



## Plenty to celebrate

As always in our Crossley Heath school family, we have plenty to celebrate and so I have picked out five causes for celebration to share.

### 1 We are the happiest school in Calderdale!

Both the annual Calderdale Health and Wellbeing Survey which students themselves complete and a survey of Ofsted Parent Views published in *The Times* rank us as Calderdale's happiest school. The Platinum standard Safeguarding Award we achieved in March shows the strong foundation of care for children at our school. We are proud of the pastoral and wellbeing care and support that runs through the heart of our school to ensure happy students are at the centre of our vision to be

The leading school for educational excellence, where we nurture happy students with strong values so they all contribute positively to society.

### 2 Our students are achieving great academic success!

We were proud to celebrate our GCSE students achieving the best attainment and best progress of all Calderdale schools this summer. As we approach our summer exams aiming to strengthen ever further we have had great news about our students post GCSE and post-A Level progression. With three of our students achieving offers for Oxford and Cambridge (3% of the year group, the highest proportion in our region) and two of our students earning Arkwright Engineering Scholarships we are seeing Crossley Heath students succeed at the highest level nationwide.

**Friday, 26 September 2025** Reunion Dinner at Heath RUFC, West Vale, Halifax  
6.45pm AGM  
7 for 7.30pm Reunion Dinner  
Dress: Lounge suits/smart casual.  
Guests welcome.  
£20 per person payable to HOBA via **Jon Hamer<sup>a</sup>**  
Mob: 07770 697176/Duncan Turner.  
**Sunday, 10 May 2026** Russell Smith Memorial Trophy Bowling Challenge  
1.30 for 2 pm Greenroyd Bowling Club  
**Sunday, 21 June 2026** Founder's Day Commemoration  
4 pm Halifax Minster

<sup>a</sup>Click on the **magenta** text for the link or email address.

### 3 Our students' attendance is excellent!

As of March 2025 our students' attendance to school is in the Top 1% of the country, 4.1% above the National average. Furthermore, 150 of our students still have the proud record of 100% attendance in this academic year. Coming to school each and every possible day demonstrates our value of courage, ensures students learn as well as possible and shows children are happy in their education.

### 4 Sporting excellence is shining stronger than ever!

Our sports teams are flourishing thanks to the commitment of students, the dedication of staff and the support of parents and carers. Our students have reached national finals in table tennis, north of England finals in badminton, won the Yorkshire Plate in Year 10 rugby and competed in the final in Year 7, reached the Calderdale Indoor Cricket final, our Year 11 boys' football team are in the semi-finals of the Calderdale Cup and we still have two Calderdale netball finals to come this Springtime! Our international sports tours are back, with the Isle of Man and Italy rugby tours this year and our Canada boys' rugby tour and Abu

Dhabi/Dubai girls' football and netball tour later this year.

## 5 Crossley Heath heritage is being restored to our glory days.

Back have come the Swimming Gala and annual school production, traditions dating back over two centuries to Heath Grammar School. Then we have been joined

by Viv Anderson and Brian Moore, alongside a wealth of Heath Old Boys and Old Crossleyan's to celebrate Andrew Watson of Heath, the world's first black international footballer. A lovely event celebrating diversity and inclusion shared on regional and national news to inspire our current and future students to be trailblazers and 'the first' in their lives to achieve landmark achievements.

**Dean Jones** Headteacher

---

## Annual Reunion Dinner

THE Association's 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion Dinner was held at Heath RUFC, West Vale, on Friday, 20th September 2024.

As ever, the dinner was preceded by the AGM, in the course of which

This is a preliminary report which will be completed later.

During the dinner **Jim Farrell** reported on the report for Halifax Heritage provided by Heidi Bain in association with York University. It offers a pathway to follow.

**Dean Jones**, Head of Crossley Heath School also spoke. He said that, in coming to Crossley Heath, he had found a strong sense of a foundation for the future and intended to build on that by, among other things, re-introducing the swimming gala, carols at the Minster, fives and house competitions. Next year Viv Anderson will be coming to unveil a blue plaque to Andrew Watson, one time pupil at Heath and the first black player to represent a country (Scotland) internationally.

He noted that the Heritage event had been very successful and that pupils had been on a rugby tour to Canada, a tour to the Isle of Man and a tour to Abu Dhabi.

**John Hoggard** [Heath 1945–1952] was the key speaker for the evening. He began by recalling that he had started school in Northowram primary school in 1939 and, after the passing of the 1944 Education Act, children from Northowram could go to Heath without paying fees and six had gone in 1945, while others had gone to Crossley and Porter and Princess Mary. Of the six who had gone from Northowram to Heath he thought that, apart from himself, only Trevor Gamson [Heath 1945–1953] might still be alive.

Though they had not been directly affected by the fighting, from Northowram they could see, in the black-out, over Halifax to Oldham and Manchester and one of the sights at night was the flashing and banging of the bombing, the searchlights and all that going on.

Anyway, at the end of it all, in 1945 they had done the 11-plus and some of them had got through.

One thing I do remember — I can't exactly remember the words — I was walking through those gates on the first day and heard a voice say, 'What ho! my fine fellow. How art thou this frosty morn?' I knew he wasn't talking to me but I thought I had walked onto a Shakespearean set of some sort. It was a guy called Swards-Shaw [K.E. Swards-Shaw: Heath 1940-47]. I remember him because he shouted out and I thought, 'Blimey! Where've I come?'

Went in and was immediately put with others into a form called 4A1. This is our first year; how can we be in form 4 already? and you might guess the reason. There was a junior school at Heath in those days and had been for several years and, of course, there were forms 1, 2 and 3 and the first year in school proper was 4. Later on — we had been in 4A1 — we were in 2A1 — not a big push down, just sorting themselves out on what the forms should be called.

And we had a chap called Lee as form master — now there are one or two Lees in the past history of Heath teachers but this one only lasted about twelve months [G.R.B. Lee who taught History and English]; perhaps it was partly because of the class he inherited with me and one or two others in it?

I had a classmate called **Douglas Gillett** [Heath 1945–1953] — some might remember Douglas — who became a teacher, never married but a very hard and vicious rugby player. I've lost a lot of height but that time, at school, we were about the same height — I got to the dizzy heights of about 5ft 8" and I was a back row forward —

a wing forward — so was Douglas but I was a sort of fancy boy — good with the hands and so forth — and Douglas was a killer of scrum halves! He made a great joke about my name, Hoggard. In recent years it's been better since Matthew Hoggard did his stuff in cricket and I have a grandson called Matthew; so when anyone says, 'Are you related to Matthew Hoggard?' 'Yes, my grandson.' And I can remember saying, 'What's so wonderful about Gillett? Hoggard's someone who kept pigs or maybe sheep. What did Gillett do?' Anyway we went on from there and became good friends.

I remember getting lost once or twice finding classrooms. You know what it used to be like. I don't know what it's like now. You used to go in the main doors and then turn left and up some stairs and along corridors with rooms on the way. If you didn't go upstairs, you went past the Headmaster's office.

At the far end I always remember a teacher called Sidney Fox [Classics and English; Heath 1946–?]. Again I don't know how long he lasted after my time but he was a nice guy, taught English, helped with the rugby as many of the teachers did. It didn't have to be the PE man. It was guys like Frank Haigh [Classics, Geography, Music; Heath 1936–1973] and Sidney Fox who helped in running the teams and going with them to away matches and I do remember him quite well.

And just bits of memories come back over the years. I remember playing rugby early on — and I really did get hardened up by tackling Douglas Gillett at Manor Heath — you know, going at full speed. Playing in the under-14s away to Rochdale and getting up from a scrum and looking up and streaking away under the posts, many miles away, was Philip Horrocks-Taylor [Heath 1945–1953]. That was the early days of Philip and people like Jimmy Farrar [Heath 1943–1952]. Both of them played for Yorkshire and Philip, of course, on to England and the British Lions. That's the early rugby memory. And, of course, rugby became an important part of life then and in later years.

What does come to mind, of course, — I had a long-running, uneasy relationship with Harry Birchall [Heath 1936–1973 except for war service]. It all seemed to come from an under-14s match in which I was

heavily tackled and broke my collar bone. He dragged me off — no subs in those days, of course — 'Oh, get back on, Hoggard.' 'Can you raise your arm?' And I could (painfully). 'Oh, it's OK,' he said. Anyway, it was very near the end of the game; so he didn't push me into going back on.

The following day I went to the hospital in some considerable pain. 'You've broke your collar bone, you daft lad. It's a complete separation.' So I went back on to the school after I had been to the hospital and told him. He didn't like it. He didn't like to be told that I had been diagnosed and that I *had* done it. And thereon there was always this difficulty between us even though he did a good job. It was probably known that he had been wounded in the war in Italy, wounded in the head.

I remember scoring a try in a house match — John Bunch was asking me about house names and when Kings house was set up; I don't know — I gave a dummy and went under the posts and he said, 'You should have passed that, Hoggard.' House matches were important. You were playing for Heath or Kings or whatever and we had to beat 'em. It didn't matter how you did it; you had to beat 'em. I remember dropping out of the cross country run in the last year because of some argument with him, having been fourth the year before, behind people like Peter Kiddle [Heath 1944–1952] who was a star runner and two or three others and with a good chance of coming first or second in the cross country with them gone, but I didn't run out of sheer bloody-mindedness to defy Harry. But on the other hand, I know for the rugby team and the success of those days and the successes later we had a lot to be thankful to him for.

I've made a bit of a list of the teachers; it's very long because I took it from the archives at Crossley Heath a few months ago. One or two stand out and it would be interesting to know how many are remembered by yourselves: a chap called Blackeby [D. H. Blackeby Maths and Geography; Heath 1947–?] who taught Maths and was very eccentric. We had a lad called Davies in the class and he would call him out. He wanted to demonstrate inverted fractions. He used to pick Davies up and tip him on his head and his bits of money and sweets and odds and ends would tippie out onto the floor. He'd be jailed today.

