



THE OLD TAUNTONIANS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

Edition No: 3

March 2024

A letter from the Chairman



Welcome to the latest edition of the OTA Newsletter.

As an Association with an ageing membership, it is inevitable that we receive and print details of deaths of members. This we will, of course, continue to do, but we would also like to balance the content with interesting articles, such as Charles Wylie's amazing charity sky jump or any amusing stories of life whilst at Tauntons. Brian Osman has kicked this off in the article below. Please think back and send me your 'lighter moments', assuming they are printable!

After my plea for additional committee members, I am pleased to advise that Chris Riley (1975 - 1977) has offered his services, which were quickly accepted. Chris has run his own successful business in Romsey, Michael Rhodes Estate Agents, and has recently semi-retired with his son now taking over the reins.

Finally a date for your diary, ***the Summer Reunion Lunch is confirmed for Thursday July 18th at Ampfield Golf Club.*** As

before, the lunch is open to OTs, their partners and friends. We hope to build on last year's successful lunch so please join us if you can.

Roger Parsons

Some 'lighter moments' at Tauntons Grammar School

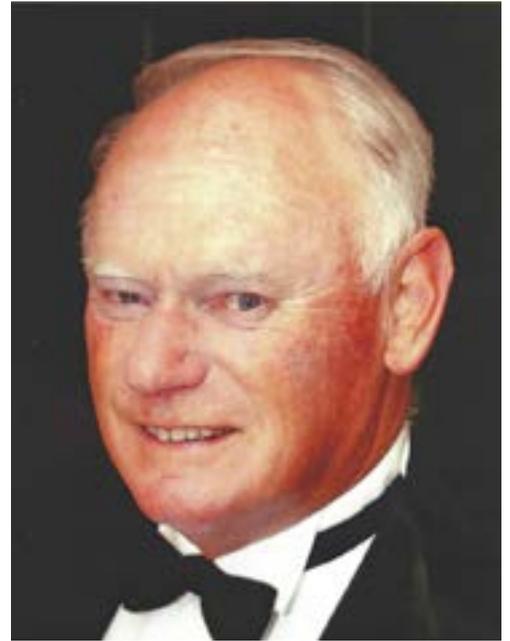
The singing of hymns was an essential part of the daily morning Assembly routine in the 1950s. Imagine the consternation of the Masters when one morning no hymn books could be found in the hall. No hymns that morning. They were later found hidden in the balcony overlooking the gymnasium. It was 1st April!

One year our English teacher was David Greenlaw. For reasons now forgotten, one week our usual form room was unavailable and therefore we were taken to a different room. Adorning the rear wall was a copy of the painting by Botticelli of 'The Birth of Venus' in which a very scantily clad Venus was arriving at the shore. Imagine the reaction of young teenage boys – for the first few minutes Mr Greenlaw was talking to the backs of the majority of the form's heads. His solution was to make sure the form turn their chairs around and face the said painting, He then conducted the lesson with his back to the painting.

Brian Osman

Tony Robinson's life - from my perspective

The first time that I really came into contact with Tony was when I joined the Old Tauntonians Hockey Club (which later morphed into Southampton Hockey Club) after I left school. Tony was a couple of years older than me so our paths at school never crossed. At the club Tony was a very keen player but because of his gentle manner was given the nickname 'Rawmeat' as that was what was needed to feed him to give him more on-field aggression. That didn't work but the name stuck. In fact, all Christmas and Birthday cards would be signed 'Rawmeat'. He was also a good administrator. He was club secretary for many years and later when the club started running the annual International hockey tournaments he was for many years, chairman of the organising committee. I was also a member of that committee and remember well the meetings discussing every aspect of the tournament from food to bands to DJs and riverboats. A highlight of the pre festival committee duties was for the committee to decamp to Cowes for a recce to liaise with the Police and the Cowes pub landlords prior to the Riverboat Shuffle event where we would bring in excess of four hundred people for an evening of raucous carousing and drinking. Another of my abiding memories of Tony from the tournament era was on the Saturday evening fancy dress party at Southampton Guildhall with Tony and Tom Noyce on stage in full chicken outfits dancing to 'The Birdy Song'. With a little bit of this and a little bit of that etc..... Even though Tony was by then living and working in London, he was back in Southampton every weekend playing hockey and latterly golf. He was also proud to boast that during his hockey playing career, he went on every one of the hockey tours. These included France, Germany, Holland, Barbados, Berlin before the wall came down and Ireland. I went on a lot of these tours with him but not all. Even when he retired from playing, he still attended all of the A XI tours and was indeed an important member of the group as someone has to be the Portmeister (pouring port and glass cleaning duties come with the job).



When he retired from playing hockey, his dedication to the Hockey Club did not fade and when the post for SHC President came up, Tony was the obvious candidate and he carried out the duty of promoting SHC in his normal unflappable way. It also gave him another nickname 'El Presidente' or EP.

He then started playing golf regularly and was one of the founding members of South Winchester Golf Club and indeed it was Tony who badgered me into joining the newly formed golf club. After a round, whether good or otherwise, he could usually be found, Guinness in hand, nattering away with any of his large group of friends. Golf also provided more opportunity to tour and Tony was always there on the annual trip to France.

Away from sport, Tony and I enjoyed a keenness for rock music and together we went to numerous Rolling Stones and Queen concerts whenever we could get tickets. We once went to a 12 hour concert at Knebworth where after we had to sleep in the car as the queue to get out of the car park was at least 6 hours. When we woke up, it was clear to go.

