

Old Huntingdonians' Association Newsletter, January 2013

The Chairman's letter

Dear Old Huntingdonian,

Happy New Year 2013

As we enter 2013 we can reflect on the amazing year that was 2012! Nationally we celebrated in style, whatever the weather, and a new feeling of community spirit was aroused. I would like each of us to help build on that community spirit within the OHA, to make the effort to reach out and make contact with others of our own era, to ensure that many more people will be involved when we all celebrate the 450th anniversary of **our** school in 2015. I know we can do it! Our plans for 2015 are still embryonic – I promise more detail next time.

Our guest for the 2012 Reunion was retiring head teacher **Keith Nancekievill** who continues his links with the OHA by becoming our **Vice-President**, a position to which he was appointed at the AGM in July.

The 2013 Reunion will take place on **Saturday 23 February** at Hinchingsbrooke House when our guest and after dinner speaker will be **Andrew Goulding**, new Principal (Headteacher) of Hinchingsbrooke, who will present his vision for the future of our school. **Please book your places NOW, using the reply-slip in this Newsletter.** Why not start your OHA weekend by coming to the Concert on **Friday 22 February** when The North York Moors Festival Ensemble, including popular and gifted cellist **Jamie Walton**, will be entertaining us – tickets available from the Box Office on 01480 375678 (Monday to Friday 9.00 to 15.30).

Our 2013 Summer Reunion and **AGM** will take place on **Sunday 7 July**. This will be the usual informal lunchtime gathering in Hinchingsbrooke House. Again, **please book your places via the reply-slip.**

If you would like to bring along any memorabilia to these events so that you can share your memories with others, we will have tables ready.

Again in this Newsletter we have another nostalgic trip down memory lane from Alan Butler . . . thank you so very much Alan for trawling through all those Huntingdonians, ones ending with a **3** this time!

Hoping to see many friends in February and July

Hilary Angell While *Chairman (01480 457900)*

The Old Huntingdonians' Association

The OHA exists to provide a link between former pupils of Huntingdon Grammar School and Hinchingsbrooke School. We organise two main social functions each year in February or March and on the first Sunday in July at lunch-time. We publish this annual newsletter.

Unusually for 'alumni associations', there is no subscription for the OHA. We rely on voluntary donations to help cover the cost of postage and printing. The Treasurer will be pleased to hear from you with a cheque (payable Old Huntingdonians' Association).

We function by mailing-list. Inevitably, like all mailing-lists, ours gets out of date. If we inadvertently send correspondence inappropriately (e.g. because of a death), we apologise and would be pleased to be told of changes of address or circumstances. The OHA cannot undertake a full obituary service in this short newsletter but we do now have an 'In Memoriam' page on the web-site so if you hear about any former pupils who have died, please let us know and we will add them in.

The OHA is run by a small group of volunteers and the current committee comprises: Hilary Angell While (Chairman), Alan Butler (Vice-Chairman), Ann Davies, Helen Hale, Peter Downes (President), Richard Cook (Data controller), Ann Monk (Secretary), Gary Buckenham (Web-page Coordinator) and John Hinsby (Treasurer).

We really would prefer to keep in touch with you via e-mail. Printing and distributing nearly 400 magazines by post is an expensive and time-consuming activity for an organisation with no subscription, run entirely by volunteers. The cost has increased this year because of the rise in Royal Mail charges. **Please send Richard Cook your e-mail address today.**

The OHA now has its own web-site. You can access this by going to the Hinchingsbrooke School web-site www.hinchingsbrookeschool.net and then click on Old Huntingdonians' Association in the left-hand column. A further click will give you details of events and photos too!

Hilary While 01480 457900; Peter Downes 01480 398082; John Hinsby 01480 457827; Richard Cook – richardcook@aol.com

Hinchingbrooke School News from the new Principal

October 2012

Dear Former Pupils of Huntingdon Grammar School and Hinchingbrooke School,

As I write this my very first article for the OHA, it is approaching half-term and my first 7 weeks in post have flown by. As the 25th Headmaster and first Principal of Hinchingbrooke School, I am conscious of the long history and wonderful legacy left by my predecessors. I wonder what history will write of my tenure of this post?

Let me start by saying that the welcome I have received has been warm, friendly and in all cases very helpful to me in getting to know what is an enormous undertaking, in terms of the volume of information and the immense complexities that go to make up an organisation of the magnitude of Hinchingbrooke. It is a privilege and an honour.

I have spent much time with staff and students, spending time in lessons and around the site at breaks and lunchtimes whenever possible. I have been to the school council meeting, sat in on a KS4 meeting with form reps, taken all the assemblies for one week and am currently doing the same for a second week. Thank you in particular to Keith Nancekievill providing such an exciting legacy on which to build.

I have been very pleased not to be the only 'new boy' joining the senior team. Lee Walker has also settled in quickly to his extremely important role as Vice-Principal (Achievement). The senior team have been very accommodating in coming to terms with new working practices and the team is beginning to adjust to the new expectations.

A number of key officers from the local authority have been in to introduce themselves and explain their areas of responsibility and the Executive Director Adrian Loades is booked in for November. I have met with the Manager of the Foundation, David Blandford, been invited to speak at a Rotarians' lunch and have met with Peter Downes who has appraised me of the Old Huntingdonians, the Bösendorfer piano recitals and the book that has been commissioned for the 450th anniversary.

Indeed, I have met so many people and learned so many things about Hinchingsbrooke, that, not only do I already feel at home, but I also find myself with renewed vigour in coming to work in the mornings. This is quite a remarkable school and a wonderful community.

So what of the future?

