

Old Raineians' Association NEWSLETTER

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May 2020



The Winds of Changes

A few words from the Editor

Dear Members,

It is a strange period of history we are all living through. The school we thought would always be there has been through the local councils' processes as far as we understand will be due to close for ever at the end of July. One thing that can't be taken away from all of us though is our own personal memories of our time there. Alongside that globally there is a new situation for us all as the pandemic associated with Covid -19 seems to be shutting the world as many have only known it and us older crowd have seen it develop into. To some of us the reliance now on technology is almost as frightening as the stories of virus infections are to others. However I would urge anyone in self isolation or even just those cooped up at home during the social distancing we are all being asked to do, if you are feeling lonely to reach out to the other ex-Raineians on one of the many Facebook pages and groups available.

The ORA website is up to date and the photos from the Winter Reunion 2019 are now available to view. Just try a search on google (or any other search engine) for ORA online..

The Old Raineian's Association Annual General Meeting that was planned to take place in May at the Civil Service Club off New Scotland Yard along with a lunch had to be placed on hold. We will seek a new date once all this is over so we would certainly still ask that you keep us updated as to your interest in attending so that when the time comes that we can book with confidence and that we have the ability to open the invitation to many as possible.

The Committee consists of:

Anthony Groves, President
Tony Beard, Secretary
Clive Baugh, Treasurer
Eddy Dodwell Gemma O'Connor, Newsletter
Laurie Dalton, Membership Secretary

Other Committee
Sandra Johnson Claire Burrows

A message from Chris Fisher

Just wanted to say hello to all those particularly in Foundation House or 5G in my last year in 1978.

I know now what great times I had at school especially in my last few years up until 1978.

I have great memories and pupils I remember are Christopher Christou, Bryn Dye, Tim Weller, Pete Ellis, Kenneth Constantine, Debbie Vine and Ann Marks amongst others.

So hi if anyone remembers me, wish I could go back to those times.

Christopher Fisher 5G 1978.

A message from Vic Hall

I was a pupil at Raines from 1951-1958, amongst my memorabilia I have intact and in good condition 6 editions of the School Mag' ~ The Raineian. 1952-1957.

Also a Distribution of Prizes for 1955-56 and my school reports from 12/1951 to 07/1958. The School Reports and Prize giving Prog' I can scan into pdf.

I now do not have the kit, software or patience to digitise The Raineians!

I am happy to loan them to you if you can get that chore done.

Vic Hall

From a Facebook post by David Powell which drew in some interesting comments

When I was at Raines, 1958-1963, football was not one of the sports that we were allowed to play, although we did play football with a small plastic ball in the playground. Can somebody please advise if it was allowed in later years, or was it always rugby?

From the 1940's some Facebook posts by Pamela Kaye May Ho and Eileen Oliver which drew in some interesting comments

- Anyone here old enough to have been evacuated with the school to Hurstpierpoint, Sussex? I joined the school there in 1943 and was billeted at first in a hostel with 25 girls. My name at that time was Pamela Burns
- And is there anyone who joined in 1943 and were in Collet House? – May Ho
- I do wonder how many of us who attended Raines during WW2 are still alive and importantly, follow this website. I have been unable to contact any. On the 8th May 1945, I had not yet been brought home to Shadwell from Hurstpierpoint so missed the jubilation and street parties, that is if there were any in Watney Street. I later again attended school in Arbour Square instead of the converted house during the evacuation. I was not used to being surrounded by bombed ruins -Eileen Oliver

KEEPING THE CONVERSATION GOING

Have these bitesize notes peaked your interest or rekindled memories well here's how you can keep things going...

The conversation on the online page can be added to by you through Visitor Posts as well as by answering comments on others and the 'pages' posts, so why not help the conversation grow.

If you are unable to access the online and you would like us to add something to the 'page', please email an article through to us as we will try and put it on line and in the newsletter.

If you have an email address you can receive the newsletter via your email. You can still print it out and read it and it saves on the postage and admin involved in the distribution. Joining us online means even in isolation or having restricted social interaction you can still be with friends.

