



Christmas 2011

Old Wymondhamians Newsletter

Welcome to the third issue of the Old Wymondhamians e-news which we hope will be a fitting tribute to the College Diamond Jubilee. This method of circulating the Old Wymondhamians news seems to be popular and on both previous occasions has attracted considerable feedback. Please let us know what you think – is this something you would like to see done again or not? Would you like to make a contribution to the next Newsletter?

This year has been one party after another! We shall be telling you more about what the College and Old Wymondhamians have been up to during the 60th Anniversary celebrations in due course. It has been wonderful to see so many Old Wymondhamians supporting the events throughout the year and has proved a popular way of meeting up with old friends, many for the first time in many years or even since they left the College!

Enjoy your reading and feel free to [email](#) us your thoughts!

Word from the Principal

Dear Old Wymondhamian

This term has seen the culmination of the celebrations marking the College's Sixtieth Anniversary. Building on the success of our "Trail Blazer Day" in April and the Diamond Ball in June, we launched our Sixtieth Anniversary Appeal (see below) in the impressive surroundings of the House of Commons, generously hosted by our local MP, George Freeman MP and by the Honorary President of the Old Wymondhamians, Norman Lamb MP. We were delighted that a number of London based Old Wymondhamians were able to join us on that occasion, along with many "Parliamentary Friends" of the College, including former Secretary of State for Education, Baroness Gillian Shephard.

On October 13th, the Bishop of Norwich, The Rt Rev'd Graham James was the preacher at our Thanksgiving Service in Norwich Cathedral. It was a splendid occasion which showed the talents of our students to very great effect, but it was also a moving ceremony which seemed in many ways to sum up what the College has stood for over the years and what, I hope, it still stands for today. In a private ceremony after the service, the Bishop led a tribute to Dr. Lincoln Ralphs and a wreath was laid at the foot of his memorial tablet in the Cathedral cloister.

In another development that links the College with its past, we inaugurated the College Heritage Trail on Remembrance Sunday. Funded jointly by the Old Wymondhamians and the Heritage Lottery Fund, the trail enables visitors to understand the College site and the various uses to which it has been dedicated over the centuries. Foremost amongst these, of course, was the American Army Hospital and we were delighted that Lt Colonel Barratt {CHECK} of the USAF helped us to inaugurate the trail. I do hope that you will wish to visit the College and "take the trail" sometime soon. To book a tour or request information please contact [Caroline Hall](#), Partnership Development Officer.

The remaining events of this special year include the International Conference for students from our partner schools across the world in the summer. We also hope to stage a small reunion event for Old Wymondhamians based in Hong Kong and other parts of the Far East in June.

In closing, may I commend the Sixtieth Anniversary Appeal to you? The Appeal has two complementary aims. One is to provide a fund for special projects for the benefit of current students and the second is to endow a Bursary Fund with the intention that we should be able to return as quickly as possible to the idea that a boarding education at the College can be available to any child who would benefit from it - irrespective of his or her parents' ability to pay the boarding fee. Please do consider making a donation either now or in the future. Information on how to make a gift and advice on tax efficient giving to the Appeal is available from the Alumni Secretary, [Mrs. Jackie Glenn](#).

I am, as ever, enormously grateful for the support of Old Wymondhamians for many aspects of the College today.

On behalf of us all at the College, I wish you and your family and friends a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Melvyn Roffe
Principal

Chairmans Greetings from Mike Herring

Well, life is full of surprises, and my writing yet another "Chairman's greetings" is one of them. Too complex to go through the details of why, but if I do one more I will have had more come-backs than Ken Dodd!

I think a quick resume of some of the things we have achieved over the past three years might possibly be the best way to sign out. I am not claiming that these were my achievements, or even my initiatives, just the result of a lot of group effort.

- Julie Harding has successfully taken over WC Remembered from Bill Atkin. A very hard act to follow.
- We had our first two overseas reunions in Australia and the USA.
- We had our first (official) regional reunion in the NE of England.
- We have been involved in and contributed towards the College 60th Anniversary celebrations .
- We seem to have found a winning formula for College reunions – think small, anticipate few attendees – and we get a record up take!!
- Bob Rowell's golf day goes from strength to strength with about 20 or so golfers and upwards of 60 people sitting down to the post golf dinner. Bob's hard work was partly rewarded this year with the presentation of a silver claret jug labelled the "Bob Rowell Trophy".
- We had our first BBQ for the previous year 13 leavers to try to keep them connected to the Old Wymondhamians.
- An annual travel award for year 13 leavers has been established.
- The Old Wymondhamians played the 1st team at cricket – AND won.

