



### Farewell from Wendy Moffat

I write my article this year with mixed feelings. Having taken the momentous decision to leave my post at the end of August 2017, there are days when I feel very excited about new challenges ahead but great sadness at leaving Crossley Heath.

When I took up my post as Head Teacher five years ago, school and the national picture were quite different. Managing the pace of change from government is a perpetual challenge alongside the fact that most schools are facing increasingly difficult issues with their budgets. However, we have seen many positive outcomes since 2011 when I took up my post as Head, including a greater number of students receiving their education here, continual improvements in examination results and developments to the building.

As we know, a school is more than a building. It is a family and, as in all families, we live, laugh and experience all the emotions associated with being human. There is no doubt that losing any one of our family is the hardest thing to bear. Sadly, we have faced several bereavements over the course of the year, namely two of our wonderful sixth form students, Milena and Penny, and Kevin Allen, much loved maths teacher, caring form tutor, gentle giant and all round wonderful man. There is no doubt that as a community we have been severely tested over the last few months.

We continue to attain the very best exam results and our students gain a place at their first choice university, including to Russell Group and Oxbridge. When the government is constantly changing the educational goalposts and making it harder for children to achieve top grades, I am particularly proud that teachers and students here have worked even harder to ensure that standards are not just maintained but exceeded. GCSE and A-level results are very, very impressive. Such results happen because of the individual motivation of our students, loving support and, sometimes, tough love from parents and because the staff who work here go the extra mile and work relentlessly as a team, never giving up and always setting the highest expectations. We work incredibly hard but we know how to play hard too! Old scholars will be pleased to know that the House competitions here continue to provide a high level of enjoyment and healthy competition within the school. Porter House is top of the leader board, having come first in the swimming and drama competitions but there is still all to play for.

**Friday, 22 September 2017** Reunion Dinner at Heath RUFC, West Vale, Halifax

6.45pm AGM

7 for 7.30pm Reunion Dinner

Dress: Lounge suits/smart casual.

£20 per person payable to HOBA via [Jon Hamer<sup>a</sup>](#)

Mob: 07770 697176/Duncan Turner.

**Sunday, 6 May 2018** Russell Smith Memorial Trophy Bowling Challenge

1.30 for 2 pm Greenroyd Bowling Club

**Thursday, 14 June 2018** Founder's Day Commemoration

7.30 pm Halifax Minster

With the [Bishop of Oxford](#), the [Revd Dr Steven Croft](#) [Heath 1968–1975]

**Sunday, 24 June 2018** HOBA vs Crocs Bowls Competition

1.30 for 2 pm Greenroyd Bowling Club

<sup>a</sup>Click on the [magenta](#) text for the link or email address.

We have always taken our charity work very seriously whilst often having fun at the same time. This year to date we have raised funds for Macmillan Nurses, Shelter, Royal British Legion and Ebenezer Food Bank, as well as filling many Rotary Christmas shoe boxes. Each of our houses sponsors a Dalit child in India, where students will walk up to two hours per day to school and two hours back to access education. To ensure they would turn up at school looking smart, they would wear their uniform inside out. When they got to school, the uniform was reversed so that the mud was on the inside, particularly important during the monsoon season. It is good to know that our students continue to support other young people who lack the entitlement to education that they enjoy.

I am living proof that education can benefit your life in so many ways. Having attained a degree in English Literature, there were many career options open to me but I decided that teaching would be my first choice and I have never regretted it. You often hear on Desert Island Discs tributes being paid to the one inspirational teacher who set the celebrity on their chosen path. For

me it was the English teacher who, on a dull Thursday afternoon, brought Shakespeare to life and used Simon and Garfunkel lyrics as poetry texts. I never thought when I was sitting on the back row, pretending to appear cool but actually absorbing everything I was hearing, that I would be a teacher myself one day and then a Head Teacher!

I look back on the last five years with a genuine sense of pride. It has truly been the best job in the world – working with young people is a gift. I love the variety, the humanity and the unexpected. Finding out what students are doing in their lives is quite simply astonishing. Who would have thought that within one year-group we would have a student making scientific history through working on genetic codes and another in a monastery on the Outer Hebrides? It's going to

be hard to leave but, in the wise words of my esteemed predecessor, Mr Bunch, 'Leave them asking why is she going rather than why doesn't she go?'

I am sure that Crossley Heath will continue to be a place where our children can grow up safely and can enjoy wonderful opportunities to learn, to travel and have fun, stepping out into the future with confidence and a true understanding of those things in life which really matter. I wish the very best of luck to my successor Lynnette Cassidy. I am sure she will look forward to meeting you all and getting involved in hearing your stories about the lives of Heath Old Boys.

**Wendy Moffat**

Headteacher

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## New Head Teacher

Following the resignation of the present Head Teacher, Wendy Moffat, the Governors have announced the appointment of Mrs Lynnette Cassidy (currently Deputy

Head Teacher at [Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School](#)) as Head Teacher with effect from 1 September 2017.

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## Seventieth Anniversary Reunion Dinner

THE annual dinner was held on Friday, 23rd September at the usual venue, West Vale. It was preceded by the AGM which this year seemed to be more introverted than usual. The only details emerging from the huddle were that the number of paying members of the Association was well down on recent years and that Rob Sumner, last year's guest speaker, has been co-opted onto the committee.

The guests having moved to their allocated tables, thus avoiding the unseemly scramble for seats of recent dinners, and the Latin grace having been professionally recited by Andrew Connell, the festivities got under way.

The meal of carrot and coriander soup, followed by a main course of chicken in white sauce and ample vegetables, was enjoyed by all. Consternation was aroused when it was realised that there was to be no pudding this year. However, it was pointed out that we are living through an age of austerity and for a paltry £17 a pudding was hardly to be expected.

The feast was interspersed with the customary raucous stand-up-sit-down game, which gets mercifully shorter every year; and the raffle with prizes generously donated by Jas Chatta and Jon Hamer. This raised £300 for the Association funds, which are depleted.

The dinner was also punctuated by excellent speeches introduced by irrepressible, ribald yet sensitive Jim Farrell. Alas, there was no school representative able

to be present. but this absence was more than made up for by the eloquence and verbosity of G.P. Smith and N. Holden.

Mr Holden's speech was, in a quieter vein, equally impressive. Not for Mr Holden the histrionic melodramatics of recent guest speakers, the removal of trousers or playing to the gallery; rather were we given small, evocative highlights of school life that compose the memory — the boiler breaking down on a snowy day, cricket at Conways, years of woodwork resulting in a nest of tables, the plunge at the swimming gala, his only ambition in life being to own a pair of shoes like Mr Bunch's.

Mr Smith, newly appointed President of the Association, resembling a venerable Old Testament prophet, made his inaugural Presidential address, dominating the room by sheer force of personality and giving short shrift to potential hecklers, was first up. He modestly admitted the undemocratic nature of its elevation to the post but submitted that 'some have greatness thrust upon them' (Twelfth Night, Act 3). He



Figure 1: 2017 Russell Smith Memorial Trophy bowling challenge group photo

also assured us that the committee worked ceaselessly tirelessly and selflessly on our behalf. He welcomed the non-Heathen guests reminding us that inevitably our numbers are dwindling Alter orating for several minutes upon such topics as:— the search for the original charter, which has never been found. the now annual bowls match against the ‘deadly rivals, the re-introduction of Founder’s Day, the now vibrant website — and urging us to support all the above, he sat down to vast applause.

The remainder of the evening passed in a mood of unbridled conviviality. Thanks to all who organised or attended. Make it a date in your diary for next year.

Those attending were:— J. Farrell, J. Hamer, P. Lane, P. Keenan, G. Stansfield, J. Henry and guest, A. Hobson, J. Hudson, E. Lumb, J. Bunch, A. Connell, D. Turner, R. Morley, R. Crosland, P. Rawson, J. Charnock, R. Eastwood, J.S. Robertshaw, J. Hoggard, R. Stollery, P. Stollery, D. Stollery, N. Tobin, R. Sumner, D. Potter, N. Holden, M. Hynes, J. Russell, J. Sumner G. Smith, B. Kerwood, J. Davey, T. Ward, D. Wilson, D. North, M. Bingham, M. Denton, J. Hoyle, M. Squire, M. Orlic, H. Reilly, C. Tindall, C. Scott, M. Baxendale, C. Morley, O. Schoefield, J. Wasyliw, T. Stringer

**Rod Eastwood [1954–1961]**

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## 2017 HOBA Bowling Challenge (Russell Smith Memorial Trophy)

A chilly, sporadically sunny but dry Sunday, 7th May saw a magnificent 19 Heathens — more than double the turnout last year — assemble at Greenroyd Bowling Club for the 11th anniversary version of the coveted Russell Smith memorial trophy. The green, although fox-ravaged, drought-parched and bumpy, was yet playable and so at 2 pm ‘battle’ commenced.

