

Old Beaumontians Newsletter

March 2008

Issue 54

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Editor's Comments

I appreciate that we are now into spring of 2008, and perhaps a little late to be commenting on events of Christmas 2007. It is however the first opportunity that I have had to report on the Beaumont School Carol Service held at St. Albans Abbey in December. I do hope I will be forgiven for setting down a few words to describe the event.

A full congregation, including a number of Old Beaumontians was privileged to have witnessed a really wonderful performance of Christmas carols and bible readings. The setting for the concert was superb, with the acoustics of the Abbey bringing out the very best in the young voices of the Beaumont School choir. In addition to the choir and individual performances, the combined voices of the congregation and choir sang a number of well-known, traditional carols, making the concert one to remember as a presentation of singing voices and of a family service. A particular word of thanks must be said to the Beaumont School Choir, to Hanh Doan (Head of Music), and everyone else who was concerned with the organisation of the concert "A really wonderful and memorable event."

Anne Bailey sent an e-mail, to say how much she enjoyed the service and Robin Cooper, who also attended, has written to say it was "Magnificent". (See *Robin's article on page 6*).

Our request for comments about working at the de Havilland Aircraft Company, (refer to December 2007 newsletter), brought an instant response from Robin Cooper. His article gives a graphic description of his apprenticeship at the company (see *page 3*).

I have also received a note from Thelma Yeager who tells us that her mother worked at de H's during the war.

I have heard from Anne Bailey, who has corresponded with Sylvia Turner. I am delighted with this news and that the OB's have helped in bringing these "old school" pals together. With the permission of Anne and Sylvia we have included details of e-mail, sent by Sylvia to Anne (See *page 4*).

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Your Letters

Hi Don (*An e-mail from Peter Stapleton, Belmopan, Belize*).

Many thanks for the December issue Newsletter. I have attached a little something that you may be able to use in your next edition.

Beaumont to Belize

The long journey to Belize, Central America, began in 1968. After leaving Beaumont School, a northerly drift led me to Grimsby the major fishing port in the country. After a brief time at the Grimsby Nautical College, I left as an apprentice Deck Hand ready for life on deep-sea trawlers.

Life on a trawler was not for the faint hearted; the hours were long and the work dangerous. Limbs were lost and occasional lives as well. The sea conditions were cruel especially around the North Cape and White Sea areas in winter. Ice had to be continually chopped from the superstructure to prevent the vessel from capsizing. Month long voyages resulted in huge pay packets when the fish had been sold. After four years of deck work a decision was reached, there has to be a safer way to earn money than on deck of an ice bound fishing boat.

The Royal Military Police for the next fourteen years led to assignments in different parts of the world. One of the most memorable and challenging was Belize, formerly British Honduras. The climate was tropical and the people laid back, plus no language problems. Belize is the only English speaking country in Central America. With a vehicle supplied, civilian attire and a healthy entertainment allowance, my main role in Belize consisted of "anti vice" duties in the seedier side of town, but that is a whole different story.

The army started to undergo changes that were not personally acceptable, so it was time to take a discharge and a decision to return to Belize to settle down. Belize has been my home for the last twenty-two years and is the place that I have pursued a security related career. I am now working with the US Embassy, married and have a great child as well.

A few months ago I checked out Beaumont just for the fun of it. The school building has changed, but it appears that the high standard of education has remained the same. I still have fond memories of my time spent at Beaumont and will always be grateful to the Headmaster Mr. Dawson and his staff for giving me a good foundation in life.

For those OB's who are wondering who I am, it's Pete Stapleton. Those who attended Beaumont from 1964 –1968 may or may not remember me, but I still remember the majority of my old classmates

Pete Stapleton.

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Hello Don, (*An e-mail from Ann Kent*).

Thanks for the newsletter received this morning. It prompted me to let you know my change of address.

I have also, during the course of the move, came across a list of teachers which I must have written at some time, but I can't remember if I let you have them. Anyway here they are as far as I can remember, together with a list of some of the girls in my form at one time or another. I was in "A" stream between 1947-1951.