That just leaves me to wish you all the best and hoping to see you at some of our future functions.

It has been a thoroughly enjoyable three years and my thanks go out to the rest of the committee, to Jackie and Caroline for their hard work and particularly to the Principal for his continuing enthusiasm, energy and backing for our organisation.

Mike Herring

Norfolk Show

We were kept busy at the Norfolk Show again this year, with 54 Old Wymondhamians coming to see us and catch up with all that has been happening. Amongst those visiting us were a number of old friends but, encouragingly, we also saw a good number who had not been before including some who had left College in the last year or two.

Steve Read (68-73) and Phil Robinson (66-73) were very supportive in terms of manning the Old Wymondhamians stand. It would be wonderful if one or two others came forward this coming year to help look after and chat to visitors about the work of the Old Wymondhamians. Please could you contact [Jackie Glenn](#) by email, or by phone (01953 609000 ext. 4312), for more details. We love to meet up with you all each year and very



much hope that we shall welcome even more of you at the Show in 2012.

Don't forget to put next year's show in your diary – 27th and 28th June 2012. We will be in the same spot, look out for our flags. The stand number will be advised nearer the time. The Concert and Jazz bands will be performing and we will have the arena party and runners again too.

Mr Phil Robinson (1966-73) hosting the Old Wymondhamians stand

Reunions

Class of 2010 Reunion

Every leaver, whether they have been the two years or seven, whether they thought they would or not, misses Wymondham. For half the year 13s it has not only been a school but a home. Although we all feel welcome back at any time, and trust me, I have taken advantage of this, the reunion party is the perfect occasion to see the school again, catch up with old schoolmates and speak to teachers. This year's was no exception. Coming back from gap years, the first year of degree courses and all over the country, it was the first time the leavers were a unit again.

The 2010 leavers got to see the new language centre for the first time over a glass of wine before the very popular hog roast. Most of the returning students dissipated after eating their fill to reacquaint themselves with the school. The lower houses were happy to open their doors to the visitors as they wandered down memory lane.

Lincoln was a popular attraction and it truly felt as if we had never left as we took over the pool tables and saw some old faces. Wandering into our old common room was particularly poignant and nostalgic as we discussed old memories.

Many thanks have to go to Caroline Hall for organising it and all the teachers and staff that dropped by to say hello. It was a lovely night, enjoyed by all, and long may the reunions continue.

Sally Dolton 2008-10

1970s/1980s Reunion



Neil Sherman and Phil Jones
The morning after the night before!

A Reunion, organised by Karen Snook (nee Rumball), was held on the evening of Friday 4th November 2011 in the Unthank Arms, Norwich. There was good representation from amongst the year groups 1977-1984. A list of those present below:

Cavell Hall: Karen Rumball, Beccy Brown, Vanda Glister, Philip Jones, Clare Rumball

Fry Hall: Bex Clegg, Craig Ferguson, Jason Chapman, Mark Garner (Muttley), Helen Treutler, Katie Treutler, Michael Saunders (Sonny), John Warner

Kett Hall: Katrina Harrison, Neil Sherman, Steve Grady, Laura Locke, Sandy Bull

Half the assembled gathering left the Unthank Arms at midnight, the rest went into Norwich and left at 2.30 am, the last 5 crawled home at 5 am!! It was a great night spent catching up with lots of laughter. Everyone wants to do it again. If you wish to contact any of the aforementioned OWs then please contact Karen Snook (nee Rumball) and she will be happy to put you in touch. [Karen Snook \(Rumball\)](#)

News from:

John Chapman [Special Grammar School 1955-58]

In June 2011 we had the following news from John Chapman "Thank you for the list and pleased to see some of us old/er students still alive if not kicking. Afraid I won't be over in the Motherland again but hope everything goes well.

Just watching our evening news and hear Christchurch has had another 5.5 level earthquake aftershock a few minutes ago. Poor devils are so stressed out with so many aftershocks. As fast as they clear up another one goes through. An elderly friend down there has stopped putting his books back in his shelves and now has them tidily arranged on the floor."

