

Old Beaumontians Newsletter

September 2007

Issue 52

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Editor's Comments

We were delighted with your positive response to the last issue of the Old Beaumontians' Newsletter (June 2007), particularly the favourable reactions to the photographs printed in the "Picture Gallery." We would like more school pictures to add to our library. As Roy Palmer suggests (*see your letters column*), it would be great if you could find some really early pictures (1938 onwards). Were there any photographs taken during the school opening ceremony? Please have a search and e-mail copies to: - djlowe@ntlworld.com

It was interesting to read in the St. Albans & Harpenden Review (e-news), of the proposals to invest £100 million in the redevelopment of Oaklands Agricultural College, Hatfield Road, St. Albans. It is intended to include a new Sports Centre, State of the art facilities for Construction Engineering, Art and Design, Performing Arts, Land Based Studies, and Sports and Beauty Therapy. Also included are plans to build 70 new homes.

A far cry from the days when, as youngsters we used to spend summer evenings and weekends playing in the grounds and woods of Oaklands College and in the field flanking Hatfield Road, which we used as a venue for football and cricket matches.

Peter Stapleton's note (*see your letters column*) comments on the "high standard of education Beaumont School enjoyed in the 1960's. Any observations on how the education of young people at Beaumont has changed and improved since those days would be very welcome!

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Your Letters

Roy Palmer (*from Bedford*) sent this e-mail: -

Dear Don,

Nice to see the Newsletter again. Has anybody got any school photographs from 1939 to 1944?

Regards Roy Palmer

Dear Don (*An e-mail from Sheila Davies*).

Your newsletter arrived and I have read it cover to cover. Great Stuff!

By all means e-mail your newsletter to me in future it will save on paper postage and time.

With kindest regards Sheila Davies

Hi Don (*An e-mail from Rosemary Jones*).

Thanks for the June Newsletter. The dance band that played at the Waterend Barn on a Thursday evening in the 1950's was Frank Harwood (and his Melody Makers). My husband played Tenor Sax for them at that time. George Mason and his group played on a Saturday evening and I remember getting out my posh frock if I was ever lucky enough to go to the dinner dance there. Another band, which played around that time, was Frank Dee and his Music Makers. The Vic (Victoria Hall) was another popular dance hall of the time. Did you ever go to the dances that were held at Hill End, Harperbury and Napsbury? Frankie Vaughan sang with the band at Hill End before he made a name for himself and I well remember going to Napsbury to hear Nat Gonella and his band (and having to walk back to St.Albans afterwards because the last bus had gone).

I was interested in the article on the Journal of the 3rd Form and knew all those you mentioned who were connected with it, but for the life of me I cannot remember the Journal itself, maybe due to a "senior" moment or two. Anyway it was nice to be reminded of them all and if any of them are reading this then I hope they are well.

Best wishes Rosemary Jones

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Dear Don, (*A letter from Frank Garrick*).

With reference to the picture Gallery- No1 "Teaching Staff 1951." I was a pupil 1948 to 1953 so I've tried to identify the teachers. I've managed to get 13 names with varying degrees of certainty. I wonder if other readers can fill in the gaps?

I have the extra advantage of joining the staff in 1961 with many of the teachers still on the staff.

Yours sincerely
Frank Garrick.

Footnote!

We have inserted the 1951 staff photograph below and named the people as described by Frank. Please write or email me with the names of the unidentified staff members!
djlowe@ntlworld.com

Does anyone have a similar picture of Beaumont Girl's School staff?



Beaumont School Boys: Staff 1951

Standing ---? ---, Mr Longbone, Mr Hullah, Mr Hodgkinson, Mr Luxemburg, Mr Chapman, Mr Norris, Mr Dumbleton, Mr Costain, ---? ---, Mr Caffery.

Seated ---? ---, ---? ---, Mr Bilk, Mrs Norris, Mr Mitchell, ---? ---, ---? ---, ---? ---, Mr Coxell.
(Head)

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Mike Neighbour has written to say that he has moved home from Littlehampton to Watford. His e-mail address remains unchanged mikeneighbour@mac.com

Hello Don, (*An e-mail from Mike Neighbour*).

Here is another article for the next edition of the Old Beaumontians magazine.

Games Lessons and Gym.



I wasn't particularly keen on sport in general while at Beaumont, especially the team sports that were a staple of games lessons – football for two terms and cricket in the summer. It remained a mystery to me how the teachers chose the lesson's captains who, in the time honoured way, alternately chose their team members from the assembled class. Several boys attracted a captain's attention in the manner of "here, over here, choose me, I'll remember you when doling out the fags next break" kind of approach. Neighbour was often one of the last to be picked and on the field was relegated to a harmless back position. It was a triumph if I managed by the end of the lesson, not to have frozen, or to have actually touched the ball once.