The immediate key priorities are:

1. To put in place a series of actions to ensure the school achieves its threshold targets at KS4 in 2013 - namely 73% 5 A*-C (including English & Maths).
2. To eradicate any teaching which is less than 'good' and to ensure that teaching is 'outstanding' overall by 2014.
3. To develop a curriculum that is rich, broad, relevant and engaging and which provides clear opportunities for students to fulfil their potential and progress to the next stage of their education.
4. To improve the consistency of behaviour management across the school and thus ensure an exceptionally positive climate for learning throughout the curriculum.
5. To develop the quality and consistency of leadership and management at all levels.
6. To develop the provision for ICT and educational technologies to enhance teaching and learning.

But all that sounds rather clinical and like the makings of a 'school development plan'! Additionally to the above, my hope is to network widely, to spread the good name of Hinchingsbrooke, to secure mutually beneficial partnerships and to work with the whole learning community towards our newly formulated mission: ***'to inspire excellence and fulfil potential'***.

Exciting times are ahead, challenges and yes, even threats, but I am confident with the support of the Hinchingsbrooke community, we can look forward with positive anticipation. It seems to me there are some fundamental values and beliefs enshrined in the very fabric of all good schools – those timeless truths, that underpin all that we seek to do in education, and things which transcend any particular educational policy or government whim.

We aim to instil values in our students such as compassion, tolerance and a sense of justice. At Hinchingsbrooke we are committed to building a learning community based on

- Mutual respect
- Moral integrity
- Freedom of expression
- Tolerance and
- An appreciation of religious and cultural diversity

For our staff we are committed to

- Developing the quality of teaching and learning
- Supporting innovation and enterprise
- Promoting the well-being of all staff

In our partnerships we are committed to

- Building a strong and effective partnership with parents
- Forging links with other educational providers to enrich opportunities for our students and to support others in their educational endeavours
- Working with local businesses to provide work related learning and to develop pathways to employment
- Encouraging our students to make a contribution to the local and wider communities

And, as for our future, we are committed to

- Valuing our heritage whilst developing a sense of destiny
- Being at the forefront of educational change
- Making the best use of technology to support learning
- Providing an all-round education of the whole child
- Building our reputation as a centre of excellence

My hope is that this will provide a firm footing for the future which is worthy the fine legacy of the past.

Kind regards to you all and thank you for any help you can give.

Andrew Goulding

More of the 20th Century through the pens of *Huntingdonian* writers

Alan Butler reads through his collection of 'Huntingdonian' magazines and captures the changing activities and moods of the school over nearly a century.

Spring Term 1923

After non-appearances of the Magazine owing to paper shortages there was 'A sudden re-kindling of the School magazine spirit as like the eruption of a long-dormant volcano and everyone we think was taken by surprise'. The resurrected *Huntingdonian* had a competition for the design for the cover, won by Abraham, - a splendid Ye Olde Schole design. R.C.Brown wrote:

'Good luck to the magazine, that is now leaving upon a voyage of critical boys ;

They're always critical when new things receiving,

And some may swear, for ridicule destroys

But if they run it down, don't keep on grieving,

But shout it from the house-tops with great noise;-

The Huntingdonian is again reviving

And we all hope it may be long surviving.'

An obituary recorded the death of the Chairman of the Governing body. Mr.F.D.Veasey. 'No Speech Day or Sports Day seemed complete without his kindly presence'. He had begun his education at H.G.S. and was well known among Old Boys as among many Governors.

Edna Goggs recalled her Grandfather's memories of school in 1848 under Dr. Fell

'when hardly a day passed without most of them receiving a good hiding'

School boarders were not often allowed out beyond the School gate but Mrs. Mutton, who kept the confectioners' shop at the corner 'where Cromwell got his cakes', had a little trap-door made at the side of the house, within school grounds, so any boy knocking could receive tuck without being out of bounds.

Summer 1923

It was reported that Dorothy Howgate had won a medal for Surgery, presented by Princess Mary, at the University School of Medicine for Women. The Prefects' Concert proved a 'successful concert in aid of the funds for the revival of our School magazine '. Result - £3 13s 2d.

There were many poems – A.G. Overnor chose Oliver;-

*'He was a little inclined to be Radical
Mixed too freely with men fanatical,
Treated the King with unseemly brevity,
Kicked the Rump with heartless levity,
Dashing along to get things done-
Steady's the motto for Huntingdon'.*

In cricket there was an attempt to revive Girls' cricket one match being played against Slepe Hall and won by 44 runs. There was also a game against the Boys but in this match the Boys had to bowl under-arm and bat left-handed.

Winter 1923

For Remembrance Day the School had a Memorial Service on November 12th when Archdeacon Knowles *'created a profound impression on all. He spoke at length of the appropriate memorial unveiled on the Market Hill the previous day. This bronze statue, designed by Lady Scott, is of a British Soldier, half resting on a mound of earth, watching and thinking.'*

Spring 1933

A letter from LAC Crisp, No. 84 (B) Squadron, R.A.F. Shaibah, had been received.

'It has always been a red-letter day for me when THE HUNTINGDONIAN arrives, as it gives me great pleasure to be able to read all about the staff, scholars who, like myself, have passed on, and those who are still maintaining the noble traditions of the school '. Included was an article on 'A Trip to Babylon with a photograph of soldiers astride The Basalt Lion of Babylon.

The football XI completed their fixtures without defeat and there followed, perhaps harshly, for an undefeated team, Team Criticisms.

Lovitt (Goal). Is not very safe with his hands. Has a poor kick.

Hinsby (Right back). Is inclined to neglect the opposing wing player.

