

# OLD WESTCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION

(formed 1926)



## NEWSLETTER 2022

### 1. OFFICERS & COMMITTEE 2021 - 2022

<p><b>PRESIDENT</b> - T.W. Birdseye, JP</p> <p><b>VICE PRESIDENTS:</b> R. Arnold H.P. Briggs J. Harrison Honorary Alderman A.A. Hurst, <i>BA (Hons)</i> A.R. Millman, <i>FCA</i> Honorary Alderman David Norman, MBE, MA (Oxon), M. Univ (Open) C.R.N. Taylor, <i>FCA</i> M. Wren</p>	<p><b>CHAIRMAN</b> - M.A. Skelly, <i>MA</i></p> <p><b>HON. SECRETARY</b> - J. Gershinson <b>HON. TREASURER</b> - C.R.P. Hennis</p> <p><b>COMMITTEE MEMBERS:</b> R. Arnold A. Graham K. Hickey Honorary Alderman A.A. Hurst, <i>BA (Hons)</i> Father J. McCollough Honorary Alderman David Norman, MBE, MA (Oxon), M. Univ (Open)</p> <p>B. Warby School Head Boy, or his Deputy</p> <p><b>HON. AUDITOR</b> - Charlotte Halls, <i>ACA</i></p>
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Hon. Sec - Jon Gershinson  
Email: [secretary@oldwestcliffianassociation.org](mailto:secretary@oldwestcliffianassociation.org)

2. AGM 18 JULY 2022 AT 7:45 PM AT THE SCHOOL
3. ANNUAL REUNION DINNER - FRIDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER 2022  
6:15 PM FOR 7:00 PM AT THE SCHOOL  
DETAILS ON PAGE 5

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1. Officers & Committee 2021 - 2022
2. Annual General Meeting, 18th July 2022, 7:45 pm at the School. Please support this if you can. There will be an update on school activities from the Headmaster. There will be refreshments provided by the OWA. Prefects will be on hand to host the occasion.
3. O.W.A. Annual Reunion Dinner, Friday 9th September 2022 - 6:15 pm for 7:00 pm at the School, Kenilworth Gardens, Westcliff on Sea, Essex, SS0 0BP. If you would like to look round the School, please be there by 5:30 pm. Details and reply slip on page 5.
4. (i) Honorary Secretary - Careers Guidance Support Form  
(ii) Honorary Secretary's Report
5. Honorary Treasurer:  
Income and Expenditure Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2021.
6. President.
7. Chairman.
8. In Memoriam.
9. Obituaries.
10. News of and from Old Westcliffians.
11. From the Archives - Down Memory Lane
12. Westcliff RFC.
13. Old Westcliffian Lodge No. 5456.
14. Editor.
15. Old Westcliffian Association and membership application details.

## **2. AGENDA FOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD AT 7.45PM ON 18TH JULY 2022**

To be held in the Centenary Room at WHSB.

Zoom available for those unable to attend in person. Please note that those attending by Zoom will be unable to vote.

Please would you advise the Secretary, Jon Gershinson if you will be attending the AGM in person. If you wish to attend via Zoom, please advise the Secretary and the joining details will be sent to you.

The Secretary's email address is: [secretary@oldwestcliffianassociation.org](mailto:secretary@oldwestcliffianassociation.org). For those without access to email his address is 16 Herschell Road, Leigh on Sea SS9 2NH.

1. Apologies for absence
2. President's opening remarks
3. Secretary to read the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2021
4. Presentation of accounts to 31 December 2021
5. Proposal to appoint Charlotte Halls ACA as Independent Examiner of the accounts for 2022
6. Chairman's introduction
7. Proposal that the Old Westcliffian Association be dissolved on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 in accordance with Article 12 of the Constitution and that any assets ( which shall include the membership database ) remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be applied to Westcliff High School for Boys Ltd.

## **A letter to the Members of The Old Westcliffian Association**

With our Association approaching its Centenary ( June 2026 ), your Committee thought it the appropriate time to give consideration as to the next phase.

When established the aims and objects of the OWA were to promote and continue the mutual interest and fellowship between the Association and the School. As a result, the Association has always been close to the School, the Headmaster being Chairman of your committee. The Association is a social hub, a conduit for Members to keep in touch via its annual magazine and to meet up at its annual dinner.

Your Committee are very aware that the ambitions of the School for its Alumni organisation are now wider than the aims of the Association. We fully support these ambitions which include: networking opportunities; employment leads; mentoring; ability to keep in contact with the School, 'those who taught me' and fellow Leavers and very importantly a need to nurture a culture of alumni giving to the School when able to afford to do so.

As you will appreciate the Association is run only by volunteers. We have concluded that the ambitions of the School cannot be met by a volunteer only organisation nor can the Association raise sufficient and regular donations from you to employ sufficient staff. We are also very mindful that the School has in recent years established a successful Community Development Office which amongst other functions interacts with Leavers.

We have therefore, after much discussion reached the unanimous conclusion that now is the time to effectively merge the Association into the School. The OWA name will be retained, Committee Members will continue to be fully involved with the merged body, the traditions of the Association will be retained including a regular magazine and annual dinner. Contact with Members going forward will be improved and we are mindful that recent school leavers have a different view of what the OWA can do for them than older generations. The views of all Members will remain important and will be listened to.

Your Committee is of the view that unless a merger with the School is advanced, your Association will be unable to fulfil the School's ambitions and will in a short period wither on the vine.

The formal route to such a merger is the dissolution of the Association and for its assets ( including a small amount of cash, its Membership database, the Presidential chain) to be applied to the School. You will see that we are proposing a formal resolution to follow this route at the Annual General Meeting on 18th July 2022. Such a resolution requires the approval of at least two thirds of members present at the AGM and we seek your support for this.

The Old Westcliffian Association Committee

June 2022

**3. OWA ANNUAL REUNION DINNER - FRIDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER 2022**

**At the School: WHSB, Kenilworth Gardens, Westcliff on Sea, Essex, SS0 0BP  
6:15 PM FOR 7 PM OR 5:30 PM SHOULD YOU WISH TO LOOK ROUND THE SCHOOL  
COST £29.50 (£19.50 FOR STUDENTS IN FULL TIME EDUCATION)**

***TICKETS WILL NOT BE ISSUED***

**DRESS - LOUNGE SUIT, ASSOCIATION TIE (£12, Available from Terry Birdseye  
see page 43) OR SMART CASUAL**

**All OWs who are not members of the OWA are also welcome**

**MENU**

Oak Smoked Scottish Salmon & King Prawn Salad, bound with Lemon Mayonnaise  
and Sun-Dried Tomatoes on a bed of lettuce

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Braised Shoulder of Lamb served on Rosemary Mash with Roasted Vegetables  
and Merlot Sauce

\*\*\*

Individual Baked Bramley Apple Crumble Tart, with your own jug of Custard

\*\*\*

Cheese Board with Biscuits

\*\*\*

Freshly Brewed Tea or Coffee with Milk Chocolates

*(Vegetarian Meal available on request)*

- NO BOOKINGS WILL BE TAKEN AFTER THE DEADLINE OF NOON ON WEDNESDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER.
- ALL CANCELLATIONS AFTER THIS TIME MUST BE PAID FOR.

✂.....

**REPLY SLIP: O.W.A. ANNUAL REUNION DINNER - FRIDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER 2022**

**FROM: Name:** .....

**Address:** .....

.....

**Postcode:** ..... **Phone:** .....

**TO: TERRY BIRDSEYE - 810 LONDON ROAD, LEIGH ON SEA, ESSEX, SS9 3NH  
TELEPHONE: 01702 714241/terry.birdseye@gmail.com**

**PLEASE RESERVE ..... PLACE(S) FOR:**

<u>NAME</u>	<u>* YEAR DATES AT SCHOOL</u>	<u>COST</u>
.....	(.....)	.....
.....	(.....)	.....
.....	(.....)	.....
.....	(.....)	.....

**TOTAL: £** \_\_\_\_\_

**\* PLEASE COMPLETE YOUR YEARS AT SCHOOL. THIS IS IMPORTANT.**

**CHEQUE PAYABLE TO "OLD WESTCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION"**

**\* BOOKINGS MAY ALSO BE MADE USING "TICKETSOURCE" [www.ticketsource.co.uk/whsb](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whsb)**



4. (i) TO: HONORARY SECRETARY O.W.A. - JON GERSHINSON

**OLD WESTCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION**

**Careers Guidance Support Form**

As in previous years, we are continuing with our careers advice network. The intention is that both current pupils and Old Boys can tap into the wealth of knowledge about careers and universities held by us, the membership of the OWA. Those seeking advice will be able to search anonymised data and then submit pertinent questions for direction to the appropriate alumni by an intermediary at the School. In order to set up and sustain the network we are asking willing Old Boys to supply a brief resume of their career history below:

Name: .....

Years at WHSB: .....

University, Subject, Degree Level, Dates 1: .....

.....  
.....

University, Subject, Degree Level, Dates 2: .....

.....  
.....

Profession(s)

.....

Email Address:

.....

By signing below I consent for this data to be kept on record and to be used solely to match those seeking careers advice with those offering it.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

#### 4. (ii) OUTGOING HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT

Fellow members

It is my pleasure to pen my annual report to you. This will be my last report to you as secretary, but more of that later.

We have sadly lost some members since the last newsletter. These are listed in the obituary section. Please accept my apologies if any names are missing. I had a major problem with my PC and some valuable information went missing. Please let me know if you are a friend or relative of such a person and I will list the names in the next edition. I know that you would wish to join me in sending our thoughts and prayers to their families and loved ones.

The Association is in good heart as we move, hopefully, out of the worst excesses of the pandemic and learn to live with Covid.

Our annual dinner will be on 9th September. We are trying a different format this year and instead of a speaker we will have interludes of music from the school band. I would welcome feedback after the event on this. It may well be that we can move between a speaker, music or just an evening devoted to socialising at future dinners. There will be a cash bar that will accept cards, but please bring some cash for a raffle. Please join us if you can, They are always fun occasions.

Membership is open to former students, former and current teachers, former and current members of the governing body and those associated with the management of the school. Life subscriptions are free to those in full time education, £10 up to age 30 and £20 for ages 31 and above. This is remarkably good value, bearing in mind that this is a one off payment.

On the website you will find back issues of the newsletter.

As I said before, there have been some changes to our team. I have stepped down as secretary after twenty two years. It has been a privilege to have been able to keep the show on the road, and I have enjoyed every minute, *sort of!!* Jon Gershinson, current Chair of Governors, has taken over as secretary. Jon will be stepping down from the Governing Body later in the year. Having known Jon for over forty years, I am absolutely confident that the Association is in good hands and I wish him well.

My intention was to retire from the committee, but I was asked to consider becoming President. I have accepted this offer, one that I found very humbling, bearing in mind some of my distinguished predecessors. David Norman will be staying on the committee. David has given tremendous service as President over the last ten years. He has been an invaluable source of advice and encouragement to me, for which I thank him.

The general thrust of our organisation and our suggested way forward can be found within the AGM notice. Again, these will be discussed and voted on at the AGM. These are significant changes, but ones that we feel are necessary to meet the challenges of the next decade.

As always, I thank my editor Shanie White, whose expertise is crucial for the newsletter's existence.

Lastly, I thank the Headmaster, whose continuing interest and involvement in our organisation is vital for our survival.

I also thank my committee; they are always there for support and advice, for which I thank them.

I wish you all good health, good luck, and thank you for your support.