There was a guy called Charlton [John

Charlton Science; Heath 1947–1956], a Geordie — Big Bill. He used to throw a slipper at you if you were doing anything wrong and he turned me round on maths marvellously. He didn't fool around. He really taught me maths; so I remember him well, if anyone else does. I am going down a fairly long list; I've mentioned Sidney Fox. Frank Haigh's been mentioned; Frank was great — a good geography teacher. He'd been in the intelligence corps during the war — many of them had served and were just drifting back — and he was another one, like Sidney Fox, who supported us in the rugby teams.

There were science teachers like 'Polly' {Hallowes [Heath 1947–1978] and 'Kettle' Hewson [Chemistry; Heath 1943–1964]. I knew them but they never tried to teach me science. George Littlefair [French, German; Heath 1947–1973], father of David Littlefair [1958–1965], a stalwart of this rugby club here. George, of course, taught us French and Cecil Owen Mackley [English, History; Heath 1931–1961]. He died in the late fifties possibly [actually 19 September 1961] but he had started in 1931 as in 1930 had Eric 'Biddy' Taylor [English, History; Heath 1930–1968] who had a bit of a job keeping order in his classes. There were one or two boys who made silly noises; they even dragged a lad called Barry [Barry Seal Heath 1948–1954] who became a Euro MP, a cheeky little beggar, two of our lads, one called Atkinson [Rodney Victor Atkinson; Heath 1945–1950] and one called Turner got him one day, went on to Sidney Fox's room and there was like a platform — a raised area — and believe me, — they shoved him under there, could have smothered him there — and, when Biddy came in to do the class, there was this mysterious tapping and Barry was eventually let out. Eric was a good teacher; he was good in the music and the plays we put on.

There were some people they couldn't find in the archives like Larry Gain [Latin, Greek; Heath 1935–?], Norman Gain, whom I saw in his final days at a nursing home in Liverpool. Arthur Holt [French; Heath 1930–1966] taught French — 'Tishy' Holt — and I realised that some of them went on for some years after I left in '52. They all leave a place in our memories.

On the sports side, before Harry Birchall came back, a chap called Charles 'Chus' Place [Gymnastics; Heath 1939–?]. He

taught at Crossley's as well as at Heath. He was divided between who should win because we were bound to beat Crossley's. The biggest disappointment came in February '52 when we had a very good team and we were going to give Crossley's a real hammering and the King went and died! And on that very day we gathered. 'Are we going to play on?' 'Oh, no. Mr Bolton at Crossley's said, "We're not playing because the King's died,"' which was right enough in retrospect but we were going to give them a right thrashing! But that was after the time of Mr Place who gave way to Harry Birchall.

So things rolled on; the rugby rolled on. We had a good season in my last year ('51–'52). I started off playing wing forward and half way through, because I was a little shorty, even then, and they needed more height in the lineout, the guy who was full back, John Esmond [Heath 1946–1953] — I don't know if any of you know John; he's still around. He can't be more than six or eight months younger than me and he was six foot plus then. They brought him to the lineout and I went to full back; so I played a whole season, half of it in the back row and the other half as full back but at the end of the season, when you usually got colours for playing in the First Fifteen, or whatever Fifteen or Under-15s, no colours for Hoggard. I often wondered if it was HB who did the dirty but I could never make anything of it.

So it all rolled on; I got the School Certificate in 1950 and, if I was good at anything, I was good at English language and very quietly, one afternoon, up in the Sixth Form room, in a break or whatever, Arthur Owen [Classics; Heath 1935–1972 except for war service] sidled up and said, 'John, as a matter of fact, you had the best results in the north of England in English language but don't make a big thing about it. It won't be announced in tomorrow's assembly.' But that was the sort of thing, you hadn't to make too much of a thing, whether it was at rugby or whatever.

So academically I fell down on the Higher Certificate, having left school, gone back — persuaded my parents to let me go back so that I could play more rugby. There was no university for me. I was out of it. It was into the air force for a few years and then working in textiles for 44 years.

But it's always there; there's always good memories; they keep cropping up a lot with



being involved with this wonderful rugby club that's based here. It goes back to that first day; I don't remember much of it but I remember those first words as I walked through the door and I thought, 'Is this the sort of place when people talk like that?' Fortunately, I did one or two plays, some Shakespeare, some other types, and enjoyed those as well. It's thanks a lot of it so some of these teachers and the time they put in, plus music and drama. So that was me, from '45 to '52. OK?

Following the applause, **Dean Jones** and **John Bunch** [Heath 1972–1985] presented John with a colours tie (figure 1).

Having started at Heath school in 1945, John should have been awarded his colour tie having played full-back in the **1951/52 Rugby Team**. He missed out because his rugby master wasn't happy that he wasn't able to play the final few minutes of a fixture in the days of no substitutes. This was very understand-

able though, as John had broken his collar bone in the match! Never too late to celebrate a school legend.

After the speeches, the raffle raised £465.

Present: Jim Farrell, Jon Hamer, John Bunch, Dean Jones, Adam Smith, Paul Keenan, Phil Stollery, Nigel Holden, Dom Potter, Pete Ambler, John Robertshaw, Richard Brearley, Richard Crosland, John Charnock, John Hudson, Duncan Turner, Richard Taylor, John Hoggard, Rod Eastwood, John Greenwood, Michael Bingham, Tim Stringer, Dennis O'Callaghan, Chris Tindle, Mark Baxendale, Heath Reilly, Umberto Cuzzo, Oli Schofield, Jawid Zaman, Andy Hoyle, Zoran Kosanovic, Craig Mallinson, Paul Mottram, Glenn Holdsworth, Nigel Sladdin, Richard Craven, Winston Greenwood, Rob Sumner, Mark Kelly, Dave Owen, Craig Shannon, Stephen Horsfield, Dave 'Edgar' Broughton, Graham 'Biscuit' Parr, David 'Bob' Stoker

**John Hudson** [1957–1960 and 1962] with thanks to **John Hoggard** [Heath 1945–1952]

---

## 2025 HOBA Bowling Challenge (Russell Smith Memorial Trophy)

ON Sunday, 11 May 2025, following last year's break occasioned by the Heath RUFC's success in the Papa John's trophy, the 16<sup>th</sup> edition of the Russell Smith Memorial Trophy was played at its spiritual home, Greenroyd Bowling Club.

If you can meet with triumph and disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the  
same;

Kipling *If*

The day was unseasonably warm and sunny, the drought-stricken green hard and true, and all was set for a memorable tournament.

Several regulars being absent (again!). a mere nine names went into the hat and the pairs were drawn as follows:

- Andy Hoyle or P. Stollery and Tim Freeman
- G. P. Smith and Richard Crossland
- Jon Hamer and Peter Greenwood
- Keith Crossfield and John Robertshaw

The format was, as before, the best of seven ends, with three points being awarded for a win and one point in the unlikely event of a draw.

After two or three hours of friendly banter with varying degrees of 'triumph and disaster,' the worthy finalists emerged in Hoyle and Freeman v. Crossfield and Robertshaw.

A welcome diversion was provided at 4.30 p.m. by the arrival of John Hudson with the buffet.

The final provided the best bowling of the match, with the score standing at 6 each after four ends, before the more experienced pair pulled away for a convincing victory. The trophy being gracefully accepted by John Robertshaw, all repaired to the bar to socialise.

Thanks to Greenroyd for hosting the event, to Grayham Smith and Jon Hamer for organising and to John Hudson for providing the buffet. Another good HOBA event in all but numbers.

**Rod Eastwood** [1954–1961]



Figure 1: *Head Teachers present and past, Mr Jones and Mr Bunch, privileged to award Heath Rugby First XV colours to the legendary John Hoggard after a 74 year wait!*

## Founder's Day Celebration: Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2025

THE 2025 Founder's Day Celebration once more took place as part of the Minister's regular Sunday evensong service at 4 pm.

Three good reasons why Old Heathens should attend the Founder's Day event:

1. You don't get preached at (evensong has no sermon),
2. The hymns and readings are familiar (they are taken from school assemblies), and
3. The Minster Choir is guaranteed to sing magnificently (evensong is largely a choral event).

So it was that the few old faithfulls gathered at the west end of the Minster before taking their places in the choir stalls to honour the memory of Dr Favour.

The service was led by Revd Sam Crook who welcomed us all.

The choir was conducted by Charlie Murray, who also composed the music for the responses. They sang Psalm 39, the *Magnificat*, the *Nunc Dimittis* and the Anthem.

The familiar readings were delivered by John Hudson — 'Let us now praise famous men' — and John Robertshaw — 'Finally, my brethren' — and the familiar hymns sung: Bunyan's great hymn and the one bidding us to be 'free from sloth and sensual snare.'

After the service we gathered at the West End beneath the stern bust of our founder, where Andrew Connell explained the significance of the Latin inscription on the school house and read its translation to draw the successful event to a close.

Thanks to all those who attended, especially the school representatives: Adam Smith, the Assistant Head, Head Girl Anaya Hammad, Head Boy Lakshya Kaushik and Deputy Head Boy Bhavan Sandhu.

Thanks also to the Revd Canon Hilary Barber for allowing us to use the Minster and to the HOBA Committee.

**Rod Eastwood** [1954–1961]

## Letters

### Bentley Cup

According to the **HOBA Bulletin 2** of March 1950, the Bentley Cup for Fieldcraft was presented by the parents of David Bentley [Heath 1943–1947] who died suddenly in December 1947.

His niece is seeking further information on the Cup. If you know anything about it being awarded and for what types of work, we would love to hear from you.

**Andrew Connell** [Heath 1958–1965] says, “In 1965 I

put in an entry for my house, Queen’s, which I think won, an illustrated essay on ‘Old Houses of Heptonstall’.” Can anyone provide any further information?

**Rod Eastwood** [Heath 1954–1961] recalls that there was a house essay competition and that he submitted an essay on ‘Modern Jazz’ around 1960. He was taken aside by C. O. Mackley and congratulated on his effort but told that the resident genius, David Nelson, had won by a mile. Rod cannot recall whether the winning essays were ever displayed in any way.