Commercial Course 1952-53

By Lilian Smith (nee Aldis)

Such a long time ago, but it is said that as one ages one cannot remember what one did yesterday but can recall happenings of fifty years ago. I will put it to the test.

I was 15 in 1952 and about to leave Cromer Secondary School for the world of work. I was undecided about which career to pursue and Miss King, our Religious Instruction teacher, mentioned a Commercial Course which the Government had set up at Wymondham College a year earlier. This sounded quite promising so, along with Thirza Hipkin and Pamela Cork, took the necessary exam. We passed and so began the year which mapped out my future.

Patricia Freeman had joined the Course in 1951 and was one of the pioneers. She was a tower of strength and helped me through the first weeks there when I was 'all at sea' and very nervous. She was my mentor.

It was a Boarding College but we, on the Commercial Course, boarded Monday to Friday and went home every weekend. We were ferried to and fro by Harry Wymer in a blue Bedford bus or charabanc as it was termed then. I quite enjoyed those journeys; it was an interval between home and College and time to get acclimatized. I do not remember much about the mundane process of packing and unpacking; which must have been a bit of a bore.

First impressions of the College were not very encouraging. Coming from a new Secondary Modern School and being confronted with a maze of black nissan huts did not do much for our morale. It did, however, teach us not to judge by appearances. The teaching was first class (forgive the pun) and we were treated with respect as young adults. Teenagers had

not then been invented! The lessons were never dull; perhaps as it was all a novel experience. Being a Commercial Course our main subjects were Shorthand, Typing and Bookkeeping. Although I have never looked on maths as one of my strong points I enjoyed Bookkeeping, I think because of its neatness and order. The other lessons I remember were English and Geography; two of my favourite subjects. Being absent at weekends meant not taking much part in the extramural activities of the College.

We were not expected to pay to attend this Commercial Course, which I for one took for granted at the time. But on reflection I realise we were very privileged to receive such a good grounding which this Course provided absolutely free. It was learning on a new level. Perhaps I was too young at the time to fully appreciate it.

We were not cosseted youngsters. We had been through the war and knew what austerity meant, but living in the Nissan huts was a whole new experience. The space between the outer corrugated iron sheets and the inside lining was populated by creatures which we would hear scurrying about at night. We did not speculate what they were; I for one did not want to know. I do remember Jill Williamson sitting guard in the Common Room by a hole in the bottom of the lining waiting to clobber any creature unwary enough to poke out its head. There were about 20 of us girls in the dormitory sleeping in spaces divided by wardrobes. Two beds to each space. At the top of the dorm. were the bathrooms, toilets etc. and at the bottom the common-room. The teacher in charge of the dormitory had a private room.

As far as I can remember the meals were not very exciting but adequate. I do remember carrots, especially in salads. Whenever I grate carrots they come out shredded but at Wymondham they were piled on the plate grated fine. Forgive my ignorance but I still do not know how that was achieved. Perhaps someone will enlighten me.
(Small point!).

60th Anniversary Celebrations

Trail Blazer Day – 8th April 2011

The day dawned warm and sunny and our guests began to arrive from about 10am for an 11am start! We were expecting about 80 Old Wymondhamians, who first arrived at the College in 1951, to join us for a day of celebration packed full of memories.

A report on the day by Mr Bill Hammond (1951-56)

The Service in the Chapel went extremely well, I was very honoured to be allowed to take part. The Choir and musicians were very talented and the whole Service opened by the perfect introduction from Mike Herring, who got us all relaxed, and he was so right, I doubt whether any of us April people had ever looked at the College early days in that light, the central heating and plenty of hot water etc., I certainly hadn't.



After plenty of gutsy singing by the congregation the whole Service was polished by the efforts of a great Chaplain, who I thought was really worth his place - and what about the girl Sperring! and the indestructable Lady Ralphs.

Then the bus ride - what a great idea, and what a treat. I am sure we all enjoyed that and what a surprise on seeing the museum and hearing and seeing all there was there, another great idea and we all seemed to relax with everyone speaking to each other.

Back on the bus, managed to talk to the bus 'anoraks' who were only too pleased to talk of their fetish. They even knew of a wreck of a bus in my local scrapyards. Very welcome cups of tea and college biscuits and more talk and memories and the presence, (as he was all day) of the young (compared to us) Principal Melvyn Roffe.