*Tatman (Right half). Lacks ball control and a sense of position.
Smith (Centre half). Not so efficient with a light ball
Northfield (Inside left). Probably the best inside forward the school has ever
had. A model player, handicapped by lack of height and weight.*

Summer 1933

The death was announced of the Vice-Chairman of Governors, Alderman Thomas Coxon J.P. and governor since 1905.

R. Horrex (VI Sc) perhaps had inside knowledge with an article on 'Results of the Splitting of the Atom'.

In Cricket T. Brooks scored the very difficult to achieve schoolboy century with 117 v. Ramsey. He could bowl as well, 7-16 v. Fletton. Another creditable performance was v. March when Humphries took 7w-13 runs.

Also recorded was *'thanks to Hall for his artistic management of the score book v. Cambridge County High School'* where Smith took 5w-8 runs.

Winter Term 1933

Two Board of Education inspectors honoured us with a visit on October 24th. *'It was pleasant to know that they were more interested in our physical comfort and the suitability of our premises than in our scholastic attainment.'* (Contrast with Ofsted nowadays! ed.)

School Notes reported that there were 342 pupils, 164 boys and 178 girls and also mentioned *'The need for a properly organised Old Pupils' Association had long been felt .'* In October officers were elected. Fifty five people were present at the first meeting on December 22nd. The Committee hoped for annual sports' matches, an annual dinner, dramatic and debating societies and a news bulletin. The annual sub was 3s.6d for under 21s and 5 shillings for others. There then followed two pages comprising eleven sections of rules.

The *'Woodwork Department under the guidance of our Woodwork Master seem to be always 'making' or 'mending' for the rest of the school.'* They had also made toys – from a 'full-size' lorry to a train engine as Christmas presents for the boys and girls at the Children's Home.

Spring 1943

Forces' News included *'Jean Jessop gave us a thrill when she sent home a short message on the BBC "Greetings from Cairo" programme.'* Later Jean was married to Mr. Denis Hopkins and they lived in Nazareth.

Carl Beck spent ten days on a raft in the South Atlantic after his ship had been sunk in three minutes. *'He is now at sea again on an oil tanker.'*

J.H.Smith was *'thrilled to be a member of General Montgomery's victorious army.'*

Three Old Boys called in to school – *'Alan Hancock's DFC ribbon clearly showed to present pupils whom he was.'*

A 'Christmas Carol' was put on at the Old Grammar School – a marionette production by the senior pupils of Highbury Hill School. Each girl had made, dressed and supervised the performance of her own marionette.

The Literacy and Debating Society debated an intriguing motion: *'That the majority is usually wrong.'*

Music Notes included the information that the school library of gramophone records was large enough to make a Listeners' Half-Hour or a Gramophone Society possible.

'My Visit to Buckingham Palace' by D.V.P.(Vb) included over 250 personnel receiving decorations including *'Lord Lovat (Chief of the Commandos), who received the D.S.O. and M.C.. and Squadron Leader Ralph Reader who received the M.B.E.'*

Summer 1943

As you would expect given the date, the War Charities Committee was very active allotting a sum of £91 to deserving causes as varied as the Red Cross Prisoners Fund, the Fund for Wounded Horses in Russia, the Merchant Navy Comforts Fund, French Prisoners of War, Fund for Friendless Serviceman as well as Waifs and Strays, Dr.Barnardo's and Lord Mayor's Distress Fund.

Old Pupils with the Forces reported that *'Sgt Flight Engineer Joe Peacock was reported missing. A month later a card written in German informed us that he was safe although a prisoner in a German hospital.'*

Sadly the death of J.J.S. Goodes (1921-23) was reported having been killed in Tunisia.

In the middle of May some eighty cadets of the A.T.C., including many boys of this school had a 'flip' in a Dominie at a local air station. *'The pilot was none other than our dear old boy Flight Sergeant Gordon Clarke, who flew Hurricanes in the Battle of Britain.'*

Under G.T.C. Notes during the 'Wings for Victory' week the Company organised a 'Junk Stall' and £21. 3s was raised in a sale in the Norman Hall of the Old Grammar School.

The School had a 'Wings for Victory Week' when each form was asked to organise some form of entertainment and admission to each would be gained by the purchase of Savings Stamps. The overall result was £875 11s 6d, Form 1 being singled out for having gained more than £50 worth of Savings Stamps during the week. Among the activities were *'darts, Hitler's Face, aircraft recognition, various prize draws and horse rides around the School field for Lower School pupils, and we are indebted to the owner for his kindness in lending the horse for this purpose.'*

In March 1943 the cadets visited the Grand Cinema and among a series of war films had the pleasure of seeing themselves on screen being inspected by the Commandant of Eastern Command, Air-Marshal Sir Patrick Playfair.

Angela Pegg and G.N. Ostergaard represented the School at a series of lectures and discussions for Sixth Forms of Public and Secondary Schools, entitled 'In quest of a durable peace' held at Cheltenham College'. The report concluded with the observations of Sir John Orr, *'The driving force for the building of the better world must come from the young people who have vision and courage'*.