## News

### Sporting Heritage Celebration: Tuesday, 18 March 2025

The Sporting Heritage Celebration was a memorable evening devoted to celebrating Andrew Watson and others who had broken barriers or challenged racism, providing encouragement to young people today to feel that they too can break barriers.

The evening began with a drink and a pie and peas supper after which *Dean Jones*, Headteacher, welcomed everyone to the event and thanked those who had made the event possible including those who had travelled from Sunderland and Scotland. He highlighted some of the moves that had been planned to increase sporting activities at Crossley Heath including bringing back the cricket nets, fives, the swimming gala and rugby. He paid tribute to those who had sponsored kit and overseas tours.

*Mark Metcalfe*, journalist and campaigner, shared his involvement in promoting plaques for footballers and how he had had the idea of one for Andrew Watson. He described how, as an 18 year old in 1977, he had attended a match between Newcastle and Nottingham Forest where Viv Anderson, then playing for Nottingham Forest under Brian Clough, was abused, something that happened at a lot of grounds. On this occasion the abuse had been particularly serious but, after providing an assist for the second goal, Viv Anderson had turned his back on the racists and raised his arms. Mark had been so impressed by the response that it had strengthened his determination to take action to combat racism.

*Bill Hern*, co-author of *Football’s Black Pioneers: The Stories of the First Black Players to Represent the 92 League Clubs* Leicester: Conker Editions 2020 ISBN 978-19999900 85 4, had realised that not every club knew

who their first black player had been; apart from Viv Anderson, there were 91 others. So he had set about collecting their fantastic stories. Viv Anderson’s parents had come to Nottingham from Jamaica in 1954 because there was family there. His mother was a qualified teacher but her qualifications were not accepted in England; so she trained as a nurse. He mentioned the careers of some other black footballers before making a couple of points about Andrew Watson.

These were taken up by *Llew Walker*, author of *A Straggling Life Andrew Watson: The Story of the World’s First Black International Footballer* Hove: Pitch Publishing 2021 ISBN 978 1 7853 1820 7, who highlighted the fact that Andrew Watson had been invited to join the exclusive Corinthians, a strictly amateur team, who beat Blackburn Rovers, Preston North End, the Brazilian national team and the French national team. The ‘combination’ style of football which they took all over the world had an awful lot to do with Andrew Watson and his contribution to Scottish football.

*Richard McBrearty*, from the Scottish Football Museum, focused on how awesome Andrew Watson had been when he had arrived in Glasgow, comparable with Jude Bellingham today and Pele in the 20th century. He came from Heath and Kingston to Glasgow and then joined Queen’s Park. When Queen’s Park had started, it had been the only football club; so it split up to create two teams and, thereafter, there was an explosion resulting in 240 clubs.

In 1872 there was the first Scotland vs England game and soon after there was the Scottish Cup. So Andrew Watson arrived at the right time. He starts at Parkgrove where he becomes captain and the first black administrator — expected to arrange games. So it was a substantial job. Queen’s Park had begun the passing game, had promoted the Scottish Football League and, in Hampden Park, had the largest football ground in

the world.

On his debut in the Scotland team in 1881 Andrew Watson was chosen to captain the team — something which was even more important in his day — and they won 6–1; in 1882 they won 5–1. This led to his invitation to join the Corinthians and to play for Swifts, becoming the first black player to play in the FA Cup. He was tall; he played fair and he stood up to racism. Following the speeches there was a raffle compèred by *Paul Ramsden*, parent of a sporting pupil, after which *Dean Jones* concluded by thanking everyone present for attending, Becky for organising the event and Andrew Watson for inspiring it.

## **Andrew Watson Plaque Unveiling: Wednesday, 19 March 2025**

The Andrew Watson Plaque at Crossley Heath School was unveiled by Viv Anderson MBE on Wednesday, 19 March 2025 in the presence of guest speakers, pupils and staff of Crossley Heath School.

*Mark Metcalfe*, journalist and campaigner, spoke about his work identifying suitable plaques for the PFA; he had heard about Andrew Watson and he thought this would be a nice idea. He thanked the school and Becky for organising the event.

He welcomed Viv Anderson whom he had seen standing up to abuse at St James's Park during a match between Nottingham Forest and Newcastle when Brian Clough was the Nottingham Forest manager. This had encouraged him to get involved in getting rid of the National Front at Sunderland.

*Dean Jones*, headteacher, welcomed people and pointed out that the choice of Andrew Watson to captain Scotland on his debut in an international match in 1881 was an example of someone breaking through barriers.

*Cllr Colin Hutchinson* reminded people that schools, like Forest School, Snaresbrook, had had a major influence on the development of football around the time that Andrew Watson had been at Heath and that it was important too to recognise the impact of slavery and its consequences.

*Virginia Lloyd DL*, Deputy Lieutenant and High Sheriff, said that this was a special day and that the examples of Viv Anderson and Andrew Watson should enlighten future generations.

*Chris Millington*, Halifax Town manager, stressed the importance of what goes on behind the schools.

*Bill Hern*, co-author of *Football's Black Pioneers*, spoke of his work identifying all the black pioneers in football.

*Llew Walker*, mentioned his book *A Straggling Life Andrew Watson*, noting that this is the first dedicated memorial to Andrew Watson. He picked out an incident from Andrew's life when he had been playing for Pilgrims in a game against Charterhouse School which they won 2–1. Andrew Watson was the first black footballer they had ever seen on the Charterhouse playing fields and they had never seen a full back playing like that. At the end of the game, the boys ran onto the pitch and hoisted Andrew Watson onto their shoulders.

*Brian Moore*, former pupil and rugby star, reminded people of the saying that, 'Those who do not remember history are condemned to repeat it.' We need to understand the importance of Andrew Watson and also of what it means to come from a disadvantaged background.

*Ibrahim Hussain*, pupil, spoke of what they had learned over the past two days from the speakers who had visited the school while

*Grace Sheard*, pupil, spoke of how it had encouraged her to break barriers through playing football.

*Richard McBrearty*, from the Scottish Football Museum, said that it was important to recognise what Halifax had given to Andrew Watson and how it had enabled him to stand up to any abuse he received.

Finally, *Viv Anderson MBE* spoke of his pleasure at being involved in the unveiling of the plaque.

## **New headstone**

In 2021, to mark the 100th anniversary of the death of Andrew Watson, Scottish football fans raised the money to provide a new headstone for Andrew Watson's grave in Richmond Cemetery.

The plaque added to the grave in 2021 says:

This memorial was renovated in 2021 to mark the 100th anniversary of Andrew's death through the generosity of football fans in celebrating the story of the first black international footballer when he played for Scotland in 1881.

Entering the cemetery from Lower Grove Road, off Queen's Road, take the second path on the right towards the south of the cemetery. The headstone is easy to find because it is unlike any other headstone in the cemetery (Figure 4).





Figure 2: *Group of speakers, pupils and staff at the unveiling of the plaque for Andrew Watson*



Figure 3: *Viv Anderson MBE, Ibrahim Hussain, Grace Sheard and Dean Jones*





Figure 4: View of new headstone

## Heath history

### The seal

**Andrew Connell** [Heath 1958–1965] wrote:

In the centre-piece of the seal itself, the open book, the words *Qui mihi discipulus puer es cupis atq(ue doceri)* mean, ‘You, boy, who are my pupil and desire (to be taught) ...’ This is the beginning of the introduction to William Lily’s Latin Grammar telling boys what is expected of them. First published in 1519, it remained a standard school text until the mid 17th Century, and was evidently used in the fledgling Heath Grammar School.

**Jim Farrell** [Heath 1977–1982] discovered a translation William Lily’s *Carmen de Moribus* (*Poem about standards*) of 1549 which he used as the introduction to his Latin Grammar. The Latin original is on the [Holy Cross College](#) website together with some grammatical notes.

*Qui mihi discipulus puer es, cupis atque doceri,  
Huc ades, haec animo concipe dicta tuo.  
Mane situs lectum fuge, mollem discute somnum.  
Templa petas supplex, & venerare Deum.*

*Attamen in primis facies sit lota manusque:  
Sint nitidae vestes, comptaue caesaries.  
Desidium fugiens, cum te schola nostra vocarit,  
Adsis nulla pigrae sit tibi causa morae.  
Me praeceptorem cum videris, ore saluta,  
Et condiscipulos, ordine quoque tuos.  
Tu quoque fac sedeas, ubi te sedisse iubemus:  
Inque loco, nisi si iussus abire, mane.  
At magis ut quisque est doctrinae munere clarus,  
Sic magis is clara sede locandus erit.  
Scapellum, calami, atramentum, charta, libelli,  
Sint semper studiis, arma parata, tuis.  
Si quid dictabo, scribes, at singula recte:  
Nec macula, aut scriptis menda sit, ulla, tuis.  
Sed tua nec laceris dictata, aut carmina, chartis  
Mandes, quae libris inseruisse decet.  
Saepe recognoscas tibi lecta, animoque revolvās:  
Si dubites, nunc hos consule, nunc alios.  
Qui dubitat, qui saepe rogat, mea dicta tenebit:  
Is qui nil dubitat, nil capit inde boni.  
Disce puer, quaeso, noli dediscere quicquam:*

