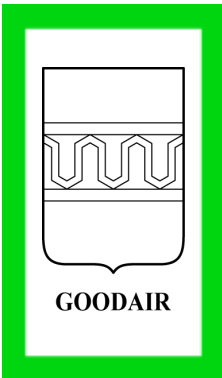


The New Hoghtonian

The Newsletter of the Preston Grammar School Association - Issue 3 - September 2014



Happy Michaelmas to all our readers!

Summer 2014 is ending in fine style (in more ways than one). The summer programme of events has been completed with the usual panache and success, reports being included here and/or on the websites, and we are now in the throes of arranging the winter equivalents. The full programme of forthcoming events is on page 7 and we look forward to seeing more of you joining in. We are also looking at introducing some new activities, in order to enthuse and enliven some of the more sedentary folk!



In the past few months we have welcomed some new Members, said Goodbye to some existing Members (all of whom left involuntarily) and renewed acquaintance across the board.

The winner of the first (and only) prize in the crossword competition in the last Issue was David Holmes, who crossed the finishing line at an exhilarating speed. His prize (automatic free entry to the next crossword competition) has had to be held over because of space problems in this Issue. Sorry David.



The more observant among our readers will have noticed that some of the gallery photographs on the websites have been cabbaged recently (because of an unexplained glitch by Google). We are working to correct the situation - watch these spaces.



The Team

The Newsletter is produced by the Editorial Team:

Text - Tony Olivine and Jim Goring

Photography - Maurice Barker

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using inputs from any and every available source. Contributions, and any comments or complaints, should be addressed to the Team, care of The Editor at newsletter@pgsassociation.org.uk. All gratefully received.

The Association's web sites are at

<http://www.pgsassociation.org.uk/> and <http://www.pgsa-plus.co.uk>

The PGSA Military Interest Group

A tour of the D-Day Landings in Normandy, 3rd - 6th October 2014, with Leger Holidays

Day One - Travel from Preston to our hotel in Normandy.

Day Two - We start our day looking at the first actions of D-Day seeing Pegasus Bridge, the Gondree Cafe and visit the Pegasus Bridge museum, where the original bridge is located, then onto Ranville War Cemetery.

Following lunch we travel to the British landing beaches. Starting at Sword Beach we see the new memorial to Piper Bill Millin. At Juno beach we look at the Canadian role, visiting the Juno Beach Centre, and following onto Gold Beach before ending the day at Arromanches seeing where the Mulberry Harbour was constructed.

Day Three - Today we travel to the American Landing Beaches, starting at Omaha Beach, seeing the 29th Division Memorial and visiting the Normandy American Cemetery, continuing onto the Overlord Museum. Lunch will be taken at St Mere Eglise. This afternoon we look at the US Airborne forces, seeing (commander of the 'Band of Brothers') Richard Winters Leadership Memorial. Then to Utah Beach and the Utah Beach Museum. We end the day at the German cemetery at La Carnbe, where German Tank Ace Michael Whittmann is buried.

Day Four - Return to UK.

School Visit 2014

On Wednesday 3rd July 2014, 17 former pupils visited Moor Park High School and Sixth Form to reminisce about the time they spent there when it was known as Preston Grammar School, and to see how much it had changed since then. (Oh how it has changed!).

We were greeted by a warm reception from the Head, Mr Peter Cunningham, who gave us a brief explanation of the current function of the school, the great success that it is currently enjoying, future plans, and the importance of the continued contact and involvement of PGSA in the role of the school.

We were then led on a guided tour of the building by the Business Manager Margaret Jowett, assisted by Pete Hawarden (Estates Manager). Whilst the character of the main building has been retained much as we remember it, there have been numerous additions in the form of extra classrooms, a huge and superb gymnasium (no wall bars or climbing ropes - Health and Safety is everywhere) and even a dance room. Don't know what some of the old timers made of that one, but many did used to go to Worsley's Ballroom on a Saturday, though I suspect that dancing was not on their minds.