Four photographs adorned the pages of Summer Term 1943, two linked to the choice of the School play this year 'Lady Precious Stream,' an old Chinese play done into English according to its traditional style, by S.I.Hsiung daring and original, but the performances more than justified the confidence of Miss McClland and her helpers.....*we must express our admiration for the distinction of the show.....the costumes presented a beautiful riot of colour.....skilful stage lighting.....Mr Towler's Chinese hangings.....excellent casting and the acting of high standard.'*

The other two photographs showed the Boys' Mile (winner A. Moore (M)) where two runners appeared to be bare-chested and one bare-footed, and the presentation to the Victor Ludorum on Sports' Day where *' The School, as last year, lined the banks along the Brampton Road to cheer their various Houses.'*

Winter 1943

The Editorial mentioned *'We cannot forget that this is the fifth war-time Christmas.'* This was reflected in Old Pupils' News, the misfortunes of war being shown with Alan Hancock D.F.C. *'increasing his 'bag' of Nazi planes to six certainties and three probables.'*, Sgt Donald Haynes writing to the Head Master saying that *'captivity was bewildering at first but now through the medium of classes and lectures organised by themselves, he and his fellow prisoners have found a way of occupying themselves profitably.'* and *'with great regret we hear of the death of Captain C.A.S. Willoughby, a pupil at the school in the late twenties.'*

N.L.L.W. concluded eleven years of Music Notes with *'my one plea is that such enthusiastic interest will continue so that a musical tradition for the Grammar School will grow from these ardent beginnings.'* The beginnings included a Madrigal Group, a short lived School Orchestra, piano lessons and The Listening Group.

The VIth Form Art class visited Lord Sandwich's home for a guided tour of many fine examples of modern paintings for example Modigliani, Van Gogh, Renoir and Gauguin.

'The Tempest' was July's drama production by the pupils of Highbury Hill High School *'our evacuated friends.'*

The swimming sports were held between the road and rail bridges, the School assembled on Castle Hills and a large number of spectators watched the proceedings from the stone bridge. A cloudburst meant some swimmers had to be hauled from the water whilst members of staff sought shelter in a neighbouring boathouse. *'The shallowness of the water at the bathing place was, as in other years, a disturbing factor, and several of the senior swimmers complained about it.'*

Spring Term 1953

The Editorial offered congratulations to Joan Ashley on winning an exhibition in Natural Sciences at Somerville College, Oxford ; Michael Wills on being placed first out of 887 candidates in the Civil Service Examination executive Grade; Jillian Skerry on gaining the L.R.A.M. so quickly after leaving school.

Also reported were the visits of Dan Maskell, the famous tennis professional, and Eric Bedser for a display of cricket. Also on the sporting front Ivor Hunter (1944-51) had signed Amateur forms with West Bromwich Football Club. R.J. Newman (1946-52) was one of 65 young athletes selected for special training in preparation for the 1956 Olympics.

Wendy Jarrett (6 Gen) and Janet Killick (6 Arts) reported on Guide plans for a visit to the Coronation Camp where one of the visitors will be Lady Baden-Powell, the Chief Guide.

The HGS Stamp Club was re-formed and *'The first meeting was held after school on the 27th January when Cowling gave a talk on 'Forgers'. The talk was well illustrated with a large collection of forgeries.'*

Kay Barraclough (6 Arts) wrote under the title Europe 1953, the experience of being one of over two thousand students meeting at Central Hall, Westminster, to listen to some of the most eminent diplomats and politicians in the world. *'Monsieur André Philippe, ex-French Minister of Finance, gave us a truly French talk ; he became extremely excited and was thus very difficult to follow. He was certain, however, that if England came off her high horse, i.e. would not keep up her rule of splendid isolation, friendships would be firmer.'* Arriving at the lecture by the Polish Ambassador.M.Jerzy Michalowski, students were given leaflets which *'we thought were to do with the lecture. How wrong ! They were from the Free Poles' Society and slandered M.Michalowski.'*

Desert Island Discs included 'Mr Lunn – Auf Wiedersehen ; Mr. Bousfield – Henry VIII I am ; Mr. Bolton – With All My Art and Soul ; Mr Illman – Any Spike Jones record ; Mr. Mullins (after the chemistry Laboratory has been blown up) – On Top of Old Smoky ;

Summer Term 1953

This being Coronation Year a school party attended a performance of a 'A Queen is Crowned', the technicolour film of the Coronation, at the Hippodrome, Huntingdon.

The Railway Society also had a local visit to Huntingdon Station when about twenty members were shown over the signal box by Mr. Hodge, the Station Master.

'A Trip to Paris' included the usual places – Sacré Coeur, the Palais de Chaillot, and the Arc de Triomphe but *'various Huntingdonians spent their time travelling through 104 different Metro stations with one ticket..'* Also mentioned was *'The speed of the traffic was unbelievable and we were always in danger of our lives when crossing a street'* - R.Wells (6 Arts.)

Also, in this Coronation Year, Josephine M. Dear (6 Arts) reported on several coachloads from school departing 5.30 p.m. to visit the various Coronation displays in London and returning between 2 and 4 a.m.

School Sports included visits by Mr. R.Howland, a member of the 1936 Olympic team and tennis star Dan Maskell.

1963

The Editorial was pleased to see Mr. Norman Armstrong's name on the Birthday Honours List with the award of O.B.E. He was HGS headmaster from 1932 – 47.

Also....'Plans are in train for a new school in Hinchingsbrooke, and it was hoped to make a start in the present financial year. Unfortunately, things are being held up at the Ministry and it does not appear than any building can start before late 1964. Meanwhile.....a fourth transportable has appeared.' The Governors intend to provide a swimming pool and have some hopes of incorporating boarding accommodation at some stage.

The Knight of the Burning Pestle, 'a good-tempered satire on the conventional Tale of Chivalry was given four performances in a well-contrived production and was enjoyed by large audiences.....The running commentary of the Common Man and his wife were effectively done by D. Underwood and J. Thicknesse though surely the wife made herself too ladylike? J. Milner as Jasper spoke and acted with poise and dignity. J. Handscomb played Ralph confidently and with good voice, though tending to over-act. His squire Tim chewed quantities of gum with dumb eloquence. P. Notley gave a nice study of the arid, self-centred Venturewell, and M.Curtis, helped by a large paunch and a pleasant voice, struggled hard to express the bankrupt optimism of Merrythought. The girls were perhaps less successful in their parts, rather statuesque and aloof, but the parts are not very exciting anyway.'