As for cricket, I was offered a harmless boundary position, or the last man in. This was a shame because I really enjoyed cricket. Mind you, I enjoyed the watching of it more than the playing. I suppose it was the humiliation you suffered if the ball hovered in the air above your head, you failed to catch it cleanly and it ended making a sizable dent in the soft grass (blimey, if that had hit my head...).

After one winter of football, I discovered a games activity, which I did enjoy and became, quite good at: cross-country running. There were about thirty of us who set off each week across the playing field towards the Grammar school field, across Sandpit Lane, through Newgates, Tramp Dick's Lane and on to Sandridge, through the village and back through the farm fields, along Sandpit Lane and the school. Not only was I getting a lot more exercise than standing at right back on the football field but I was able to pace myself and use the opportunity to intelligently improve my timing - the early finishers got the hot showers! Skivers soon learned that cross-country was no pushover, unless you could engineer a drop-off behind a hedge before the teachers saw you.

Having found a sport I actually enjoyed and was good at, the marked-out athletics track appealed in the summer term. And if the cricketers' ball came winging my way I could ignore it and increase my pace along the track to avoid it. At the end of term the best boys in each year took part in the school sports (the only times when the Houses Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa came into their own) and the best of those entered the District Sports in Clarence Park, in the days before Westminster Lodge. Those were thrilling occasions, partly because, whether taking part or watching, you could let your hair down and cheer on your mates (or boo the others), or prove your worth to those captains who the previous year had failed to choose you for their team.

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In the gym I recall three types of lesson: gymnastics exercises or drill, where we stood in a space facing the teacher and responded to his commands - as on an army parade ground. There were also group lessons "with apparatus." About 6 groups were formed around various items such as ropes, beams, the box, vaulting horse, wall bars and benches. After every five minutes the whistle blew, you were lined up stomachs in and breathing well controlled, before moving on to the next group. I enjoyed everything unless it involved turning my body upside down and usually out of control.

The third kind of lesson was reserved for the end of term; pirates: a most wonderful romp, when every available mat and apparatus was strategically placed around the gym. I didn't mind being caught, because then I could generally move around anywhere in my own time without being chased and I couldn't have cared less if I caught anyone or not! So, no pressure.

There were, of course, occasions when games lessons were called off because of bad weather and we were herded into classrooms for indoor sessions; teachers talking tactics or describing sports we had no opportunity of playing. Did no one at Beaumont know how to play basketball, for example, or golf?

If you arrived on games day with a note claiming you were unfit to participate, you ended up doing mindless tasks like picking up litter or getting weeds out of the paving cracks in one of the courtyards. And if your note coincided with wet games, you just kept the note in your pocket for the following week; just hoping your father hadn't dated the valuable evidence.

Mike Neighbour (1955 – 1959)

Hi Don, *(An e-mail from Mike King)*

I hope you and yours are fit and well, we won't mention the weather. First I like very much the new look newsletter, well done to all concerned.

The item concerning the "journal of the 3rd Form Beaumont Secondary School for Girls." I noticed one of the girls who contributed to the "swap corner" was Hazel Jump. I wondered if she was in contact with you or on any database. I would like to get in touch with her or her brother Terry. Any advice would be welcome.

Look forward to the next reunion.

Regards to all.

Mike King.

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Hello (*An e-mail From Peter Stapleton, US embassy Belmopan*)

I was recently surfing the web and decided to search for Beaumont School out of interest. I was very surprised to see the web site. As an Old Beaumontian myself it brings back a lot of memories. The Headmaster during my time was Mr Dawson and the Deputy Head was Mr Costain.

It has been many years since I have thought of my old school, but one of the most vivid memories to this day was the high standard of education I received there between 1964 - 1968. I doubt if there is anyone who remembers me in the OB's. I hope that the Head and Staff at Beaumont are still striving for excellence in education as they did in the 60's.

Peter D. Stapleton

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The next issue will be published in December 2007.

Please let me have your contributions by the latest 14th November 2007.

Email Don Lowe djlowe@ntlworld.com

To access the Old Beaumontians web page; on your PC type www.beaumontschool.com the "search results page" lists "Beaumont School – St.Albans" click this heading, you will then have accessed the school web site. Click on the tab "about us" scroll down to the "Old Beaumontians" click on this tab to access the OB's pages.