**Terry Birdseye**  
*terry.birdseye@gmail.com*

## 5. HONORARY TREASURER

OLD WESTCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION  
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

	2021		2020	
	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>				
Life subscriptions	280		200	
Profit on ties etc	77		62	
Donations, bequests etc	847		126	
Surplus on function	<u>(222)</u>		<u>-</u>	
		982		388
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Printing, postage & database	266		234	
Sundry expenses	<u>185</u>		<u>50</u>	
		<u>451</u>		<u>284</u>
<b>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</b>		<u>531</u>		<u>104</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

	2021	2020
	£	£
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Stock of ties etc	655	790
Cash at bank	4,753	4,403
Cash at building society	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u>5,410</u>	<u>5,195</u>
<b>FINANCED BY</b>		
General fund brought forward	5,195	6,876
Surplus for the year	<u>531</u>	<u>104</u>
	5,726	6,980
Grant to WHSB	(256)	(1,725)
OWA Prizes	<u>(60)</u>	<u>(60)</u>
<b>GENERAL FUND CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<u>5,410</u>	<u>5,195</u>

C R P HENNIS  
HONORARY TREASURER

C HALLS ACA  
HONORARY INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

## **6. OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS**

In the archives of the OWA is a letter from a Westcliffian replying to the Association's invitation to our Annual Dinner. The (anonymous) correspondent strongly rejects the invitation and says that he can think of nothing worse than sitting around with a bunch of boring old farts reminiscing about their school days! Thankfully, I believe that he was one of a tiny minority. Most of us recognise that our schooldays represent an important part in shaping our future lives. Even those far off days when corporal punishment was commonplace can look back with affection on the quality of education we received at Westcliff from dedicated teachers and on friendships formed which have lasted a lifetime. For almost a century the OWA has played a vital part in keeping former students in touch with the school and one another.

At our Annual Dinner last September, I announced that I was retiring from the presidency of our Association. It has been an honour to have served in the office of President for the past decade and I have been proud to do so.

I shall be 80 next year and I now feel that it is time to pass on the torch to a new generation.

During my years in office, I have sought to draw the OWA with a closer association with the school, providing funding support to various activities ranging from the Combined Cadet Force to the provision of new flagpoles. How we can improve and strengthen those ties should rightly be the subject of continuing review.

Not that I intend to be bidding farewell to the school which I first attended in 1955, I am still currently a school governor and hope to remain on the OWA committee. Although I have now retired from Southend City Council having recently been made Freeman of the Borough, I hope to continue with some community work most notably serving as a Trustee and Chairman of the Committee which now maintains the Dunkirk Veteran Leigh Cockle Boat "Endeavour".

And so, I wish the OWA and its members all the best for the future and very much hope to play a part in our splendid Association for many years to come.

David Norman

**Honorary Alderman David Norman, MBE, MA (Oxon), M. Univ (Open).**

## 7. CHAIRMAN & HEADMASTER

As we look forward to another busy term, I am delighted to have the opportunity to update Old Westcliffians on recent news and developments at the School. Before turning to those updates, however, I would first like to reference the recent changes within OWA Committee, some or all of which you may already be aware.

### **Changes to the OWA Committee and Future Developments**

Alderman David Norman has decided to step down from his role as President of the OWA having given distinguished service for 12 years. David will continue to play an active role in the work of the Committee, and I am most grateful to him for agreeing to offer his continued support. Terry Birdseye has stepped down from his role as Secretary. I wish to pay tribute to Terry for his tremendous contribution and commitment towards that role over many years, and we are pleased that he has accepted the role of President and remains a valued member of the Committee.

We are delighted to welcome Jon Gershinson to the OWA Committee and he has taken on the role of Secretary. Jon is an Old Westcliffian who has served on the Governing board since 2006, and has held the role of Chair of Governors since 2016.

The Old Westcliffian Association was formed in June 1926 and is therefore approaching its Centenary year and that is something we shall be celebrating in due course. Since its establishment, so many friends and alumni have remained in touch across the generations and, of course, we hold the Annual OWA Dinner each Autumn. Strong alumni support is so important to the School and we must find ways to ensure that continues. So much has changed since 1926, the needs and interests of our current and recent leavers are rather different from those in 1926 and we must continually adapt and respond to those differences if we are to retain the value of strong Alumni connections.

In recent years, we have sought to further emphasise to our Upper Sixth Leavers the value we place on our alumni and, through our Community Development Office, have encouraged them to remain in touch via the School's Alumni Network whilst at the same time promoting the opportunity to join the OWA. This is a matter which remains on the Committee's agenda and, in recent months, we have been discussing our greater ambitions in this regard. This includes the ways in which the School is able to support with alignment of the OWA and the Alumni Network to ensure the opportunities we offer for promoting the value of continued friendships, remaining in touch and for offering support to the School remain of interest and relevant to all. This is an exciting development and we shall keep OW's updated through our various newsletters and publications.

### **Extra-curricular Activities and Events**

In January, it was a great relief to see the return of near normal routines and structures within the School following the many months of disruption caused by the pandemic. Once again, we were able to enjoy a full programme of rich and exciting extra-curricular activities, including wonderful music concerts and drama productions, including a fantastic performance of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicoloured Dreamcoat*. We were delighted to see OWs joining us for those events and I would encourage others to take advantage of these wonderful performances and join us whenever possible; they are a real treat.

Despite many months without opportunities for regular training, our pupils also enjoyed great sporting success, much of which I hope you will read in the Summer Term edition of *The Westcliff Diary*. This has included impressive performances in Basketball, reaching five semi-finals in the Basketball Essex Cup, and in Rugby. Our Year 7 pupils made an impressive start to their first year at WHSB and, at the time of writing, they have won the Essex 7s competition and are currently placed among the last 16 schools in the country for Rugby League.

The School also performed well in Football, reaching the semi and quarter finals in the Borough and South East Essex competitions. We have been delighted to see the addition of Rugby League to the extracurricular programme and thank the Physical Education Department and Sports Coaches for their outstanding support to the pupils through regular training and fixtures.

OWs may also have read in the Spring Term edition of *The Westcliff Diary*, the wonderful article on the School's Gardening Club. Having read about the School's 1950s predecessor Gardening Club in the School's history book, our Sixth Form students have brought gardening back to the WHSB community. This is a fantastic example of a pupil-led project through which they aim to create a bridge from the past to the present, to increase pupils' knowledge of plants, and to raise awareness of the importance of the environment and eco-friendly solutions for food management.

The CCF at WHSB welcomed its largest ever intake in January 2022, with over 100 Year 9 pupils signing up to join. The Army Section currently stands at over 180 strong, while the Royal Navy Section now has 60 cadets. Our newly established RAF section also made a successful start and is currently over 40 strong. We hope to be running Summer Camps for all three sections of the CCF this year following two years in which this was not possible, and that too is a welcome return.

I would also like to record our congratulations to Royal Navy Cadet Leading Hand Billy Wallace who has, this year, been appointed to the position of the Lord Lieutenant's cadet.

It is our intention to hold a special Inaugural Parade and formal Mess Dinner towards the end of the Summer Term to celebrate the addition of an RAF Section to the School's CCF Contingent.

### **The Summer Term**

During this term, our Year 11 and Upper Sixth students will be taking their GCSE and A Level examinations and we wish them well with their preparation and, when the time comes, their summer examinations. This can be a worrying time for these students, and we are doing all we can to offer guidance and reassurance ahead of that challenge. The Upper Sixth students, of course, did not sit formal examinations at GCSE due to the alternative assessment arrangements in place due to COVID-19, so this is a particularly challenging time for them and we are doing everything possible to support them.

Year 7 admissions to the School remains strong and in September this year we shall, for the third year running, fill all of our local priority places (postcodes SS0 to SS9). This is the result of our structured WCGC *Go for Grammar!* 11 Plus Familiarisation Programme through which we have now provided support and tuition for approximately 7,000 pupils from local primary schools.

Aside from the day-to-day School operations, we are also about to embark on a large-scale project to replace the entire heating system throughout the Main School building, and in the Mathematics and Music Block. The Main School heating system is the original, and it has been most unreliable for a number of years, so we were pleased to receive news of our success in our bid to the Department for Education for £1 million to support this project. Of course, a project of this nature cannot be achieved without disruption and we are currently working with the appointed contractor to plan a programme which keeps that to a minimum.

Having had to stall on a number of projects during the last two years, we are now closer to completion of the Centenary Archive Room which I have referenced in a previous edition of this newsletter. With our thanks, due to the generous legacy gift to the School from OW John Brian Abraham, and the kind support of members of the School community through their purchase of tickets for the Centenary Celebration in 2020, we have now been able to order furniture for that room and that is expected to arrive before the end of this term. We shall be organising an official opening of that space and shall notify OWs of the details in due course. This room, doubling as formal meeting room, will provide a wonderful educational resource for our pupils, but we hope it will also be visited by OWs who may be interested in the displays and records.

Many OWs have been kind enough to donate materials or other items for inclusion in the displays, for example, old letters, programmes, school caps, ties and photographs. We are continuing to collect these and other similar items and would be very pleased to hear from any OWs who may wish to donate or lend items to the School for use in the displays.

### **East Toilet Project: Assistance needed**

The School has also appointed architects to oversee the design of toilet and changing facilities to replace the East Toilet Block which is original and now in dreadful condition. We have bid to the Department for Education for funding, without success, on five separate occasions to support this project so now have to accept we are unlikely to receive additional public funding for this purpose. We are in desperate need of substantial funds to be able to deliver this project and that is something we shall need to address in the months ahead. If you are able to support with fundraising for this project, either individually or as part of a team, or can support with a donation, I would be very pleased to meet to discuss any ideas or support you may be able to offer. The facilities are much needed on the east side of the School grounds near the Year 7 playground, and we simply cannot leave our younger pupils wanting for decent, basic facilities.

### **Support from OWs**

I would like to thank all those OWs who have supported events such as the Careers Evenings during recent months. We received tremendous support from OWs for our Sixth Form Lecture Series which began last term. It was such a pleasure to receive an overwhelming response to the School's request for help in delivering lectures on wide-ranging topics, including offers from OWs living overseas who will now be travelling to the School to lend their support with that programme. Aside from the wonderful educational opportunities this support brings for our pupils, I cannot overstate the value OWs bring to the pupils' experiences in terms of inspiration and the joy of hearing from and meeting alumni who were once in their shoes!

Finally, I would like to remind OWs that copies of the School's History book by Dr Alan White, as well as other items such as our Centenary tie, are available for purchase through the School shop. Feedback from OWs on Dr White's book has been superb and I urge anyone who has not yet had the pleasure of learning more about the history of the School during the past 100 years to treat themselves to a copy. All proceeds from the books, ties and other items go towards supporting the pupils currently attending the School.

I offer you all my very best wishes for the term ahead, and hope we shall see you back at WHSB in the very near future.

**Michael A Skelly**

## 8. IN MEMORIAM

Leslie Adcock  
Paul Archard  
Graham Ball  
Gary Brooker  
Roland Darvell  
Don Day  
J Michael Dawson  
Don Day  
Mike King  
Chris Masters  
John Sayers  
Andy Smith  
Patrick Smith  
Cliff Stanford  
G A (Mick) Stoke

## 9. OBITUARIES

Paul Archard  
Graham Ball  
Gary Brooker  
Don Day  
J Michael Dawson  
Don Day  
Mike King  
Kenneth MackInnon  
Stuart Leonard Parsonson  
G A (Mick) Stoke  
Cliff Stanford  
Leslie Adcock

### PAUL ARCHARD

My first memory of Paul was at the Science Museum on a Cubs' outing: we were all waiting for nearly an hour for him to turn up to go home. When he finally arrived he explained that really he was five minutes early as it was British Summer Time which was an artificial man-made time, not the real natural Sun time that he was working to. And he continued with this left field view for the rest of his life.

We sat next to each other at St.Helen's Junior School, in order of merit - the two top boys in the 'Scholarship Class' as it was called - Paul with a perpetual big grin on his face, content with the world or perhaps just being amused by it. During one wet break the headmaster came in and told the class it was making too much noise. "It's not funny, Archard. Take that grin off your face" - with the accompanying smack around the head. The third of a pint of milk Paul was about to drink shot up in the air like a badly opened champagne bottle and descended all over the Headmaster. 'Hoist with his own petard.'

Paul arrived at Westcliff in September '53 and to everyone's surprise found himself in 1B rather than the odds-on favourite 'A' stream. This was the first of Paul not quite achieving what was expected of him. He had probably spent his time during the 11 plus exam discussing the shortcomings of the questions rather than answering them.

Music, numbers and languages were his forte; but not necessarily in a conventional way. He explored the family piano as a toddler and then fell in love with the organ, which he heard at St. Helen's church; he was playing that organ before his feet could reach the pedals. This was the beginning of a lifetime of active involvement in music: Paul had remarkable improvisational skills and composed chamber music and choral works in later life. For several years he sang in the New Westminster Chorus, and eventually combined his organ playing with the role of choirmaster, at both St. Helen's and St. Peter's churches in Westcliff.