Teachers and subjects

Miss Tucker.....	<i>History</i>	Miss Crossley.....	<i>History</i>
Miss Flynn.....	<i>Needlework</i>	Miss Ablett.....	<i>Art</i>
Miss Flegg.....	<i>Sciences</i>	Miss Wood.....	<i>Maths & Games</i>
Miss Probert.....	<i>French</i>	Miss Sparks.....	<i>Maths & Handicraft</i>
Miss Beckett	<i>Scripture</i>	Mrs Burghley.....	<i>English & Drama</i>
Miss Pickering.....	<i>Housecraft</i>	Miss Platnum.....	<i>Gym & Dancing</i>
Miss Brittain.....	<i>French</i>	Miss Hines.....	<i>Music</i>

Girls

Anne Ayling	Audrey Lewis	Janet Hyde	Enid Roberts
June Mockridge	Margaret Ward	Pam Stirling	Maisie Goss
Maureen Holmes	Rose Spinoza	Elsbeth Troop	Joanna Evans
Sue Pooley	Anne Halsey	Jean Foster	Shirley De'Ath
Maureen Oram	? Harrington	Margaret Conway	Sandra Bradford
Shirley Rolph	Julie Roberts	Jean Hitchcock	

There were others, but I can't remember their names, perhaps someone else will!

Best Wishes Ann Kent (nee Stafford).

Dear Don, (*Writes Robin Cooper*).

I enclose an article about my time as an apprentice at de Havillands. When I arrived, the Hatfield plant was building Comets. When I left – the first Tridents were leaving the production line. The 748, a small airliner fitted with four engines followed this. Then they built Airbus wings, which were air freighted to Toulouse, in France for final assembly. After that the factory closed. In its place are buildings for the University of Hertfordshire and in Hatfield – the only memories are streets named after various company planes and senior staff. There is a statue of Geoffrey de Havilland at the University's Roe Green Campus.

de Havilland Apprentice

I loved seeing the Vampire and the Venom fighter planes being tested over my house. I was in the Air Training Corps and when I left school with a handful of "A" levels, instead of going to university like my fellow students, I went to de Havillands to do an apprenticeship.

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I started at the de Havilland Aero Technical School at Astwick Manor, Hatfield. All company trainees, whether studying engineering, accountancy, business or commerce spent a year there. I learnt to cut and file metal, I learnt soldering and how to make things from steel and aluminium sheet. I learnt to use a rivet gun. We learnt woodwork from an instructor who hated apprentices and would reduce boys, who outside work were "Teddy Boys", to tears. Most interesting of all, we learnt to use lathes and milling machines.

Going to the Main Assembly Shop was a nasty shock. Factory workers worked a 44-hour week. We started at eight in the morning and finished at six in the evening – with an hour's midday break. I was amazed how the workers accepted the long hours, but they were happy and the pay was good, they'd been working on Vampire and Venom planes and there was a lot of overtime. Getting to work by bus was inconvenient, long walks at both ends of the journey and I often cycled to work. Having got home I was much too tired to do any work from college. I had two days a week at Hatfield Technical College.

Eventually production was moved to another factory so that work could be concentrated on the new jet airliner – the Comet. In September 1958 all overtime was stopped. We apprentices were offered transfers to other companies and we found ourselves in departments, which had nothing to do with engineering.

Comet Airliners were mysteriously breaking up in flight. Five planes were lost with 110 deaths. Companies, which had originally ordered Comets cancelled them and purchased American planes.

I was wondering whether I'd entered the right career, especially as boys with whom I'd attended school were now leaving university and getting good pay, while I was still on apprentice's wages. The firm was forced to sack workers when they had finished the job they were on. There was a large store of Sea Vixen nose cones, which the Navy wanted modified; the workers carrying out the changes took their time! The government forced British European Airways to buy Comets, although they really didn't meet their needs. Eventually the modifications to the Sea Vixen nose cones were completed and dispatched. I was moved to the Aerodynamics Office, where I did design calculations on the Trident Airliner, which was yet to fly. I went on to the Stress Office, calculating loads in various parts of the Comet under particular operating conditions and I spent time in the Weights Office, calculating how the centre of gravity of the Comet would change if the seats were replaced by lighter, better ones.