We did the tours of various departments but some had to leave, but myself, Brenda, John Brown and Heather, who had not been back to the College since leaving in '59, found ourselves alone, being shown around by an extremely pleasant student who I recognise as a player in North Walsham Rugby Club Team (My Team) - what more could you want.



We were very impressed by what we saw until we came to the new 6th Form Centre, and we were 'gob smacked' . There cannot be many better facilities worldwide. We mentioned to the students sitting around in the sun, we hoped they realised how lucky they were. They all indicated that they were.

The Diamond Ball – 4th June 2011

It was decided that, as part of the programme of events to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the College, we should hold a Diamond Ball to which all those connected to the College in whatever way could come and help us celebrate. So, the plan was made, the tickets sold, the food/drink arranged, the band was booked, the marquee decorated to within an inch of its life, the waiters and waitresses were anxiously awaiting the arrival of our first guests. The sun shone on us that evening and guests were able to mingle outside the marquee whilst sipping champagne and nibbling canapes.



Our guests came from a wide range of College connections, including Old Wymondhamians, parents, College staff, governors, trustees and members of the PSA. Out of the 350 guests present, 60 of them were Old Wymondhamians – which is most encouraging. After the Champagne Reception, where our guests were entertained by FAME, a string quartet made up of present students, we made our way into the dining area for a five course dinner produced from ingredients sourced locally and prepared beautifully by our very own Mr Bob Bales (Catering Manager) and his team. Dinner was followed by dancing to The Jonathan Wyatt Big Band, and a disco supplied by Craig Royale, and it was 1.00am before the last of guests left for home.

Here are a few perspectives on the evening:

“Just a quick email to congratulate you on organising such a fantastic Ball last night for the College. It really was super, everything was 'spot on', from the moment we arrived until the last dance! The champagne flowed, the food was delicious and so nice to see that it came from local sources. The students did a fabulous job serving, very attentive and so lovely to see them all joining in the dancing too!

Good prizes for the auction, with a welcome change that the evening was not taken over by auctions and raffles etc, like so many balls these days!

*The marquee was beautifully set out and arranged, and the dance floor was perfect size!
A truly fabulous event.”*

A Wymondham College parent.

I should like to congratulate Caroline Hall and Jackie Glenn for their excellent organisation of the Diamond Ball.

Past and present members of staff, former students, parents and friends met for drinks and canapes in bright sunshine on the lawns of Elizabeth Fry Hall. A delicious five course dinner was served by the catering staff, aided by sixth form students, under the leadership of Bob Bales, the College Catering Manager.

I shared a table with my family (less our eldest son who is in Dubai) and one of my former house captains: Flight Lieutenant Christopher Collins RAF.

Following coffee there was dancing, conversation and shared memories. The evening ended after midnight.

Michael W Brand (Staff 1962-1998)



The Brand Family at the Diamond Ball

“What a fantastic summer evening with drinks on the lawn where Nissen huts once stood, followed by a superb meal.

It was amazing to see how the school has evolved over the 15 years since I was last there and entertaining to see some faces from my past.

It was an evening when old and new came together to celebrate what has, and will continue to be, a great environment to develop young people.”

Justin Brand (Fry Hall 1985-92)

Service of Thanksgiving

On 13th October, some 800 of us, governors, staff, parents, pupils past and present, assembled in Norwich Cathedral for the 60th Anniversary Service of Thanksgiving. In the words of the Dean this event was of particular significance, as we gave thanks to God for all that has been and all that will be. In welcoming the congregation, he especially mentioned Mrs. Joan Sperring, one of the two founding heads in 1951. Andrew Day had clearly rehearsed the College orchestra, band and choir to almost perfection for the music before and during the service, including, appropriately, three pieces by Handel. Andrew and the performers were much acclaimed after the service.

The first lesson was first read by the President of the OWs, Norman Lamb MP, taken from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians which speaks of Christ being the wisdom and power of God, the second, read by the Principal, Melvyn Roffe, included the words of the Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount in the fifth chapter of Matthew.