Paul's love of numbers was facilitated by his phenomenal memory. He could tell you the day of the week for any date you threw at him and if that day was in his lifetime, he would often add details of the weather.

At one time Paul seemed destined to become a Classics Scholar. He jumped from 4 Arts straight into the Sixth Form to study Latin and Greek, I'm sure with a view of sailing to Oxbridge; but when the rest of us reached the Lower Sixth, Paul was still there, his high flyer route abandoned - another path not quite going to plan.

His new claim to fame was as a long distance walker. It was the time when Dr Barbara Moore was advocating a healthy lifestyle by performing 110 mile walks, and members of the sixth form organised such an event for charity on the pier. Paul outlasted all others entrants, walking for 23 hours and covering 68 miles in the perishing cold. He then walked the two miles home as he hadn't any money for the bus.

This attracted national attention and Paul made his first TV appearance because of it. His second and last experience of TV stardom was many years later on Countdown, where he managed to clearly imply that the host was overweight, something that was demonstrably true but perhaps better not expressed.

Paul tried to reprise this walk exactly fifty years later, in 2009, in aid of Children in Need. He was still hale and hearty at the age of 68 but it was no longer possible to walk at night on the pier, this now for some reason being considered unsafe; so, undaunted, he pounded the seafront from Leigh to Shoebury East Beach.

Paul's last starring role at School was at the Leavers' Supper when he performed a duet a la Flanders and Swann (with Neil Benson I seem to remember) called "Half a Crown a Ruddy Term", which suggested that our termly contribution to the School Fund went to financing Henry Cloke's new Vauxhall Victor.

Paul's love of travel helped with his language learning. He spoke French and German, much of it learned by the use of his thumb. He was a prolific hitch-hiker, most often travelling alone through Europe, dropping into the occasional cathedral for both spiritual and artistic fulfilment, playing the organ there if given the chance. He even gate-crashed a church wedding in the south of France, accepting the resident organist's invitation to play a trumpet voluntary as a recessional.

After leaving school Paul signed up with P&O to work his passage to Australia. It's a wonder he ever made it back. Being granted shore leave in one of the ports en route (I think it was Port Said) he disappeared into the slum back streets of the dockland area to see, in his innocent naivety, how the ordinary people lived. Fortunately he was spotted by a friendly inhabitant who intercepted him to warn him of the dangers to foreigners in such an area, and invited him to meet his family and take tea, before escorting him safely back to his ship.

After spending time travelling to various places, Paul enrolled at Kesteven Teachers Training College, Stoke Rochford, eventually qualifying as a teacher, working in the Grantham area. Again it was a path that would not be entirely straightforward. Paul had to endure several episodes of psychiatric illness, often being hospitalised. Paul was keen to dispel society's taboo about mental illness and would, I think, have wanted this undeniably important aspect of his life to feature in the story of the highly intelligent, kind and generous man he was. He was an inspiringly generous soul. He befriended the vulnerable, for example the homeless people in the town, to whom he would take an early morning flask of soup, and he engaged in many other charitable works.

Paul worked on and off as a supply teacher and as a private tutor, retaining the art of relating to young people right to the end of his life.

The last contact I had with the active Paul was when I received a phone call from him to say he hadn't been too well mentally and was going into hospital for a course of treatment. He had been chosen for some of his musical work to be showcased at the Civic Centre that year (2011), and I arranged to come and hear it once his hospital course had finished. But before this concert took place he reacted badly to some of the drugs he had been given and he was never the same again. Paul bore with fortitude the last nine years of incapacity that put an end to his active life and to his musical creativity. It was very sad to see him slowly deteriorate.

Paul didn't achieve great heights as a financier in the City, a warrior in the Armed Forces, a scholar in Academia or an entrepreneur in the world of business. But he achieved much more, some would say: he lived as a gentle, kind, sensitive, loving and generous being. Not a bad legacy.

He is survived by his son Lawrence from his marriage to Lynda, dissolved by Papal decree, by his second wife Sylvia, and by the surviving three of his four younger siblings.

**Dennis O'Leary**

**GRAHAM BALL** (WHSB 1966-68) – died April 2020

Graham came to Westcliff from Belfairs for his A levels. At Westcliff he started a magazine called 'The Eclogue' which just about eluded staff censorship for its short life. Armed with this experience, he won a place on the prestigious Mirror Group Training Scheme based in Plymouth, a spawning ground for many national newspaper journalists. During training on the Devon newspapers Graham met his future wife Tessa Hilton who went on to edit the Sunday Mirror.

Graham was one of Fleet Street's old school. An investigative and campaigning journalist for more than 35 years, his newspaper life stretched from tabloid exposes on the Sunday People to investigations for TV's The Cook Report, campaigns for The Independent, and leaders and literary reviews for the Express.

He was part of an era of excess but is remembered as much for his prodigious intellect and humour as for the drinking escapades that were inseparable from a newspaper career. A man who was interested in everything and made everything interesting, he followed up a passion for history with a BA in the subject at Birkbeck College in his fifties and was working towards an MA on press and propaganda in wartime in his retirement.

In the 1990s Graham went freelance. In 1997 he was with The Cook Report in Cyprus, researching the fugitive fraudster Asil Nadir, whose company Polly Peck had collapsed in 1991 with debts of £1.3bn. Colleague Roger Cook remembers: "Nadir was a charmer, but Graham saw through him. He pursued the story relentlessly until we had the ammunition we needed.

Once we had to travel between the north and south of the divided island. Graham found a man whose a bandoned house straddled the border and for a small fee we left the north through his front door and arrived in the south through the back.”

He then joined the Independent on Sunday and masterminded the editor Rosie Boycott’s campaign to decriminalise cannabis. He also travelled with Unicef, reporting on the plight of children in Cambodia and the Philippines. He ended his newspaper career as books editor of the Express titles.

Graham is remembered by many as a kind and big-hearted man; a great conversationalist and humourist, still collecting stories wherever he happened to be. He is survived by Tessa, whom he married in 1976, his children, Oscar, Thomas and Rebecca, and four grandchildren.

**Peter Holman**

## GARY BROOKER

I wrote to Terry suggesting he approach the Procol Harum fan club to ask Gary Brooker to submit any memories of his time at Westcliff High . I now realise that he was not in good health and was saddened to hear of his passing just a few days ago due to cancer .

I , as a member of The Monotones ( UK ) recall Gary in the early 60’s at school , when he was the singer and key board player for The Paramounts . They released “ Poison Ivy ” in 1962 whilst we released our debut single in 1964 , “What Would I Do ”. Neither were ‘smash ‘ hits.

They were labelled as an RnB band and could count the Stones as one of their big fans .

In 1966 Gary formed Procol Harum and wrote and sang ” Whiter Shade Of Pale ” which achieved World wide success .

The band broke up in 1977 and he went solo but joined up with many famous musicians, namely Eric Clapton, Ringo Starr and Bill Wyman .

In the year 2003 he was honoured with an MBE for his charitable services and later in 2009 presented with a BASCA in recognition of his contribution to music .

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of February 2022 he sadly lost his fight with cancer and died peacefully at home . Our thoughts are with his family and friends .

The following links may be of help ..... [Gary Brooker - Wikipedia](#); [Procol Harum singer Gary Brooker dies at 76 - BBC News](#); [Beyond the Pale \(procolharum.com\)](#)

**Peter Stanley**



62 TIMES SERIES March 8, 2022

Former Westcliff High pupil Gary Brooker MBE.

### PROCOL HARUM FRONT MAN GARY BROOKER DIES AGED 76

PROCOL Harum frontman Gary Brooker MBE has died at the age of 76. The singer-songwriter of the famous Southend psychedelic rock band had recently been receiving treatment for cancer.

A statement posted on the band's official website said: "With the deepest regret we must announce the death of Gary Brooker MBE, singer, pianist and composer of Procol Harum, and a brightly-shining, irreplaceable light in the music industry."

After attending Westcliff High School, then studying zoology and botany at Southend Municipal College, Brooker joined the Southend band The Paramounts, before founding Procol Harum with friend Keith Reid in 1966.

A year after, the group released their 1967 debut hit 'A Whiter Shade Of Pale', which topped the singles charts for six weeks, and was in 1977 named joint winner alongside Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody as Best British Pop Single 1952-1977 at the Brit Awards, and inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2008.

Brooker went on to lead the band for more than five decades, and helped write

the tracks with lead vocals on 13 albums. The Facebook statement continued, "Gary lit up any room he entered, and his kindness to a multilingual family of fans was legendary. He was notable for his individuality, integrity, and occasionally stubborn eccentricity.

"His mordant wit, and appetite for the ridiculous, made him a priceless raconteur and his surreal inter-song banter made a fascinating contrast with the gravitas of Procol Harum's performances."

He was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2003.

**Report by JOHN BLACK**

## **GARY BROOKER**

I heard the news today that Gary Brooker had died.

I taught Brooker (just surnames then) Maths in the 1<sup>st</sup> Year at Westcliff. Later he formed and led Procol Harum and gained widespread fame with A Whiter Shade Of Pale. Once when I was on holiday in Austria I went in a church and the organist was playing it. Although I taught many boys who became successful in various fields, the one who was the most successful was Gary Brooker.

Alex Welsh, (WHSB 1956-1994)

## **GARY BROOKER – now a much Darker Shade of Pale**

I was so saddened to hear of the death of Gary Brooker – the founder of the 60's group Procol Harum. Sad at the passing of a music icon but more so of a former house mate at WHSB.

We were not close friends, I guess, but Gary was someone who has left a lasting impression and happy memories of my time at school. In the same year group and, as it happened, in the same House from the first days of what was then the new Priory House – blue badge - and along with Crowstone was no doubt formed to add to the existing 4 school houses as the school expanded.

Playing some House Rugby together and enjoying a bit of socialising on the school playing field bank during lunch breaks they were certainly good times. Aware of his music interests and obvious talent and fascinated by his going off to some gig or other over the weekends we were always keen to learn on the following Monday what really happened on these what to us were quite exotic rock and roll adventures.

A fun and amusing character was Gary and when Whiter Shade of Pale hit the charts and the headlines with such success in 1967 it was great news as well as innovative and enduring music. It was also a happy indication that the School doesn't just turn out the likes of accountants and lawyers, like me, but a whole range of varied and interesting characters.

I still regularly stream Gary, Procol Harum and his subsequent bands via my Spotify and recall the good times at school when we all rather envied this fun-loving musician being a real part of the 60's scene as his ongoing and well deserved success clearly illustrated.

Thank for the memories Gary.

David Gray (WHSB 1955 – 1962)

## DON DAY 1930-2021

We are truly sorry to have to report the death last week of Don Day, who died after a short illness at the age of 90, in Southend Hospital. Don was one of our very eldest Vice Presidents, having been elected in the early sixties after a stellar playing career which encompassed the period from 1948-62, spent almost entirely in the 1<sup>st</sup> XV, whom he skippered with alacrity, having been an almost ever-present during the period mentioned above.

Don was a giant of a man, both physically and in terms of character. Very few fly-halves could claim to be around six feet three inches tall even now, let alone then, and his prodigious goal-kicking saw him to be the first club stalwart to exceed one thousand points at first team level, at a time when it must be remembered that a try was worth only three points. Don registered over sixty tries, more than one hundred and fifty penalties and nearly one hundred and eighty conversions during his time as goal kicker, and would more than happily slot over penalties from the half-way line, in the days when of course rugby was played in a very different way from what we are currently familiar with. In those days, the club's fixture list was strikingly different – the 1950 season would see us in combat with the second fifteens of London Welsh, Saracens, London Scottish, Wasps and Richmond – all five of whom we beat (!), together with victories over Southend, and both Guy's Hospital and Old Bancroftians, who at the time, just after the war, were formidable set-ups.

Over Don's career, we were to take many more scalps, as the club progressed from the trauma of the war until the sixties, by which time we were established as one of the strongest sides in Essex, as well as one of the most respected Old Boys' sides in the South-East.

After retiring from rugby, Don went on to become a senior member at the Boyce Hill Golf Club and was heavily involved in the Old Westcliffian Association and the Old Westcliffian Masonic Lodge, of which he retained a great interest until very recently.