Some of the comments echoed by members of Forms 1 and 11. 'It was better than some plays on T.V.'

The Sixth Form Society were especially active with nine meetings, topics ranging from 'Humour', 'Your Attitude to Life', and 'The Teenager and Commitment' to 'Pop' Artists.

Miss Glynn-Jones led the annual carol singing party round Huntingdon and a total of £8 9s was collected for School Charities. 'The singers returned to school cold, wet and exhausted and were welcomed with hot soup and refreshments provided by Mr. and Mrs. Stuart for which the choir would like to thank them very much'.

One of the Current Affairs' Society meetings ended 'with lively and somewhat violent discussions on Comprehensive Education.'

B.R.Souter's report for The Railway Society noted that although the Age of Steam was drawing to a close this did not deter younger members of the school from joining and 'filling the places vacated by the older members who have been lost on previous trips ! We thank Mr.Mills for helping to keep the Society 'on the rails' '

Theatre visits abounded – Chips with Everything, Waiting for Godot, A Man for All Seasons, as did Post Examination trips to the Chilterns, Harlow, Wyton Met Office, Blakeney Point, Kew and the Lake District – the latter being a Wash-Out !

Further afield I.Pygott (Lower V1), commented *'The Austrian women worked in the fields with their husbands and children, reaping, ploughing, and sowing, as well as doing housework: very conscientious, Girls please note.'* *'Every time Tim Clarke got off a bus he beamed at the driver as he gave in his money and said " Bier ist gut fur Sie,"*, reply *"Ja – hic-Ja "* *'Our driver was nearly always drunk.'*

The benefits of Outward Bound courses were commented on by both M.E.Bowman (Lower V1) and Jennifer Brown. *'More ready to accept responsibility.....I hope, a little more tolerant...exciting, exhilarating...a greater zest for life now...no such word as 'can't'...a wonderful opportunity to do things out of the ordinary...'*

Excavations at Buckden, prior to the site being engulfed under water during the creation of Diddington Reservoir, *'A deep and wide moat surrounds a rectangular, almost square mound '* revealed bits and pieces of pots, both glazed and unglazed. These were excavated by Elizabeth Hopper and Varey and *'Mr.Jamieson guarded as if they were Crown Jewels and submitted them to the British Museum for identification'. The glazed pottery was thought to be sixteenth century. A trench was dug in the moat itself ' Nutley last seen fast disappearing, worm-like, into the bowels of the earth.'*

OHA notes included a weak soccer team losing 0-8 to the school whereas the Ladies gained a creditable draw 2-2 with their school counterparts. In cricket the OHA looked well on course to challenge the school's 103 but slumped from 39-3 to 45 all out. *'The new school wicket played well and was in no way responsible for the bowling successes.'*

Rev Richard Rutt (1937-42), later to become the 'Knitting Bishop', visited the school on leave from Seoul, South Korea.

The dinner dance, for pupils 1945-50, was the outstanding event of the OHA year. *'Ninety-six sat down to dinner including many former members of staff. The OHA Committee plan to hold reunions for other years in the near future.'*

The Sports' Notes was presented in a new way, which made it more lively as well as more instructive. *'However, this involved such a labour for Mr.Bright and Miss Glynne-Jones that it should not be looked upon as an annual event.'* J.W.B. particularly highlighted *'Why play games ?'*

Sporting highlights included the performances of the Senior Boys' Cross Country team in the Triangular and Fenland with record scores in both races.

A century in school cricket is rare often because of time restraints on an afternoon game. However, Handscomb did just that, 105 in one hundred minutes, against the Ramsey attack. Ann Thicknesse showed athletics promise to come, high jumping 4 ft.7ins at Peterborough.

Two splendid sporting action photos featured, P. Sharp (Up.V1), soaring skyward in the Pole Vault and T. Garner (Up V1) a model of concentration in the Tennis Finals.

1973

A very busy montage of a cover showed various scenes from the school fete reported in the editorial as *'None but the brave deserves the fair'*. Torrential rain the day before threatened to dampen proceedings although not the oracular Mrs. Bown's optimism ("It will be fine because I say so"). The skies cleared and *'Hinchingsbrooke Park had taken on an air not so much of holiday but of fantasy'*. The original proposed beneficiary, the school mini-bus, benefited by £200, with other school funds benefiting by £589.37.

R.E.S. reported on Postcards and Pepperpots where 'the Sixth Form meets the world', namely tours of Hinchingsbrooke House. There were around 4,000 paying visitors although 'We haven't yet got around to organising a Safari Park ("See the herds of Third Formers grazing in the Park ") but still the visitors pour in to enjoy our historic glories'.

Special mention for the longest tour went to Maureen Ward '(an hour and a half and she doesn't even stutter)', for the shortest tour to Mary Barrett '(you are about to enter the Library which we will now leave ') while 'Terry Barringer and Roger Tempero were mentioned in dispatches for stamina'.

The Pepperpots alluded to referred to the *'the normal sequence of ten Banquets'.....the candles glittered upon throngs of fashionable guests – lovely ladies, distinguished men – as course followed upon fragrant course, borne in by dimpled wenches and lusty lackies while the Hinchingsbrooke Singers made the air sweet with song, and the Cromwell portraits gazed down benignly from the panelled walls of the Banquet Hall.....Special mention of Andy Jackson (without whom...) and warm memories of Trevor leading the staff in at the Leavers' Banquet for the Waiters' Cancan. His slip was showing'.*

The Debating Society were very busy – English Speaking Union Competition, the school Public Speaking competition, the Discussion Competition team and the Huntingdon and Peterborough County Final where *'The judges sat looking at the contestants with eagle-like stares. Despite their absurd points of view (!), the Kimbolton team put up a good*

fight, and we spoke second on, of all boring topics, 'Parents'. Nevertheless, the Young Farmers, the Police, Kimbolton and the rest were no match for our homely wit and ultimately we emerged victorious'.