The players were a mix of veterans and naive débutants, namely, J. Henry and T. Depledge; J. Farrell and A. Baigent; G.P. Smith and P. Greenwood; R. Dixon and J.S. Robertshaw; J. Hamer and R. Sumner; R.D. Morley and D. Potter; A. Hobson and D. Robinson (later replaced by M. Baxendale).

The format was the usual first to 11 or best of five ends.

After some desultory opening salvoes whilst people found their bearings, a pattern began to emerge — that of bowlers who knew what they were doing and

no-hopers who didn’t. By the half-way stage Smith and Greenwood, with a thumping 8–1 win, had taken the lead but were being closely trailed by Dixon and Robertshaw who had posted a crushing 9–1 win. After 4 pm the tension mounted and a ‘breathless hush’ [*vide Henry Newbolt*] fell over the green as scores were closer than anticipated.

After some unseemly argie-bargie over who actually deserved to play in the final, it was contested at 5 pm between the ‘favor-ites,’ Smith and Greenwood,



Figure 2: Founder's Day service

and the home pair, Dixon and Robertshaw. The final proved a disappointment, as the latter's sparkling earlier form now eluded them. Smith and Greenwood quickly romped to an unassailable 8-0 lead after four ends both winning pair being excellent and Smith's unerring accuracy providing the knock-out blow.

So the trophy was presented, the buffet and socialising followed and a highly entertaining afternoon concluded. Thanks go to ever-present John Davey, now well into

his anecdotage; John Hudson for providing the buffet; Grayham Smith and Jon Hamer for organising the event; and to Mike Bingham for good-humouredly managing the complex scoreboard; also to Greenroyd for again having us on their sacred turf.

#### **Rod Eastwood [1954-1961]**

P.S. The 2018 event will take place on Sunday, 6 May 2018.

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## **Founder's Day Celebration: Thursday, 15th June 2017**

ON Thursday, 15th June 2017, at 7.30 pm, the good Dr Favour gazed down puritanically from his timeless niche on the west wall of Halifax Minster. Perhaps he was amazed that his founding of a grammar school over 400 years ago in a barren northern clime is still being celebrated and in a form that he would recognise. For this is the third of its revived kind; he has had time to ponder and perhaps to be amused, though by all accounts he was a man not easily amused.

The service again took the form of a complete evensong, that loveliest of liturgies, in the choir stalls, which were packed with civic dignitaries, Old Boys and their consorts, and those leading the service.

The Minster chamber choir, conducted by the Revd Dr Hilary Barber, sang magnificently from the opening *Preces* to the *Magnificat* to the *Nunc Dimittis*. G.P. Smith read the immortal 'Let us now praise famous men' passage and J.S Robertshaw read a familiar but highly appropriate passage from Ephesians 6 while the collects were the Founder's Collect and others that

would be familiar to those who attended the school when W.R. Swale was Headmaster.

The address, given by the Archdeacon of Halifax, the Ven. Dr Anne Dawtry, focused on the theme of mutability and found meaningful links with both the readings and the hymns. We were all scholars once again.

The Chamber Choir, as well as singing the service, contributed 'The heavens are telling' from Haydn's *Creation* as the anthem.

We then processed down the central aisle to the west end of the Minster to gather before the the bust of the

austere Doctor who was willy-nilly garlanded with a nosegay by the Head Girl and Head Boy. The Founder's Collect was read and Chairman Jim Farrell read out a translation of the Latin inscription in the outer wall of the School House to which it was moved from the original school building:

The land was bad and barren all, with thickets overgrown;  
 Not fit for crops of any kind, but rough with horrid stone.  
 Then people warm with piety and holy in their thought  
 This greatest of religious works into existence brought,  
 To make the land of greatest good and bless the people too.  
 And so a blessing on the land, not on the owners, grew.  
 Long live the Queen Elizabeth who granted us such grace,  
 And prosper Thou, O God, this work, that it may never cease,  
 But live in vigour through all time.  
 So, Christ, with this intent, We give ourselves,  
 we give our means, unto Thine honour bent.

Proceedings concluded with a sumptuous buffet organised by Jon Hamer.



*The Mayor and Mayoress of Calderdale with Sammun Mumraz, Head Girl, and Matthew Shaw, Head Boy*

Thanks go to the many people who helped to make the occasion such a success, the Archdeacon for leading the service, the vicar for hosting us, the Mayor and Mayoress of Calderdale, Councillor Ferman Ali and his wife, for attending, Head Teacher designate, Mrs Lynnette Cassidy, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governors, the Head Girl and Head Boy, the choir, Jim Farrell for organising the event, the HOBA committee for their hard work and Jon Hamer and colleagues for organising the refreshments.

With its blend of spiritual, historic and social, it is hard now to see how this, now, annual event can be improved upon. Dr Favour would surely agree!

#### **Rod Eastwood [1954–1961]**

P.S. Put Thursday, 14 June 2018 in your diary when we will be joined by the **Bishop of Oxford, the Revd Dr Steven Croft** [Heath 1968–1975].

## **Heath vs Old Crossleyans Bowls Tournament 2017**

**G**REENROYD Bowling Club on a balmy summer Sunday afternoon in late June presents an idyllic picture. Birds sing in the well-trimmed hedges; the hanging baskets are fragrant. The sun-dappled green is as fine a stretch of grass as you will find. An aura of tranquillity, away from the vulgar world without the gates, prevails. One feels that P. G. Wodehouse and his characters would feel at home in these sylvan surrounds.

But wait, for today, 25th June 2017, two old rivals are set to combat in the fourth of the on-going series to determine who will hold the diminutive but prestigious trophy.

The series stands at 2–1 in Crocs favour, but both sides have indulged in desperate team-strengthening exercises, Crocs with a new player-manager in J. Ingham,

following the inevitable resignation of M. Denton after last year's debacle, Heath with the ethical dilemma of whether to import veteran talent, of uncertain quality, or to stick with old faithfuls whose delicate nervous systems may crumble under the magnitude of the occasion. We shall see!

After much intrigue the teams ran out as follows:—



Figure 3: Grayham Smith holds the trophy aloft



Figure 4: Crocs vs Heath participants

**For Heath:** M. Griffiths and N. A. Small; P. Greenwood and G. P. Smith; R. Dixon and A. Waite; K. Campbell and J. S. Robertshaw; P. Birkhead and T. Depledge; J. Hamer and A. Baigent.

**Reserves:** R. Sumner; J. Henry; M. Baxendale; M. Bingham; R. D. Morley.

**For Crocs:** Mrs G. Knowles and G. Mitchell; T. Knowles and Mrs B. Clayton; B. Reynolds and J. Ingham; P. Ineson and C. Hodgson; G. Hinchcliffe and M. Squire; Mrs J. Dunn and Mrs M. Reynolds. The complexities of the scoreboard having been explained to Mrs Hamer and Mrs Dixon, the epic got under way. The format was the customary best-of-five ends or first to eleven, with two points for a win and one for a tied game. The magic number this year was 37.

The early exchanges went almost entirely Crocs way, with their experienced ladies carrying all before them. After a couple of hours desultory play, Crocs had forged well ahead and Heath heads were down. The day appeared lost. “Looks like a battlefield, dunnit?” was heard.

At 3.30 refreshments were taken, and lo! Suddenly the

momentum shifted, the clouds lifted and it was ‘game on.’ Why? Was it the beer and sandwiches? Was it a stirring 11–1 win by Campbell and Robertshaw? Was it while the Crocs formidable ladies loitered in the tearoom socialising? O who can fathom the vagaries of the strumpet Fortune? At 4.05 the score stood at 26–26.

At 4.20 it was 28–28.

I can’t stand all this excitement, was heard.

Shortly after this the real miracle occurred when Mr Knowles was lost for words as Heath went ahead for the first time: 31–29. The rest is history. It’s exhibition stuff, John, was heard and We’ll bring our first team next year, from a crestfallen Croc.

The final score, 38–34, confirmed an emphatic team effort. Thanks to Jon Hamer for the buffet and to Grayham Smith and John Ingham for getting their teams together. It is now 2–2 in the series. Roll on next year!

### **Rod Eastwood [1954–1961]**

P.S. The 2018 event will take place on Sunday, 24 June 2018.

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## **The Titteringtons and Branwell Brontë**

ALAN Titterington [Heath 1953–1958], whose novel about the relationship between his great-great-grandparents, Mary and John Titterington, and Branwell Brontë, *St John in the Wilderness*, was published last year, has been involved in two events marking the bicentenary of the birth of Branwell Brontë.