Don was a noted member of the "Golden Oldies" table, which attended countless league lunches until very recently, in the company of such club legends as Don Choppen, Ceddie Hodgkins, Jim Crowe, Vic Lowen, Brian Scarsbrook, Mo Wilder, Jimmy Nutchey, Mike Turner and others whom I apologise for not mentioning, such is the vagueness of memory as we get on a bit!

Don was very devotedly married to Pat for many years, before sadly she became ill long-term. During these years of devoted care, Don found an outlet in researching the whole history of the club's 1<sup>st</sup> XV, from our inaugural match in 1923 until the club became open in 1989. His meticulous research has been invaluable, and much of the club's projected centenary publication the year after next will owe an inestimable amount to Don's painstaking hours spent at Southend Library amongst other places, carefully compiling a huge amount of data. This will undoubtedly be Don's legacy to a club which he loved and respected.

It was with delight that we were able to welcome Don to the inaugural match at our current premises in December 2019, where a fantastic afternoon was capped with the defeat of an Esher XV that thirty years ago we could never even have contemplated playing at Level Four. This was, sadly, the last time Don would appear at the club, as a result of lockdown, but we are hopeful that his last memory of the club was a good one.

No date has yet been ascertained for Don's funeral, but I can assure the membership that, as soon as it is known, those who still remember fondly an absolute card and gentleman, polite, cheerful and effusive to the last, will be able to pay their final respects.

### **Nick Crowe**

Don was a gentleman with old fashioned values which have mostly disappeared in subsequent generations.

As stated above, Don was a keen supporter of the OWA and was a Vice President, having served as President from 1965 to 1966.

### **Terry Birdseye**

### **MIKE KING**

Mike King who has died at the age of 90 was not an academic high flyer during his relatively short period at the school. Like many of his generation he had a disrupted education during the war years. Yet he went on to become a successful local businessman, a prominent local Liberal Councillor and unquestionably one of the most affectionate community campaigners our town has ever produced.

Mike first came to local prominence in the early 60s campaigning against the "road to the West" which would have driven a large road west of Chalkwell and utterly destroyed Leigh Old Town. More recently, the successful opposed bulldozing taking place on Hadleigh Castle fields. In 1996 he was largely responsible for the creation of Leigh Town Council, a new hand of local Government in Southend. He was also the prime mover in restoring the historic Dunkirk Veteran Leigh Cackle Boat The Endeavour.

Although we were never on the same side politically, I greatly respected him and often turned to him for advice. He had an encyclopaedic knowledge of classic boats. Mike was truly a "Leighman born and bred" and this was a life well lived right through to the very end.

### **David Norman**

*Footnote:* Mike was a great help to me during my time as Chairman of Leigh Town Council. He offered me invaluable advice and was always there for me as a "sounding board"! I valued his friendship and he was a true son of Leigh.

### **Terry Birdseye**

### **KENNETH MACKINNON 1933-2021** WHSFB 1944-51

My late father Kenneth MacKinnon attended Westcliff High School from 1944 until 1951. He first came to Leigh as a young child in the late 1930s on holiday from his family home in Poplar, London. From there he was evacuated to Cornwall during the war. The family then moved to Leigh in West Street in 1944 when he started at Westcliff High School in first year.

Two abiding themes of Ken's life were his Christian faith and his love and participation in the folk customs, heritage and traditions of the British Isles. Being uprooted and his wider immediate family origins in Ireland and Scotland led Ken to reach out to the indigenous traditions and heritage which bind communities. He became a lay minister for the Methodist church and was active in folk music and dance.

He founded and ran a folk carol service for over forty years held annually in December, latterly at St Clement's, Leigh. He gave a remote sermon at the virtual carol service conducted during the pandemic in December 2020, and I and my sister Morag gave a dedication to him in person at the 2021 service. Ken's working life was as a teacher and then a lecturer in social science. He took a specialist interest in the Gaelic language of North-West Scotland. He was a councillor, then Alderman and served a year as mayor of Southend-on-Sea. Ken reached out to all the communities which formed him and went on to lead a life in active retirement in Scotland in the Black Isle just North of Inverness working part-time as an Open University tutor.

I also attended Westcliff High School for seven years. My father took me on my first day. As we went in I remember that a teacher, 'Spike' Limbird who taught biology, spoke to my father asking what Ken was doing here. Indicating to me and telling him that I was enrolling, Mr Limbird expressed surprise at the amount of time that had gone by, now to the next generation.

It so happened that there were other masters still there from Ken's time at the school, and indeed the same headmaster Henry Cloke.

Ken wrote in his family memoirs: "Henry Cloke succeeded Eric Ayres as head in our second or third year. Henry Cloke was a breath of fresh air. He loped onto the stage at our first assembly, as we were agog to see what we had got coming amongst us. With gown askew, this tall and foreboding figure commenced the morning service. 'What do you think of him, then?'

My neighbour asked me. 'Whatever do you think he looks like?' 'Like a great boot with the tongue hanging out,' I replied. 'Come to think of it, that would be a good name for him, the Boot!' And so it caught on.

The Boot he was from then on, and throughout his days there! When I was leaving, the Boot wished me well, and told me that I would be back to give the Speech at the annual School Speech Day and Prize-giving. Fourteen years later I was duly so invited. As the very first Old Westcliffian to become Mayor of the Borough, I commenced my speech by telling the serried ranks of scholars, parents and staff that, 'Now the boot is on the other foot!' – to rapturous acclaim and applause."

"The school building bore the marks of army occupation during the recent war years, when the pupils had been evacuated to Belper. Lewd words and phrases still adorned the walls of our classrooms. Lessons were interrupted by air raids, which I for one always hoped would coincide with maths lessons. We would then all repair to the underground air raid shelters excavated into the upper terracing between the school and the playing fields. I had always promised myself that I would throw my cap in the air when war finally ended. The news of the final victory in Europe came during afternoon lessons on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945, and I imagine we were let out of school early. I was one of the first out, and promptly threw my cap in the air."

Ken and I often talked fondly of our times at the school, a combined period of fourteen years. I attach the weblink to my 'Other Lives' obituary in The Guardian which gives further details of his life. <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2021/jul/12/kenneth-mackinnon-obituary>

### **Niall MacKinnon**

*Footnote:* I first came across Ken when I was elected to Southend County Borough Council in 1970. Although of different political persuasions, we became firm friends. We had folk music and, of course the school in common.

He was a true gentleman of the "old school" and I shall miss him very much.

### **Terry Birdseye**

## **G A (MICK) STOKE**

I am the son of G.A. (Mick) Stoke MBE DSC RN who attended WHSB from 1933 - 1939. As the war was starting, he took the Civil Service Commissioners Exams for Special Entry into the Royal Navy and, although having no family tradition nor coming from one of the major public schools, was one of 99 accepted out of 500 candidates. He then had a remarkable career becoming The Most Highly Decorated Midshipman in the Royal Navy in the Second World War.

In May 2020, I finally opened some boxes of papers that had been carefully preserved by my mother for over 70 years to find a treasure trove of my father's school and naval career including all his WHSB School Reports!! He wrote over 150 letters back to his parents starting when he joined Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth at the beginning of 1940 through to the end of the war, including some to his House Master and History Teacher at WHSB, Ivan Brown. He mentions some other Old Westcliffians he meets during the war and his visit to Belper in 1942, where the school was moved to temporarily. His younger brother was John Stoke who attended WHSB between about 1940 - 1947?

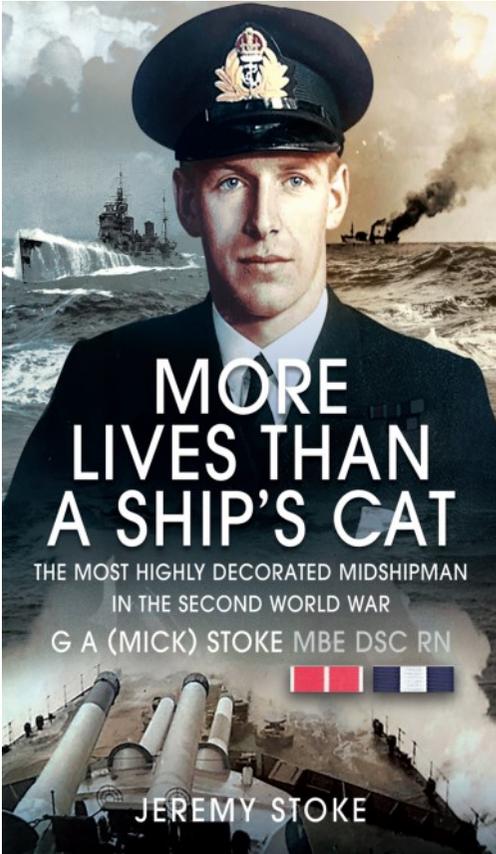
I started writing a book later in 2020, finishing last year. I have been very fortunate to find a specialist publisher, Pen & Sword, who have provided first class editing, graphics and marketing support and have just received the first advance copies. I would be delighted to send a copy for you and the school library. His letters demonstrate how much he appreciated the education and values he received from WHSB. The school's motto, Fide and Fortitudine, is particularly apt.

I would like to contribute in some way back to the school, although neither myself nor my two brothers attended. After receiving a copy of the book, you might like to consider whether you think a visit and talk from me about my father's values and achievements during the Second World War would be worthwhile?

More information and how to obtain copies of the book can be found at [www.stokebooks.co.uk](http://www.stokebooks.co.uk) Maybe some Old Westcliffians might be interested?

Kind regards

Jeremy Stoke



Stanford: 'I always wanted to be wealthy. Money doesn't buy happiness but lack of it can lead to misery. Now I really enjoy my life, I do whatever I like and no one tells me otherwise'

**Cliff Stanford**

High-living founder of Demon Internet who hit the jackpot bringing affordable web access to all Cliff Stanford, who has died from cancer aged 67, founded Demon Internet, a company which sparked a revolution by becoming the first to provide genuinely affordable access to the internet in the UK; later he was instrumental in exposing the hidden assets of Dame Shirley Porter, the Tesco heiress and disgraced former leader of Westminster Council.

When the internet began, it was mainly used for communications between academic institutions. Commercial internet service providers (ISPs) emerged in 1989, but access remained extremely expensive.

In the early 1990s Stanford, who ran a small business software company, heard that Pipex, the UK's first commercial ISP, had started offering leased-line internet access for £20,000 a year, so he got out his calculator and began to do the maths.

With a Net feed leased from Pipex, he reckoned that if he could get 200 people to pay £10 a month (an early example of crowd-funding) for an individual dial-up service it would be viable, "and if I could get 400 people I would make a £20,000 profit".

Demon Internet, offering “just a tenner a month” access to the internet, was born in May 1992 in a boiler room behind the old Odeon cinema in Hendon, with 200 subscribers, eight modems, a few phone lines and the Pipex Net feed.

Its initial aim was to gain 400 subscribers in six months and 1,000 in two years. “In the first year we got 1,400 customers,” Stanford recalled. “Each month we grew by 25 per cent, and we were not even advertising.”

With the advent of the World Wide Web in 1993, Demon went on to hit the jackpot. By 1997 the company had 250,000 subscribers, all with an email address ending “demon.co.uk”, and the same year it was sold to Scottish Telecom for £66 million, of which Stanford banked £33 million.

Predicting that his business empire would be “bigger than Branson’s”, and declaring, “There’s no such thing as enough money”, a few days after the sale Stanford set up another venture, Redbus Investments, with John Porter, the son of Dame Shirley. In 1999 Stanford appeared in *The Sunday Times* Rich List, in 731st place.

To begin with things went well enough, with Redbus riding the technology and investment boom at the end of the 1990s. Its investments included a landmine-clearing outfit, an early online film service (later sold to Lionsgate), a manufacturer of light-bending windows, a dentists’ training firm and a girl band called Girls@play featuring Alan Sugar’s niece as its lead singer (“If they do what the Spice Girls did, we could make millions” – they didn’t).

It also featured Redbus Interhouse, a company specialising in building and running internet “hotels” – data rooms that take care of firms’ online activities. In 2000 Redbus Interhouse came to the stock market, raising £120 million, money it spent establishing co-location centres around Europe.

“I always wanted to be wealthy,” Stanford told *The Guardian* in 2001. “Money doesn’t buy happiness but lack of it can lead to misery. Now I really enjoy my life, I do whatever I like and no one tells me otherwise.”