K. Sheringham reported on his experiences in the School versus Staff – Scarcely Cricket, *'Trevor Fowler, his eyes rolling, stood pawing the ground and breathing deeply through flaring nostrils, and I had the vision of a vast and rather ill-tempered horse with whom I'd had an unfortunate contretemps in Ireland.....I was still contemplating which of my repertoire of shots would be most effective (forward prod or back-foot dither ?).....Mr Whiteside, judging it to be in the best interests of the team in general, and of my own physical well-being in particular, promptly called for a second run and had me mercifully run out.....feeling that the day should not be entirely wasted, I settled to watch the Brampton Road traffic, enjoy the evening sunshine and smoke my pipe. Imagine my consternation then, reader, when a general shout drew my attention to a ball skied in my direction.....I recall sinking to my knees in an attitude of prayer, shifting my pipe slightly to the right, and clutching the red-hot missile to my chest. Finally, rising from this semi-recumbent position with as much nonchalance as a man on fire with Erinmore can imagine, I returned the ball to the wicketkeeper.....Mr.Whiteside, with that touch of sadism for which he is justly noted, asked me if I would bowl the final over.'* In spite of the school requiring a nine-ball over to amass twenty runs, they failed and the staff won a famous victory.

The Music report included Mr. Tim Brown's last stand, *'the school carol service where we said goodbye not only to him, but also to Mrs.Horsfall (formerly Miss Freeman).* Previously, the Drama and Music departments under M. Watson and T. Brown had joined forces in the production of the school's first opera – All the King's Men – *'which proved the source of much enjoyment and gave pleasure to both performers and audience'.*

With the opening of Hinchingsbrooke's swimming pool there arose a variety of clubs, one of which was the Sub-Aqua Club. Steve Taylor wrote *'I would like to thank Mr.Hall for convincing the Headmaster of the need for the existence of our club, to Mr. Wakelin for loaning us £50 to buy the basic equipment, (i.e. masks, fins, snorkels),which got the club off the ground (!); and Miss Jolly who came down to the pool with us and dutifully collected our 10p subs.'*

The increasing size of the school showed in the plethora of sports' teams, for example Rugby had five teams and Hockey four teams.

In the Stop Press was reported the death, at the age of 79, of Miss Ethel Pearson. She taught at Huntingdon Grammar School for 37 years from September 1918 to July 1955. *'Many Old Huntingdonians will remember her as P.E., Physiology and Hygiene Mistress and will recall her work as Captain of Guides during this period.'*

1983

New Headmaster P.J.Downes accepted the Editor's invitation to write the editorial commenting on, compared with 20 years ago, the size of the school now nearly 1800 pupils, the largest in Cambridgeshire. The advantages of a large school included more academic opportunities, a better range of facilities and being cost-effective while disadvantages could include possible loss of identity as, with a lot of people around, *'somebody else could be sorting out the problems. If perhaps the feeling of school community is in danger of being lost, the school magazine could be seen as one way to create 'the vital sense of community.'*

Notable among the Staff Farewells was that of Don Riach, appointed to be in charge of Geography at HGS in September 1959. *'Like all Geographers of that era, he was an ardent pipe smoker, but we were relieved to learn that, unlike his predecessor, he did not grow his own tobacco'*. He had a *'masterly knowledge of his subject'.....tried to show his pupils how much he enjoyed his subject and wanted them to share that joy with him'*.

Many expressed sadness at his departure: Frank Lunn, *'I think I identified his personality – amused , enthusiastic,- with the subject of Geography itself. We got the impression that he knew the material inside-out and back to front, as if he had been teaching it since the rocks themselves were laid down. We used two gospels, a red one called Monkhouse and a green one called Luke. In one of them there is a picture illustrating striations on glaciated rocks. The small human figure on the ground must be labelled graffiti-style in every copy – "Rocky".'*

Roger Mitchell, another departure, was much involved in the change-over from a small Grammar School to the largest Comprehensive in Cambridgeshire. An extract from Mrs. W.M. Stuart's contribution *'Roger would seem to be elevating himself from the home of the Earl of Sandwich to the Monarchy itself (King George V College, Southport) but we suspect that he leaves part of his heart in Hinchingsbrooke !'*

Hinchingsbrooke House played host to *'a plethora of banquets and buffets, meetings and tours including a special celebration of the 350th anniversary of Samuel Pepys' birth.'*

Mock election results were announced from the Balcony of Hinchingsbrooke House. This was the result of most inconvenient timing by Mrs. Thatcher who had called the election for June 9th, which with half-term the week preceding proved difficult to organise a Mock Election. Parties included The Hinchingsbrooke Improvement Party, the Communist Party, the Pyjama Party, the Apathy Party and the Campaign for National Freedom.

The local press sent reporters and the BBC sent a photographer 'to take the Middle School candidate who thus had the satisfaction of seeing themselves, albeit briefly, on John Craven's Newsround'. In the 6th Form election, *'Tim Sharpington's humorous and off-beat campaign as a joke candidate won the day over the more conventional candidates.'*

Pauline Luke and Sarah Sharpington went to the National Gymnastics gradings at Sheffield and did remarkably well. Miss Garrett, now working for her Club Coach award under the expert guidance of Mr. Sharpington said it was great to have a link with the Huntingdon Gym Club at last. [Editor's note: the Huntingdon Gym Club came to national prominence in 2012 for its contribution to the GB Gymnastics Team successes.]

