very painful) & prepared to go to the local Grammar School, when my Father was transferred back to war work in London. At that time the war was well & truly under way & there was a shortage of male teachers as well as schools. Preston Manor C.S. was full up & I had to go to another school until a place could be found for me there.

Eventually I arrived at Preston Manor at the height of the bombing. My Father had managed to get back to live in Kenton with my Sister whose husband was away in the Army. Somehow or the other 7 of us managed to squeeze in a 3 bedroomed semi-detached house but we were more fortunate than many other families. To us youngsters the war was quite an exciting time but of course it was far different so far as our parents were concerned. Food rationing was in place and Mothers had to feed their families on the limited amount of food that was available. Fortunately for me my Mother was an excellent cook & we never went hungry although I will never know how she managed.


When I eventually started at Preston Manor we were all allocated separate “houses”. Mine was Butler & I recall that the others were, I recall, Erlebach, Millward, Vernon & Farren (please excuse the spelling but it was quite a long time ago!!). The Headmaster at that time was Dr. Bannister; I recall my maths teacher, Mrs. Williams, English teacher Miss Evans Spanish teacher, Miss Allen & the Caretaker, who also ran the school cadet force, Mr. Brierley. Our chemistry & physics teacher was a dear old boy who had come out of retirement to assist the other teachers but his name escapes me as does the name of our music teacher (Mr. Swindenbank?).

One of my heroes at Preston Manor was Bill Wiggington because he was an excellent footballer. I just about managed to get into the under 13 & under 14 School football teams I recollect. The goal keeper for the School 1st eleven was known as “Wood” although I can’t remember his first name. He was also the Captain of Butler House. We spent a good deal of our time in the air raid shelters. As soon as the air raid warning was sounded we had to collect our belongings & adjourn to the air raid shelters as quickly as possible. How our teachers coped I really do not know, mind you it didn’t help us either!!.

Being in North West London we had quite a few Jewish pupils who were of course terrified as to what would have happened to them if Hitler won the war. News had by then come through of the atrocities being committed by the Nazis against the European Jews. When the air raids eased up families had to face the terrors of the “doodlebugs” & then the V2 rockets. I recall at Assembly being informed that one of my friends had been killed the previous night; that occurred more than one of course. Things were very hard for all concerned.

At the School we were all encouraged to have a small allotment in which to grow food under the “dig for victory” campaign. I managed to grow on mine the odd lettuce & radish but not much more.

We did not know how long the war was going to last & us boys were encouraged to join the School Army Cadet Force run, as already stated by Mr. Brierley. He did a splendid job & gave up a considerable amount of time for this purpose.



When our troops landed on the Normandy beaches in 1944 we had a special assembly when Dr. Bannister informed us of all that; to us it was all terribly exciting. After that the tide of the war changed in our favour to the relief of us all. When the war was over my Father moved to Southend-on-Sea to start another business so I never did complete all my education at Preston Manor. You will note that I don't have a lot to say about my educational achievements; I think it best if I pull a veil across that, although I did do well at Football & Cricket!!

At the age of 18 I did my national service in the Royal Navy for 2 years. Well it was supposed to be for 2 years but I was a radar operator &, when the Korean War broke out, I was recalled for specialist training. This happened on 2 other occasions so in all I was "on the books" of the Royal Navy for 6 years.

I entered the legal profession & worked for 2 or 3 firms of Solicitors, working my way up the ranks. I was fortunate to be head hunted in 1964 & worked for my last firm until I retired at the age of 65. I have always had a great love of sport & played football, cricket, golf (badly!), refereed football and now play bowls where I am the President at Chalfont St. Giles Bowling Club having moved to the Chilterns when I married in 1963.

I generally go to London at least once a month on the Met. Line to socialise with my old friends & colleagues and always think of Preston Manor when the train passes between Preston Road & Wembley Park. I would love the opportunity of looking over my old School before my time is up if only to see how things have changed since the 1940's. I reckon I could easily manage to bore some of the present pupils with my recollections of what went on at Preston Manor in the 1940's!!

From Monica Bailey, left in 1986

I am now 86, so I was at Preston Manor during the war. None the less I received a good education and had a happy time. I attended with my brother Neil, he sadly suffers from dementia. I am still in touch with a number of friends, including Jim Marwood and Stella Edwards nee Kirton. On-going down memory lane, I recall Dr Bannister announcing very sternly, Miss Rose I fear we are wasting our time and that you should give up torturing Latin and take German instead.