After selling Demon, Stanford had moved to Brussels to avoid capital gains tax and splashed out on a £150,000 Rolls-Royce Silver Spur (“my favourite present to myself”), a private jet, and a house on the Costa del Sol.

But then troubles began. In December 2000, a spread in the *News of the World* gave an account of champagne-fuelled overnight romps at Claridge’s with two exotic dancers. “Cliff doesn’t have any inhibitions,” one young woman was quoted as saying. “Let me tell you – his bank balance isn’t the only impressive thing about him. That man certainly has breathtaking assets.”

Stanford was inclined to shrug off the article: “The stripper was a friend of mine and she sold a story, so good luck to her. But the detail was so wrong it was laughable. Even my mother didn’t believe it.” Claridge’s, however, banned him from the hotel.

Worse was to come. Redbus Interhouse failed to generate sufficient sales to support its expansion, and as the dot.com bubble burst, shares began to slide.

The result was a spat between Stanford and Porter over company strategy – a drama played out in flying writs, boardroom rows and angry shareholder meetings over more than a year.

It culminated in a stormy five-hour extraordinary general meeting in July 2003 (by which time Stanford had resigned as deputy chairman, though he still owned 30 per cent of the business), when about 61 million votes were cast in favour of Stanford's demand for the removal of all of Redbus's directors, including Porter, while about 67 million were cast in favour of keeping the existing team.

In September that year Stanford sold his Redbus stake, once worth £150 million, for just £3 million.

The following month, allegations surfaced that Stanford had been involved in the interception of emails between Porter and his mother, Dame Shirley, and in 2004 Stanford was charged with committing offences under the Computer Misuse Act and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act. Police claimed that Porter's emails had been automatically forwarded to a Hotmail email address.

In September 2005 Stanford was convicted of intercepting emails, given a suspended sentence and ordered to pay a fine of £20,000 plus £7,000 in prosecution costs.

He might, perhaps, have claimed a public interest defence. Dame Shirley had owed Westminster Council £37 million in surcharges due to her involvement in the "homes-for-votes" scandal of the late 1980s. She claimed, however, that she only had assets of £300,000, and efforts by the council to prove otherwise had drawn a blank.

The confidential emails obtained by Stanford strongly suggested that she had access to millions, much of it tied up in offshore tax havens. Copies of about 40 communications found their way, via Stanford, to Andrew Hosken, a BBC reporter, who in June 2003 did a story on Dame Shirley's real wealth. The intercepted emails included bank sort codes and numbers of secret accounts in Switzerland and Guernsey.

Following Hosken's report, investigators froze £34 million of Porter funds and, faced with the prospect of legal action to recover the full amount of the surcharge, Dame Shirley agreed to negotiate. In April 2004 she struck a deal under which she repaid £12.3 million.

One of two children, Stanford was born Clifford Martin Spiegel (he later anglicised his surname) on October 12 1954 and grew up in Southend-on-Sea, Essex. His father abandoned the family when Cliff was 12, leaving his mother to bring up Cliff and his younger sister alone. She had several book-keeping jobs and young Cliff started helping her. By the age of 13 he had learnt double entry book-keeping and by the age of 15 was running payrolls.

Leaving Westcliff High School for Boys aged 16, and reasoning that he had "never known a poor accountant", he began training at a practice in Billericay.

In 1979, however, bitten by the computing bug, he left to set up his first company, ImPETus, to develop BASIC software for Commodore business machines, operating from a shared office in the Hendon boiler room.

He built a team of six programmers, but in 1984 Commodore stopped making business machines, putting ImPETus out of business. Stanford bounced back – "doing the same thing with customers but on Apricot computers" – with a new venture called Demon Systems. But by 1992, when he started Demon Internet, he was virtually bankrupt.

After the battles over Redbus, Stanford, a squat, bearded man with a smoker's voice, retired to Spain, then, in 2017, to Tallinn, Estonia, where, styling himself an "innovation strategist", he enrolled at Tallinn University to learn Estonian, became interested in blockchain technology and began trading in cryptocurrencies.

A keen chess player and user of Twitter, Stanford was an enthusiast for a "clean-break Brexit" and recently came out in support of Dominic Cummings.

He was divorced from his Colombian wife, with whom he had a son. From 2000 he was in a relationship with Sylvia Spruck Wrigley, an American-German science fiction writer.

**Clifford Stanford, born October 12 1954, died February 24 2022**

## LESLIE ADCOCK

Receiving your Old Westcliffians newsletter today reminded me of another duty I must fulfil as the recently bereaved widow of your member Leslie Adcock (1951 -1957 at Westcliff High) He was 81. It would be good if you could include my memories in your next publication.

Les died on 3rd December 2021 having suffered Alzheimer's for 4 years, the last 2 made even more difficult by the pandemic isolation.

He enjoyed his membership for many years especially since his move to Surrey in 1974 by Nat West Bank which he joined on leaving school.

His years at Westcliff were under the headship of the redoubtable Henry Cloke.

His contemporaries included Mike Harrington, Mike Plummer and Peter Hammond all of whom kindly contacted me on hearing of his death. Mike Harrington unearthed some old school photos which I treasure.

His next-door neighbour the dentist John Fozard was a schoolmate throughout his years at Westcliff. John also sadly died a few years ago.

Other old boys some of whose names I recall were team members of the OW Cricket Club with whom he played for many years until we moved to Surrey. They are:- Nev Phillips, Mike Fricker, Dickie Davies, Nigel Robinson, Tony Ewing, Peter Stead, Mike Benningfield, Laurie Patch. Sadly, some of whom have predeceased Les. There were others whose names escape me.

Playing football was his first love but he enjoyed rugby too and tried to combine playing both until Jimmy Harrison found out and refused to select him unless he gave up the football!

I was a pupil the other side of the fence at OW Girls but 4 years younger. We married in 1965 and had twins 6 years later. We moved to Surrey when they were 3 and Les worked for several branches of Nat West until his retirement.

Two other old boys of note to myself are Gerald Harnden and your President David Norman who were at North Street primary school with myself. David was very welcoming when we attended reunions of North Street a few years ago.

Les's membership has brought happy memories for both of us over many years and has been a privilege.

My kind regards Marilyn Adcock



## **10. NEWS OF AND FROM OLD WESTCLIFFIANS**

### **CHARLES BAREHAM**

#### **Memories of the 1960s.**

The obituaries page in the Daily Telegraph 24th February brought back memories of being a member of the OWRFC back in the 1960s. The obituary of Gary Brooker, the frontman of the pop group Procol Harum ,who's global hit " A Whiter Shade of Pale " made him possibly one of the best known OW in the last fifty years. He was a pupil at the school in the late 1950s and used to play the piano at the morning assembly. It was not until I read the obituary,that I realised his first group was The Paramounts.

Fellow OWRFC members of my vintage will remember the Paramounts as they were one of the groups that played at the regular monthly Saturday night dances. The other group was Tim Gentle and the Gentlemen. The Paramounts were a terrific group but little did we realise then that the lead singer would progress to stardom. Any reader who was around then will remember these dances were a hot ticket that drew some very attractive young ladies to the Old Gables. I am sure this will bring back a guilty smile to those that were there!

Memories of this era , on and off the pitch, underline how the game of club rugby has changed in the ensuing half century. Totally amateur,we paid a match fee, provided our own jersey which we washed ourselves. We contributed to the beer kitty and the watering cans of often dodgy bitter. When we trained outside, we used the grassed area under the street lights in front of the school. On international days , we played in the morning against the clubs near to London and went on to Twickenham for the afternoon match. In those days,you could buy a ticket at the turnstile and it was not at the extortionate price they are nowadays. Post match we would gather in the small bar in the north east corner.

I think that we were lucky to have played rugby in the amateur days.

I hope these jottings revive memories for others of my vintage.

**Charles Bareham**

WHSB 1952 - 1958

## MICHAEL FELTHAM

### A Mariner's Tale

In conversations with our Hon. Sec. and other Old Boys, recently, I was encouraged to recall the close relationship with residents of the Borough and environs and the sea. Or, estuary, rather, in point of fact.

My parents moved to Chalkwell, from Epping area, in 1952, when I was aged ten. To place this into perspective this was just 6 1/2 years after the end of World War Two in Europe; a fairly frightening thought! However, core to many of my experiences.

In the London area, Dad had a cabin cruiser, kept on the River Lee, and we journeyed along the Lee and one day, through Limehouse Lock onto the mighty River Thames! In a gale... I became mightily seasick; fortunately, a very nice ex-Royal Navy man who came along for the day (he worked for my father) gave me sterling advice: "Always throw up on the lee side, not to windward! Otherwise your vomit is blown back all over you and your shipmates and they will not be happy!" He also said after the first time, probably I would never ever be seasick again. Luckily, he was right.

A river boat would be useless for the estuary, since such boats tended to be built with high cabin structures having far too much "windage" and were top heavy, having an unfortunate propensity to roll over in much of a sea; accordingly, Dad bought a local boat. As with so many, Norah Edith was a converted BOT lifeboat. The boats were "Double enders". i.e. pointed both ends. Norah Edith was fitted with a marinised (For salt water) Austin Seven engine. Well, I must say, I wouldn't want to be faced with the North Atlantic in mid-Winter in one of these! She was almost totally open with just a vestigial fore locker for the anchor and chain and spare ropes.

About the most interesting thing about this boat happened to be an identical sister ship was moored near by at Westcliff and had a gun metal commemorative plaque: she was one of the "Little Ships" which had so bravely journeyed to Dunkirk and back, rescuing survivors of the British Expeditionary Force, trapped on the beaches in May and June 1940.

Now, forgotten by most, most of the seafront from what was Peter Pan's Playground to Chalkwell, was HMS Westcliff: a secretive training area for amongst other projects, the forthcoming Normandy Invasion, Operation Neptune, which was part of Overlord.

The house my parents purchased in Chalkwell Avenue, has been like so many, requisitioned as part of HMS Westcliff. Navy types tended to clean floors by chucking buckets of water over the wood and mopping off. Not surprisingly, the floorboards and joists were rotten with dry rot, damp rot etc. In 1952 one had to beg for building materials from the Ministry of Supply. It was interesting, as a kid, to leap between holes in floors early on!

The Chalkwell, Leigh and Westcliff of the early 1950s, was very much focused on boats: Leigh was then a very active fishing town and the rest was mainly devoted to amateur boatsmen (And women, naturally!).

Exciting plans were afoot: my elder brother I went with Dad one Saturday to Chatham Royal Navy Dockyards, then still very much a working establishment. In those far off days to reach Kent it meant Tilbury Car Ferry or driving into East London and the Blackwall Tunnel. Tilbury Ferry was quicker and more fun. Dad wanted to examine three surplus Admiral's Barges. Now, these boats were rather like miniature MTBs, built by Vosper Marine or Thornycroft, the design was Hard Chine: in other words, with sufficient power they would "plane" just like a speedboat: or an MTB or MGB. The hulls were offered bare; no engines and no marine gearboxes, plus the superstructure was mainly missing. My Father made as required, sealed bids on two: and won the bid on his favourite choice. The hull had to be transported by road, to the boatbuilder, Arthur Pike and Son, in Westcliff, an old local firm.

Pikes constructed a very good cabin and steering cabin; the deck was covered in canvas and painted. Meanwhile, Dad, repaired to a wonderful post-war emporium called Pride and Clarke and bought a brand new government surplus Scripps-Mercury (Canada) marinised Ford V8 MTB Donkey Engine, in a packing case for £60. Cheap as chips. He also purchased a surplus Lancaster bomber compass, an Aldis signalling lamp and other essentials. Well, I did tell you WWII was a core part of early 1950s life...

And thus, Quo Vadis came into being.

Now what on earth does all this have to do with the school and old boys, I hear you ask? Simply because so many pupils of the school in my time, were involved with boats, sailing, fishing and so on. Sons of most of the Old Leigh fishing families, such as Osbornes, Meddles, Cotgroves, etc attended the school. It is often forgotten that the root of Southend itself was fishing and thus boats.