Before taking two themes from these readings in his address, The Bishop of Norwich paid tribute to the late Sir Lincoln Ralphs for his foresight and imagination in founding Wymondham College. The Bishop also welcomed and paid tribute to Lady Enid Ralphs for maintaining her interest and enthusiasm for the College. Bishop James then compared the early 1950s with the present day mentioning the Festival of Britain, food rationing, the role of

women and changes in the pace of life. A mini classics lesson followed with the Bishop explaining that the word 'school' or 'scholar' had a Greek as well as a Latin root which literally means leisure in the pursuit of knowledge. Targets in schools, encouragement to succeed, ambitions etc. are not wrong, but they need to be tempered with the teachings of Jesus which are so often ignored - wisdom which the world counts as foolishness.

Truly authentic people are those who heed the Beatitudes and are exemplars of meekness, people like Nelson Mandela, Mother Theresa, Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama. Meekness is not weakness. Wymondham College is not only a special school because it is a successful school but because it has a special regard for true wisdom. Those words which were spoken over 2,000 years ago have special resonance for Wymondham College. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth".



David Hastings, Jack Smith, Geoffrey Hardaker, Anne and Adrian Hoare at the tea in the Hostry after the Service of Thanksgiving.

After the service, guests were entertained to tea where a celebration birthday cake was cut by Lady Enid, Joan Sperring, Ronald Wolsey and Melvyn Roffe. Norman Lamb in his address spoke affectionately of his time as a pupil and his brief involvement with the College as a solicitor. Melvyn Roffe spoke of the uniqueness of the College, the inspiration

of its founders and launched the Diamond Jubilee Appeal with its two initial objectives of creating two funds, one for Special Projects and the other for a Bursary Fund. We departed with thankfulness for the past and with much hope for the future.

Jack W. Smith (1951-53)

Heritage Trail

The 60th Anniversary Heritage Trail was inaugurated on Sunday 13th November by the Principal, Melvyn Roffe and Lt.Col Christopher Bennett who is the Commander of 100th Operations Support Squadron at RAF Mildenhall. The Trail is composed of a series of interpretation boards explaining the significance of the remaining buildings and site layout from the earliest times to the present day. It provides a "Walk Through History" including Roman, Saxon, Medieval, Victorian and Wartime links which will be explained as you take the Trail. This was made possible by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and a donation from the Old Wymondhamians.

During term time all visitors taking the Heritage Trail must be accompanied by a member of staff. This is for the safety of the students. Accompanied tours take place on Wednesdays at 2pm (weather permitting). To take the Trail at other times please contact Reception in person, by telephone on 01953 609000 or by email at enquiries@wymondhamcollege.org and the College will do their best to accommodate you.



Obituaries

Jan Mullins (1951-52) After a long battle with cancer, Jan Mullins (nee Platten) died in hospital on Tuesday 8th February 2011. She will be sorely missed by her family and friends.

Maureen Boldero (1951-54) Maureen Boldero (nee Seaton) died suddenly on Friday 11th February 2011. She and Geoffrey Boldero met at College and had been married for many years. They had recently become great-grandparents. She will be sadly missed by all her family and old friends.

David Thompson Our good friend Joan Thompson and her husband David had planned to return to the UK when Joan retired. Joan, virtually single handedly, organised the Australian reunion, and their house in Brisbane was a home from home on more than one rugby tour. Very sadly David passed away on their return to the UK in March this year. To an Australian he would be considered "a good mate". Those of us who had the pleasure to get to know him loved his sense of humour, his hair raising driving, his meticulous model making, and an ability to almost see life as a prank! He is, and will continue to be, sadly missed and we extend our sincere condolences to Joan, her children and grandchildren.

College Newsletter

If you would like to see what all our current students have been up to then please click on the link to go to the College Website where you will find an electronic copy of the College Newsletter in the New Year under the News and Events section on the front page.

<http://www.wymondhamcollege.org/>

We have also included some dates for key College events in the **Dates for your Diary**.

Dates for your Diary

Old Wymondhamians AGM	4 th February 2012
College Production of Les Miserables	7 th -10 th February 2012
PSA Quiz and Supper Evening	2 nd March 2012
Mair Cup Music Festival	25 th March 2012
Royal Norfolk Show	27 th /28 th June 2012
Golf Day	6 th July 2012
OW Summer Reunion (venue/time tbc)	7 th July 2012



Wishing you a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year