All the pupils are now given a tablet, not to swallow, but to enable them to interact with the numerous computers to be found in almost every room in the building. Even woodwork is now done on a computer, with a laser cutting out the finished article. Can't figure out how this will help them to make a shelf at home with a handsaw like I have to do.

The tour was rounded off by an excellent buffet in the drama room, where the President expressed thanks to our hosts for a most enjoyable afternoon, and handed over a token of our appreciation in the form of a collection made by our members.

I'm sure that all present thoroughly enjoyed our trip down memory lane coupled with a brief look into the future, and feel certain that our old Alma Mater is in good hands.

Report by Jim Goring

The Association's proposed Guild Wheel Walk

A Message from our President

We are proposing to undertake a Sponsored Walk of the Preston Guild Wheel in 2015 and would like to give early notice of the event (i) to allow for the planning of it, and (ii) to provide enough preparation time for potential participants. An Action Group has been set up, and some of its members will shortly be reconnoitring the circuit by cycle.

The more energetic amongst us will probably aim to walk the whole 21 miles in one go, whilst others might be happy to complete one or more of the measured sections of the route (some of which are very short). The event as a whole will be open both to Members of the Association and to their Guests (male and female).

We should like the proceeds to be donated to a Charity, and given the Hodgson connection and the importance of the School Camp to many Old Boys, and the fact that a number still walk in the region, the Wasdale Mountain Rescue Team has been put forward as a strong suggestion. The donation would be welcomed, and it would also go some way towards formalising our appreciation for the reassuring presence and the occasional call-outs of the Team during the Nether Wasdale years and, moreover, the dramatic rescue of one of our own Members not so long ago.

Further details will be published nearer the time, and any interim feedback will be welcomed.

Colin Monks.

Note: (for those not already aware of the Guild Wheel).

The Wheel is a 21-mile walking and cycling circuit of Preston, set up to commemorate the 2012 Preston Guild Merchant Festival, which uses existing public rights of way together with a couple of small additions to complete the circuit. For more information about the Wheel see [here](#).

MEMBERSHIP: RECENT OBITUARIES

Dr Joseph Robert Nixon who lived in Epsom Downs, attended Preston Grammar School between 1944 and 1951. He sadly passed away on 7th March this year, aged 80 years. I was informed of this by his wife Ruth, who added the following: "He was a pupil at Preston Grammar School in the second half of the 1940s. He came south and attended King's College, London University, and obtained his B.Pharm and Doctor of Philosophy Degrees, and then became a Lecturer and Senior Lecturer at the University. Although he never returned to Preston after his parents died, he had many happy memories of his time spent at Preston Grammar School. My very best wishes to you and for the continuing success of the Association."

Jeff Garstang, who lived in Garstang, passed away on 28th May last. He attended PGS from 1948 to 1953 and was in Harris House. On leaving School he became a Stock-Broker in the family firm of Swindells, Brandwood and Garstang, and was a work colleague of our Past President John Brandwood.

Jim Danby, who was a former Police Officer, lived in Ashton and passed away in June of this year. He had been in Miller House and had attended the School between 1952 and 1960. He had only recently joined the Association (a collection of his photos is on the Website), and he was also a member of the Lancashire Place Names Survey (the English Place Names Society).

(cont:)

(cont:)

Geoffrey Threlfall Swarbrick, a truly dedicated Prestonian living in Grimsargh, died on 1st August this year, aged 91 years. He had been at the Grammar School from 1934 to 1939, and was an active Member of the Association, having been President in 2001, and a long-serving Member of the Executive Council. Up until recently I don't remember him ever having missed a meeting.

On leaving School Geoff became a car mechanic, and owned his first garage on Moor Lane in Preston. It was, however, as a politician that I knew him best, and here he carved out a very successful 'career' for himself. He served on the Grimsargh Parish Council for over 35 years, and he was a Preston Councillor long before the City status was acquired, a cause which he had long espoused. He was elected Mayor of Preston for the Millennium year, and for his overall contribution to the City he was created an Honorary Alderman and an Honorary Burgess. Always considered a "real gentleman", he received much praise for his work on his passing, but it is also true to say that he had throughout remained a dedicated family man, having celebrated his diamond wedding anniversary with wife Jean in 2009.