In the mid 1950s, many older boys had weekend jobs on Leigh Bawleys and this boomed overnight when the dyed White Weed craze took off. Shrimpers and Cocklers would rig up a power winch in the stern and use iron rakes to dredge up the weed from various parts of the Estuary: the destruction of habitat caused loss of dabs, flounders and other such fish for quite some time after. One of the interesting side results, were the blokes coming to school after the weekend, with rusted and heavily corroded Sten Guns, Thompson Sub-Machine Guns and live automatic .303 cartridges, dragged up by the White Weed rakes. At this time, the estuary was a dump of various ordnance from sunk cargo vessels, crashed aircraft etc which had all fallen victim to attacks by the Luftwaffe, nasty mines (including the then new magnetic mines) dropped and subs which had managed to sneak through the anti-submarine nets strung right across the estuary at Shoebury (by East Beach: what is left of the above surface structure can still be seen off the MOD land).

One fairly stupid senior boy, made a hole in the school wall (not far beneath the Head's Balcony outside his study), pushed in a .303 round and proceeded to belt it with a hammer! It exploded and the bullet set off across the rugby pitches.

I had the sad task, last year, of writing Geoff "Syd" Thompson's obituary: and during a long telephone conversation, earlier in the year before Geoff passed away, he reminded me of his time on Quo Vadis one weekend, which he thoroughly enjoyed. Another regular was one of my elder brother's classmates, Charlie Townsend. My brother lost interest, yet Charlie often still came out with us and helped. He was a Sea Scout and a useful chap to have on a boat. So many pupils at this time, were members of local sailing clubs, racing dinghies and associated with boats in many different ways. Indeed, much, much later, (1990s), yet another Old Westcliffian, John Alani, was a member of my then Rotary Club and John was on the Olympic Team at one time racing sailing dinghies.

Life changed when Dad also purchased a lovely 18 foot sailing sloop, Havoc, a Gaff-Rigged mainsail with a conventional roller reefing jib. A beautiful boat built, from Mahogany – clinker construction, with a centre plate - by Johnson and Jagos of Old Leigh. She was open with a tiny fore locker and Havoc's sister ship, had been sailed by experienced cadet members of one of the large local sailing clubs, to France, one summer. Excellent sea boats. This taught me how to sail; a whole different world.

Back to Quo Vadis: there was a major problem. The propeller "Cavitated" when the throttle was opened; mainly since the pitch of the blades was too fine for the power developed by the new engine. A new prop. was cast by an old foundry in Norfolk, Blakes, which solved this problem.

Running the engine on petrol was very expensive and the boat was converted, quite simply, to run on TVO. (Tractor Vaporising Oil) a type of higher quality paraffin or kerosene, as Americans call it. The old "Flat Top" Ford V8s (So called as they were all side valves, as against later Overhead Valves) ran with a Compression Ratio of circa 4:1.

This Cabin Cruiser achieved, on TVO, over the Measured Mile, near Canvey Island, 24 Knots per hour, which equates to circa 27.6 miles per hour. In calm weather, it was an exciting ride!

A small tale of what can happen...

Having provided the crew with Mae West ex-service surplus, inflating life belts, Dad decided we ought to test these. OK, so far. Now, despite loving boats my Father, bless him, could not swim!

Safely on our mooring near Westcliff Jetty, we all leapt over the side, and once immersed, pulled the inflation cords. And all popped up to float safely. Nice. Then, when we tried to re-board, well it was a "Houston we have a problem!" moment.

Since the bulwarks (sides you land lubbers!) of the cockpit were rather high, then no one was able to clamber back onto the boat. Ooops! Dad, eventually, solved the problem by climbing up the mooring chain and arriving back on board with his legs and knees raw and bleeding from all the encrusted marine life on the chain. Good Ol' Dad.

Motto and lesson: before leaping over the side of ANY boat, make sure you have first installed some type of ladder.

Happy days; they really were.

**Michael Feltham**  
**February 2020**

**Footnote ...**

***The Board of Trade, the supervisory government body for merchant ship safety and an organisation forever cursed by sailors, particularly in the Battle of The Atlantic in WW2. Why?***

***Most of all the BOT specified life jackets. The early type having large cork floats front and back broke many necks when merchant sailors leapt for safety from any height. After this fiasco, the replacement Kapok filled type, was susceptible to oil-saturation and would then not provide floatation: the two hazards of merchant ships after being torpedoed, were large oil slicks and fire. Many seaman drowned so sadly.***

Motor Torpedo Boat and Motor Gun Boat.

Used for power generator etc.

For non-Latin scholars, "Wither Goest Thou?" Smug? Sorry!

Just at the time of writing, 16 suspected unexploded bombs were detonated by HM Royal Navy 25-02-2020.

Clinker means boats built by layering side planks, one on top of the other. Quo Vadis, however was a mixture as they all were: Carvel Chines (Triple Skin Marine Ply with canvas between each lamination) and Clinker upper hulls.

To place this into perspective, when I was deeply involved in motor racing and building racing engines, mainly Ford and BMC, we ran on about 13:1 compression ratios, which demanded the highest octane rating petrol, of about 104 octane rating. Only then obtainable at racing circuit pumps.

## DUNCAN VEASEY

### An Old Man Witters On

#### Part One

One of the things about living in rural Nova Scotia is the importance still of season and the elements, the closeness to nature and change, though as we are only fifteen minutes from shops and a hospital I had better not overdo the frontiersmen bit. So it was I found myself relaxing after a hot, late summer morning spent stowing logs for what might be another of those 'old fashioned Nova Scotia winters' the locals are proud of, six feet of snow and minus thirty.

I decided to watch the school video for the centenary celebrations and blimey, it was Proust and his cake all over again, save I never stop at one myself in the Mr. Kipling department! I was amazed to see how much had not changed with buildings and uniform, fun things like drama and music.....and exams in the hall, which of course is so much smaller than I recall.

Here are a few of my random memoirs of Westcliff in the sixties presented in a raindrops and roses and whiskers on kittens kind of way. My favourite childhood and school memoirs from England are those of Keith Waterhouse and Steven Fry, the first so like my previous life in Hull, walking round a city in freedom, Leeds in his case and some time before me, the second rather more extreme and self indulgent, but the "feel" of school is there. Then, there is the slightly more surreal John Cleese film "Clockwise" ... "It's a long way down to the front isn't it..." Alas, I lack their genius and I shall never be a national treasure, an old man's memory fades and he makes bits up to fill in the gaps, never mind the conscious embroidering.

My family had moved south from Hull on my father's promotion, so I was fortunate to start at Westcliff in the first year in 1964, knowing nobody, but all of us in the same culture shock boat. My Yorkshire accent was so strong people could not understand me in shops. I left to go to St Bartholomew's Medical School in 1970, a spotty seventeen-year-old as callow as... a great bit callow thing. We had a 'leavers' supper' with Mr. Cloke in the school dining hall and off we toddled into life. Do the English "graduate" from high school now with balls, a la North America? No song and dance in our day. Suddenly grown up, ha!

Well I'll start with the teachers.....

#### Teachers

I remember first seeing Henry Cloke, tall and unkempt majesty in his gown, striding along, leonine head flung back, remote, austere, rather frightening to a twelve-year-old. I was sent to him on a couple of occasions for a bollocking, waiting outside his office. "Clockwise" again. "9.20!" Regrettably, never had his teaching.

The deputy head, just one, (I can't help noticing a proliferation of admin staff job titles by 2020), was Mr. Harden, always immaculate, officer's shoes, gowned, an old fashioned Baldwinesque figure I have in my mind. I loved his readings in assembly from Marcus Aurelius. A classicist chum told me he was freely translating from the Latin to keep his skills up to snuff! Bravo! I was sorry to hear in these pages of his suicide after his wife's death and his history of being passed over for the headship. I never got the opportunity to study Latin either...I never 'ad the Latin for the judging' as Peter Cook memorably put it. (Actually the generation just before me at medical school had anatomy lectures administered in Latin and you needed latin O level for admission.)

His eerie was by the front door.....whereas the staffroom was the teacher's sanctuary. Occasionally one would be sent there with a message. Knock and wait, slight anxiety, then a teacher would open the door, suspiciously, and a huge cloud of smoke, like a Victorian armored cruiser working up to full speed, would billow out into the corridor...cigarettes and pipes. How do teachers cope with the stress of the job now without the gift of tobacco? Mr. Thomas was never seen without a cigarette in his mouth, and I am sure Mr Hughes in economics smoked his pipe in class.

My time straddled the change from Oxbridge MAs and PhDs to rather lesser academic qualifications in many teachers, from the old fashioned gown and those who had fought in the war, to sixties graduates in cords and desert boots. (We were quite the little intellectual snobs and rather looked down on teachers arriving with thirds from plate glass universities.) Perhaps, Hogwarts to Grange Hill is a stretch.

And don't mention the war! Mr. Limbird, always known as "Spike", in biology, still had the physical stigmata of his time on the Burma railway as a FEPOW. No doubt many others had tales to tell that we never learned because, as I remember with deep frustration from my own father who had been in Burma, never wanting to talk about experience and adventures, to swing the lamp or relive trauma, was the norm. (In fact Mr L. did once tell us of his reaction to exposure to Japanese people, nightmares and attacking his wife in bed, and by coincidence as a young naval psychiatrist I had the enormous and humbling privilege of taking part in the medical and psychiatric reassessment of surviving FEPOWs in the 80s, 40 years too late for most.) I also recall Mr L. finding 3 of us with what passed for porn in 1967, queuing up outside the biology lab to dissect some worm or eyeball. We didn't get sent to the head that time!

My first form teacher was Mr Hart, an exotic, extreme Francophile. I recall he even found the style of the oblong French sugar lump vastly superior to the traditional British cube. I think we were the first year exposed to 'audio-visual' language teaching with a slide projector and big reel tape recorder. "Monsieur Thibault habit Dix Place d'Italie, a Paris." Is still ingrained like something from 'The Ipcress File.' He also ran the film club.

I may be making some of this up, because I went on to London and spent most of my first year spare time going to the National Film Theatre, but the film club run by Mr. Hart put on all sorts of stuff and I owe him my lifelong interest in cinema. Obviously there was rubbish by Jean-Luc Goddard, but I am convinced that he actually let us see "Robert Having His Nipple Pierced" and "I Am Curious (Yellow)." I must say, my first viewing of Zulu has left a stronger impression and I bet that isn't being shown in modern UK schools.

## Art

My favourite teacher was Trevor "Pug" Jones in Art, Welsh, vertical boxer's nose, Bobby Charlton comb-over, arms like hams, dry, kind and understated: "Its coming" he would compliment before picking up the pastel and making some deft changes to one's work. I went back to study Art in the sixth form in "free" ...."They're study not free periods!".....and sports periods. I was in awe of some of the older boys who got places at Southend Art School and had a special gift with line and colour. The backdoor of the art room, the old school kitchen, was the illicit smoker's paradise.

He was hugely tolerant and had the task of hand calligraphing the school master timetable, which took him weeks every year. I owe him much with lifelong creativity. He also got me into the "Thirty Club" ... is that still a thing?... as I was leaving school, for services to the arts, against the headmaster's judgement. (Mr. Cloake openly told me so. A cruel man but fair!). I also had one of my pastel still life pictures framed and hung outside the headmaster's office, which did make me proud indeed. Hopefully the light playing through those bottles and fruits brought some solace to those awaiting their bollockings.

Wine...

I do not recall much in the way of exposure to drugs in my school days. I am sure there was some going on. There were a couple of boys darkly rumored to be involved, their academic performance having dropped off severely and of course this was the time of pop stars. I recall a discussion in the prefects' common room about the famous 'butterfly on the wheel' occasion when Sir Michael Jagger was alleged to have been apprehended in a drugs raid in flagrante with the fragrant Miss Faithfull and an item of popular confectionary made in Slough. Ian Croxford, our Head Boy, assured us it was true and he'd seen the pictures, and his dad was a Chief Constable so it must have been true! Sadly I passed up a hitch hike to the Isle of Wight to see what turned out to be Jimmy Hendrix's last performance there as I was studying for my Russian A level!! ( Decision right or wrong? Discuss.)

As for drinking, there were quite extraordinarily free times for young people. I certainly had a regular alcohol habit by the age of fifteen, and every Friday and Saturday night the three pubs on Leigh-on-Sea waterfront ... are The Crooked Billet, The Smack and the Ship still there?... were absolutely packed with under age drinkers, seemingly with no policing at all. A group of us music nerds went to each other's houses once a week and sampled our home brewing products, over which I will draw a discreet veil (and I don't draw many of those).