If you want to add something to the Newsletter please do drop us a line and we will include items where we can. Comparisons with today's virus restrictions to other Raines related adventures...No toilet roll whilst halfway up Snowdonia? Pasta only whilst on ski trips and you or someone didn't like it? Travel restrictions or Rationing during the war. Three days weeks and school closures, army manning the streets in 70's? TB isolation, Fear of losing people through uncontrollable events. Friends and communities during hard times. Teaching during those times and what teachers are being asked to do now. There's lots to compare with our own pasts at Raines and even our learning from there will have shaped how we are taking those teachings and reacting to the current situation. Let us and let other know your stories. We look forward to hearing from you.

For those of you who enjoy a longer read ...

An Article submitted via email by John Smith

RAINE'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL, ARBOUR SQUARE in the 1950s

Background

I lived in the City from birth, gained a Governor's place from Sir John Cass Foundation Primary School at Aldgate and began in the 'C' stream a year younger than my contemporaries. I followed the shade of my brother Roy (ten years my elder), an England Schoolboys and Harlequins rugby player and, with his Raineian girlfriend Gladys Norman, an ORA stalwart. Roy joined the RAF as a Pilot Officer but died in a much-publicised motorcycle accident in a dense 1955 fog. His widow joined the RAF herself and, now Gladys Castle, she lives in Wales. Roger Smith MBE, my younger brother, followed me into Raines and distinguished himself during a remarkable career in the RAF. Roger now lives in Stafford close to his wider family, playing golf. We travelled to school on the No.15 bus (all human life is there, I found), joining in with the fascinating trolleybuses from Aldgate onwards. My father made the oak roll of honour cabinet supporting the founder's bust, an ORA gift to the school.

Practices and Customs

The boys and the girls next door were not allowed to mix. The boys were often disruptive or unco-operative. Punishments for bad behaviour included: 1) reprimand: 2) physical – six if the best - Wally Spooner's 'slipper' was the most feared: 3) removal from the classroom to stand outside: 4) a pencil entry into the behaviour record book and erased upon subsequent good behaviour: 5) an ink entry: 6) caning administered by the headmaster: 7) a wide range of other individual teachers' techniques - I remember a boy required to hold a salt-cellar at arm's length while standing on a table in the Dining Hall. There were four Houses, although their significance only seemed to come to light on Sports Day. 'Jake's' (Jacob's?), a sweetshop in Commercial Road was popular with the boys and any

boy going home for lunch took an order list. 'May I go forth?' was the only accepted toilet request. Looking back, not many of us enjoyed our schooldays although I viewed my days at Raine's as a good education. Boys and girls were definitely not allowed to mix.

Staff

Gerald Shutt was Headmaster at the time of my admission. He later took the same post at Westminster School. After finishing top of the form, he told me I would promote to the 'B' stream if top again and that otherwise that he would cane me. Scared stiff of failure, I was promoted. Mr Goode, a strict Baptist, was Headmaster at my leaving. Conscious of important non-taught social skills like (in the boys' case) cooking and car maintenance, with the Headmistress he agreed to the joint 6th Forms' request for ballroom dancing lessons. But, to our dismay, to be held separately. He tried to reprimand my father (not a wise idea) for giving me too close a haircut but I was nevertheless obliged to wear my cap inside the school throughout the following week or so. Dr Forrester, my first form master, was a true academic, a kind and wise teacher of whom alas we took advantage by misbehaving and I regret this because I was not blameless. Ken Tulk was my later form master. I have read nothing about him in newsletters since I left school. I owe him much for his support and I would dearly like to have thanked him. Mr Eaton – an excellent French teacher. Alec Aldridge, my excellent later French teacher had a well-known (but not in my day) and distinguished wartime record, more about which has been recorded in newsletters. 'Biffer' Broughton, a Welsh international triallist and History teacher. He never so much as raised his voice yet somehow held pupils' complete respect and constant perfect behaviour. Mr Butterfield was my excellent English teacher. I still remember him on every odd occasion when I get my grammar right. Johnny Roden, an excellent Physics teacher, diminutive but played Rugby for Woodford or Wanstead. Dusty Traill, once an England hurdling coach; half our lessons seemed to be sitting in hurdling posture and exercising hurdling-specific arm motions. Aubrey Ironmonger, our later PE teacher, a statuesque (I'm told) back row forward at Rosslyn Park. I dislocated my right elbow tackling him during rugby practice. My physics notes are almost illegible, being obliged by Mr Roden to record them left-handed. Mr Nay, 'chisel-chucking-Charlie' - a brilliant and much loved crafts teacher prone to temper loss (I dare not relate examples I witnessed) which I suspect may have changed his career, for he abruptly disappeared. Dr Lambert, an idiosyncratic chemistry teacher and the less said, the better. 'Duncan' Edwards (a soubriquet from one of the ill-fated, brilliant Busby Babes), a fine Art teacher who patiently encouraged and inspired me (a relatively lazy pupil) to excel. And a few who never had to put up with me: the much-loved Wally Spooner who we brought to ORA reunions toward the end. Donny Lyons. Jim Shivas. Frank Luton. Mr Bawden, who successfully encouraged boxing in the school. Miss Ringold, the Biology teacher. Although a maths 'A' level student, my later Maths teacher's name has somehow not lingered in my memory, sad to say. I wonder if anyone could remind me?