The first was at the Pyramid Gallery, Stonegate, York where portraits of Mary and John Titterington, painted

by Branwell Brontë were on show. The second was on Saturday, 1 July 2017 at the Lord Nelson in Ludenden village where the portraits were on display and as well as songs from folk singer, John Bromley, poems by Branwell were read by Gareth Tudor Price.

Alan’s novel is available from [Amazon](#) for £9.99.

Thanks to Rod Eastwood [1954–1961] for drawing attention to this.

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## **Facebook page**

ROB Sumner has created a [Facebook page](#).

Rob writes:

Please do two easy things for us:

1. ‘Like’ the page (I think this is important to raise the profile). For the older end still getting to grips with this Interweb thingy, just click on the Facebook  icon button;
2. Share the link with ‘Every Man Jack’ and ask them to like the page, com-

ment on it, upload photos, etc. etc.

And consider one slightly more technical thing: if you have any school photos, memorabilia, etc. — images of which are suitable to upload and you can provide a short explanation — and you are capable of doing so, then please do; we want the page to be as colourful and animated as possible. Many thanks

**Rob Sumner [Heath 1975–1982]**

## Letters

### From Malcolm Ruckledge [Heath 1954–1962]

I have just discovered the HOBA web site and found it extremely interesting reading, particularly the reminiscences. Thank You.

I have somehow managed to dig out of the recesses of my memory most of the members of my form, 1B 1954. They are:-

Adams, Andrews, Beaumont, Brierley D., Brierley S., Crowther, Devine, Donoghue, Garbutt, Gidley, Green, Kingstone, Lee (son of Harry Lee), Morley, Murgatroyd, Nelson, Radcliffe, Rawlings, Ruckledge, Russell, Simpson, Sutcliffe K., Sutcliffe ?, Topliss, Watmough, Warton.

I am sure that there are others whose names escape me. Nuttall and Prosser joined the class later.

Our form master was 'Froggie' Guy and our form room was room B in the corner next to the office.

Froggie taught us Latin and History; both left me bewildered. School didn't excite me, I was in the Scouts and wanted to be out walking the hills or exploring on my bike! It wasn't until the third year when I was in bottom set Maths, taught by Harry Lee the woodwork teacher, that things changed. He was a brilliant teacher who brought trigonometry, algebra and geometry to life for me. He woke me up to the extent that I rose to the top set in the fourth year and took O-level a year early and in the fifth year somehow managed to scoop the maths prize. (The only year the prizewinners didn't appear in the Heathen!) I owe much to Mr. Lee.

I opted for 5G because I preferred the broader range of subject, only to find later that this barred me from taking sciences in the 6th form. I, therefore, had to repeat the year in 5S.

Surprisingly, my best O-level was History. 'Caggie' Carter dictated 14 questions to us and stated that 8 of them would come up in our O-level. We spent the year memorising the 14 answers! When it came to the exam, my history notes magically appeared before my eyes and all I had to do was copy them down. My only experience of a photographic memory. Needless to say, my knowledge of any of that is now zero.

Harry Birchall's P.E and games, i.e. rugby, didn't do much for me. I was saved by the replacement for 'Caggie' when he left. I, sadly, can't remember his name, but I think that he played for Rochdale Hornets. He coached me in the long jump and triple jump leading to me breaking the school record in both and later breaking the triple jump record at Borough Road College.

An old Heathen, Keith Mitchell, was working in the area and came back to start a new sport for us, basketball, which for me was a welcome relief from the rugby

field. This became my, and my family's, major sport, and I became a National League referee and managed the England and Great Britain juniors for 6 years.

I mention these three teachers, Mr. Lee, my jumping coach and Keith Mitchell, because they inspired me to want to be a teacher who was able to do for others what they had done for me. I hope that I came some way to achieving that goal. I became a teacher and was a head teacher for the last nine years of my career until I had to retire prematurely.

I can now spend all the time that I want in the hills!

### From Mike Warrington [1967–1974]

I was interested to see the pictures of the restored pulpit and chairs on the Heath Old Boys website. When I saw the close up of the date carved on the front (1951), it set me wondering as to who had made them. The date is shortly after Harry Lee's arrival at the school (1949), and I am curious as to whether these were the result of some lunchtime activity of his. He was certainly skillful enough to have done the job.

Incidentally, the pulpit appears to have lost its lectern. After years of being abandoned, maybe this isn't too surprising.

### From P. Graham Smith [1946–1951]

I am P. G. Smith, not G.P. the brother of the late Russell, who I note, is the present President.

Thank you for the Newsletter received some weeks ago. I intended to compliment you on the superb quality of this but I have been away from home for a longish period. However may now do so most sincerely.

I have been thinking for some time about two matters to be brought to the Association's notice and realise that strictly speaking they should be put to the Hon. Secretary, but I cannot since I do not have his address, and it may be that as Editor you feel that they should be included in a future Newsletter.

First, there is my ongoing grumble that, welcome as it is, the Association has revived Founder's Day. I feel that this should be done by the School, with the full co-operation of the Association of course.

The second concerns the Pulpit and chairs. I enclose a couple of sheets covering these matters and thought that, while I am at it, another few matters might be mentioned. I send all this stuff for you to do whatever you think fit, though I do feel that it is most important that the question of the pulpit and chairs should be settled, if someone knows the answer for sure, and recorded in some way. If they were made from a part of the original School building, they would be a unique memento and treasured.

My very best wishes to all

*He goes on to add comments on various topics and items on the website:*

### **Founder's Day 2016**

I attended the service in June 2016 and must say that, of the many previous ones, that has to rank with the best and the Committee, and particularly those gentlemen who organised the Day, are to be thanked most sincerely.

However, grateful as we must be that H.O.B.A. has taken it upon itself to perpetuate our Founder's memory in the traditional manner, he is a vital part of the history of the School. not merely as it was, but as it now is, and the School should take up the reins. Eventually there will not be any Heath Old Boys surviving but the School will.

### **Pulpit restoration 2016**

One day in 1951, on arriving at school, I noticed that the stage in the Hall displayed the lectern and three chairs, all obviously bespoke not 'Utility.'

Not being aware of the reason for such extravagance, I enquired and was informed that the three chairs were designed to be occupied, as to the most ornate one, by the Headmaster, and the other two by the Deputy Head and the prefect who was to read the day's lesson in Assembly, and *they were constructed from wood forming part of the original school building.*

I enquired who was the unfortunate prefect shown on the rota for that day and was told that it was me. I must admit readily that, although I have not lost my memory with increasing age, often it is difficult to find it and I advise taking the statement in italics with a pinch of salt until corroborative evidence is uncovered.

I truly believe that the words were said and further that the said wood had been stored in the School's cellar but I have no recollection who said all this nor any opinion how authentic the information was. My guess is that it is true and, if so, the furniture assumes great importance which should not be forgotten.

### **Jim Farrell [1977–1982] responds:**

Firstly my apologies for the delay in responding.

I have restored the pulpit, honours boards and the two brass and oak plaques which commemorate scholarship donors to The School. The latter were in the library during my time at Heath. They were taken down in the 'fallow' period. However, we managed to keep and restore them. They are now fixed on the main corridor next to where the right hand hall entrance was situated, beneath the marble Scaithcliffe plaque. I also closely examined the chairs and the old lectern which were at CHS some years ago.

In regard to your memory about the source of the oak, this is indeed based in fact. The original lectern, a large black Tudor oak item had a brass plaque affixed underneath the bible — so never really seen. The plaque was engraved in a copperplate hand stating: 'This lectern is made from roof timber from the original school building.' This can be cross-referenced in Thomas Cox's history of the school.<sup>1</sup> The pulpit and chairs, however, are of a later date, around 1930–40. This is around the time of an upsurge in or affinity with history. The School's Latin grace and motto are from around this time (see [Puns, Prayers and Graces](#)), not hundreds of years old as might be expected. The honours boards have (on one) a receipt for and date in the 1930s.

Since becoming chairman of HOBA (again!), one of our main aims has been to restore, protect and display artifacts from the school. We have an ongoing investigation into the history of the Charters, the School Seal (matrix) and any unfinished work in Cox's history of the school. An offshoot of these acts is to create an inventory of School items and where they are.

This last point was initiated as I have to report a sad event. I returned to the school some time ago to review the lectern. To cut a long story short, it could not be traced! I have, along with John Bunch and other committee members, investigated this without success. This episode was the main driver for the above course of action.