Another event we attended was to the World Snooker Championships in Sheffield several times in the early 80s. Tony, Ray and Linzi Colmer, my wife Lynn and I would all travel up in Tony's car for the weekend. On one occasion after a mostly liquid lunch, we were on camera in the front row dozing or asleep. Must have been a boring match!

Tony was also very involved with the Old Tauntonians Association and he regularly attended the annual London Dinner. We went to the annual Southampton Reunion Dinner together and we took a lot of stick when after a game of hockey, we would dress in our DJs for after match teas before going on to the Dinner. 'Doesn't everyone dress for dinner?' Tony would say to the opposition. In 1990 Tony was honoured with being Chairman of the Dinner. He also took over from Johnny Bathurst the role of organising and running the OT's annual golf day and also the OTs Summer Lunch, both very successfully.

More than all of the above, Tony was a very good friend and very much a gentleman.

Ralph Turner

Laurence Bishop - 1934 - 1939

My first cousin once removed attended Taunton's School in 1934 - 1939. Searching the School Archives, Annelise and I were delighted to discover his school record card. Although Uncle Laurie now lives in Canada, I have always corresponded with him mainly by letter but more recently by email via his step-daughter Francine. For Uncle Laurie's 100th birthday on 13th July 2023, we managed a Facetime video (set up by his step-daughters) which was wonderful. It was his first Facetime call and he was amazed that it was in 'real time'!

The last time we met was in 2014 when I visited him at his home in Brossard Canada whilst on holiday. Uncle Laurie has always been an excellent writer and has articles published in magazines. His Blitz memoirs are held at Southampton Archives and used by local historians; his memories of serving in the Hampshire Regiment during WW2 are held at the Regiment Headquarters in Winchester. In addition to this, when Uncle Laurie lived in Greece he wrote several text books, as his profession was teaching English as a second language.

I was delighted to receive this picture of Uncle Laurie with Justin Trudeau in November 2023 together with his brief explanation.



'As a veteran of WWII, I was asked to be present at our local Legion Hall on the afternoon of 9th November 2023 to welcome the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. He was on a quick visit to such places before returning to Ottawa for Armistice Day. My step-daughter, Johanne, drove me there and was also invited to attend the meeting. Mr Trudeau came round the room, asking each of us for a quick history of our service and readily posing for a photograph of us. It was a remarkable occasion'.

Debby Bartlett

Lower Sixth Form 1956 - 1957 Annual Dinner

This year our form reunion took place at lunchtime on 18th October 2023 at the Novotel, Southampton. It was thought this was the 35th such occasion. The original reunion was inspired by the retirement of Ted Colenutt who had been our form master for that year. Ted was a regular attendee until his death in 2015.

Numbers have inevitably dwindled over the years, down from an initial 25 to this year's eight. Those attending were Jim Rumsey, Norman Eades, Phil Clarke, Ron Limburn, Jim Hallum, Peter Dommert, John Slade and myself. This was the first time all the attendees lived locally.



Lunch was very much enjoyed amongst much nostalgic talk, although health issues could not be kept out of the conversation - a sign of the times and our ages!

Brian Osman

Jumping for Joy - an update!



As I mentioned in the last Old Tauntonians' Association Newsletter, Jean has been coping with Alzheimer's for nine years. Rather than receive any gifts for my 90th birthday in August I asked people to sponsor my 'Jump for Joy' - a tandem parachute jump with the Red Devils, planned for 8th September 2023.

We've now smashed both the £5K and the £10K targets - Gift Aid has taken us over £23000. Bless you for your generosity. I'm hoping to post a video of the jump, which went well. The free fall of 45 seconds from 12,000 feet meant the chute opened at about 8,000, when I sang for Jean: 'I'm on the top of the world, looking down on creation.'

Charles Wylie

The "100" Club

Recent Winners

November 2023 £50
Tony Burbidge (1945 - 1952)

December 2023 £20
Jim Hallum (1951 - 1958)

January 2024 £20
Brendan Brophy (1957 - 1960)

February 2024 £20
Mike Bull (1946 - 1949)

March 2024 £20
John Russell (1955 - 1963)

Useful Contact Details

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Treasurer *Brian Osman*
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Bill Gillham - Obituary

Bill Gillham died on Friday 22nd September 2023. He was a pupil at Taunton's School from 1947 – 1954. He married Judith Downing in 1963 and they celebrated their Diamond wedding anniversary earlier this year. Their son Charles was born in 1969 and their second son George in 1973. After living in London, Leicester, and Nottingham they made their home from 1976 in a rambling farmhouse in Rutland.

After completing National Service, Bill went to Hull University to read Psychology. After postgraduate study in London, he became an educational psychologist in Leicestershire schools. Then, in the early 1970s, he became an academic child psychologist, first at Nottingham University and later, having taken his Ph.D., from 1983 at Strathclyde University where as a Senior Lecturer, he ran their postgraduate child psychology course.

Having taken early retirement in 1995, Bill remained as Honorary Senior Lecturer at Strathclyde University, ran the Ph.D. programme for the Glasgow School of Art, and also consulted at LaSalle College in Singapore. He was from the 1970s to the 2010s an author and editor of books on psychology and research methods (his seminal 1978 work, 'Reconstructing Educational Psychology' remains in print), and a prolific author of children's books. His last major published work was a guidebook to his beloved Paris, a city he visited frequently for more than sixty years, and which ran to three editions.

Bill stayed in occasional touch with a number of Old Tauntonians, including the Reverend Prebendary Ron Swan, until ill health led to his retirement from the world after a fall in 2020.

George Gillham