The Girls' School

The boys generally viewed themselves as robust and confident though mischievous individuals and the girls were seen in the same light. They may not have rivalled St Trinians, but we saw remarkable things jettisoned from their windows and on one occasion an unfortunate girl over the Yard's dividing wall. No interaction was permitted and the doors dividing the two halves of the building were locked although the large glazed folding screen dividing the Hall at least allowed an occasional

distant glimpse. This separation policy did not always work well for the girls. There always seemed to be a predominant expectation of a domestic, teaching or secretarial future for them. The sixth form boys had good physics and chemistry teaching staff but several girls were obliged to attend Coburn School in Bow Road for those studies, Christine Hoe included. Away from the school however, many boys and girls knew each other well anyway. Christine in V.A and I in L.VI became friends and we met when we could. While I managed to escape most censure, Christine alas suffered frequent reprimand until her mother came to the school and forcibly reminded Miss Mangold of the innocent but natural facts. 58 years later we are still happily married.

Games

We walked to the Underground on our way to Hainault (by the Old Blues' home ground) for rugby. On the way, a shop in Stepney Green sold home-made chocolate broken from a large block. On one occasion I learned the value of courage and honesty: I confessed to the groundsman my breaking a changing-room light fitting and was rewarded with the match ball I had kicked. We struggled all the way to Eltham via Shadwell in the spring to play tennis and other games. Cross-country running was loved by some but hated by most. One particular boy would force himself to faint to escape the ordeal. There were of course many notably successful athletes who attended Raine's and some may not feature on our website. In my day, the outstanding character was undoubtedly Robin Hobbs of Essex, Glamorgan and England, awarded a Star (a different kind of newspaper at the time) bat while in the 2nd Form at school and celebrated the following day in morning assembly. I remember the centre-back Brookner twins, Cyril and Alan – impossible to defend against once they had the ball and Joe Arscott was the best fly-half I ever saw (and I have seen a few) – I wonder if he continued in the sport? Fights occasionally happened in the Yard, closely surrounded by onlookers and one boy made the mistake of opposing John Davison. I later went with my father to see him fight and win in the ABA Championships. In 1958-59, I remember our new school basketball team beginning to beat all-comers. Sports day was popular and held at the Eton Manor ground in Leyton. In the Yard, High-Jimmy-Knacker (also played by the girls, to my surprise), British bulldog and piggy-back fighting were always popular.

Events

June 1954. Lunchtime in the Yard saw the whole school - boys, teachers, cooks and Secretary viewing the not-quite-total eclipse of the sun, the best until 1999. We were armed with an assortment of screening devices - photographic film, smoky glass slides and only a few purpose-made card spectacles. A miracle if nobody suffered permanent damage. Around the same time, our form enjoyed a trip to Metz, Moselle with the Rev'd George Loughborough, my first foray abroad and where we stayed for several days, perhaps a week. I remember being fascinated by the foreign building design details, especially art nouveau decoration and huge espagnolette bolted shutters. An enormous bowl of mashed potatoes which smelled and tasted wonderful and very different. And an Algerian chaperone ("Algerie Francaise!" were his watchwords) who was taught the most profane expressions by these East London kids without a clue as to their foul meaning. Towards the end of my schooldays, The Aeolian String Quartet would periodically entertain us. I was spellbound by their playing which launched my own interest in classical music. July 1958 and the last day of term. Potassium permanganate dyed the whole of the school's cold water supply pink. Mr Ironmonger's crash hat (he rode a motor scooter) found itself on top of the toilets' soil and vent pipe. Across the