In relation to the question of who made the pulpit and chairs? I can say that there is some documentation to a local craftsman at Norwood Green. I have worked on some fantastic items including the Houses of Parliament; the carving on the Pulpit is exquisite. There are only a few who could have done this; the intricate work and perspective are superb, if mostly wasted on the unknowing eye. This work and pieces would have been commissioned to show the status and kudos of a school in full sail!

In regard to the lectern part of the pulpit, this was not present when I was at Heath in 1977. I was going to make a replacement during restoration but we felt it should remain as it is, with a story of how it survived 30 years incarcerated but not without scars, even if these occurred in full view!! Perhaps a metaphor that neglect can happen right in front of us.

The committee has been very active recently. Present action includes:

- the siting of the honours boards,
- the possibility of a display for our growing collection of memorabilia,
- erecting history boards at both schools and shortly in the cafe area of the adult education aspect at Heath (top corridor).

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Cox *A popular history of the Grammar School of Queen Elizabeth, at Heath, near Halifax* Halifax: F King 1879

These along with 'Famous Heathens' plaques containing QR links to web pages of the individuals are examples of current Heathens' activity in the community. I shall be taking some further photos for the web and the new [Facebook](#) page.

The Bowls tournaments, Founder's Day Celebration and annual dinner continue to be vibrant events.

I hope this answers some of the questions. Feel free to make contact if you have any further points, questions or memories.

## From Barry Hill [1977–1982]

Hi John and all

It seems that Heath is quite unique. I ask all my friends if they had nicknames for their teachers. Some had nicknames for a few teachers. We had nicknames for every one of them. Some of them were obvious, some inventive, some amusing, one or two were derogatory, and one or two were obscure. I hated it when they were used in torment to abuse teachers, but I remember all of them fondly.

Speaking of remembering, I believe I can also remember the names of every boy in my class, although I'd struggle to tell you the names of many of the people I have worked with in my adult life. That five years back four decades ago must have had a huge impact on me. If I could look out of my window, and the railway wasn't in the way, I could see our old school. Although I disliked it at the time I was there, it's presence gives me a sense of quiet comfort. I do believe the lower playground is some buildings now. Is that right? No, don't

tell me, I'll remember it as was. I wonder if schools still allow kids to play football on concrete.

I have just come across the website for Heath Old Boys, and was pleasantly surprised to read a letter from myself on there. It is rather out of date now, so I thought you might like an update.

It's nice to name drop working at the BBC but, to be honest, it was only a six months taster employment. Auntie Beeb showing her caring side. Still, I got a taste for the work and can now name drop HBOS and Sky as well. Although I can influence how they put things on their apps and website, I still can't influence what Sky put on TV.

I upped my game at the blind society too. I'm in my third year as Chairman. I didn't want the job, but neither did anyone else, so I stepped up. Oddly, in the Society's hundred and twenty odd year history, there has not been a blind Chair before. It still astonishes me that the committee listen to that boy who always 'could try harder' but never did at school.

Last week, I got my fifth guide dog. No, I don't currently have five guide dogs. Chester is a black lab crossed with a donkey — he's huge! Although he's fully trained and I'm a seasoned GD owner, we have to go back to basic training to learn how we both do everything together. So, if anyone sees me around town over the next few weeks I'd appreciate it if you didn't distract him, especially if the GD trainer is watching.

Every year, I intend to come to the AGM dinner, but I'm always away when it's on. This year ... I'm away again. Sigh. Maybe next year.

Cheers

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## Memories

### C. O. Mackley

I do not know whether he had a nickname since I never had any academic contact; with him. However, I did have a sporting contact, which occurred in the following way: upon reaching the fifth form, on several occasions, I received an 'invitation' to make up a four to play a few games of Fives after school.

The other three were Messrs Mackley, Swale and Norman 'Larry' Gain. I was extremely flattered to be so treated as an equal, and completely overlooked that my invitation, in lieu of Whisky Haigh and Archy Littlefair both of whom were several classes better players, was simply to run for the ball which was shot out frequently. This was prior to the time when Harry Birchall had the Courts blanked off thus making the game non-spectator.

Now anyone who has any experience of playing or even

watching the game of Fives will know that, when a player plays a bad shot or worse misses entirely, often he will make a comment. Indeed, some players have been known to make very fruity comments. The other members of our four fell into this category, though I hasten to add not the fruity one, but C.O.M. had a unique way of commenting, letting off steam by bellowing — and no other word will do — *Quelle dommage!* Some Old Heathens may have to hunt for the French dictionary; so to save the trouble it means 'what a pity.'

### P. G. Smith [1946–1951]

#### Fifty years ago

On 31st July, 1966, I set sail for Brazil on a massive Argentinian liner, the *Libertad*. I, aged 24, had signed a three year contract with the British Council to teach English at St Paul's School, Sao Paulo.

Being young and romantic, I had been influenced in my decision by two works of art; one was the film of *South Pacific* with its haunting depiction of Bali'hai as a tropical paradise of sensual pleasure. I expected that Brazil just might resemble Bali'hai, as in some places it turned out to. The other was a marvellous book by Peter Fleming, *Brazilian Adventure*, in which Sao Paulo is depicted as a quaint little town on the edge of the primeval forest. I conveniently overlooked the fact that the book was written in the early 1930s. It is based on the search for the elusive Col. Percy Fawcett, who had disappeared into the Mato Grosso in search of El Dorado and was never seen again. During the school holidays I saw myself leading an expedition into the jungle, rescuing said Percy from the savage tribe holding him captive, and returning him, a bronzed hero, to 'civilisation.'

As the *Libertad* floated serenely away from a cold, damp London, two impressions prevailed on me — the ever-present smell of food that pervaded the pale green corridors and the overwhelming aura of gloom among the passengers, all of whom seemed to be disgruntled Argentinians. The first was accounted for by the vast, five course meals that we served three times daily — whatever the *Libertad's* passengers might expire from, it wouldn't be hunger. The second was, of course, explained by the recent World Cup in which, as we all know, their talented team had come away in disgrace, labelled 'animals.' The only time I ever dared broach the subject to a gloomy Argentinian, the reply was instant — the ref. had been 'bribed.'

The next two weeks were singularly uneventful, and bore out what Conrad called the 'magic monotony' of life at sea. The sight of a flying fish or a porpoise was the highlight of any day. I soon became disorientated by the continual putting back of the clocks by an hour, and sought refuge on a greasy patch of the after-deck where I could observe the flying fish undisturbed. Shortly after leaving London the wardrobe in my tiny cabin inexplicably filled up with expensive-looking mink and fur coats. The steward kindly explained that

they were presents for his 'wife, sister, mother, girlfriend, mistress, auntie' and so on and would I mind looking after them until we reached Vigo? They did indeed disappear at Vigo, along with the steward.

Three memorable passengers made the monotony tolerable. Nestor Raul Olivera was a young Argentinian illustrator who had been working in London. The only book I chose to take to Brazil with me was a copy of *Why Was He Born So Beautiful and other Rugby Songs*, which Raul spent the entire voyage trying to memorise, myself having to explain the many asterisked words.

Mrs Hirst was a veteran journalist from Buenos Aires, who regaled me with stories of the many times she had interviewed Evita and her charming husband.

'Uncle Lou' was a portly Polish polymath from Coventry. When he learned that my second teaching subject was Latin, he regaled me with short stories and jokes in Latin, which he spoke fluently. To listen to 'Uncle Lou' and a lawyer from Sao Paulo arguing in Latin, their only common language, made you wonder whether it really was so 'dead.'

Eventually, one day, we saw seagulls and floated into bustling Santos, where I was met by the school bursar grumbling that I had interrupted his Sunday lunch. We drove up through the hills to Sao Paulo which I soon found had in the words of a song, '*Oito milhoes de habitantes*', and was just like Leeds or Manchester.

## Rod Eastwood [1954–1961]

### 1968 School photo

Peter Corbett [Heath 1966–1971] has kindly sent us a copy of the 1968 School photo, in which he is sitting cross-legged on the far right wearing a sports jacket rather than school blazer.

Obviously it is too big to be able to see the detail on anything other than a monstrous monitor. So we have placed a version in PDF format on the website to which we can add names if people send the details to the Editor.

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## History

### Heath School 1585–1985

This Souvenir Booklet was compiled by Jerry Fearnley [1962–1970] and Peter Hand and edited by Edward Riley.

You can read the Souvenir Booklet in PDF format on the website.