*Ne mens te insimulet conscia desidia.*  
*Sisque animo attentus, quid enim docuisse iuvabit,*  
*Si mea, non firmo pectore, verba praemis:*  
*Nil tam difficile est, quod non solertia vincat:*  
*Invigila, & parta est gloria militiae.*  
*Nam veluti flores tellus nec semina profert,*  
*Ni sit continuo victa labore manus:*  
*Sic puer ingenium, si non exercitet, ipsum*  
*Tempus & amittet, spem simul ingenii.*  
*Est etiam semper lex in sermone tenenda,*  
*Ne nos offendant improba garrulitas.*  
*Incumbens studio, submissa voce loqueris:*  
*Nobis dum reddis, voce canorus eris.*  
*Et quaecunque mihi reddis, discantur ad unguem:*  
*Singula, & abiecto, verbula redde, libro.*  
*Nec verbum, quisquam dicturo suggerat, ullum,*  
*Quod puero, exitium non mediocre, parit,*  
*Si quicquam rogito, sic responders studebis,*  
*Ut laudem dictis & mereare decus.*  
*Non lingua celeri, nimis, aut laudabere tarda:*  
*Est virtus medium quod tenuisse iuvat.*  
*Et quoties loqueris, memor esto, loquere latine:*  
*Et veluti scopulos, barbara verba fuge.*  
*Praeterea socios, quoties tecumque rogabunt,*  
*Instrue, & ignaros, ad mea vota, trahe.*  
*Qui docet indoctos, licet indoctissimus esset,*  
*Ipsa brevi, reliquis, doctior esse queat.*  
*Sed tu nec stolidos imitabere grammaticastros,*  
*Ingens Romani dedecus eloquii.*  
*Quorum tam fatuus nemo, aut tam barbarus ore est,*  
*Quem non autorem, barbara turba probet.*  
*Grammaticas, recte si vis cognoscere, leges:*  
*Discere si cupias cultius ore loqui,*  
*Addiscas veterum, clarissima scripta, virorum,*  
*Et quos autores, turba latina, docet.*  
*Nunc te Vergilius, nunc ipse Terentius optat:*  
*Nunc simul amplecti te Ciceronis opus.*  
*Quos qui non didicit, nil praeter somnia vidit:*  
*Certat & in tenebris vivere Cimmeriis.*  
*Sunt quos delectat (studio virtutis honesta*  
*Posthabito) nugis tempora contere,*  
*Sunt quibus est cordi, manibus pedibusve, sodales,*  
*Aut alio quovis sollicitare modo.*  
*Est alius, qui se dum clarum sanguine iactat,*  
*Insulso, reliquis improbat, ore genus.*  
*Te tam prava sequi nolim vestigia morum,*  
*Ne tandem factis, praemia digna feras.*

*Nil dabis aut vendes, nil permutabis emesve:*  
*Ex damno alterius, commoda nulla feres.*  
*Insuper & nummos, irritamenta malorum,*  
*Mitte aliis: puerum nil nisi pura decent.*  
*Clamor, rixa, ioci, mendacia, furta, cachinni,*  
*Sint procul a vobis: martis & arma procul.*  
*Nil penitus dices quod turpe, aut non sit honestum:*  
*Est vitae ac pariter ianua lingua necis.*  
*Ingens crede nefas cuiquam maledicta referre:*  
*Iurare, aut magni numina sacra Dei.*  
*Denique servabis res omnes atque libellos,*  
*Et tecum quoties isque redisque, feres.*  
*Effuge vel causas faciunt quaecunque nocentem:*  
*In quibus & nobis displicuisse potes.*

Boy, you who are a student of mine and who desires to be taught, come here; consider these things in your mind.

From a prone position flee your bed in the morning, shake off soft sleep. As a suppliant, go to church and worship God.

Furthermore, among the first things (you do) let your face and hands be washed, let your clothes be clean and your hair combed.

When our school will have called you, come, putting aside your idleness and let there be no cause of sluggish delay in you.

When you see me, the teacher, greet me with a 'good morning' and also your fellow students in turn.

Also take your seat where I order you to have a seat and remain in that place unless you are ordered to leave.

And the more that anyone is distinguished in the performance of his lesson, so much the more should he be placed in a more distinguished seat.

Let there always be present for your studies your prepared arms--the pen, knife, quills, ink, paper and books.

And if I will dictate something, you will write each thing correctly. Let there not be any blots or defects in your writings.

Do not entrust to loose pages your dictation or poems which it is fitting that you have inserted in a book.

May you often review to yourself the things read and repeat them in your own mind. If you have doubts, consult at one time some and at another time others.

He who doubts and often asks a question, he will retain my words; he who doubts nothing, he takes nothing of value from here.

Learn boy, I beseech you, be unwilling to forget anything; let not the mind, desirous of laziness, indict you.

And may you be attentive with your mind, for what will be the use of having learned if you press my words in a heart which is not firm.

There is nothing so difficult which ingenuity does not conquer. Stay awake and the glory of the campaign is gained.

For just as the earth does not bring forth flowers or seed unless it has been mastered by continual labour of the hand,

so does a young boy, if he does not exercise, throw away talent, time itself and at the same time the expectation of talent.

Likewise, a rule must always be observed in speaking lest shameful babbling offend us.

Applying yourself to your studies, you will speak with a subdued voice. And whatever you respond to me, you will be melodious with your voice.

And whatever you respond to me, let these things be so learned that they are on your fingertips.

And when your book has been put aside, respond each and every word. Let not anyone suggest any word which produces for the young man a non mediocre injury.

If I ask anything, you will be so eager to answer that I praise you with words and that you deserve honour.

You will not be praised for a too quick, or a too slow tongue. There is virtue in having maintained the middle course which is pleasing.

And as often as you speak, be mindful to speak in Latin. And, as if rocks, flee foreign words.

Moreover, instruct your friends as often as they will question you and bring along the uneducated to my precepts.

He who teaches the unlearned, although he might be the most unlearned man, be himself can be more learned than the rest in a short period of time.

But do not imitate the stupid grammarians, the great shame of Roman eloquence.

No one of these is so foolish, or so barbarous in speech that the base crowd does not approve of him as an authority.

If you wish to correctly know the laws of grammar, if you desire to speak more elegantly,

learn the most famous writings of the old and which authors the Latin crowd suggests.

Now Virgil picks you out, now Terence himself, now at the same time the work of the esteemed Cicero picks you out.

He who has not learned these, he sees nothing but dreams, and he struggles to live in Cimmerian darkness.

There are those whom it pleases to waste away their time in trifles, once the pursuit of honest virtue has been placed secondary.

There are those to whom it is pleasing to annoy their friends by their hands or feet, or any other measure.

There is another, who while he boasts of himself as of noble blood, he condemns his race before others by his foul mouth.

I am unwilling that you follow such crooked footsteps of habit lest, at length, you bear worthy gains from these deeds.

You will give or sell nothing, you will exchange or sell nothing: from the loss of another, you will bear no gains.

In addition, leave coins, the inducements of evils, to others - nothing except pure things befit a young man.

Let shouting, quarrelling joking, lies, stealth and loud laughter be far away from you; and let the arms of war be far away also.

Inwardly, you will say nothing which is base, or which is not honest. Language is the door of life and likewise of death.

Believe that it is a great wrong to return curses on anyone, or to swear by the sacred power of the holy God.

Finally, you will protect all things and books and you will carry them with you as often as you come and go.

Flee the reasons which make you noxious and as a result of which you can be displeasing to me.

## The archives

In the summer of 2015 I began to correlate the card index database which Rose Taylor, Andrew Kafel and Vernon Brearley had created with the Heath Grammar School records. Following a break because of Covid, I found that a number of classes had been omitted from the original card index and I looked at some of the informal records kept by W. R. Swale and O. R. A. Byrde. Though there was a dearth of formal records for the 1920s and 1930s, O. R. A. Byrde's informal records filled in a huge number of gaps in the formal records and in the original card index database.

Consequently, from an initial card index database containing nearly 4,400 former pupils, it has now been possible to identify nearly 6,400 former pupils, for about 90% of whom we have a date of birth, admission and leaving dates.

**John R Hudson** [Heath 1957–1960 & 1962]

## Charity Boards

Many poorer pupils were assisted to attend the school through various grants from charities. Two charities also offered grants to enable poorer pupils to continue their studies after leaving Heath. Two boards listing pupils who received such grants are now hanging in the main hall at Crossley Heath School.



*Holders of the Wm Hy Rawson Exhibition*



*Holders of the Nathan Whitley Exhibition*

## Memories

### 1890–1891 Rugby Team

The team members (figure 5) were members of the school for the following periods:

- H. Waite 1888–1892
- A. M. Cunliffe 1888–1891
- S. Clay 1887–1893
- E. F. Fookes 1890–1892
- G. Hartley 1888–1891
- R. Whitaker (could be one of two Whitakers at the school at the time)
- J. E. Halstead 1890–1891
- L. Storey 1888–1892
- E. Macauley 1890–1891
- R. Brook (could be any of three Brooks at the school at the time)
- F. W. Davis 1889–1891
- B. Longbottom (could be one of two Longbottoms at the school at the time)
- J. P. Martin BA 1891–1924
- A. Constantine 1888–1891





Figure 5: *H. Waite, A. M. Cunliffe, S. Clay, E. F. Fookes  
G. Hartley, R. Whitaker, J. E. Halstead, L. Storey, E. Macauley, R. Brook, F. W. Davis  
B. Longbottom, J. P. Martin BA  
A. Constantine, A. G. Sugden (Captain), G. Buckley*

- A. G. Sugden 1887–1891 (Captain)
- G. Buckley 1888–1891

## Letter from Donald Bancroft

On 2nd May 1983 Donald Bancroft [Heath 1924–1931] wrote a letter to the headmaster reporting the death of Lazarus Corney and providing a tribute to him. He continued about his time at Heath:

Heath was a one form entry school. Each ‘year’ consisted of about twenty-five boys, of whom half were scholarship boys, presumably the dozen brightest lads of their age in Halifax and district — very élitist, though such a term was unknown to us. It was during my years at the school that the change from soccer to rugger occurred. I recall playing for the school at rugger, cricket and lives. We had a fives match against the monks at Mirfield, I recall. There was little attention paid to music or drama, and no school societies apart from the occasional debate. Our literary efforts appears in ‘The Heathen’ from time to time. Boys, on the whole, behaved reasonably, and I recall no

vandalism or scandal. One or two of the masters were sadistically inclined and terrified us in the lower forms. The gym was a cheerless, cold place with dark and noisome changing rooms. The library was housed in a room on the first floor and is quite unmemorable. One depended largely on the public libraries at Belle Vue and Bankfield. The only time that parents went to the school was on the annual Speech Day. There was no school uniform, except the red cap (invariable) and red blazer (optional). This must be very different now, but I trust that the tradition of scholarship is maintained.