school's main double entrance doors was fixed a wooden plaque bearing the words, "St. Hyam's School for Lay Preachers". School caps and hymn books burned in a large fire in the Yard. With all pupils assembled, an ingenious device involving a battery, alarm clock mechanism and Jetex model fuels issued smoke from beneath the dais staging just as the final assembly was about to begin. Coughing front row first-formers were quickly led from the Hall followed by everyone else. Every member of the sixth and then the fifth forms was interviewed individually. Those responsible (I understand that the three fifth-formers voluntarily admitted their involvement) were expelled. At the time, the proceedings were seen by most boys in a very different light than by the staff.

Contacts

Unlike Christine, I did not keep in contact with my contemporaries for long. Gerry Cook and I continued with others to entertain publicly for a while, mostly performing Everly Brothers classics. From time to time since, I made fleeting contact with Gerry, George Oag and Geoff Smith as well as Roy's friends George Osborne and Fred Gregory in 5763. As Jorie Robbins mentions, Christine and many of her schoolfriends from over the globe still meet up occasionally somewhere in the world. Husbands, Raineian or otherwise are not invited - the tradition happily continues.

I resist the temptation to add a CV except to say that I am an architect, mostly retired from my private practice Tangram Ltd which still thrives strongly in Bermondsey. We live in Wanstead with our families close by.

John Smith (1952-1959)

Update on people we hear from

- Gerry Calvert (maths teacher) update. One of the committee members lives quite local to Gerry and has had contact within the last week plus arranged to deliver food parcels where needed so can therefore confirm that in general he is doing fine but still recovering from his previous stroke. In previous contact he sent his thanks to all those who have reached out over the past 12 months or so and says hello to all, who remember him.
- Gwyneth Jackson (music Teacher) update. It appeared that several people were reporting that their usual contact with Ms J, as she was affectionally known, had stopped. A recent update on her from Mrs Darch (nee Lewis) (English teacher 1970's and 80's) gave the following information: Yesterday (11th May 20020), Gwyneth moved into a care home in Ripon. At present, I have no idea what the long term plans are. If anyone wishes to write to her, this is the address :

Long Meadow Care Home, 60 Harrogate Road, Ripon, HG4 1SZ.

Gwynneth is always delighted to hear from former pupils but can I suggest that, if you do write, try to include as much context as possible to help her recall exactly who you are.

- Danny Perkins (ex-head boy) update Danny is now a very active administrator on on of the facebook groups. He is now retired and spends his time on a number od things one of which is promoting the sharing of memories on the facebook group by setting up a starters thread for every year going back to the 40's. He responds to enquiries by publishing them on the group in a prominent position thus helping not only ex pupils but the families of the more senior ex-Raineians trying to get in touch with friends from the past.

History buffs corner

Swimming pool or not...the saga continues.

Following on from previous discussion one of our number was conducting searches related to something else and came across these plans which show gymnasium in the early 40's.

History of the school -take your own adventure into discovering the past you are part of

Did you know there are several places within the national archives that you can search to take a peak at the history of Raines School and later Raines School Foundation. Some items are available online; to view others require you to take a wonder down to the National Archives in the Bloomsbury area of North London. (Just round the corner from the old Saddlers Wells Theatre to be exact.)

One of our committee spent time during the past year looking at records that spanned the whole 300 years and included Henry Raines will, Education Departments (of varying names) inspections and reports, the construction drawings for Arbour Square, the St Judes Building and the Parmiters building, Head Masters reports from the forties and war planning for the continued education of Raineians, Governor discussions about the amalgamation with St Judes and the sale and acquisition of the various buildings. There is a vast amount of information there going right back through the past 300 years. Post lockdown you feel like shutting yourself away in a room (haha) then why not take a trip down there to check it all out.

Thank you all for your submission and little nuggets of information.

Unfortunately there is no physical AAM this month and the dinner that we were hoping to arrange has had to go on hold all due to the current virus measures. We hope to see you all again soon but please keep in touch and we let you know as soon as we can give news of further gatherings.

Keep Healthy, Play Nicely, and most of all stay Happy

The ORA Committee