My last Department was the Wind Tunnel. This was unpleasant, because it was a research establishment and was not covered by the Factory Acts. There was no cleaning, the windows were filthy and the toilets were a disgrace. There were cobwebs everywhere!

I spent a final year full time at Hatfield College. We took our final degree exams and all failed except one who was completely mad! I decided Engineering was not for me. I took a part time job elsewhere, which gave me time to study for, take and pass my degree finals. By then I'd decided I would enjoy life more if I were working with people and that's why I became a teacher.

Robin Cooper

Hello Anne, (*An e-mail from Sylvia Turner dated 15th December 2007*).

Thank you for your mail, it was interesting to read of more names from the past...Joyce Hawkes and Vera Shadbolt, I do remember them very well. I seem to remember Vera being friendly at school with Barbara Westrope and Janet Breed. Do you ever see them? I know Janet's sister has written in the Beaumont magazine.

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Janet Salt's (Hyde) husband died recently, we went to the funeral last Tuesday. It is so sad, best friends of ours since teenage times! Also via Maureen Roberts's, she tells me that Doreen Spicer has died, I know the name so well but cannot put a face to her.

Enough of doom and gloom...it would be nice if several of us could meet up at the school reunion, I am really looking forward to it now.

I remember your late husband and so does Bob...life is cruel sometimes.

I used to enjoy our time at netball...you used to get the ball in the net didn't you? I continued playing for a while after school, right up until the twins were born, then of course I never had the time!!

Please keep in touch and enjoy a lovely Christmas and best wishes for a happy and healthy 2008.

Sylvia

E-mail from Graham Turner

I attended Beaumont School from 1970 to 1975 and my Form Teachers were as follows:

1K - Mrs Killick
2P - Mrs Plant

3D - Mr Dyer
4Z - Mrs Jackson

5P - Mr Pearson

At the time I was living in Colney Heath and we used to get the coach every day that was organised by the Local Authority. A late coach was always a good excuse to miss assembly.

I can remember my final assembly when Mr Noble shouted from the stage. "Turner, if you bring a hacksaw in later you can take a piece of that column that you have leaned on for the past year. Now GET OFF it boy."

I have some very fond memories of my time at Beaumont and I can also recollect the following Teachers.

Mr Dawson - Head

Mr Noble - Deputy Head

Mr Costain - Deputy Head

Mr Luxembourg (we knew him as Bomber and he retired during my time at the school).

Mr Pepper - He did not actually teach me but often popped in to see Mrs Plant.

Mr Brand - Woodwork teacher (managed to break the neck of an electric guitar that our Tim Bayliss was making, not funny to Tim but hysterical to the rest of us).

Mr Jones - Chemistry (the only teacher to give me an "A" and it was just once. I believe that he started at the school during my time there).

Mr Polding - Metalwork (in a moment of exasperation with our class he grabbed a basin, which promptly came away in his hands – hysterical).

Mr Pomeroy - Another teacher with a beard and jacket I seem to recollect, but didn't teach me.

Miss Chilton - Drama teacher (a strong favourite with 6th Formers).

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Mr Lord and Mr Jones - PE teachers – (I can still recollect getting dried with the School towels, which were the size of a face flannel).

Harvey Dagel - Music teacher (no doubt a brilliant musician, but to “us lot” he did not compare to Slade, Mud, the Sweet, Bowie etc).

Mrs or Miss Shenton - Domestic Science teacher.

Mr Jackson - Bearded “hippy type.”

Mrs Bombier - Maths teacher (*not sure of the spelling*).

Madame Robert - A French teacher (sent me outside of class during nearly every French lesson. I spoke no French and she had little English)!

Mr Macready - French teacher (he developed the art of twisting my 1970’s hair around his finger, and lifting me off the floor when I was disruptive).

Mr Thrower - Metalwork (we always called him Percy).