### Contents

- Introduction and acknowledgements

- The Queen's message
- Peter Hand 'How Heath survived the crisis years'
- Ambitious plans for the 'new look' school
- Peter Hand 'At last, Heath belongs to Halifax'
- E. J. Taylor 'Making the experiment a success'
- Mike Politt 'A sad farewell to staff and pupils'
- W. E. Swale 'What was good enough for Shakespeare ...'
- David Bottomley 'Guilty — but a good act'

- The Headmasters
- Arthur Holt ‘Magazine that mirrors life of the school’
- S. J. Fearnley ‘Happy days and Golden Ages’
- H. C. (‘Nuffer’) Morris ‘School holidays in Switzerland’
- Albert Crosby ‘Thirteen years of enjoyment’
- Peter Hand ‘Rescue acts that kept Heath alive’
- Which anniversary?
- S. J. Fearnley ‘George Thomas Thompson 1857–1889’
- A. Sunderland ‘And may the name of Heath live on ...’

With thanks to John S. Robertshaw [Heath 1958–1965]

## Pupil database

### Introduction

This database is drawn from several sources, each containing its own selection of data. Thomas Cox’s book<sup>2</sup> and the Admission cards were transcribed by Rose Taylor, Andrew Kafel and Vernon Brearley. The, rather shorter, class lists and Education Board registers were transcribed by John Hudson.

### The sources

- Thomas Cox’s history of the school (Cox) mentions many former pupils of the school but not normally with significant details about them.
- The Class lists from 1887 to 1906 [L] provide the names of the masters and of the pupils in each class along with the academic successes of former pupils.
- The Education Board registers from 1901 to 1925 [R] give full details of each pupil’s attendance, former and later education, parent or guardian and source of funding — but do not contain all the pupils mentioned in the Class lists for

1901–1906; perhaps private pupils were not registered?

- The Class lists from 1924 to 1939 [L] are incomplete but list much the same information as the earlier Class lists along with details of pupils’ performance in individual subjects.
- The Admission cards from the 1930s onwards [C] provide basic but, in some cases, incomplete information on most pupils who attended in the last half century of the school’s existence.
- The Register from 1945 [R] has not been transcribed but used to check and fill out data missing from the Admission cards.
- The Class lists from 1947 to 1984 [L] are also incomplete and there are no plans to transcribe them in the near future because there is less information in them than in any of the earlier Class lists and the existence of both the Admissions cards and the Registers for this period suggests that they will contribute relatively little — but they are available for consultation.
- The Register from 1973 [R] has not been transcribed but will be used in the same way as the Register from 1945.
- The Rolls of Honour [B] have been used to fill out some information not available in the Class lists or Admission cards.
- *The Heathen* [H], Obituaries [O] and entries on the Website/Wikipedia [W] have been used to fill out information not available in the other sources.

### Information requests

Members of HOBA may request the basic information contained in the database from the Webmaster; more detailed information, where available, can also be provided as time is available to officers to consult the original sources.

Non-members may request similar information but will be asked to make a minimum contribution of £10 towards the charitable work of the Association.

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## Extracts from *The Heathen*

WE introduce a new feature which may be of interest to those reading the printed edition: extracts from editions of *The Heathen* which are now available on the website.

### A description of Heath School

Nigh the Town, on the South Side, is a stately Grammar School, when building is fair, line and large, all of Freestone, with a good School-house, with handsome

and convenient apartments for the Headmaster and his family to dwell in.

This School was founded by Queen Elizabeth, by Letters Patent bearing Date the 15th day of February 1585, at Westminster which Charter of Incorporation

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Cox *A popular history of the Grammar School of Queen Elizabeth, at Heath, near Halifax* Halifax: F King 1879

was procured by Henry Farrer Esq., at his own expense. The Charter being thus obtained. the Right Honourable Gilbert Earl of Shrewsbury, Knight of the most Noble Order of the Garter, Edward Savile, Kt, deceased, late of the Lord of the Manor of Skircoate, and Sir George Savile Kt. did by their Grant bearing Date August the 14th 1598, and seal'd and deliver'd at Sheffield Lodge, October the 4th afterwards, give the School-house and six acres of land contiguous thereof, lying in Skircoate, in the County of York. Yet notwithstanding these Grants and Privileges, the School was endowed by the Liberal Contributions of the Inhabitants of the Town and Parish of Halifax, and of several other generous and good benefactors.

These and many more were benefactors to the School in its infancy, who did not reside in the Parish tho' 'tis probable that most of these if not all were born in it, There were likewise good contributions made in the Town and Parish of Halifax. some few of which I shall mention.

	£.	s.	d.
John Savile Sergeant at Law gave	5	0	0
John Longbottom of Northowram by Will	5	0	0
Richard Townend, by Will	3	6	8
Jas. Blythman Esq., buried Nov 25 1632	10	0	0

Taken from Rev. Thomas Wright's *Antiquities of Halifax* 1738.

From [The Heathen April 1979 frontispiece](#).

## Letter louts

a POST mortem  
solemnly dedicated to the Postmaster General  
who, I am sure, can take a joke.

What's this? Temporary postman wanted at Christmas ? 1/9 an hour? Now let me see: if I work seven-teen hours a day, seven days a week, I'll earn ... er ... err ... just think of that bulging pay-packet!

Sounds good, doesn't it? By the time the first day of a week of hard labour has arrived you have begun to change your mind. You wake up bright and early (5.30 am) and look out of the window ... it is snowing. Snowing with a capital S. The stuff isn't coming down in flakes, but in heaps. And you've got to crawl to Shelf and back six times today. Ah well ... just think of that bulging pay-packet.

When you arrive at the post office you are given :—

1. A black arm band (don't be discouraged by the colour). This proclaims to all that you are a proud (?) member of that gallant band of postmen and postwomen, the willing (?) servants of the British public. (The arm band also performs the unnecessary and unwanted function of preventing any blood still unfrozen from reaching your poor, numb, deathly white fingers.)  
and

2. Two tickets (net value 6d.) with which you are to buy enough nourishment to last you through the long, hard, weary day. Do'nt spend it all at once, and don't buy too much ... you may die of surfeit.

Thus armed and prepared, you are handed an enormous bag, packed to its spacious brim with crisp morning mail, all tied up neatly with little pieces of string (net weight sixteen tons). With a cynical smile your letter-sorter cum bag-packer gives you explicit directions concerning the whereabouts of your 'walk' ... by the time you have collected your bus fares (always ask for 6d. too much), you have forgotten every word.

You arrive at your destination. You step of the bus. You extricate yourself from six feet of pure, white, freezing. unadulterated snow. You proceed to examine the contents of your bag (always wear this on your chest ... it acts as a snowplough). In the murky depths you find several bundles of letters, each marked clearly (sometimes) with a number. You take out bundle number one (it you can find it). All you have to do is undo the string, place it in your pocket, and deliver the letters (raucous, sarcastic laughter from the experienced). Have you ever tried undoing string with a hand carefully protected by six pairs of gloves? This is your first task. Having picked up the letters, and having rearranged them in (what you hope) is the correct order, you attempt to put the string in your pocket ... no matter what you do it always comes back out attached to your comfy, woolly gloves. But never say die, and when you are struggling through mountainous drifts of snow, when you are climbing up icy hills, and (unintentionally) sliding hack down them, when you are hopelessly lost, or are stuck in a snowdrift with no sign of help, when you slip and lose all those carefully arranged letters out of your bag, in fact, in any hour of frustration ... just think of that bulging pay-packet.

Lastly may I alter a few words of advice to aspiring temporary postmen:—

1. The G.P.O. provides you with everything you need ... except skis, snow-shoes, compass, distress signals, emergency rations, and instruments for prising dog's teeth from your leg ... so be prepared.
2. Suitable clothing must be worn. May I suggest (a) a good hat (the Davy Crockett type is quite suitable); (b) at least three coats; (c) anti-snow-blind goggles (sun glasses will suffice); (d) six pairs of gloves (indispensable); (e) one pair of trousers (equally indispensable); (f) one pair of Wellington boots (preferably with built-in, retractable ice-skates).
3. Remember you are strictly forbidden to solicit Christmas gratuities (call them tips and you're dead safe).

4. BEWARE of all dogs, children, registered letters, helpful old ladies, spiteful old gentlemen, fellow temporary postmen (especially the female type), klepto-maniacs, and letter boxes (especially the fierce come-back-and-catch-you kind, that will have your fingers all before you can say 'long live the postman's union').
5. Never forget the temporary postman's motto:—  
'Do as little its possible in as long a time as possible.'

Remember you are paid by the hour, and think of that bulging pay-packet.

signed (reluctantly)

V.L.C.

**Postscript** Should this article discourage anyone from becoming a temporary postman, I heartily commend his good sense. May he sit and swot while I gloat over my bulging pay-packet!

From [The Heathen 1956 Vol. 2 no. 10 pp. 29–31](#).