In Grimsargh he held a number of other positions, and with Jean alongside, they did much fund-raising, supporting various local causes along the way. He will always be remembered by generations of children who on field days were lucky enough to be given a ride on his "Grimsargh Flyer", a mock railway engine he had built on a Mini chassis!

David Johnson, who lived in Tarleton, died on 1st September aged 81 years. He was at the School from 1944 to 1951, and was in Thornley House. Prof Don Eccleston (Goodair, 1944-1951), who knew David well (he had been Don's Best Man in 1958), sent me the following:

"David Johnson was one of a group of pupils who were bussed in each morning from Tarleton and Hesketh Bank. David was a bright lad as witness his Maths results. He left School in 1951 to do his National Service, after which he joined the family butchers business, an unlikely combination of brains and brawn (pun intended). Fortunately he went into teaching, which was his metier. He was a charismatic and hugely popular teacher of IT. Following his retirement, he and his wife Joan indulged their passion for foreign travel. David's final illness, though predictable, was short and pain-free. He leaves a wife, a daughter, two sons and seven grandchildren."

David took a great deal of interest in the Association, and indeed, less than a couple of years ago he was instrumental in helping me to locate another Old Boy for a "get in touch" project.

John Foster Jim Heppell (Miller, 1932-1939) informs me that John Foster, who was a lifelong friend and exact contemporary of his at School, has died very recently (September 2014) at the age of 92. I do not have any further details at the moment.

John, a retired Surgeon, had lived for many years in the Carlisle area, but had recently moved to Leeds to be nearer his daughter. Despite being away from Preston he had always taken an active interest in the Association, serving on the Executive Council and becoming President in 2004. He regularly contributed to the Newsletter and the Website, and was a great benefactor to PGSA.

He, along with all of the other Members above, will be sorely missed, and the thoughts and best wishes of the Association go out to their respective families, friends and colleagues.

Charlie Billington.

NEW MEMBER

Since the last edition of the New Houghtonian, we have one new Member, **James Stewart Hunter**, who was at the School from 1960 to 1968 and was in Harris House. Of course, we knew him as "Tab", and we had quite a number of escapades in common. Welcome on board Tab!!!

Charlie Billington.

Some (fairly recent) news for the Association's "History of PGS and its pupils".

The Garstang Courier for Wednesday April 25th 2012 included the following in its News section.

"River fall man airlift rescue

81-year-old suffers head injury and hypothermia in river plunge

AN 81-YEAR-OLD man was airlifted to hospital after plunging into a river.

The man fell into the River Wyre, where it meets the Lancaster Canal near Garstang Country Hotel and Golf Club, at around 3pm on Tuesday last week.

It is believed he made a desperate swim towards the river-bank as the water carried him along. A North West Air Ambulance helicopter attended the scene at the rear of Garstang St Thomas' Primary School along with an ambulance, firefighters, police and members of Bowland Pennine Mountain Rescue Team. The man was treated for a head injury and hypothermia and wrapped in a foil blanket before being carried on a stretcher into the helicopter. The aircraft set off for the Royal Preston Hospital but, due to wind conditions, was diverted to Blackpool Victoria Hospital.

A walker who witnessed the operation said the helicopter landed on the golf course and paramedics treated the man for a gash on his head. Chris Mercer, 65, from Ashton, Preston, who took photographs of the rescue, had been walking along the Lancaster Canal. He said: "I was up on the aqueduct while they were helping the man on the river bank. From what people said, the elderly gentleman had been walking along the canal and he went down the steps to walk along the river. He stumbled apparently, rolled and fell in the river and was extremely lucky to get out. It washed him another 20 metres and he scrambled to the side and rested on the bank."

A spokesman for Lancashire Police said the man's family had been informed and were going to the hospital, where he was being treated last night. His condition last night was unknown.