Geography teacher - I am struggling to remember the name of my Geography teacher at the time. He maintained control of the class through two methods

1. He was a superb shot with a blackboard rubber.
2. He had no reservations about using a plimsoll (this is pre “trainers”) across ones rear end.

I believe that some of the above are still there. I am very interested in attending the 70th anniversary and as I am still in touch with some of my old school friends (I am sure that they would also be interested). Please let me know of any details regarding the event.

Regards
Graham Turner

Beaumont School Carol Service (*A letter from Robin Cooper*).

I’d left Beaumont School ten years ago, so I was most surprised to be invited to the school’s carol service at the Cathedral. Neatly dressed, polite senior students greeted me and gave me a programme. The service was a mixture of traditional carols, new ones and obscure ones in languages most people did not know! The singers looked just right, with their neat clothes and good behaviour. I know students don’t like uniforms – I didn’t when I was young, but properly worn, with pride they can look very nice.

Too often you attend carol concerts, where the programme makes little demand on singers or listeners – but here the standards were high: the sort of performance you would expect from a choir school where parents pay hefty fees for their children to attend.

I hope everyone enjoyed the concert as much as I.

Robin.

Note: Robin’s letter contained his “thoughts on some of the Music Teachers who had worked at Beaumont School”. We will include his report in the next issue of the OB’s Newsletter.

Reunion Update.

The Anniversary 2008 School reunion will take place at Beaumont School, Oakwood Drive, St.Albans on Saturday 5th July 2008. Everyone who attended the school since its opening in 1938 will be welcome.

The programme for the day will follow a similar pattern to previous years, with a reception being held in the school hall at 11.30am, providing visitors with an opportunity to renew old school friendships and perhaps make some new ones! During the reception background we hope that music will be provided by the School Music Department. Escorted tours of the school will be organised in the afternoon. We hope once again to display memorabilia and old school photographs. If you have any suitable material that could be displayed please let us know!

A buffet lunch will be served between 12.30pm and 2.00pm. Liquid refreshments will be available in the Hall, throughout the day. The cost for the 70th anniversary reunion is £8.00 per person.

As this will be the last reunion to be arranged by the existing OB's Committee, please do your very best to attend! If you are in touch with former school friends please do encourage them to come as well.

Complete the attached form and together with your cheque send to Beaumont School, Oakwood Drive, St. Albans, AL4 0XB, by 6th June. Please mark your envelope "REUNION".

Summer Ball. The Beaumont School Association (PTA) is organising a Ball to celebrate the school's 70th Anniversary, to be held on the evening of Saturday 5th July. This event will be held at the Old Albanians Club, St. Albans (refer to page 9).

If you have any queries please let us know, contact Don Lowe
djlowe@ntlworld.com

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TICKET APPLICATION FORM

**OLD BEAUMONTIANS
Beaumont School 70th Anniversary Reunion
5th July 2008.
Beaumont School, St.Albans.**

Please reserve..... tickets @ £8.00 per ticket

**I/We enclose cheque for £.....(Payable to Old
Beaumontians).**

Name.....Address.....

.....

Telephone No.....

Email address.....

**Send your remittance to: Beaumont School, Oakwood Drive,
St. Albans, Herts. AL4 0XB.**

Please book your place by 6 June 2008

**Once again, brief reminder, please notify us of any change of address
and your e-mail details.**

Beaumont School
70th Anniversary Ball

supporting "Excite with Science Project" – Beaumont Science labs fit for the 21st Century



Saturday 5th July, 2008

7 to 12.30

At Old Albanians Club, St Albans

Tickets are £45

Welcome drink, sit down meal, dancing and Auction of Promises

Black tie

Please send the completed slip and cheque by April 19th to school reception,
marked **The Anniversary Ball**

Book soon – places are limited.

Tickets will be issued nearer the time. All places must be paid for in advance.

Any queries? Contact Abi Lewis on bsa@beaumont.herts.sch.uk

Please reserve me: _____ tickets for **The Anniversary Ball**

I enclose a cheque for £_____ (payable to BSA)

Name: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Please arrange a table for me OR Names of people on my table (max of 10):

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