

# Old Beaumontians Newsletter

## Issue 49

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### Editors Comments

We still await your ideas about celebrating Beaumont School's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Put your "thinking caps" on and let me have your ideas! [djlowe@ntlworld.com](mailto:djlowe@ntlworld.com)

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You will recall that in the last Newsletter we asked for news of and from pupils who first attended Beaumont School. It was great to receive an e-mail from Jean Shield who attended the school in the very early days. We have published her letter, in which she shares her school day memories with us! Please write in if you have similar stories!

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Memories! At the OB's reunion in July I found myself discussing with another Old Beaumontian, the use of the old Great Northern Railway Line, running between St. Albans and Hatfield and in particular the stretch between Hill End and Smallford.

We came to the conclusion that the station at Hill End was constructed to serve the mental hospital. It was from near the station that a siding was built to enable the deliveries of stores and equipment to be made directly into the hospital.

During the war Hill End hospital was taken over by military authorities and was used to treat wounded servicemen. (I remember having a weekend newspaper round there).

From my own memories the line was well used, particularly during the 1940's. It enabled workers to get to and from the De Havilland Aircraft Works in Hatfield and to many other factories in the area.

The railway level crossing at Hill End was a great adventure for boys. Regularly after school, a few more adventurous lads would, before the crossing gates were closed for an approaching train, place coins on the track, usually an old penny or halfpenny and pick them up after the train had passed, hot, bent and buckled.

*"Dangerous stuff and not to be recommended."*

The line was closed to passenger traffic in the early fifties and has now become the six and a half mile "Alban Way" cycle route, between St. Albans and Hatfield.

*I'm sure you can add a few more stories to this saga!*

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### Your Letters

Dear Don (*An e-mail from Jean Shield*).

In 1938 I attended the Central School in Hatfield Road. When this School was changed to a Grammar School, many of the first year students were transferred to other schools. A number of pupils together with four teachers were allocated to Beaumont, one of the first (if not the very first) Secondary Modern Schools. There were three levels: Grammar, Secondary Modern, and Elementary. The teachers included Miss Ellis who was appointed Head Mistress, and also Miss Sparks the Maths Teacher, Miss Brown who taught History and Miss Flegg was the Science Teacher. I only attended Beaumont for two years as at that time we left school at the age of fourteen years of age. My memories are pleasant with no pressures

such as homework, GCE's or "A" levels..

One of my early memories is of our Domestic Science Teacher - Miss Pickering. Our first task in needlework was to make a pink gingham apron which had to be worn for cookery and laundry. We also had to make green gingham dresses which at that time were part of the summer school uniform. In cookery each week two girls cooked dinner to which we invited our mothers - very nerve wracking.

Miss Flegg created a lovely garden near the Girls entrance to the Gym and surrounded it with a lavender hedge, which she cut when it flowered and sold for one penny (old money of course) a bunch.

As it was war time we carried our gas masks and prepared to evacuate to "the trenches" should the need arise. Fortunately it never did.

I seem to remember Eileen Toms sent you a photograph which included Eileen, Olive Cooper and myself amongst others.

In later years my sisters Janet and Jill and my brother Ian also attended Beaumont.

Jean Shield (nee Breed)

***Footnote.** We were very pleased to receive Jean's memories of her early days at Beaumont school. In her e-mail she mentioned Central School in Hatfield Road . Is the building still standing? If so what is it used for today?*

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Dear Don (*Extracts from an e-mail, letter and articles from Mike Neighbour*).

In the e-mail letter from Mike, he comments on the year group listings which he has compiled and which have been published in previous newsletters. He indicates that confusion over the listings (re Newsletter 46) may have arisen due to the manner in which they were set down. We should perhaps have listed them as "Year of Admission" and not "Year of Leaving."

Mike concludes by stating that the latest listings can be downloaded from his home page:- [homepage.mac.com/mike\\_neighbour](http://homepage.mac.com/mike_neighbour) (this address appears in the Beaumont section of "Friends Re United.")

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Extracts from Mike's letter.

I hope it is not too late to submit another couple of Herts Advertiser articles for the Pink Newsletter. If it is they will do for the Spring issue.

It seems that the Girls' School did not go in for publicity, at least until after the sixties in the same way as the boys' school, even when they were sharing the same premises in Oakwood Drive.

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*Articles reproduced from the Herts Advertiser 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1953. (Sent in by Mike Neighbour).*

### **Beaumont School Changes in Teaching staff**

Mr Leo Norriss, who is leaving Beaumont School St. Albans, at the end of the summer term to settle in south Devon, has been responsible for the fifth-form work in English language, English literature and Mathematics. Examination results, writes a correspondent, bear

testimony to the excellence of his work.

During the last war Mr Norriss served with the RAF, rising to the rank of Squadron Leader and being awarded the Air Force Cross and the Belgian Croix de Guerre. Mr Norriss, who holds the Carnegie Diploma in Physical Education and was until recently, Hon General Secretary of the Amateur Gymnastics Association (England), will be long and affectionately remembered, especially by members of his "Gym Club."

Mrs E M Norriss who did excellent work in English and French, as well as in Music, left the school at Easter.

Mr A Duke MA.(Cantab) who has been senior history master since 1951, is leaving to take up a headship in Surrey.