She said there were not thought to be any suspicious circumstances relating to the incident. She said: "We received a call from the ambulance service around 3.15pm reporting that a man had fallen into the river. He was conscious and breathing and firefighters helped him onto a stretcher and into the helicopter."

Garstang Aqueduct opened in 1797 and carries the Lancaster Canal over the River Wyre. It was built by John Rennie.

The gentleman in question was none other than our own Norman Leigh, a now-retired doctor, who attended PGS in the 1940's. It's one way of making a splash! We will ferret out some further info.

(Article reproduced by kind permission of Gillian Parkinson, Editor of the Lancashire Evening Post).

Another former pupil Harry Hopkins (1913 - 1998) was, to quote from the *Guardian* obituary, 'a quixotic figure whotilted against injustice'. He was born in Preston, educated at the local grammar school, and took a First in politics, philosophy and economics at Oxford. He was a journalist for much of his life and also the author of a number of books including *The New Look: A Social History of the 40s and 50s in Britain* and *The Long Affray*.

Published in 1985 and described by Ronald Blythe in the *Guardian* as a 'great telling of a shocking story'. Harry Hopkins examines the history of a bitter conflict that raged in England for over two centuries. Coming across an obscure poacher's grave Hopkins finds two contradictory headstones: one denouncing the poacher as a murderer and the other saluting him as a martyr. So begins Hopkins's quest for the truth and it leads him to an age-old battle between peasant and landowner where for the price of a rabbit or a pheasant men were murdered, transported as convicts and executed. This ancient struggle over game was not just about food for the poor poachers and their families, it was about social rank and the power of the landed gentry, the burgeoning class politics of the time and the harsh realities of rural life. Writers like Rudyard Kipling and politicians such as David Lloyd George all engaged in the debates surrounding the game laws and the effect they had on the families of those who were caught poaching. It was a bloody conflict and one that is as compelling now as it was then.

An afternoon with Dr Brian P L Hitchen (BPLH)

Early in May, I visited Brian who took up a post at PGS in 1967 as Head of Chemistry, soon to become overall Head of Science and later to fulfil a similar role at the then newly-established VIth Form College (later to change into W.R.Tuson College and now is Preston College.) He moved to Preston after living for a number of years in the Pennines.

He lives in Ashton with his wife Kath, in the same house they bought upon their arrival in 1967, bringing up their family, who have now flown the nest, so one assumes that they are happily settled and will probably stay!

Brian had previously taught at Chadderton Grammar School, and had a spell in industry with International Nickel after completing his National Service in the Royal Navy and his time in University at Imperial College.

He always had the desire to teach and in his time in industry, enjoyed his tutorial sessions every Friday afternoon with colleagues still on the long road of study.

He recounted his fond memories of his years in Moor Park Ave. between the two Grammar Schools and said that he always thought it a privilege to have taught there. He always had an excellent relationship with pupils and fellow colleagues and described the camaraderie within the common room as very strong, having been warmly welcomed by the staff upon his appointment. Brian formed many long-lasting friendships with members of staff and had soon become involved in regular bridge nights with Jack Wilkinson (JCBW - I still think of Jack by his initials -he was the only person whom I knew to have four initials, apart from BPLH), Les Holmes, Ian Morgan and John (Jock) Shaw. He regularly played soccer for the staff side against the pupils and was also a member of the staff cricket eleven alongside colleagues such as Les Holmes, Nigel Morgan and Ian Morgan, playing against other grammar staffs at Lancaster RGS, Bolton School, QEGS and Ormskirk Grammar.

A number of amusing "out of class " memories came to light during our chat. Early on in his new post, he noticed that along the corridor leading to the Physics lab was a door labelled Radioactive Material Keep Out. The key to this room was held by Alec Dumbill and despite many requests from Brian, the key was "never available" until on one occasion when AD was away, the lab technician was persuaded to unlock the room. Upon entry to this dark room, Brian tripped over a cycle on the floor and was surprised by a noise coming from above. As his eyes became adjusted to the light he saw a row of demi-johns bubbling away producing quite an amount of home brew. On another occasion, whilst Brian had not yet moved house but went home for the weekends, he brought into the common room a box of eggs for the staff, having kept chickens at his house. Unbeknown to Brian, Alec had a small business supplying eggs from his smallholding to a number of staff. What happened after this we shall have to guess.