Just for the record, you may like to have a brief account of my own career. After coming down from Oxford I taught at King’s School, Rochester until 1941, when I went into the army, finishing up at Bletchley Park, working on the Ultra project. In 1946 I went to Lancing College and retired from there in 1978 (Second Master and Head of the English Department). I have a minor reputation as a contributor to B.B.C. radio programmes. If you are interested in literary programmes, you can hear me present-



ing four of my Radio 3 efforts on May 10th, 13th, 17th and 20th. The programmes are entitled 'A Day in the Life of' and are broadcast in the interval of Symphony concerts etc. Also, since retiring I have taken up writing short stories and have had fourteen of them broadcast on Morning Story in Radio 4.

I am in touch from time to time with two of Corney's old pupils, **Alex Dakin** who taught at Kingswood for many years and owns the Kingsley Bookshop in Bath, and Ronald Lewin, the most distinguished of us all. Doubtless you are familiar with his many books on military history. I hear that he has been invited to write the official history of World War 2.

**Editor's note:** it is interesting that he mentions the lack of extra-curricula activities in the twenties, though there had been a scout troop since 1909; in the thirties there were two scout troops, a model railway club and trips abroad. Perhaps this reflects the arrival in 1930 and 1931 of a group of masters who would remain at the school into the fifties and sixties.

## 1952 Cricket Team



*Standing: Mr S. R. Atkins, P. Haley, A. H. Jagger, T. D. Gamson, K. G. Hartley, A. E. Greenwood, D. B. Verity, A. Stott (scorer)*

*Sitting: G. R. Lawrence, M. Horrocks-Taylor, J. P. Horrocks-Taylor, J. G. Farrar (Capt.), J. B. Esmond, F. W. Normington, J. H. Mitchell*

This photograph was kindly supplied by the family of Gordon Lawrence [Heath 1946–1952].

## 1973 U15 Sevens Team

The Under-15 Sevens Team competed in the Halifax Schools senior seven-a-side Rugby Union tournament held at Hipperholme.



*M. Blaylock, R. Braithwaite, P. Mansley, P. Lister, A. Watson, M. Fee*

*D. Brear, J. Taylor (Halifax Courier)*

Sadly, the team were knocked out in the first round by Hipperholme Grammar School.

Thanks to **Richard Taylor** [Heath 1969–1976] for sharing this memory.

## 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**.

### John Lewin: 13 August 1919–24 November 1944 [Heath 1927–1936]

John was born on 13th August 1919, the third son of Frank and Elizabeth Lewin. His father was a Patent Agent and partner in the firm of Barron & Lewin. John

attended Heath (Junior and Senior schools) from 1927 to 1936.

He showed an early ability for games, winning medals in the Junior House Relay (1928) and Junior Sixes (1928 and '29). As mentioned below, he excelled at cricket, progressing to the first XI before the age of 15. He

was also Captain of Fives and was keen on rugby, playing for Heath Old Boys and Yorkshire Wanderers after leaving school.

John studied at Leeds University whilst working as a Solicitor's Articled Clerk, passing the Law Society's Intermediate Examination, and enlisted in the Territorial Army in 1939. He was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Royal Artillery in May 1940 and served on the Home Front until May 1942. He was then posted with the rank of Captain to the Middle East Forces, serving in Egypt and Palestine. With the requirement for Anti-Aircraft Artillery reducing in late 1944, John transferred to the York and Lancaster Regiment of infantry. He died of injuries while on active service, and is buried in Ramleh War Cemetery in Israel.



*John Lewin*

I can do no better than echo the tribute paid to John in the pages of *The Heathen* p. 4 from January 1945.

John Lewin belonged to a group which in the middle 'thirties showed so well-balanced a combination of athletic distinction, social tact, and sound intelligence that those who remember them find it hard not to reflect that "there were giants in those days." John's own especial distinction was in cricket, and he was Captain of the XI, but his ability in all games was marked. He was qualifying as a solicitor after leaving Heath. He leaves a particularly gracious memory of uprightness and charm.

**David Lewin** [Heath 1968–1971]

### **Frank Lewin: 7 September 1879–27 March 1957 [Heath 1892–1893]**

Frank was born in Hull, the fourth child of Septimus and Elizabeth Lewin. His father was a wine and spirit merchant. In 1881 the family moved to Halifax, Septimus becoming the landlord of the Hare and Hounds pub (renamed Lewin's in later years) in Bull Green.

Frank initially attended Upholland Grammar School in Lancashire as a boarder, moving to Heath from 1892 to 1893 and then to Halifax Technical College. In 1896 he was indentured for five years as an apprentice technical draughtsman, combining this with his studies at the Technical College. In 1899 he was awarded the National Medal for Success in Art, awarded by the Department of Science and Art.

On completion of his apprenticeship, Frank enlisted as a trooper in The Duke of Lancaster's battalion Imperial Yeomanry and served during the second Boer War, being awarded the Queen's South Africa medal. Returning to Halifax, Frank set up practice as a draughtsman and Patent Agent and went into partnership in the firm of Barron & Lewin.

In 1906 he married Ida Williams, with whom he had two children, Elsie and Roy. Both children died in infancy, and their mother died in 1912 at the age of 27 following a long illness.

The following year, Frank met and married Elizabeth Winkfield. They had four sons, Ronald (1914), Eric (1917), John (1919) and Peter (1931), all of whom attended Heath. During the First World War Frank served in France with the West Riding Regiment, reaching the rank of temporary Major, and was awarded the British War Medal and the Allied Victory Medal.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Frank enlisted in the Home Guard but resigned in 1940 to take care of Eric's motor business when he joined the RAF. Latterly Frank ran the Patents Office for David Brown Industries Ltd in Huddersfield.

**David Lewin** [Heath 1968–1971]

### **George Washington Benson: 5 September 1893–1971 [Heath 1902–1911]**

#### **Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines**

When war was declared in August 1914 the British air force, known as the Royal Flying Corps, sent a total of 63 aircraft to France with the British Expeditionary Force (BEF). These primitive machines made of canvas and plywood, held together with wire and powered by unreliable engines were a far cry from the modern aircraft we are familiar with today.

The whole advent of aerial warfare was brand new and both sides strove to master the technicalities and tactics of this new dimension. One particular problem which the British were trying to solve was how to destroy the giant German airships known as Zeppelins, named after their creator Count Graf Von Zeppelin, which were capable of flying long distances carrying bombs that they could drop on defenceless civilians below. They were able to fly high enough to be out of range of anti-aircraft guns and the planes of the time lacked the necessary firepower to shoot them down.

One intrepid aviator decided to try a novel way to solve the problem; he would not try to shoot them down but bomb them instead. On the night of 7th June 1915 Lieutenant Reginald Warneford of the Royal Naval Air Service pursued and destroyed Zeppelin LZ.37 by dropping three bombs on it which caused it to explode and fall in flames. The concussion from the explosion damaged the engine of Lt Warneford's plane and he was forced to land in a field 35 miles behind enemy lines but was able to effect repairs and make his way back to a friendly airfield. Boys Own stuff indeed and the following day the King awarded Warneford the Victoria Cross for his exploits. Alas only ten days later Reginald was dead, killed in a flying accident near Paris. He was buried at Brompton Cemetery, London, one of the very few servicemen whose bodies were repatriated to be buried at home.

The Warneford name was a familiar one in the Skircoat area at the time as Canon John Henry Warneford had been the first vicar of All Saints Church, Salterhebble, from 1846 until his death in 1899 and his daughter Minnie still resided in the area and worked tirelessly for the St John Ambulance Brigade. The Reverend Warneford was Reginald's great uncle and Minnie his second cousin. She campaigned for there to be a memorial to her famous cousin in Halifax and Clog Yard, King Cross, was renamed Warneford Square in his honour in August 1915. The Square is long gone, demolished in the re-development of King Cross and the site is now occupied by the car park for King Cross library but, if you look carefully at the adjacent buildings, you will see that the street sign has been retained to perpetuate the memory of this brave man.

By 1918 the Royal Flying Corps had expanded to almost 4000 aircraft and there was a corresponding increase in the number of pilots required. One of them was George Washington Benson whose family lived at Hadlow, Albert Promenade, Skircoat. He had originally enlisted in the West Riding Regiment and crossed to the Western Front in December 1915. He subsequently transferred into the Flying Corps and during a training flight in March 1918 he decided to pop home for dinner. Although great strides had been made in the design and construction of aircraft they were still small machines by today's standards and he was quite easily able to land on Skircoat Moor, leave his aircraft,

enjoy his meal at his parents' home and then take off to return to his airfield. Flying was a seat of the pants experience in those days with few regulations to control where planes could fly or land. A far cry from today's heavily regulated society. George survived the war and passed away in 1971 in Whitby.

In July 1918 another plane landed on Skircoat Moor but this time with tragic consequences. The pilot, Harold Heydewrych, had lost his way and descended to try and ascertain his whereabouts. Aeroplanes were still a novelty and a large crowd gathered curious to see one of the flying machines they had heard so much about. When the plane took off a policeman and some soldiers attempted to clear a lane for it but some of the crowd ran into its path forcing the pilot to take evasive action. His manoeuvre undoubtedly saved many lives but he unfortunately struck four-year-old Arnold Stancliffe of Walton Street, King Cross. Arnold was transported to the Infirmary and his mother rushed there to see him but unfortunately he died the next day from his injuries.

**Rob Hamilton**, Halifax Military History Society. Thanks to **Graham Bradshaw** for sharing this with us.

### **Lazarus (Les) Corney: 8 December 1901–28 April 1983 [Heath 1924–1935]**

Lazarus (Les) Corney was Classics Master at Heath from 1924 to 1935. He was born in Manchester on 8 December 1901 to Benjamin and Annie Cornofsky (Karnovsky) who had immigrated from Lithuania and worked in the garment trade.