.....Women

Sadly, not. I'm with Sir John Betjeman on this one. (He famously regretted not having enjoyed more ladies.) In retrospect, I think single-sex schooling has certain advantages. I cannot imagine how I would have coped in class with girls and the headmistress of the girl's school next door, I think wisely, kept up barriers not far short of electrified barbed wire and attack dogs. There was the yearly school dance (about which, more later) and contact with some societies, sometimes with choir and music. We had very few female teachers, though the arrival of Ms. Gayler, whom I recall as an absolute vision of feminine loveliness in a mini skirt, must certainly have caused ripples in her classrooms as well as the smoker's lounge.

...and Song

My second favourite teacher was Gerwyn Parry, our wonderful music master, another inveterate smoker, plethoric and passionate, always conducted in white tie and tails, and discussed the music between each piece at concerts in a way which was unique and helpful. He famously opined: "No music has been written since the death of Schubert" in an Ogmores Pritchardian sort of way.

We used to tease him by bringing in Shostakovich LPs. (Note for younger readers, if there are any; they were large plastic discs which reproduce sound on a "record player", an antique device which Joe Biden recently mentioned to much ridicule). We had some seriously good musicians in my time... most prominently Malcolm Stewart who went on to lead the Liverpool Phil and Dave Cottam who was touched with genius, teaching himself classical guitar and later playing at the Wigmore. I remember him playing Lionel Harrison's guitar concerto before I left the school, Lionel being another extraordinary musical colossus.

Southend with its excellent amateur orchestras and vibrant music scene was surely as good a place as any for any musical immersion in school and out. Derek Merton-Lynne usually had the assembly gig like the art master in "Clockwise" and Roy Wales brought his astonishing energy as director of music in Southend, and also, if I recall, swept Ms. Gayler away as Mrs. Wales.

Yes, music and beer were my passions. Mr. P's successor, whose name has been erased from my cortex, probably courtesy of the beer, though I am struggling with the word Derek, put on a wonderful Britten's 'Ceremony of Carols' the years I left. Weeding old papers to erase myself, before my family have to do it after I die, I found a Southend Music Society Programme in which I and Chris Lale, (I was rather jealous of him as he played better than me), knocked off the Hindemith Canonic Sonata for two flutes in public, and I had my only two ever professional engagements arranged by Brian Gregson, an older boy who taught me.....wonderful player. (He later became an RAF 'scopie' and ran a base in the Shetlands before retirement.) I got five quid for second flute in the Matthew Passion conducted by Gerwyn with professional soloists down from London of mixed quality... an appalling Judas Iscariot being pronounced "villainous", a considerable insult from his more usual 'dire!' I recall the oboist amusing us by blowing cigarette smoke through his instrument. It has been downhill all the way since, though I am still playing for free beer in an Irish pub Celtic session.

### Crime and Punishment

In my fourth year, as I was fat and spotty and shy, I volunteered to run the coke stall at the school dance in order to avoid Terpsichorean embarrassment. We had two horrible boys in the school who would threaten younger boys with a duffing up and a dead leg at the end of school and who sported the fashionable skinhead haircut. After they were expelled, they stormed into our Maths class being held by the charming and rather elderly Mr. Bately, swearing at him, causing a ruckus, indeed I think he may even have been pushed, while we all sat there smirking in horrifies embarrassment, lacking any moral courage to stand up en masse and deal with them.

I am sure it was just coincidence, but security at the time of the dance where these two were expected to put in an appearance, was provided by Mr. 'Baz' Tate, another mathematics teacher whom I remember as a cheerful young man with a tight shiny suit and the confident swagger of a bloke who could obviously handle himself. Whilst Mr Harden undoubtedly spent his evenings translating Homer, he was reputed to spend his evenings as a club bouncer!

Sure enough, the bullies stormed into the hall, although they were not allowed on the premises, causing a nuisance of themselves on the dancefloor, shortly followed by the urgent figure of Mr. Tate steaming in. There was then a brouhaha and the dancers parted like the Red Sea and there was Mr. Tate, one miscreant in each hand, he having caught them completely off balance, storming down the dance floor, their arms flailing like demented wind turbines.

There was an almighty crash as he smashed them through the swing doors and then the whole place erupted in cheers. I was reliably informed...well Ian Croxford said so.... that as they were still talking when they should have been listening, Mr T gave them both a good hiding on the lawn. That was the last we saw of them. Mr. Tate achieved overnight hero status in the whole school. (Note to teachers: this, although by far the best approach to dealing with this problem, this might have certain negative consequences in 2020).

My assumption is that these two went on to grace one of Her Majesty's penal establishments but perhaps this humiliation brought them up short with a round turn and made them see the light. Perhaps one became Suffragan Bishop of Matabeleland and the other a school governor.

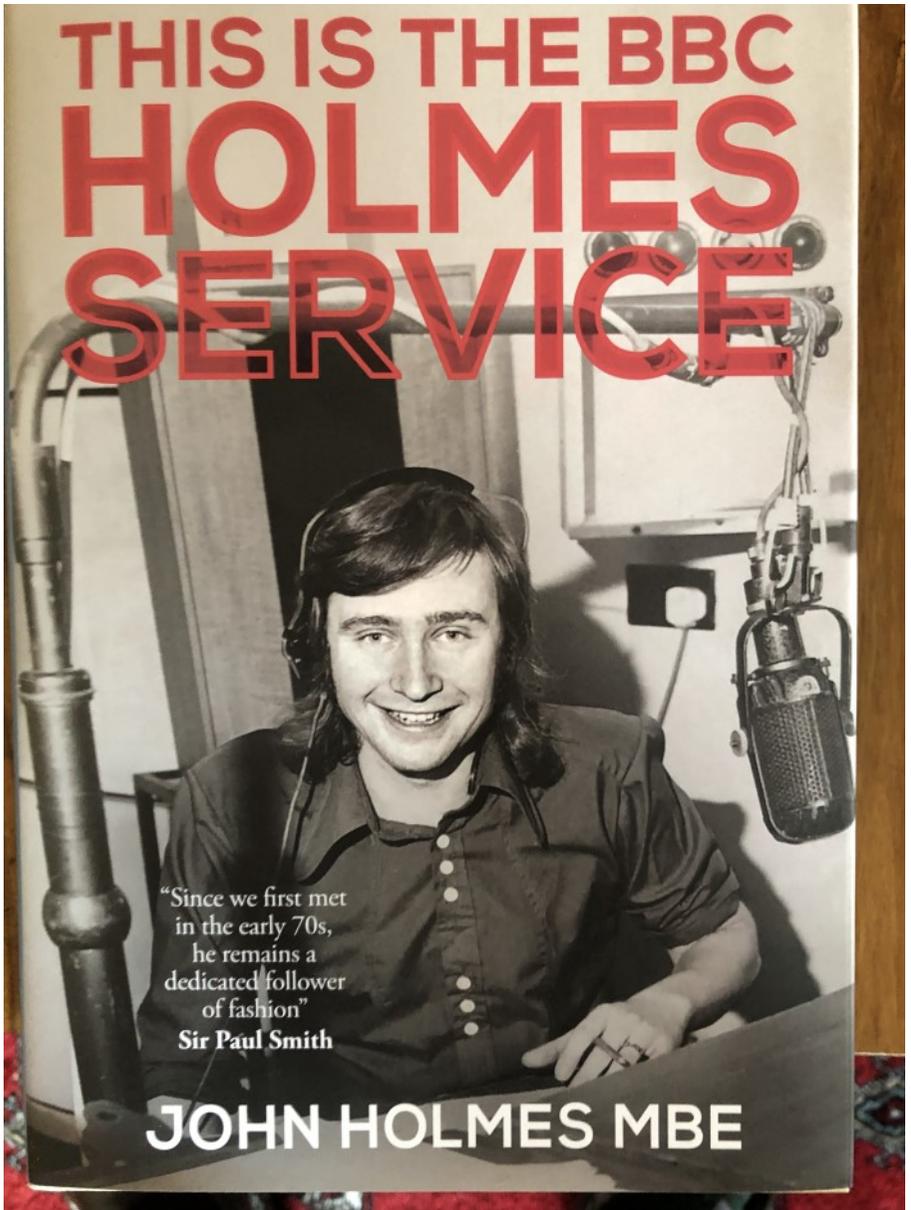
### Sports

I enjoyed Rugby but was never much good at it being fat, unfit, blind and cowardly. As I lived five minutes from the school in my later years I was a kind of turn up reserve. If somebody else did not come, I got on the bus and had a game in the seconds. If not, I would drop my kit back home and then walk down to the library in Southend, where I spend many happy hours examining books I could not afford like Oscar Parkes' "British Battleships" in the reference section. (Note to younger readers: libraries were institutions full of books, whence one could actually borrow books. They were normally run by fierce women of all ages in knee-length skirts and sensible shoes who could expostulate "shhhhhhhhhh!!!" in a manner which would crack a walnut at ten paces. There was also a newspaper room which allowed tramps to shelter from the rain and usually smelled of damp and urine as a consequence. I believe, libraries are now full of computers and emotional support dogs and have been taken over by Marxist deconstructionists like that silly woman at the British Library.)

I remember Jimmy Harrison as an excellent and inspiring teacher, even for those of us who were athletically challenged. Indeed, having really put the effort in during my fourth year cross-country run, to this day I can't say why, I came staggering up the old lane next to the school somewhere in the first twenty to be greeted by what appeared to be a most genuine "well done!" which no doubt inspired me to go on and run and jog with that unique endorphin hit until the end stage osteo and knee replacement. That's your bloody fault Jimmy

Duncan Veasey - 1965 -70

(To be continued....if Terry allows it!!)



# THIS IS THE BBC HOLMES SERVICE

"Since we first met  
in the early 70s,  
he remains a  
dedicated follower  
of fashion"

Sir Paul Smith

JOHN HOLMES MBE

## **BIOG for Westcliff High School**

A successful 50-year career at the BBC, an Honorary Doctorate and an MBE: John Holmes puts a lot of that success down to his childhood in Southend, and he does just that in his autobiography which has just been published.

His formative years at West Leigh School and seven years at Westcliff High School for Boys were pivotal in his life and he owes much of that to his headmasters, Mr Gibbs and Mr Henry Cloke, who were so supportive. Part of that encouragement included a shock at the end of his very first term at senior school. His continual larking about lead to Mr Cloke relegating him to the lowest stream in the school. After that jolt, he took school life more seriously. He represented the school in rugby and athletics, and by the time he was in the sixth form he was helping to run extra school club activities, including becoming a regular in the annual school plays. This pastime included mixing with the girls' school next door, which was appreciated very much.

He has never forgotten his teachers who have inspired his success over the many years. Mr Gridley, who looked after those school plays, and his form master in the geography room, Mr. Coyte. He also looks back on physics teacher, Mr Lay; from English, Mr Dickinson, from Maths, Bunny Welch and music teacher, Mr Bates.

It was Mr Cloke who encouraged him to successfully apply for a National Coal Board Scholarship, which resulted in a degree in Mining Engineering. How he ended up leaving the NCB and moving to the BBC is a long story but it lead him to produce such Radio 4 favourites as 'Down Your Way', 'Any Questions?', 'Any Answers?' and The Natural History Programme.

When John first joined the Corporation in 1969 in Broadcasting House, London, he worked for the Music and Light Entertainment Department. He then spent a short time in Birmingham on Broad Street. His work included spot effects on 'The Archers'. This was before the days of Pebble Mill.

His next stop was with the fledgling local radio network, at BBC Radio Nottingham. It was perfect timing, especially with respect to sport. He was in Munich to report on Nottingham Forest's European cup success, was with Torvill and Dean during their triumphant reign, even reported from Lord's when Essex were beaten in the last ball of the innings by a Notts team lead by Clive Rice and Richard Hadlee.

His TV work began on 'Look! Hear!' a youth show with Toyah Wilcox, promoting new bands of that time – The Specials, Dexy's Midnight Runners and Black Sabbath. He also presented one of the BBC's first consumer series; BBC2's Inside Information, and hosted many shows for Midlands TV.