The school responded well to the annual competition BP – a Challenge to Youth. This was *'aimed at stimulating useful technological inventiveness among the school children of today'*, the target being the *'construction of a robot for the first time in the competition's history, the robot to travel 4 metres to a solid 10 cm cube, pick up the cube and return to its initial positioning the fastest possible time.'* Budget - £150.

'The chassis was constructed in the metalwork room in the school, under the kindly guidance of Mr. Jenkins, but entirely in the team's spare time, the team being Philip Thompson, Stewart Bromley and John Higgins. Anglia TV filmed trial runs and the National Final was at Reading with 16 other schools. Hinchingsbrooke's robot 'outclassed its opponents with its speed.....a great joy to us all.' The team *'were taken down to London and entertained by BP, made an appearance on Breakfast TV and then returned to Hinchingsbrooke, proud bearers of a cheque for £700, the BP Build a Robot Trophy and framed certificates to be kept by the school'*.

Other winners were the Cambs Schools' Road Safety Quiz team of Helen and Clare Morton with Amanda Walters.

In Music for a Summer Evening *'We heard, sadly for the last time, the wonderful lyrical soprano of Ann Heavens, singing a group of songs by Fauré and Debussy.'*

At another summer concert the Upper School Orchestra, Jazz Band and Concert Band provided 'a rousing and well-contrasted programme ranging from Bizet's March from Carmen, to the theme from M.A.S.H.'

Peter Pearse, a fifteen year old flautist, had his first experience of musical competition and playing Debussy's En bateau was awarded 90% in the U16 woodwind competition.

The Middle School West Side Story featured *'gangs, finger-clicking bad, who approached their singing and dancing as they approached each other: with attack. The tension was established by their leaders Alistair Smith, the mean, smooth Puerto Rican Shark whose permanent aggression was barely subdued and Aaron Peth, the American Jet, who sang and danced with tremendous style and confidence.'*

The Lower School 'Evacuees', was of an *'of an exuberant impact of ninety young voices'* and concluded *'So off we went, a whiff of Churchillian cigar smoke in our nostrils, the dying wails of a siren in our ears, and tunes jostling in our minds'*.

The Staff and 6th form production 'Come Charleston with Me' was a 1920s' Revue – *'irresistible.....inhibitions on the part of both cast and audience were left far behind'*. There was a variety of 20s' characters, including at the back of the magazine a photo of 'the Headmaster and Senior Mistress reliving their younger days'.

The OHA celebrated the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Association. All four Headmasters of the previous 50 years were present: Norman Armstrong (1932-47), Geoffrey Rowntree (1947-65), John Wakelin (1965-82) and Peter Downes. There were displays of school photographs, magazines, school caps – *'precious heirlooms from those far-off days!'*

There was an informal gathering in the evening for 270 former pupils and guests it then being *'difficult getting guests to depart at midnight !'*

1993

An increasingly pictorial magazine highlighted the visit of HRH the Duke of Gloucester for the formal opening of the new school buildings, completed in 1992 and thus bringing Hinchingsbrooke School onto a single site after more than 20 years as a split-site school.

Appropriately fulsome tributes were paid to two departing Deputy Heads: Trevor Hughes came in 1970 and was Deputy i/c Lower School for over 20 years. His work in linking with the feeder primary schools was noted: *'parents found his avuncular jollity combined with a relatively traditional stance to be most reassuring'*. Sheila Hargreaves had been Deputy i/c Middle School: *'she always had time for people. She cajoled, encouraged and supported staff and always made them feel valued.'* She made a major contribution to the school by organising the building programme so that work could continue effectively in spite of the disruption.

Another long-serving leaver was John Clark, a biology teacher who inspired pupils by his enthusiasm for natural history and bird-watching in particular.

The Performing Arts flourished in the new setting of the Mary Stuart Hall – drama productions, bands, orchestras and choirs, and Mrs Kennedy's ambitious and colourful dance productions.

Jo Taylor reported on her rainforest research expedition to *Sarawak .. alive with the shrill cries of insects ... a horrific screaming sound ... we watched an amazing ritual*. Jason Peters and Mark Galligan looked forward to their Arctic expedition with the British Schools Exploring Society, for which they had been selected from 400 applicants from across the UK.

The OHA News by Michael Petty reported on former Head Boy Michael Ockwell's appointment with the Royal Shakespeare Company, and the professional debut of James Dickinson and Gareth Williams in the Imperial Brass Quintet.

The continuing achievements of Mr. Baker's Duke of Edinburgh Award pupils and staff team are rightly praised. The parent activists in the HSA reported their success in raising £2,000 at the Fete to help build a school in Namibia in conjunction with UNICEF.

The Head, Peter Downes, noted in his report that *'the political fight to get adequate resources for education is one which will continue in earnest this year'*. It's a fight still going on in 2013!

The OHA Bösendorfer piano series

The concert series based on the Bösendorfer grand piano, bought for the school by former pupils in memory of Ken Brown, is now in its sixth season.

Jillian Skerry continues to find excellent performers for us to enjoy in the Performing Arts Centre. After our fifth series, we were able to donate a further £300 to the OHA Music Fund. This is used to provide prizes and bursaries for promising young musicians in the school today.

The support for the concerts from the local Huntingdonshire community has been growing gradually as more and more people have realised that they are getting top London performers at a bargain price and without having to travel to London or even Cambridge to hear them.