Good luck to you and once again many thanks for still including me in your long list of past P M C S past pupils.

From Eric Garner, left in 1943

I sat at the back of the class. On my left was John Benjamin, (the father, I suspect) of the John Benjamin on the Antiques Road Show. In the form above was Jim Slater, later of Slater Walker and finally a wealthy man (died last year, I think) James Wolf (e?), he went to Wadham College, Oxford, qualified in politics, philosophy and economics and went on to become Reuter's correspondent in Paris; a prestigious job. Sadly he was murdered by the OAS. He's on the board in the hall for a half blue in lacrosse, I believe. On my right was Krolkowski, whose father was the local barber in PRESTON RD. Sadly he contracted poliomyelitis. On his right was Cyril Wigginton, whose big brother was a popular head boy. I saw him at the last reunion, Bill that is; Cyril has died. Also in the year above was James's brother, Peter Wolfe, he became a publisher, famous enough to be on the back page of the Daily Mail, which I have somewhere.

That's it for now!

Yours,

Eric Garner

PS. I went on to what is now The Royal London Hospital, Whitechapel and qualified as a dentist, gaining BDS with honours.



Jo Rowe, formally Josephine Vallom, left in 1958.

I started at Preston Manor September 1953 and left to go to Training College. I was an infant teacher until my daughter was born. After she started school I was a supply teacher for all the primary school ages. I taught at many schools and found it all very interesting. For many years I took my own prepared work in and was able to do whatever I liked, all day. I had to take PE etc but here again, I chose what to do. The children got lots of work done but we had lots of fun. The younger children specially liked my puppets! How different to today. I would not want to be a teacher now!

During the latter years I had to exactly follow the teachers' instructions. I remember, as do others, the summer lunch times when we all went on the field. I specially recall when there were several different skiffle groups scattered round the field. My friends and I wandered round listening to them. They were good! There was an eclipse. One boy had brought a piece of smoked glass, so we could view the eclipse 'safely'! We lined up and took it in turns to look then came away looking like coal miners! It was all good fun.

I remember in the 2nd year we had a great snowball fight with the boys. There were school dances, and productions. I was part of the crowd scene in Androcles and the Lion. Good fun without having to learn any lines! I made sure I joined the choir as choir members had a seat in assembly when often the rest of their year group did not.

I always enjoyed being at Preston Manor. I think school life was more fun in those days than it is now.

Dimitri Lera

Dimitri joined Preston Manor as a Language Assistant in 2016.

My wife passed away to a secondary breast cancer. Cancer has been a sad recurrence in my family, from very close family members to my present partner. Luckily, for her, treatment is working well.

"However, as for those close members of my family and the many more people out there affected by cancer, treatment is not always successful. So, since the passing of my wife, my father, my grandmother, my uncle and aunt, I decided that I had to do more to stop other women, and other people, dying from this terrible disease. My wife was young, vivacious and full of life".

I have been involved with fund raising for some time now, precisely since 2011. Please support my fundraising, cancer can be beaten! This year I will be running the Berlin Marathon 2017.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/berlin-2017>



Please support my fundraising:
www.justgiving.com/Berlin-2017

GENERAL NOTICES



Message Board

A 'Message Board' section will feature on the back page of each newsletter. Please send any requests for messages to be included in future editions to d.graham@preston-manor.com

Facility Hire - 10% discount available for Old Manorians Alumni Association.



PRESTON MANOR
An All-through Co-operative School

PRESTON MANOR - FACILITIES HIRE

Our available facilities for hire are listed below:

Upper School

- Main Hall (functions to include weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, etc.)
- Sports Hall (contains 4 Badminton Courts)
- Gymnasium
- Floodlit MUGA (3x5 aside pitches - AstroTurf)
- 3 x Football Pitches (2 to FA senior standard)
- 4 x Tennis Courts (Asphalt)



Lower School (part of the same site)

- Main Hall (functions to include weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, etc.)
- Gymnasium (1 Badminton Court)
- Floodlit MUGA (1 x Netball court - Asphalt)

www.preston-manor.com



We can also provide catering facilities at either venue. For further assistance please contact our Site and Facilities Manager on 020 8385 4086 or email: site@preston-manor.com

Please let us know if you can help in the planning of our 80th Anniversary celebrations next summer

Thank You

To all Alumni who contributed pieces and sent photographs which make up Issue 4 of The Old Manorian Newsletter.

If you would like to contribute a piece for Issue 5 then please get writing and send once completed with photographs if possible.