He had a brother, Eric, a sister, Rachel, and a brother, Harry. Their father died when he was 8 years old but he was able to gain a place at Manchester Grammar School from where he obtained a scholarship to St John's College, Oxford. At some point he married Leah.

**Donald Bancroft** [Heath 1924–1931] writes in a letter to the headmaster dated 2nd May 1983:

My entry into the school with a scholarship coincided, I believe, with Corney's arrival. He was educated at Manchester Grammar School, from which he went as a scholar to St John's College, Oxford. The headmaster of H.G.S. was O. R. A. Byrde, who was certainly keen to foster classical studies. In appointing Les Corney he showed very good judgment.

I don't know whether the honours boards are still displayed in the school hall, but if you examine them you will find that in the late twenties and thirties there is a remarkable series of awards gained, mostly at Oxford and predominantly in classics. The

*annus mirabilis* was 1930–31. In October 1930 Alex Dakin won a Hastings Scholarship to Queen's in classics; in December I won an open scholarship in classics to Corpus and T.K. Hanson an open scholarship in natural science to Oriel; in March, 1931 W. R. Nicholson won an open scholarship in classics to Oriel and B. Sunderland an exhibition in classics to Worcester College, Oxford. So, in this academic year Heath Grammar School, with fewer than 200 boys in the school, took five awards at Oxford. The credit for these successes must be due in large measure to Les Corney.

Most people who look back to their school days with pleasure can recall one particular teacher who influenced them strongly. For us, it was Corney. Over the intervening tract of fifty-five years it is hard to remember exactly what he did to inspire us. He was no slave-driver. Sweet reasonableness, rigorous standards of scholarship, a readiness to praise when praise was merited — these were the features I remember . . . and a rather ugly, smiling face. He gave the impression that he enjoyed his work and we were infected with a corresponding enjoyment and wanted, above all, to win his commendation.

He left for Emmanuel School, Wandsworth, and during WWII served in the 1st Anti-Aircraft Divisional Signals, part of a Territorial Army unit responsible for defending London.

He appears to have spent the rest of his teaching life in London and died on 28 April 1983 after a painful illness [not specified in his letter by Donald Bancroft]. He was survived by his wife, Leah.

When his book *The Story of Rome* was published by Edward Arnold in 1964, he gave his name as 'Leslie Corney' to the British Library and in the note with the complimentary copy which he sent to his former student, [Donald Hudson](#) [Heath 1926–1935], he signs himself 'Les.'

### **Gordon Russell Lawrence: 19 November 1935–19 December 2015 [Heath 1946–1952]**

Gordon Russell Lawrence (JP) died at home, aged 80 years, on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the dearly loved husband of Susan, loving father of Simon, Fiona, Matthew and Rebecca and a respected and friendly grandad and father in law.

The funeral service was held at St. Jude's Church, Savile Park, Halifax, on Monday January 4<sup>th</sup> 2016 at 1.30pm followed by a private cremation.

With thanks to Gordon's son-in-law, **Greg Reinsch**, for this information.

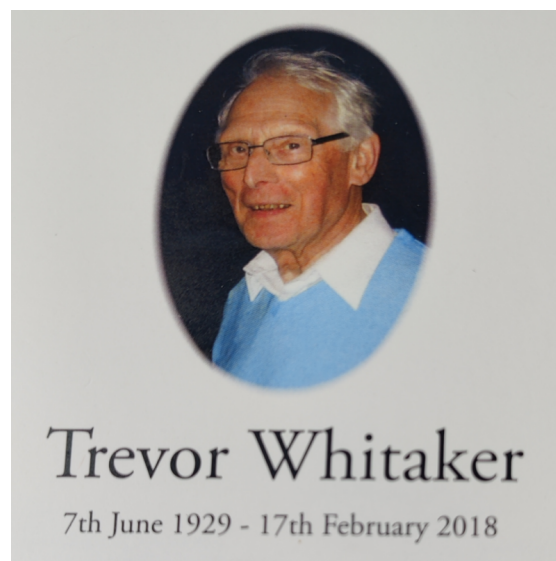
### **Trevor Whitaker: 7 June 1929–17 February 2018 [Heath 1940–1947]**

Trevor Whitaker died suddenly at home on Saturday, 17 February 2018, aged 88 years. Much loved husband of Doreen, loving dad of Estella and Jill. Father-in-law of Graham and Jonathan and dear grandad of Kate, Samuel and Tom.

On leaving Heath he had trained to be an Ophthalmic Optician and worked in Sowerby Bridge prior to his retirement.

His brother, Brian, was a doctor in Ripponden for many years and died early in 2024. His youngest brother, Keith, died in the mini bus accident on the M6 in September 1987.

The funeral service was held at All Saints Church, Dudwell Lane, Halifax on Wednesday, 14 March 2018 followed by committal at Park Wood Crematorium, Elland. Donations may be made to [Parkinson's UK](#).



### **Harry Santiuste: 2 October 1936–3 September 2024 [Heath 1951–1955]**

Harry Santiuste died on 3 September 2024 at the age of 87. A Requiem Mass was held at St Peter's, Chequer Road, Doncaster on Tuesday 24 September 2024 followed by Committal at Rose Hill Crematorium.

He had fond memories of Heath Grammar and spoke warmly of his time there. He was grateful, for instance, that he was introduced to Latin, which helped to encourage his lifelong interest in history, languages and travel.





*Harry Santiuste*

But Harry was a sociable (and sometimes mischievous) schoolboy, who was not only focused on his lessons. Outside the classroom, for example, he also played rugby for Heath's school team. That did mean, however, that he needed to adapt to the rules of rugby union, whereas his true sporting passion was always for rugby league.

Harry went on to study at Keele University. He subsequently enjoyed a successful career as a school teacher. Later in life, he lived in London and Doncaster, although he maintained close links with Halifax. He is remembered with love and affection by his family and friends, all of whom will miss him greatly.

#### **David Santiuste**

#### **Michael Roper: 19 August 1932–20 September 2024 [Heath 1943–1951]**

Michael Roper, CB, MA, DLitt, FRHistS, former Keeper of the Public Records and former Editor of *The Heathen*, sadly died in a car accident in Roxwell, Essex, the village he had lived in for the past 24 years. Michael's Service for the Celebration of his Life took place at St. Michael and All Angels' Church, The Street, Roxwell, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 4PA on Wednesday, 6 November 2024 at 2pm.

Born and brought up in Halifax, Michael passed the 11-plus scholarship intelligence test and found himself at the beginning of the autumn term 1943 as a new boy at Heath Grammar School in Free School Lane. In those days it was an all-boys school, though towards the end of his time at Heath sixth form girls came from

Crossley and Porter school for Latin classes and Princess Mary's High School for Advanced Maths.

Because it was wartime, school uniform rules had to be minimal: school cap (maroon with a gold badge) and tie (maroon with a gold stripe); in summer, to the boy's delight, they were allowed to dispense with the tie and wear their shirts open outside their jacket collars.

In his third year at Heath in addition to being a school prefect and cricket secretary he was editor of the school's magazine, *The Heathen*.

In 1948 Michael took the School Certificate examinations, distinctions in English language, history and maths; credits in chemistry, French, Latin and advanced maths, passes in English Literature and Greek. He went on to the sixth form to study history and English as main subjects with French and Latin as subsidiaries. Michael's history teacher at Heath, **C. O. Mackley**, encouraged him to read widely and taught him to assess the evidence and to select and assemble it in a logical way. This would stand him in good stead in his professional career.

As an active Old Boy, Michael often returned to Heath for its annual dinners; at one he was the guest speaker. He took part in two four-hundredth anniversary celebrations, one in 1985 to celebrate the school charter and another in 1997 to celebrate the date on the school seal. When the **school seal** was found in the 1960s, Michael was consulted by **Arthur Owen**, the classics master at Heath, and, as Michael had seen an illustration of an early example of a school seal, he compared this illustration to Heath's seal and was able to authenticate it as genuine and original.

Michael stayed on for a third year at sixth form and was awarded a scholarship. On leaving Heath he went on to do his National Service and, because of the Cold War and the need for Russian linguists, he was chosen to become one. On completing two years National Service, he was offered a place at Manchester University to read medieval and modern history.

Whilst Michael was at Manchester University he married a Halifax lass, Barbara Earnshaw. It was Barbara, in 1959, who spotted an advertisement for a vacancy as Assistant Keeper of the Public Records and so his career at the PRO began. He eventually achieved his lifetime ambition to become Keeper in 1988, retiring in 1992 after serving over 32 years in a wide range of archival posts within the PRO.

Michael lived with Barbara and his two children in Rayleigh in Essex then Teddington in Middlesex. In 2000, Michael and Barbara moved to Roxwell in Essex; after a long illness his wife Barbara died in 2020 having celebrated 52 years of marriage.

In his professional life, Michael undertook short-term consultancies, training missions, professional visits, lecture tours, and gave conference papers in most countries in Europe and over twenty-five non-European



countries. He published over ninety monographs, articles, reports and conference papers on aspects of archives administration and records management. He served on numerous Archivist committees in various capacities and was an external examiner in various countries. Working with UNESCO and the ICA he travelled the world.

In 1991 he was awarded an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters by Bradford University and in 1992 he was awarded the Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) in the Queen's Honours.

Michael was a King's Scout and later became Group Scout Leader at Rayleigh Methodist Church; he was also an active member of the Wesley Guild. Michael and Barbara sang in various choirs, travelling to Paris and Sancerre to sing in the cathedrals. A very keen ornithologist and animal conservation supporter, he also had a strong faith, serving as either a committee member, Treasurer or Secretary at each church he worshipped at. Michael was such a busy man that his family joked about having to make an appointment to see him. At 92, he had just completed the Roxwell Walking Trails information boards with QR codes for both visual and oral extra information. He was also one of the villagers who bought and raised money for the renovation of the dilapidated village pub and was looking forward to his first pint in the bar. As a member of RATS (a wine tasting club) and taking a weekly prayer group, he was extremely happy in Roxwell.