Mr F Bridges, who joined the school in 1949, has served the school in a multitude of ways. He was responsible for the memorable productions, such as the "Ghost Train" and "Emil and the Detectives," which thrilled and delighted large audiences of children from many other schools. He had also been a keen and effective house master. Mr Bridges has been appointed to the staff of Mandeville School, St. Albans.

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### **New Masters**

These major gaps in the teaching staff of Beaumont School are to be filled by a number of new masters, recently appointed. They are Mr J. B. Sharpe B.A.(Dunelm), who has been a regular member of the London District (Army HQ) soccer and cricket elevens; Mr C Jacobs B. Sc (Lond) who has several times represented Cambridgeshire at athletics (middle distance), was awarded a half-colour for athletics at Leicester University college and also represented his college at hockey ; Mr J R Collier B. Sc (Lond) who also saw active service as a commissioned officer in Iraq and Palestine 1947-48 and later distinguished himself as a weapons instructor in Egypt; Mr J L Cox BA (Dunelm) who was awarded colours for rowing at University College Durham; Mr P. R. Danter B.Sc. (Econ) whose geographical studies have been enlivened by active service in France, Belgium, Holland, India, Ceylon and Singapore.

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### **BEAUMONT BOYS SCHOOL CONCERT**

*An article reproduced from The Herts Advertiser 20<sup>th</sup> July 1956 (sent in by Mike Neighbour).*

Pupils of Beaumont Boys' School, St. Albans, combined to give a concert on Monday and Tuesday. The programme included songs by the school choir, which was only formed this year. Messrs M. Boddaert and J. Hope have done well in training the boys. The choir rehearses outside school hours.

Outstanding among performers were Trevor Chapman, Darrell King, David Dimmock, Michael Turnbull, Trevor Godfrey and Derek Smedley, who sang quartets and trios from comic operas.

A stirring rendering of "Rejoice, for the Lord has Arisen," by Mascagni, was given by a select four-part choir. Miss June Clark and Mr E.C. Godfrey provided piano solos. Alan Pinnock and Ian La Riviere also gave short recitals and Messrs D. Berridge and B. Sharp assisted in the choral items.

Mr G. Humphries, the headmaster welcomed the audience and said how much their appreciation had helped the boys in their performance.

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### **Awards for Boy Cyclists**

*An article reproduced from the Herts Advertiser 28<sup>th</sup> November 1958. (sent in by Mike Neighbour).*

A remarkably high standard was reached by boys of Beaumont Secondary school, St. Albans, in a recent cycling proficiency test, it was revealed at a presentation of certificates and badges by Police inspector F. Bunn at assembly last week.

Inspector Bunn said that although the boys had done very well in the test, passing an examination was not enough. It was the practical application that counted.

P.c. Cox, who trained the boys for the test, stated in a letter to the school that they were the best group of boys he had ever trained and marks they obtained were amongst the highest ever achieved. The highest was 91% and the lowest 81%

Eight of the boys had been made bicycle prefects by the headmaster, and their job was to supervise bicycles and cycling within the school premises and as pupils approach and depart from school. Many other boys were now anxious to take the test and had asked if they could be trained.

The following were awarded certificates: Peter Edwards, Ronald Burr , Barry Hewitt, Roger Sargent, Richard Males, John Satchell, Brian Cockell, David Lauder, John Flood, Clive Alexander, Roger Glading, Richard Jones, David Brooks, and David Britten.

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### **Extracts from Beaumont Life**

(November 2006)

#### **From the Head teacher.**

First of all many, many congratulations to all those involved in the sell out performances of Grease earlier this month. The standard of singing, musicianship and acting was exceptional and so many of us enjoyed seeing so many excellent performers singing well known songs. Thank you to everyone who supported the show in any way and especially to the parents and staff involved.

The next big events are the Christmas Fair on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December and the Christmas concert on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December.

We have had a number of new staff join us during this term. Mrs Mitchell and Mrs Ross have joined us as Learning supervisors. Ms Michaels as general support and science. Mrs Rickman as receptionist and Mr Poltorack (a recent past student) as IT technician. We extend our very best wishes to Mrs Lloyd who begins her maternity leave this month and we welcome Miss Blomeley who will be teaching her timetable.

Parents will be interested to know that over the next three months we will be moving from one Management information System to another. The move will eventually give parents access on line to their child's attendance and assessment information.

Elizabeth Hitch

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### **Plans for new access to Beaumont School**

As you may be aware , plans are being put forward to provide Beaumont with a new access road from Hatfield Road. At present, we have health and safety issues with our existing entrances, especially as both mix pupils with vehicles. We also cannot use our existing playing fields during the winter because they become water logged.

The proposals would provide:

- New access road from Hatfield Road.
- Separation of cars and pupils on our site.
- Coach pick up/drop off site.
- Full access for emergency vehicles
- New larger, purpose-built playing fields to the east of our site

We have already held a Public Exhibition and will now be holding an exhibition of the proposals for Beaumont parents on Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> December (6.00 - 7.00pm) and Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December (3.00 - 5.00pm).

We hope you will be able to visit the exhibition and offer your support to the proposals in preparation for the planning application.

Ed Jones

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### **Mode of Transport**

Over the next two weeks we will be asking pupils how they get to and from school. This information has been requested by the Department for education and Skills.

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**Old Beaumontians Newsletter  
Issue 49**

**The next edition will be published in March 2007.**

**Please let me have your contributions by mid February.**

**Don Lowe**  
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