Three more concerts remain in the 2012-13 series:

- On **January 11th** we have a return visit of Masa Tayama who has become one of our favourites
- on **February 22nd** we welcome the North York Moors Festival Ensemble under the leadership of cellist Jamie Walton.
- on **March 22nd** the soloist will once again be Marina Nadiradze who gave a thrilling performance last season.

Those of you who live within reach of Huntingdon may like to join us for these concerts. You can reserve tickets by telephoning the box office on 01480 375678 between 9 and 3.30 during the week.

A loyal Old Huntingdonian, Spencer Freeman, also helps the OHA Music Fund by liaising with Huntingdon Rotary Club to put on a piano concert featuring the prize-winner from a competition Spencer runs in the South East. This event raises money for the OHA Music Fund as well as for local charities supported by Rotary.

The concert in 2013 will be on **Friday, April 19th** in the PAC at 7.30 p.m. and the soloist is Mishka Rushdie Memon. Tickets from 01480 398082.

Peter Downes, OHA Bösendorfer Piano Concerts promoter

Hinchingsbrooke School 1565-2015

Its place in history

As part of the celebration of the 450th Anniversary of the school in 2015, the OHA will be coordinating the production of a new version of the school's history.

We reported last year that the OHA has commissioned two local Huntingdon historians, Alan Akeroyd and Caroline Clifford, to write this book, which will place the development of the school in its local social, historical and national educational context. It will show how Huntingdon Grammar School and then, from 1970, Hinchingsbrooke School, responded to the changes in society and educational expectations and how it has played its part in contributing to recent changes in the way schools are managed. Work is proceeding well and we are grateful to former pupils who have provided memorabilia.

To help finance this ambitious project, several former teachers and pupils have become 'Patrons'. For a contribution of £50 (cheques payable 'The Foundation of Hinchingsbrooke School') you will receive a free copy of the book on publication and you will be listed in the book as a Patron.

So far the following are Patrons: Sam Bell, John Brown, Bev Curtis, Ann Davies, Elwyn Davies, Martin and Susan Dickinson, Peter, Michael and Chris Downes, Bob Dring, Duncan Grey, Keith Grimwade, Peter Hains, Jean Harris, Kathie Haydon, Trevor Hughes, Chris and Tessa Leuchars, Jackie Medcalf, Roger and Glendon Mitchell, Keith Nancekievill, Jean Nicholls, Ann Petty, Carolyn Price, Dorothy Pritchard, Cherry Protheroe, Helen Reece, Don and Nancy Riach, Marion Rutherford, Peter Sainsbury, Patrick Salvadori, Caroline Sheffield, David Smith, Mary Smith, Chris Steer, Joyce Taylor, John Wakelin, Rodney and Isobel Wilson.

Further details and a Gift Aid form available from:

- by e-mail to: peter.downes@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
- or by post to: 42, Huntingdon Road, Brampton, Huntingdon,
Cambs PE28 4PA

Latest news from the 'Friends of Hinchingsbrooke House'

Many former members of staff and pupils are members of 'The Friends'. We help the school to protect and enhance Hinchingsbrooke House and promote the House as Huntingdon's most prestigious historic monument.

We put on two events every year:

- An Annual Dinner early in February when we have a visiting speaker who talks about some historical aspect of the House. In 2013 we welcome back Roger Mitchell, a former history teacher at Hinchingsbrooke and Head of Sixth Form. He will talk on how Country Houses had been in trouble in the Inter-War period. They found new but usually inappropriate uses during World War Two and then became entirely inappropriate for a post-war world. Many were demolished while others struggled to survive. Hinchingsbrooke presents a perfect case study.
- A Summer Evening meeting on the first Sunday in July when, after the short formal AGM, we have a short talk followed by a tour of the grounds.

A few of us do some basic work in the Rose Garden and adjoining herbaceous border. These were visited by the judging team from 'Britain in Bloom' and Huntingdon got a Gold Award (though we do not claim to be worthy of that for our puny efforts!). If you would like to donate a rose in memory of somebody, please send a cheque for £30 to the Treasurer (address below).

Membership of 'The Friends' is open to anybody interested, whether or not they have direct links with the buildings as a former pupil or teacher. As a Friend, you will receive Newsletters and you will have the satisfaction of knowing that part of your subscription goes to help with the maintenance of the House as a historic treasure.

To join, send a cheque for £12 (payable 'Friends of Hinchingsbrooke House') to the Treasurer, Ian Nicholls, 9 Glebe Road, Perry, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE28 0DG.

Enter 'Hinchingsbrooke House' in Google and find out what a fascinating and historically important place it is.

Forthcoming events . . .

'The Friends of Hinchingsbrooke House'

Annual Dinner, Sunday, February 3rd, 2013, 6.00 for 6.30 p.m.

Topic: 'The post-war Crisis in the Country House'

Guest Speaker: Roger Mitchell, former Head of Sixth Form

Tickets: £23 from:

Ian Nicholls, 9 Glebe Road, Perry, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE28 0DG.

Cheques payable 'Friends of Hinchingsbrooke House'.

Please enclose stamped addressed envelope. Tel: 01480 811870

e-mail: ij.nicholls@btinternet.com

O.H.A. Annual Spring Reunion

**Saturday, February 23rd, at 7 for 7.30 p.m.
Hinchingsbrooke House, Huntingdon**

Guest Speaker: Andrew Goulding, Principal, Hinchingsbrooke School

Tickets: £23

Please use the enclosed reply-slip to book your tickets.

OHA Summer Lunch Reunion

Sunday, July 7th, 2013, from 12.30

**An informal buffet lunch and a chance to look round the grounds,
the school and the House.**

Tickets: £17

Please use the enclosed reply-slip to book your tickets