Michael was a keen and knowledgeable sports fan, rugby and cricket, football and golf being his main choice of sports. He was an avid reader always with two books on the go, one factual and one fictional. At 92 he could still do the Super Sudoku and always finished the *Guardian* and the *Observer* crosswords.

He will be sadly missed as a lovely, kind Yorkshire gentleman, knowledgeable but humble, by all who knew him. His family, Karen, Steven, Nigel, Claire, Wayne, James, Reo and great grandchildren Isabelle, Rory and Erin will miss his calm, loving ways, his interesting stories and Isabelle and Rory will miss playing hide and seek with their Great Grandpa in his home and being spun in the swivel chair.

A Long Life, Well Lived.

With thanks to **Karen Phillips**, Michael's daughter.

## **David Hanson Brearley: 31 December 1941–23 September 2024 [Heath 1953–1960]**

David 'Harry' Brearley was born on 31 December 1941 and was at Heath between 1953 and 1960. He was one of the walkers involved in the 1987 M6 crash.

He was 1st XV captain of Heath RUFC from 1966/67 to 1967/68 and Club Chairman between 1974 and 1985.

He died peacefully in Clover House Care Home, Halifax on 23rd September 2024, aged 82 years. His funeral was held at 2.15 pm on Tuesday, 15 October 2024 at Park Wood Crematorium followed by tea at the Rugby Club. Donations gratefully received in his memory will be given to The Rob Burrow Charity.

His daughter, **Rachel Jones**, paid the following tribute:

Hello everyone. Thank you for being here today. I am Rachel — David's daughter and I just want to take this opportunity to celebrate dad's life and share a few stories and memories with you.

Born on New Year's Eve December 31st 1941 — to Mary and Harry Brearley, Dad was a much wanted and much loved son.

Right from the start there was confusion - what was he actually called? — David Hanson Brearley was a euphemistic way of addressing questionable lineage somewhere down the line in Boothtown. Was he a Hanson or a Brearley? This ambiguity around names would prove to be a recurring theme.

Dad had a happy childhood, growing up in Claremount; he attended the local junior school, he had a pet border collie, Shep, he kept rabbits and he was an altar boy at the local church of St Thomas's. I am told this was due to looking like an angel — blond curls, blue eyes — rather than any particular devotion.

A bright boy, he was the first in his family to pass the grammar school test and from 1952 attended Heath. Where David Hanson Brearley was immediately rechristened Harry for reasons lost in the midst of time, and this new name stuck with him for the rest of his life. He was a talented boy — yes clever, intelligent (if not typically lazy), an able athlete but also creative — he liked making things and had an eye for art.

At Heath, he and his groups of friends anecdotally got away with murder — this included scattering caps on the stage so that when Mr Swale, the Head, walked into assembly he was greeted on all sides by artillery fire; on another occasion for some unknown reason a group of friends hid in the art room store cupboard so that when the art teacher, Honky Peace, looked through the key hole they blew paint down a straw straight into his eye. And there was other notoriety — he had the biggest head in Heath school — and as the only head that would fit the new school cap — he was chosen for the photograph in the Courier.

At school he settled into a successful rugby

career. The school team of his era was celebrated and although small by modern standards, he was an excellent hooker. He enjoyed success at the Ilkley 7s — a grand day out for coach loads of Halifax supporters. He trialed for Yorkshire U18s and after University played at Ovenden Park and latterly for Heath.

Another first — he was the first person in his family to go to university, to study history — and to Kings College, Durham at that. No little achievement for the boy from Claremount. He stayed in lodgings with Mrs Hubbock in Whitley Bay — and his academic career was most notable for his climb of Newcastle Football Club Floodlights and the resulting night in a cell. Oh, and he also joined the Tom and Jerry Society.

After University he embarked on his teaching career firstly at Highlands — teaching history and a little bit of PE. They had a great social life there — where teachers had time at lunchtime to play bridge, dominoes — inter school football and cricket matches where they would umpire all day and send out for bacon butties for sustenance — they generally had a lot of fun.

In the late 1960s he moved to Whitcliffe Mount School — where he stayed for the rest of his career. Here, he enjoyed sending students to one of his colleague's classrooms where they were told to ask for a long stand or given a bottle of fairy liquid to make a bubble for a spirit level. But he was a good teacher because, although often quiet and taciturn, when in the mood he could tell a compelling story. As a historian, his specialist subject was 1833 — it only dawned on me at about 17 when studying history A level myself that nothing of any significance happened then — only a few Whig reforms. Ever the troublemaker though, he enjoyed feeding me controversial theories — on the origins of the second world war for example — that succeeded in scuppering my whole history class whenever I mentioned them.

And in the 60s, he also looked the part — channeling a younger Michael Caine, black glasses, sharp suits, flowery ties, or as my friends said 'your dad looks like that man from the Goodies'. In true Dad fashion, I don't think he took the job too seriously — he wore roller skates to sixth form lessons and made the final answer to every history test Geoffrey Boycott. Students soon twigged on and so he switched it one week

to 'Which first class and international cricketer wears an earring?' — certainly not Geoffrey (as the clueless class wrote down) but Derek Pringle — a Southerner, from Essex, who played shots and the epitome of the flashiness which plagued the game in my dad's eyes.

He got married to Madeleine in 1965 and started his wedded life on the floodplain of Bradshaw, at New Grange View. Despite extensive draining issues, my brother came along in 1968 and then me in 1971. Throughout these life changes, Heath Rugby Club was an ongoing, constant fixture. He carried on playing rugby for a short while before acting as Chairman for a period. And he spent every Saturday afternoon down at West Vale.

Dad was always a d-i-y practical person — putting in his own central heating system, with only one quick trip to the hospital, building his own greenhouse — only for tomatoes really — he was green fingered and gardening remained a hobby, and latterly a job. He continued to live in Bradshaw — winning the much sought after awards Brain of Bradshaw and Domino champion at the Golden Fleece. These were richly deserved accolades when one considers how much time he invested training at the pub. My devout dad used to refer to it as 'going to church.'

He enjoyed cooking but of the show pony variety — only breaking out into extravagant dishes when there was a dinner party. I remember vividly the party of the jugged hare — he brought home a whole hare and got me to help gut it and also his stock making for soup — once I nonchalantly opened the pan on the top of the cooker to discover a pig's head staring up at me — probably two heart-stopping reasons I am now vegetarian.

And then there was the cock. Dad brought home a cockerel from the Rural Studies department — it was meant to be dead in a sack but Lazarus like it emerged clucking and strutting into our strawberry patch. The invincible bird had a charmed life — it evaded both Simon and my dad's best efforts as they chased it up Bradshaw Lane each armed with a pair of oven gloves and escaped to torture the neighbourhood with dawn awakenings — it became known as 'that bloody cock' and pitchforks were out for the person unidentified who had so stupidly brought it into our midst. We kept

schtum.

Dad still went to Heath religiously and joined a walking group of rugby players and friends and they walked extensively near to home and further afield on the first Saturday of every month. They completed the Pennine Way, the Dales Way and such like.

Like a rugby game — Dad's life was definitely one of two halves — before the accident and after the accident. September 5th 1987 was the day when everything changed. The walkers' minibus was involved in a tragic crash at Lune Bridge on the M6. Dad was lucky; he escaped with his life — a bang on the head as he called it, and severe leg injury. But the loss of so many of his friends was beyond comprehension. This was the 1980s and he was fixed and bandaged up — brilliantly by the NHS — but sent on his way. No support, no after care, no emotional help. I would like to think that we know better and would do better now. His and our support came from family and friends in the immediate aftermath and in the years that followed.

It doesn't serve to dwell on the trauma of that period because dad certainly didn't. After the accident he settled into a different life but one which arguably he found more agreeable. Forced into early retirement, he instead spent his time dry stone walling, restoring furniture, working on building the Hebble Trail, gardening for a bevvy of old ladies from Skircoat Green, and contributing to Halifax Civic Trust. He moved to Wheatley to a new house. And he had a new companion. His dog — Nelly 'the ferret' — a Jack Russell cross — she adored him and he adored her. Together they truly were a partnership of chaos — she was a lovely dog if not the most obedient and, despite being barrel shaped, by god was she was a fast mover. They got into scrape after scrape. But she provided companionship and love in some difficult years.

Dad also began working as a cleaner down at Heath. And it proved to be an excellent source for his newfound joy of foraging. Whether it be used soap (from the plug-hole), wood for the fire (actually a brand new pub sign) or discarded clothing (our favourite being the orange Grimsby Fish Market T shirt). He also developed a different sense of fashion — mostly sponsored by the armed services. He had a penchant for 1970s tracksuits from Eastern Europe — retro before retro was a thing.

He loved the army and navy stores and memorably purchased an SAS assault style balaclava, straight from the Falklands — which caused great consternation one morning in Bradshaw Post Office before he disrobed and announced with a flourish 'It's me David/Harry — a packet of yachtsman and fishermen's friends, please.'

In the last few years of his life Dad's eccentricities found their calling when he moved to Todmorden — so he could be closer to my brother — where he enjoyed watching cricket, frequenting the local take aways and dominating the quiz at the Help the Aged centre to such a degree that he had to be barred. But my brother and the people of Todmorden, and Cambridge Street looked after him — when he regularly went walkabout — Todmorden's version of international rescue clicked seamlessly into operation. Finally, after a bout of Covid, he moved for one last time to Clover House, where the staff looked after dad with great care and kindness and where I know he was happy and content. And for him surprisingly chilled.

He was also latterly a proud father in law to Jayne (Olympic swimmer, allegedly) and Richard (Lancashire pillock, definitely) and very very proud grandparent. Firstly to Ben — the rugby protege and fellow hooker. Dad offered him his wisdom, his ability to pick a fight and unforgettably his well-used 1950s rugby shorts, and I know he enjoyed critiquing the referees at Ben's matches; to Jonny — who captured Dad in paint for GCSE art — they shared an artistic bent and cheekbones to die for; to Eleanor — who looked after him very recently as his carer and his shopper and his cleaner and his cook. And who bought him far too much bloody tuna. And to Caitlin who loved destroying his electric bed — she could squash him between two mattresses in short shrift and with whom he appeared to enjoy binge watching 'Come Dine with Me.'