## Obituaries

OLD boys are invited to supplement the information in these obituaries with both facts about and memories of an old boy. Please send any such material to [the Editor](#).

### Arthur Comfort: 11 November 1864–1935 [Heath ?–1935]

Arthur Comfort was an English master wood engraver at *The Graphic* in London and an art teacher in Halifax.

He was born in London on 11 November 1864, where he attended the Graphic School of Wood Engraving, and afterwards worked as an engraver for almost 15 years at *The Graphic*, a national illustrated journal founded in 1869 by William Luson Thomas. During that time, he achieved some renown for his watercolours, especially of flowers, and his work was exhibited in Brussels and at the Royal Academy in London. He was regarded as one of the few engravers of high rank at the end of the nineteenth century in Great Britain along with Messrs Charles Roberts, William Biscombe Gardner and Charles Frederick Ulrich. He became the chairman of the international Society of Wood Engravers but, with the development of half-tone and screen blocks for illustrations, wood-engraving became obsolete and he left the journal and moved north.

He settled in Halifax at Swires Road, and taught art at the local Heath Grammar School, Sowerby Bridge High School and Hebden Bridge Grammar School. He joined the Halifax Art Society, and developed some skill with pen and ink sketches, and mezzotints. The *Halifax Evening Courier* published two books of his sketches, *Sketches of Old Halifax* in 1912 and *Ancient Halls in and about Halifax* in 1913; and also published *A Spring-Time Saunter: Round and About Bronte Land* by Whiteley Turner in 1913 which he illustrated.

He died that year aged 71 at the Royal Halifax Infirmary. He was survived by his wife, two sons and a daughter.

He is recorded as Art Teacher at Heath Grammar School from at least the early twenties (there are sub-

stantial gaps in our records between 1906 and 1924) until the summer term of 1935.

With thanks to **Rob Sumner** [Heath 1975–1982] for finding this on [Wikipedia](#).

### William Ernest Denison: 1866–21 August 1926 [Heath 1879–1881]

William Denison was the born in Chorley in Lancashire, the son of John Denison. He attended Heath Grammar School for two years, possibly as a boarder, before becoming an apprentice journalist in 1881 and a journalist in 1901.

He was known as Mr Willie and spent much of his life in the newspaper business. He worked on newspapers in Nottingham, Barnsley, Manchester and Sheffield before returning to be Chief Reporter when the *Halifax Evening Courier* was established in 1892.

He became Head of Advertising in 1896, a Director of Halifax Courier Limited in 1903 and, on the retirement of his father in 1916, Chairman, until his death on 21 August 1926.

In 1905, he published a series of articles by Whiteley Turner in the *Halifax Courier*. Turner's *A Spring-Time Saunter* was dedicated to Denison.

### Rob Sumner [Heath 1975–1982]

### John Eric Richardson Rushworth: 19 February 1908–4 July 1991 [Heath 1917–1923]

John Eric Richardson Rushworth was born in Halifax on 19 February 1908, the son of a Wholesale Woollen Cloth Merchant. He attended Miss Bedford's Private School and Holy Trinity before being admitted to Heath in 1917. He would later talk regularly about

playing rugby on the pitches in Kensington Road and also playing Fives on the court at the school.

He left in 1923 eventually finding a job at Rippon Bros who were the Rolls-Royce and Bentley dealers for Huddersfield. He was all set to be a vehicle mechanic and started an apprenticeship, but travelling by train each morning and evening to and from work cost 10s 0d whereas he only earned 7s 6d a week; so he was out of pocket to the tune of 2s 6d a week!

At 19 he suffered with appendicitis and did not return to work in Huddersfield but started his own Private Hire taxi business. Living on Skircoat Green with his parents at 328 Skircoat Green Road, he was able to obtain a reasonable amount of work from the residents of the district and around Savile Park, many of whom were company and business owners.

One of his regular jobs, perhaps obtained because his father was a sidesman at Halifax Parish Church and a member of the Church Council, was to be the driver for the then Vicar of Halifax, the Rt Rev. George Horsfall Frodsham, who'd been the Bishop of Queensland in Australia but was a Manchester man by birth. The Bishop had returned to England having found the climate of Australia not to his liking and also disagreeable with his constitution. For this he submitted a monthly account for the work that he'd done rather than being paid a weekly wage.

Ten years later, in February 1937, he sold the taxi business to a friend and fellow taxi proprietor and returned to the Motor Trade as a salesman selling small Commercial Vehicles for a garage in Huddersfield. This lasted up to the outbreak of War in 1939 when the supply of civilian vehicles dried up due to the firms turning over to War production.

He married his first wife in December of 1938 but unfortunately the marriage broke down during the war and he was divorced in 1949. Shortly after this first marriage, he suffered a bout of pneumonia from which he recovered and he worked for one or two garages in Halifax as a salesman up to receiving his call-up for the RAF. His medical examination uncovered the fact that he had heart disease; so he was graded 'C' and rejected for Military Service.

He worked for a while on munitions at Firth's Carpet Mill at Bailiffe Bridge; they were assembling bomb release catches which were to be fitted into Lancaster Bombers at the shadow factory which was next door to what is now the Leeds-Bradford Airport. He also joined the Police Force as a Wartime Special Constable based at Brighouse Police Station.

The area he was assigned to cover was around the Hipperholme crossroads where he spent more time arresting drinkers who'd had a drop too much in the pubs of the district; traffic control and point duty on the crossroads were regular occupations as the traffic lights that we know today were not there during the war years.

In 1943, he obtained a job with Mr Harold Mitchell in his Gent's Outfitters shop in Crown Street where he worked until the early 1950s when the shop was sold to Greenwoods due to Mr Mitchell's retirement. Other jobs, which only lasted for a few months in some cases due to him suffering with more poor health and heart problems, took him up to early retirement on Doctor's orders in the late 1950s.

He married again in 1950; his wife was a Ward Sister and became the Surgical Nursing Officer at the Halifax General Hospital up to her retirement in 1981; she died aged 83 on January 5th 2005. A second bout of pneumonia occurred in the Autumn of 1950 and again he recovered but only through his wife's diligence and professional expertise.

He knew many Directors, Managers and Business owners in Halifax along with just about every Solicitor and Accountant because he had been at school with them. His diaries recall his involvement with Heath Old Boys Association, the earliest entry being for Wednesday, January 14th 1948 where he's written, 'Heath Old Boy's Dance, Alex Hall.' This was of course the Alexandra Hall in the centre of town where all the reunions were held through the 1950s and into the 60s. He also records a meeting on Monday October 4th, one on Wednesday, December 15th at the White Swan Hotel and one on Thursday, January 6th 1949. There are no more entries until December 22nd 1958; so perhaps he had decided to cancel his membership and never bother with it again.

With having heart trouble he never played any sport after this childhood but took some interest in the fortunes of Halifax Town Football Club, strictly from his armchair. With his wife having been in nursing since the age of 18, she kept an extremely tight rein and a microscopic eye on his health and, if she thought that some days he'd overstretched himself and done too much, then for the following week he was told to rest and do virtually nothing.

**John R Rushworth**

**David Arthur James Littlefair: 20  
September 1946–7 July 2016 [Heath  
1958–1965]**

David was born in Bradford, the eldest of three children; the family moved first to Hipperholme, then, in 1956, to Shibden, where he was to live for most of the rest of his life, eventually moving into one of the cottages attached to the farm which his great-grandparents had first acquired at the end of the nineteenth century.

Like the rest of the family, he played a full role in farm life in his younger days, operating the mowing machine,

stacking bales, tending cattle and nursing the aged carthorse through the exertions of its summer work.

He went to primary school in Lightcliffe and, in 1958, to Heath Grammar School, where his father, George Arthur Littlefair, taught Modern Languages from 1947 to 1973. At Heath, David developed the talents he had already shown at primary school — particularly for sport and for acting. He took major roles in several school productions, including Sheridan's *The Rivals*, Anouilh's *The Lark* and Robert Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons*. His acting ability stood him in good stead throughout life, as he became a popular after-dinner speaker and master of ceremonies, as well as perhaps the North's leading exponent of that hauntingly lyrical ballad known as *Eskimo Nell*. He also followed in the family tradition of being a good linguist, particularly in spoken French. Heath, its traditions, its legacy and its influence were always of great importance to him, as were the lifelong friendships which he made there.