A teacher's life in schools around this period was relatively safe, however, one morning on arrival at school, he was met by JCBW who promptly handed him four sticks of gelignite which he had just confiscated from a pupil.

There are many contributions to our magazine relating to the summer camps. What is probably not known is that outside the official camp times, a number of staff were able to rent the cottage Fouslyke for the princely sum of £5 for the week!

A later memory relates to the move of the VIth Form College to its new premises at St.Vincent's Road in Fulwood. The exercise was taxing many of the various departments, remember that this now included establishments within the Harris College and Alston Hall and includes Fred Coulthurst. In WWII Fred had been involved in the movement of the British Army in their advance across the desert. It wasn't long before his logistical skills were remembered and once more Fred was brought into the front line, with the result that there was a very smooth transfer without a hitch.

Towards the end of my talk with Brian, I asked if he had visited our Alma Mater and his old department since he retired. His answer was brief and to the point....."there have been quite a number of changes.....some good, and some not so good ", and I am sure that we echo his sentiments on each of our frequent visits.

It was a great pleasure to sit and listen to his reminiscing about an institution no longer in existence, but one of which we were all a part of many years ago and I must add my grateful thanks for the time and hospitality shown to me by Brian and Kath.

Maurice Barker. (PGS '53-'58 VIth. Form Coll. '72-'74)

The Association Calendar - 2014-15

Friday	3 rd - 6 th October	Battlefields Tour (Normandy & D-Day Landings)	TS
Thursday	9 th October	Full Cabinet Meeting, 1400h, Members to be notified	PB
Thursday	16 th October	Bomber Command Presentation, 1900h School Main Gates	JG
Tuesday	21 st October	Visit to Lancashire Museum, 19.00h in the Café	JG
Sunday	9 th November	Remembrance Service, 15.00h at the Minster (Refreshments)	CB
Friday	28 th November	Hot Pot Supper, 19.30h at Fulwood Conservative Club	JG
Tuesday	13 th January	Full Cabinet Meeting, 14.00h, Members to be notified	PB
Thursday	29 th January	Visit to Fulwood Barracks, 18.30h at the Sumners Hotel	JG
Saturday	14 th March	Annual Dinner, 19.00h for 19.30h, The Samlesbury Hotel	CB
Thursday	9 th April	Exec Council Meeting, 19.30h, Fulwood Bowling Club	PB
Friday	8 th May	AGM & Hot Pot Supper, 19.30h, Fulwood Conservative Club	PB
Tuesday	12 th May	The PGSA (Golf), venue/time tbc	TO
Thursday	18 th June	Visit to School, 15.45h at Main Gates (Refreshments)	JG
Tuesday	30 th June	Full Cabinet Meeting, 14.00h, Members to be notified	PB
Wednesday	1 st July	The Roebuck Cup (Bowls), venue/time tbc	TO
Tuesday	8 th September	The PGSA Masters (Golf), venue/time tbc	TO

*All the dates and times for the events on this Calendar are **fixed**. Details are also on **PGSA-Plus**. Reminders will be posted on the website but circulated only **by email**, so if you do not have access to a computer it is important that you keep this record, with the contact details. Separate notifications for the Annual Dinner and AGM will be issued nearer the time. If you wish to attend any (or all!) of the events, please **make a note AND let the named person know** as soon as possible. In the case of the **Golf** and **Bowling** events, please **inform Tony Olivine** of your interest, and he will put you on a 'rolling' contact list, to be notified as and when final details are known. **All the contact details are overleaf.***

Other events are also being considered. These will be advertised as and when they are arranged, along with contact details.

Exec Council and Cabinet Members will receive the usual notification before meetings.

CONTACT DETAILS FOR EVENTS AND MEETINGS

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