Moving to Bristol to work for Radio 4, he produced Down Your Way, presented by star names such as Spike Milligan and Nigel Hawthorne. Nigel's programme included a visit to 10 Downing Street and an interview with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. He produced Any Questions? with Jonathan Dimbleby, and launched Any Answers? as a phone-in. He also had a satisfying spell working in the world famous Natural History Unit.

He's now back working on BBC Radio Nottingham. Special guests have included Dame Stella Rimington of MI5, Sir Paul Smith, the Nobel Prize Winner Sir Peter Mansfield, Lord Falconer, Sir Peter Bazalgette, Jasper Carrot and Joan Collins.

If you ask him why he never worked at BBC Radio Essex, he'll tell you that he applied, but was turned down.

Away from work, he's been married to Kate for almost 53 years and his three children have so far produced seven granddaughters and a grandson.

John is proud to be a vice-president of the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and chairman and founder member of the Karen Clifford Skin Cancer charity; SKCIN.

You can now catch up on his whole eventful story in his recently published autobiography 'This Is the BBC Holmes Service'. It's 340 pages long, in hardback, and costs £20, plus £3.20 p&p and may be ordered from Waterstones. Just tell them it is in their Nottingham branch.

For more information visit his website [johnholmes.co.uk](http://johnholmes.co.uk)

And whilst there, make sure you look at his Fragments of Rock page!

## **PAUL WILLIAM TARRANT**

Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master of Essex



Freemasons from all over Essex travelled to a special Essex Provincial Investiture Meeting on 9th September 2021, held at Freemasons' Hall in London, the headquarters of the United Grand Lodge of England, to witness Paul William Tarrant installed as the 20th Provincial Grand Master of Essex. Later that day he was also installed as the Most Excellent Grand Superintendent for Essex Holy Royal Arch.

Born in Leigh-on-Sea in 1954 Paul attended West Leigh Primary School. He passed his 11 plus in 1966 and entered the hallowed portals of Westcliff High School for Boys, where he was placed in Priory House (later to become East). Henry Cloke was the Headmaster - a man who lives fondly in the hearts of all those privileged to have known him. Other staff members who made an impression upon Paul, include Arnold Shone, Jimmy Harrison and Jim "Spike" Limburg, who spoke with an aristocratic accent reminiscent of Terry Thomas, the old Ealing Studios actor.

Another member of staff whose name brought memories flooding back was Mrs Brogden. However these memories were more of trepidation than of joy as Mrs Brogden taught, amongst other subjects, Sex Education. Paul went on to study at Southend College of Technology where he gained a diploma in Business.

Paul, who has a very fine singing voice, joined the Little Theatre Club and first appeared in their production of The Music Man in 1973 at the Cliffs Pavilion. Over many years Paul took leading roles in various musicals including Bitter Sweet, West Side Story, How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, but his favourite role was Fredrick in the Broadway version of The Pirates of Penzance. Paul's love of Gilbert and Sullivan led him to join Rug Opera. This small group of singers helped raise over £80,000 for various charities. Paul also joined South Anglia Savoy Players who performed Gilbert and Sullivan operettas throughout East Anglia. They regularly performed at the world renowned Buxton G & S Festivals, where Paul twice won Best Actor.

Paul has had a distinguished career in IT, working for Racal Electronics, HM Customs and Excise and the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

He became a Freemason in 1983, having been proposed by a close friend and fellow member of The Little Theatre Club, David Badger - an Old Southendian. Paul was initiated into the Lodge of Fraternity, which meets at Saxon Hall in Southend and became Master of that Lodge in 1994. In consequence of Paul's acting and singing experience gained on the stages of Southend's theatres, he was regularly invited to Installation Meetings throughout Essex, to sing the Master's Song, which is the highlight of the Festive Board - the formal meal that follows every meeting. He quickly rose through the ranks of both Craft Freemasonry and Royal Arch.

In 2014 he was invited to become an Honorary Member of the Old Westcliffian Lodge, alongside Jimmy Harrison who is also an Honorary Member, after many years of loyal service to the Lodge.

His appointment as the Provincial Grand Master of Essex comes at a pivotal time, as public perception of Freemasonry has changed favourably over the past couple of years. Positive local press reports include Essex Masons winning the 2020 Pride of Essex Awards and the raising of £6.5 million for local charities during the Essex Festival 2022. Paul is determined to build on this positivity and attract more members, not only to enjoy the friendship Freemasonry offers but also to help with all the charitable works and good causes in Essex, which Freemasons support.

Colin Bott -Director of Ceremonies Old Westcliffian Lodge  
(also an Old Southendian)

## 12. WESTCLIFF RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB 1922-2022

The club is currently approaching the end of its ninety-ninth season, give or take the odd one, such has been the consequence of annals being lost over time. Since the last newsletter, we have found ourselves, like many other organisations, battling to return to normality after the immense disruption caused by the pandemic.

September 2019 saw us take our place at Level Four in the Rugby Union ladder for the first time ever, as members of National Division Two (South). It was clear that this was going to be a tall order for the club, playing in the company of sides such as Esher, Redruth, Taunton, Clifton and Old Albanians, all of whom have been at least one level above this one in recent years.

Covid made its dramatic entrance in March 2020, at which time we were entering a dramatic finale to the season, with five matches still to play and by no means out of the relegation mix. The unsatisfactory but to be frank unavoidable solution to the shutdown was to use a "Duckworth-Lewis" type algorithm to project the results of all outstanding fixtures, and this method ensured that we survived, admittedly by the skin of our teeth, to fight at this level another season. We were not to know at the time that "another season" did not mean 2020-2021, which was completely abandoned owing to the prevailing conditions.

Our brand new premises in Cherry Orchard Business Park, after just over three months of action, was now, in common with many other such organisations, closed for fully fifteen months before the limited relaxation allowed in Summer 2021. The new season, i.e. 2021-2022, laid bare the effects of inactivity for such a long period – several players had taken the opportunity to find alternative entertainment during the cessation of hostilities, and were now trading in rugby kit for push-chairs. A few had retired for other reasons, and several had moved to other sides around the South-East.

After a tight match against Dings Crusaders, which we lost narrowly when on another day we would have won, the season became something of an ordeal.

Indeed, the initial losing bonus point against Dings remained our only point, let alone win, until January.

More than sixty-five players have represented the 1<sup>st</sup> XV this season, including some old warhorses who have spent most of their career at Lions or Rhinos level. In addition, some of our hugely-promising youngsters were blooded (and indeed bloodied!) possibly earlier than would have been ideal, and have been given a salutary if harsh introduction to life at Level Four.

The side's strength in adversity has been immense, and commented on by the sides who have been trouncing us with a mixture of admiration and at times disbelief. Finally, the first victory came in the Barnstaple home fixture, where we prevailed 28-20. Another couple of close defeats gave an indication as to how far we had improved, before a magnificent away victory over Old Albanians lifted us off the foot of the table at last.

Steady improvement saw a four-try bonus point against the might of Clifton, two further bonus points in a tight 26-27 defeat at home to Guernsey and then, most satisfyingly, a 20-17 cliffhanger victory over our rivals from Rochford last Saturday, in front of a crowd of nearly one thousand people.

**Greg Bannister** has skipped all season and been the outstanding performer, scoring over 150 points and by some way leading try scorer. Great strides have been made by some of our younger players, notably attacking back **Jack Hogarth**, seventeen year-old **Fin Doyle**, who became our first (and certainly youngest) player to notch a hat-trick of tries at this level, **Mason Nicholls** and **Oliver Walker**, who have added greatly to the front eight, to name just a few.

On the "old soldier" front, we were sorry to say farewell to **Ewan Binneman**, who has had to retire due to concussion.

Binman has played more than a decade for the club, including over two hundred league appearances since 2011, and his enormous presence will be sorely missed next season.

The club's other senior sides have themselves been disrupted by the plethora of calls made by the 1<sup>st</sup> XV, but have still performed well enough under the circumstances.

The Ladies side, or The Lionesses, have just been promoted for the second year running and have made a major impression on the general fortunes of the club in the wider sense of things. Youth remains strong, with more silverware, as is customary, now adorning the club's trophy cabinet after some excellent campaigns. Sundays continue to see hundreds of would be first-teamers going through their paces, egged on by a willing band of volunteers.

On the committee front, we are sorry to have to report the retirements of both Club President John Pacey and Club Chairman Pete Jones. Both have given many years' service in the top club positions and their input and enthusiasm has been remarkable. When John and Pete took over in 2016, we were struggling near the foot of Level 5 – we have a come some way since then. We thank them and hope that they both enjoy a well-earned rest.

As will no doubt be found elsewhere in this publication, obituaries have been more frequent than wanted, and we are sorry, since the start of Summer 2021, to have lost several hugely-valued Vice-Presidents, former players and senior members, this further exacerbated by the logistical problems of arranging ceremonies under possibly over-strict conditions.

We salute **Ivor Cleverley, Clive Goodwin, Tony Brown, Tim Bareham**, leading sponsor **Mike Goff** and, most recently of all, our second oldest Vice President **Roland Darvell**. All great workers and supporters, who will not be forgotten.

Next season sees our official centenary year – final details regarding special events are not known at this stage, but will naturally be posted on the club website as soon as they are. Let us look forward to the club's continued success.

Nick Crowe

### 13. OLD WESTCLIFFIAN LODGE REPORT

After two years of disruption, the Old Westcliffian Lodge is now more or less back to normal, with our regular meetings at Saxon Hall being held in a COVID safe environment.

In October 2021, Daryl Peagram was installed as the Worshipful Master, succeeding Jan Bardua, who had served as Master of the Lodge for two years, due to the pandemic and the suspension of Freemasonry during lockdown.

In September 2021, Paul Tarrant, an Old Westcliffian and an honorary member of the Old Westcliffian Lodge, was installed as the Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master of the County of Essex and the Most Excellent Grand Superintendent of Essex Royal Arch Freemasonry. We are very proud to count amongst our members, the Provincial Grand Master and we take every opportunity to remind the members of the Old Southendian Lodge, our local rivals, of that fact.

The two "Old Boys" Lodges are actually very supportive of each other and attend each other's meetings whenever possible.

In March, the Essex Festival 2022 Appeal came to an end. For five years Essex Freemasons have been donating money to the Appeal and exceeded the target of £5 million. The money raised will be donated to charities and worthy causes across Essex, the UK and the world.

Freemasons donate the second highest annual amount to charities, headed only by the National Lottery. The money comes from Freemasons themselves and not from public collections. The members of the Old Westcliffian Lodge raised over £27,000 for the 2022 Appeal and received Grand Patron status in recognition of their generosity.

If you would like to become part of an organisation that cares about the community, provides a moral framework for self improvement and a bond of friendship throughout the world, then join our Lodge and enjoy the fellowship of like-minded individuals.

To find out more about becoming a Freemason, contact the Hon. Secretary of the Old Westcliffian Association, who will pass on your details to me.

If you are interested in joining and would like further information, please contact the Hon. Secretary of the Old Westcliffians' Association, who will pass your details on to me.

**Colin Bott** - Director of Ceremonies  
Old Westcliffian Lodge

(Contact Greg Bermon - 01702 711369, if interested).

## 14 EDITOR

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the Newsletter this year, more articles than room in the Newsletter!

Hopefully they will feature in next year's Newsletter.

Like Terry, this will be my last time of editing the Newsletter and I have enjoyed editing it very much. I have learnt a great deal over the last eight years.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Terry for his help and advice over the years.

As previously, should you know of anyone not receiving their Newsletter, please ask them to get in touch. They can either email their details to [secretary@oldwestcliffianassociation.org](mailto:secretary@oldwestcliffianassociation.org) or contact the Hon. Secretary by post. Please also keep us informed of email and postal address changes.

With best wishes to all OWs.

**Shanie White**

## **15. OLD WESTCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION AND MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION DETAILS**

The Association was formed in 1926 to enable pupils to have a means of keeping in touch with staff and colleagues.

The Annual Newsletter forms a good link between members at home and abroad.

The AGM is usually held in July.

Our Annual Reunion Dinner is held in September.

We welcome a growing membership and our Honorary Secretary will be pleased to welcome new members on receipt of an application.

For further details please contact: [secretary@oldwestcliffianassociation.org](mailto:secretary@oldwestcliffianassociation.org).