As a sportsman, he was a good cross-country runner, competing in the national schools cross-country championships, and an able wicket-keeper for the school Second XI. His prowess was as a rugby-player and he developed into a creative and cultured wing forward and vice-captain of the school First XV. He won a place in the Yorkshire Schools Under-nineteen squad during the 1964/65 season; an injured ankle kept him out of the game against Lancashire but the pack was reshuffled to include him at openside in the fixture against Wales at Otley in January 1965. He had an excellent game, having a try unjustly disallowed in the last minute — Yorkshire were awarded a penalty instead which would have drawn the match — and subduing the Welsh scrum-half — Gareth Edwards — into a rare quiet afternoon. He also excelled a seven-a-side rugby, where his creativity and sound defence were often instrumental in deciding the outcome of close contests.

Before he left Heath Grammar School in the summer of 1965, David had played on a regular basis for Heath Old Boys, as the club then was known, for some time, joining the second wave of young players who continued the revival of the club which had begun in the late fifties with the energy and enthusiasm of Russell Smith, Gordon Brear, Alan Hartley and others. He recalled that he first trod the turf at West Vale in 1963 and he was proud to play his part for over fifty years as the club developed, prospered and flourished both on the pitch and off it. He loved the club and served it loyally, never tempted to play his rugby anywhere else. He played with distinction for many years in the first team, captaining the side for two years, then, in the foothills of middle age, captaining the second team and helping to nurture youthful talent, and continuing to serve in a variety of roles, including committee member, coach and referee's secretary until late in life poor health curtailed his involvement to active and perspicacious

spectator. He derived enjoyment and satisfaction in his latter days from his scouting expeditions to watch the following Saturday's opponents. His affection for and pride in the club never dimmed and he cherished memories of many high points — reaching the Yorkshire Shield Final in 1968, winning the Silver Trophy in 1979 and the *annus mirabilis* of 2002 culminating in the Junior Vase triumph at Twickenham.

The previous year he had been diagnosed with the leukaemia which was to bring his working life with John Smith's Brewery in Tadcaster to a premature end; entering hospital one morning with what he believed to be a chronically bad back, he was sent home the same day with a very different diagnosis. Told that he might live a short time or fifteen years, he was determined to make the most of his time, travelling widely, particularly to New Zealand, where he had made and kept many friends, and to the United States to visit his son James. He was given a new lease of life by his two grandchildren and rejoiced in the time he spent with them. He lived as fully as he could in a conscious spirit of *carpe diem*, continuing to travel, to speak and to watch with avid interest and insight Yorkshire cricket and rugby. In 2016 he became increasingly frail, but his warmth, wit, wisdom and encyclopaedic memory were still much in evidence. He faced his illness bravely and without self-pity or complaint. A bad fall at home put him in hospital in Huddersfield; complications followed and he died peacefully six weeks later, surrounded by members of his family, including his daughters, Sarah and Anna, and his first wife Linda.

#### **John Littlefair [Heath 1961–1968]**

#### **William Malcolm Bussey: 19 February 1941–22 August 2016 [Heath 1952–1960]**

September 1952 saw the usual intake of 60 or more boys to HGS, all with abilities later revealed, to greater or lesser degree, as they passed through school.

One such was 'Buss' as he soon became known. In the early days he was a small, wiry lad showing some promise both on the sports field and academically — promise that was well on the way to being realised by the time he left in 1960!

His parents, Willie and Ada, ran a coal merchants business in Ovenden. Holy Trinity School saw him through the 11+ and into HGS, where he soon began to display considerable confidence and competence. He was a good cricketer, but his enthusiasm in that area was overwhelmed by his development as a rugby footballer and as an athlete which was truly outstanding.

He played an increasingly influential role in each year's XV, with his natural speed and amazing left to right sidestep — practised regularly as he made his way to school sidestepping lamp standards along Huddersfield Road. Buss was a member of the Yorkshire Schools XV for three years, graduating to England Schools in his

final year whilst also breaking, and holding for many a long year after his departure, the Inter Grammar Schools quarter mile record and winning the England schools 440 yards championship in 1959.

In those times the School had a fearsome record playing Seven a side rugby and Buss was a member of each of the School's Ilkley Sevens teams from 1958–60 and the winning Llanelli Sevens team in 1959.

His academic attainment saw him go up to Cambridge to read Natural Science and, unsurprisingly, to play rugby. He was in the 1st XV throughout his three years at Cambridge winning in each of his three Varsity Matches. The 1961 team was nicknamed 'The Invincibles' as they won every match they played leading up to and including the Varsity Match. He was selected for the Probables team for an England RFU trial but, unhappily, his wrist was broken in the Varsity match three weeks prior to the trial and his chance of International Honours slipped away.

Michele [née Rhodes] and Malcolm were married at All Saints Church, Halifax on 15 August 1964 and they were blessed with three children — Neale, Michael and Tracey — and five grandchildren — Nicole, Rebecca, Kate, Kameron and Tiger.

His future however lay in the Midlands; he began, and 42 years later, ended his teaching career at Uppingham School. He was a dedicated and inspirational Chemistry teacher, master in charge of rugby, Housemaster for 16 years and, finally, Senior Master until his retirement.

His reputation at the School was immediately enhanced by his rugby career with Leicester Tigers, where he was known as 'The King,' playing over 121 first team games between 1963 and 1967. His rugby career ended due to injury and, blessed with his fierce competitive spirit, his sporting prowess was invested, as was Michele's, at The Luffenham Heath Golf Club where he again rose through the ranks to serve as Captain in 2013.

Sadly Buss was struck down with motor neurone disease; he bore the condition with fortitude and in the certainty that he had been worthy of great acclaim in his roles as son, husband, father, grandfather, sportsman, teacher, friend, Heath Old Boy and — throughout — as an archetypal Yorkshireman.

Our condolences go to all the family.

### **Grayham P Smith [1952–1959]**

There are tributes on the [Old Uppinghamians](#) and [Leicester Tigers](#) websites.

**Malcolm Bull** [1952–1960] writes:

I met Malcolm at Trinity Junior Boys School at West Parade, Halifax and we both passed the 11+ to go to Heath, where we stayed in the same class and set right from

1B through to the upper sixth. From there, Malcolm went to Downing College, Cambridge, and I did another year in the 6th form, doing maths with Polly Hallowes before I went to University College, London.  
19 January 2017

### **Courtney James William Tordoff: 14 March 1948–31 December 2016 [Heath 1959–1961]**

Courtenay James William Tordoff was born in Halifax on 14 March 1948 and educated at Holy Trinity School, Heath Grammar School and Fulneck Boys School, Leeds. At 18, he joined the *Evening Courier* as a trainee reporter. He won a national award for journalists which resulted in a trip to the USA to write about the space programme. He became a sub-editor on the *Evening Courier* and also met his wife, Sheila, whom he married in 1969, there.

In 1970 he moved to the BBC in Leeds where he worked as a news producer on *Look North*, moving in 1974 to the national newsroom at Television Centre where he was a news organiser on the Home desk, before becoming deputy Foreign news editor in 1982.

Perhaps his most famous moment came in 1982 at the Vatican, when he seized the moment to grab an unscheduled and virtually unprecedented interview with Pope John Paul II, a BBC exclusive shown round the world. Courtenay later said that, when the Pope put his hand on his shoulder, it felt like a lightning bolt going through his body.

However he claimed the most professionally satisfying moment was two years afterwards when he deployed Southern Africa correspondent Michael Buerk, and Reuters cameraman Mo Amin, to Ethiopia to reveal to the world the worst famine of our time.

In 1988 he became senior producer, BBC Special Events, responsible for news coverage at four Olympic Games and three World Cups, among a host of major stories on virtually every continent.

His unflappable nature and dedication to the job endeared him to management and colleagues alike. John Simpson said he lacked the ego of the correspondent but was the 'sheet anchor' of the small newsgathering team, with no interest to defend except the final product.

At home he was a private yet active man who kept his health issues very much to himself. A big Wycombe Wanderers fan, he loved Dad's Army and collecting Eddie Stobart models. In retirement (2003, after 33 years) he kept a daily ritual of an afternoon visit to his local for a glass of white wine and, until recently, he had a villa in Spain. He was involved with Age Concern locally and was a BBC Pensions Visitor in the Reading area, as well as having a series of local part-time jobs.

He is survived by Eve Peters, his partner of 24 years, and children Emma, Helen and Benjamin from his marriage to Sheila.

Read the [obituary written by Courtenay's friend and colleague Bob Prabhu](#) from which much of this information has been gleaned.

## **Oliver Smithies 23 June 1925–10 January 2017 [Heath 1936–1943]**

Oliver Smithies was born on 23 June 1925 in Halifax, the son of William and Doris Smithies. He had a twin brother and a younger sister. His mother introduced him to literature, his father to mathematics. His grandfather taught him how to make useful things from junk, a talent that served him throughout his career. He said that his love of science came from an early fascination with radios and telescopes.

He attended Copley Junior School where a bout with rheumatic fever at the age of seven kept him out of sports activities. So he turned to books. He attended Heath Grammar School, as did his brother, Roger William, where he was 'a dedicated scientist and a stalwart of the Scout Troop' (John Palmer [1939–1946]). Getting a scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford, to study medicine, he changed to animal physiology and took his post-graduate degree in biochemistry, publishing his first research paper, co-written with his tutor, Alexander Ogston, in 1948 and receiving his DPhil in 1951.

Ogston recommended that he should go to the States but Smithies wasn't very keen and it was a Rhodes scholar in Ogston's lab who persuaded him to apply for a visiting fellowship at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, his home state. He was eventually awarded a Commonwealth Fund fellowship to take up a position in the United States, at the University of Wisconsin–Madison's Department of Chemistry but a problem with acquiring a US visa then forced him to leave the US. and, from 1953 to 1960, he worked in the Connaught Medical Research Laboratory at the University of Toronto in Canada. There he developed the technique of gel electrophoresis using a starch matrix. He used this to reveal differences between normal human plasma proteins, and in collaboration with Norma Ford Walker, showed that the variation was inherited, which stimulated his interest in genetics. The high-resolution gels that he created allowed researchers to study blood proteins effectively. Before this, scientists thought that blood plasma contained five different proteins. He found 25 proteins.

In 1960, he returned to the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where he worked in the Department of Genetics until 1988, in due course becoming Leon J. Cole and Hilledale Professor of Genetics and Medical Genetics. While at the University of Wisconsin in the 1980s, he developed gene targeting in mice, something

which Mario Capecchi also developed independently. This work came from his desire to replace the gene responsible for sickle-cell disease with a normal gene and was at the foundation of the field of gene therapy.

He married Lois Kitzke, a virologist at the University of Wisconsin, in the 1950s; they separated in 1978.

Nobuyo Maeda, who was to become his second wife, left her parents' home in 1978 to do postdoctoral work in physiological chemistry at Wisconsin. It was the first time she had lived on her own, away from her family. After obtaining a post at the National Institutes of Health in Washington D.C in 1980, she lost it almost immediately, as a foreigner, to an executive order of the new President, Ronald Reagan. Smithies was persuaded to take her on in his lab and she began developing his work in new directions.



*Oliver Smithies*

When she could not obtain a post at the University of Wisconsin, but obtained one at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, he moved with her there in 1988 to become Excellence Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine and continued to work in his lab there daily into his eighties. He loved physically doing science: designing his experiments, mixing his own reagents and building new equipment when what he wanted was not commercially available. He created the first animal model of cystic fibrosis in 1992.

By this time, he had become a naturalised US citizen. He won the 2007 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, jointly with Capecchi and Evans,

for their discoveries of principles for introducing specific gene modifications in mice by the use of embryonic stem cells.

At the 2007 University Day ceremony, four days after he learned of his Nobel Prize, the then Chancellor James Moeser granted Smithies a true rarity at Carolina: a free parking space for life. At the time, he said the idea of retirement hadn't entered his mind. 'I've always said if I were to die somewhere, which certainly will happen, it might as well be at the bench because that's where I'm happy.'

On 5 July 2010 he made a short visit to Halifax to unveil a plaque at Copley Junior School to commemorate his attendance. Head teacher Nan Oldfield, kindly invited members of HOBA to catch up with him during his visit. They were invited to join the children for lunch; Graham Smith, John Davey, John Bunch and Mick Hynes represented HOBA and were well looked after by the children. John Bunch presented Oliver with the scroll of former Heath headmasters, together with the book which was published to record the amalgamation of Heath and Crossley & Porter.

Oliver Smithies co-authored a total of more than 350 research papers and reviews, dating from 1948 to 2016. In 2016, UNC launched the Oliver Smithies Research Archive website to make available to the world the 150-plus notebooks where he recorded his notes daily, a habit he began as a graduate student at Oxford.

Besides his passion for science, Oliver loved flying single-engine aeroplanes and gliders and, despite being colour-blind, was a licensed private aeroplane pilot. In 1980, he was a co-pilot on a record-breaking crossing of the Atlantic Ocean in a single-engine plane. The speed record held for 20 years.

He died on 10 January 2017.

### **Michael Newton: died – 27 May 2017 [Heath 1973–?]**

Michael Newton, who became a teacher at Heath in 1973, died on Saturday, 27 May 2017

His funeral was held on Tuesday, 13th June at 11.15am at St James's Church, Mytholm, Hebden Bridge.

Don't worry if you could not make it to the funeral. We will also be holding a very special 'Michael Newton Memorial Celebration' at Hebden Bridge Trades Club on Sunday 24th September in the afternoon — full of music, poetry, eulogies, laughter and fun. Please put this in your diaries now.

Although Dad was not in any way religious, the church was an important part of his family life, it being attached to our primary school; so it was the venue for many formative concerts of mine and Heather's; also it was where I sang in my first choir, where Stacey and John got married in 2000 (and Janine, Dad's 'adopted 4th daughter,' to Rob in 2010) and Mum has for decades been a very active member of the church; so it seemed a fitting (and, importantly, spacious enough!) venue, close to the family home, to celebrate Dad's life.

Parking isn't easy though; so do consider car-sharing or public transport if you can.

Family flowers only please; donations can be made to Marie Curie UK through Robertshaw Greenwood Funeral Directors in Hebden Bridge.

For those wishing to send cards, Mum's address is Great Gable, Off Savile Road, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, HX7 6ND.

Thank you again for all the love and support you have all shown the whole family. It is truly helping us through this very difficult time. Dad was so overwhelmed and delighted by the amount of well-wishes before he died. We are so very proud of him.

Please do share all this information with those you think would like to know. I am certain I will miss important people, so all help getting the word out is very welcome. Thank you.

**Kirsty Doody**

### **John Edward Malcolm Blythe: 30 April 1937–21 June 2017 [Heath 1959–?]**

JEM Blythe died on 21 June 2017. His funeral took place at St John's Methodist Church, South Parade, Ossett on Wednesday 12 July 2017 followed by a service at Dewsbury Moor Crematorium and a reception at Ossett Cricket and Athletics Club

Everyone was welcome to attend any or all parts of the day to celebrate the life of an amazing and loving gent.

**Mel,** daughter of JEM Blythe

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## **Requests for information**

### **Eric Webster 1920–2005**

Matthew Ambler would like to contact the family of Eric Webster to obtain their permission to reproduce one of his books.

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## **Pre-2003 HOBA Newsletters**

John S. Robertshaw [Heath 1958–1965] has kindly loaned his collection of pre-2003 HOBA Newsletters which have been scanned in and added to the [web-site](#). The [Bibliography](#) allows you to find particular articles by author (if any — a lot of the contributions are anonymous) or title.

## New subscriptions

### Your Association needs you NOW

New subscription rates were agreed at the AGM on 26 September 2015. However, not all member have increased their subscriptions to the new rate.

- *For subscribing members:* Voluntary increase in your annual subscriptions from £5 pa. to £10 pa.
- *For new members:* Start paying subscriptions of £10 pa. and/or make a donation to cover your 'missing' years.
- *For 'Life Members':* Our records have got hazy over time and you have had exceptional value for money; so please consider recommitting to £10 pa.

### Why do we need the increase in subscriptions?

#### So we can maintain and improve our level of support and giving.

The Association does all it can to help and support the Crossley Heath School. We provide four prizes annually — for Excellence in Sport girls/boys, A level Textiles and Further Maths.

Periodically we make donations to the school, most recently in November 2015 with a cheque for £500 towards the new sixth form centre.

The Association also does all it can to help and support Savile Park Primary School which officially moved into the historic Heath Grammar School building in October 2015. We provide prizes to the school for academic and outstanding achievements.

We will also make periodic donations to the school, most recently in November 2015 with a cheque for £500 towards the school's continued refurbishment.

The Association donates to a variety of local good causes and charities, most recently in September 2015 with a donation of £370 to Young Minds Charitable Trust.

The Association also maintains its website, keeping Old Boys connected, with news and events. The annual events include a reunion dinner, a Founder's Day celebration and Bowling competitions.

The Association also sends out an annual newsletter, by post, to Old Boys not connected to the Internet.

## What do you need to do?

### Sort out your subs now.

- *Existing members:* Simply contact your bank to increase your subs to £10 pa.
- *New members:* Simply contact our treasurer Duncan Turner to arrange setting up your annual subs/donations:  
Mr J D Turner  
18 Newlands Road  
Norton Tower  
HALIFAX  
HX2 7RE  
Tel: (01422) 355081

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The views presented in this Newsletter are the views of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the HOBA.

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