We will all miss his infamous Christmas gifts in particular — an annual tradition normally purchased and wrapped with black electric tape in March and reliably inappropriate in every way — most notably a flame thrower for Ben aged 9, industrial quantities of seeds for Eleanor to 'make her own muesli' aged 8 and a cheeky bottle of rosé for Caitlin — aged 5. But as grandpa, he also gave all four of them much more —

the confidence to cope with difference, with foibles and eccentricities, a model for how to crack on against the headwinds of life, and the understanding that however bleak the situation could be deemed — find humour.

Because, despite the difficulties and tragedy which marked much of Dad's life — he never wallowed or moaned or complained. Yes, he could be and often was, bloody-minded, belligerent and difficult — a self-declared 'awkward old sod.' But who wouldn't be faced with the challenges he must have encountered on a daily basis? It was actually these very qualities which helped him make the most of his own second half.

Dad's life was, as Simon aptly described it a few weeks ago 'a life of small pleasures' whether that be boiling himself alive in the hottest of hot Radox baths, or sitting in his chair with a plate of three oat cakes (good for cholesterol) then piled high with mountains of butter and honey; a pint pot of extremely well mashed tea to the side — a Jack Russell cross, ferreting under his arm and a pipe in his hand puffing away; or more simply watching a match down at Heath.

Dad, you have rucked, and scrapped and mauled — very well played. And you have definitely now earned your 'lig' and as you would so often say to Simon or I when we were telling you off and you were beyond exasperated; now it is your time to — 'just relax.'

### **Raymond Rushworth: 31 August 1941–8 October 2024 [Heath 1952–1959]**

Raymond Rushworth (Ray) died peacefully at home after a long and bravely fought illness, aged 83 years.

Ray was the beloved husband and best friend of Jacqueline, dearly loved father of David and John, father-in-law of Ginny and Fran, grandfather of William, Sophie and Cameron and a caring and loving brother, uncle and cousin.

The funeral service took place at 1.45pm on Thursday 7th November 2024 at Warley St. John's Church, followed by a service of committal at Park Wood Crematorium at 3pm.

Donations for Overgate Hospice and Forget Me Not Children's Hospice would be greatly appreciated.

### **John Davey: 7 March 1940–16 March 2025 [Heath 1951–1959]**

John was born in March 1940 to Johnnie and Emma Davey, joining elder sister Barbara in the family. For the first seven years of his life the family lived in Harewood Avenue, Highroad Well. John grew up happily unaware of the hardships caused by World War II (the fish and chip portions were on the smallish side but were not rationed; so that suited John down to the ground). At the time dad, Johnnie, was a pattern maker at Modern Foundries, part of Asquiths Machine Tools, and mum, Emma, was a manager for the Wallace Mann bakers in King Cross Street, Halifax. Johnnie also had an interest in his father's basket making works known as the skep shop in Moorfield Street, Halifax.

By 1947 the pair had bought a small grocery and confectionary shop in Hanson Lane to try to improve the standard of living for the family. The premises were old, heating was by open fires and the bath was a cast iron affair in the cellar. Young John and sister Barbara had attic bedrooms above the shop. Emma ran the shop and Johnnie continued his work in the pattern shop as well as managing the basket works that he had taken over from his father. 1947 was the winter of the big freeze and John had vivid memories of the back streets being piled so high with snow that the local kids cut tunnels through the packed snow.

In 1947 John went to the Battinson Road Junior School. After he had been at Battinson Road for two years (a school he remembered as being a bit grim and gloomy), the school converted into the Ostler County Secondary School and John had to move to Warley Road Junior School to complete his primary education. He remembered Warley Road as a much happier place to learn with a good reputation and where he settled quickly and made some good life-long friends. While at Warley Road John captained the football team.

Outside of school John developed a good network of mates who would play in the back streets around Hanson Lane. As a youngster John became interested in sports, watching football and speedway at the Shay, rugby at Thrum Hall. For a short time he became a ballboy at the Shay until his time started to get taken up playing sport himself. The local gang also hired bicycles and spent hours riding them on the cinder-hills of Shroggs Tip. Trips to see films were also a regular treat at the Cosy Cinema on Queen's Road and the Palladium at King Cross, sadly now long gone. Family holidays were taken in Blackpool, up to three or four times a year; so the shop must have been doing

OK for the family to be able to run to that. Stories from that time included Emma having to pick John up from school and taking him to hospital to have a dried pea removed from one of his ears. Another mishap was when Emma had to recover John's overcoat when he'd agreed to swap it for a bag of conkers.



*John Davey*

John was a bright enough boy, but not what you'd call studious. He passed the old 11+ entry examination and was pleased to gain a place at Heath Grammar School, joining the Queens House which he captained in his final year at the school. He had incredibly strong and fond memories of his time at Heath, loving the sporting activities, particularly the rugby, cricket and swimming. He had a great respect for many of his teachers and again made some life-long friends. This was a theme throughout John's life, and, in later life, he felt himself to be very lucky to have gone through life making such great pals along the way. While at Heath, John turned himself into a very useful rugby union player, playing at full back and kicking goals. On the cricket field he was developing into an attack-minded wicket keeper/batsman. John also enjoyed participating in school plays, often playing comic roles.



*John Davey ready for action*

During the early 1950s John joined the Boys Brigade at Salem Methodist Church at North Parade. He often looked back on that move as a significant event in his life, as he felt the Boys Brigade officers gave him a sense of responsibility and discipline that set him on the right track in life. He loved the sport, captaining the football team for the Salem BB Company, and made the Halifax Battalion side at both centre half and goalkeeper. John also loved the Boys Brigade camps that took place at Whitsuntide and in the Wakes week holidays. These trips introduced him to the outdoor life in the Yorkshire Dales and particularly caving and potholing, an interest that stayed with him for his entire life.

As John's sporting interests grew, he joined Northowram Hedge Top Cricket Club, taken there by school friend Brian Kerfoot. At first he played junior cricket before moving up into the second team. The junior side was the outstanding team in the Halifax League at the time and won the league in three consecutive seasons. John was a hard-hitting batsman that was always trying to make runs quickly and in the field he kept wicket. John made more life-long friends at Northowram and played for the club through to the



late 70s. He was an occasional player with the first team at Northowram and played a part in the club's Parish Cup win in 1965 albeit only as 12th man.

In 1957 John met Lydia Stevenson at a dance. Lydia was tiny at only 5ft tall and was the daughter of Russian and Ukranian parents. Lydia's family had moved from Russia through Poland and Germany to escape the second world war and, by now Lydia had settled with her parents and brother in Halifax. She was an excellent dancer and John was smitten. The only trouble was that Lydia had a strong mind, was very wary of men (her father and brother had been quite challenging for her) and was very clearly not convinced she needed John in her life. It took John several weeks to get Lydia to agree to a date, and he had to work quite hard to get the relationship started.

At the end of John's happy time at Heath School in 1959, he did well enough to gain a place at Leeds University, and elected to study French and German. John soon realised that he had made a huge mistake, as he was way out of his depth on the languages course. It was a miserable time for him, and was the first time he had really tasted failure. Thankfully by this time John had joined the Bradford Pothole Club following Phil Nash, a friend from the Boys Brigade. The weekends caving and potholing in the Dales with good mates like Grassy Greenwood and Dave Cording provided blessed relief from the misery he was feeling at Leeds Uni.

One significant event in John's life came in the April of 1961 when he was involved in a caving trip to Simpson's Pot in Kingsdale above Ingleton. John was life-lining friend and former Heath student Graham Shaw as he climbed down a rock face on a rope ladder. As Graham was descending, a huge flake of rock peeled away from the rock face, hitting Graham as it crashed to the cave floor. John was the first down to Graham and found him concussed, bleeding, with his ankle smashed to pieces. John said that his boot and sock seemed to be all that were holding his ankle together. Graham was in shock; so, despite being deep underground and at risk of exposure and hypothermia, John stripped off his caving clothing and put it on to Graham to keep him warm. A long and arduous cave rescue ensued and Graham made a good recovery after a lengthy period of recuperation. John's ability to stay calm in a crisis and his selfless act wrapping Graham in his clothing may well have saved his friend's life.

After an unsuccessful first year at Leeds, John quit his course and took up work as a Junior Clerk working for local government in the Youth Employment department. The pay was quite poor; so John soon moved to the Civil Service with the National Assistance Board in 1963. 1963 was also the year that John's family sold the shop in Hanson Lane, moving to a house in St Anne's Road, Skircoat Green where John lived for a short period before moving to his marital home with Lydia.

While John had been struggling with his course at Leeds Uni and then getting started in his working life, Lydia had been away in Stoke Rocheford, near Grantham, completing teacher training. When she completed her training, the couple decided to marry, and tied the knot in 1964 at Salem Methodist Church. The newly-weds bought a semi-detached house in Cheltenham Gardens that became their home for the rest of their lives.

The early days of their marriage became a balancing act with John's sporting interests, cricket with Northowram, rugby with Heath Old Boys (where he played second team, then captained the newly formed third team), football with Salem and caving with the Bradford Pothole Club, all competing with the need to start to develop the home. DIY and construction became a big element of John's life from then on, with gardening becoming Lydia's domain. Around this time, John was also developing an interest in sailing; so early holidays included boating trips on the Norfolk Broads. In time, John went halves with one of his potholing pals, Chris Dufton, and bought a share in a Heron sailing dinghy that was sailed at Yeadon Sailing Club. John later bought his own Enterprise dinghy and sailed for quite a few years at Halifax Sailing Club. Martin still has mixed memories of many a cold, wet and windy afternoon at the Fly Flatts Reservoir, especially when things went badly and the dinghy capsized.

In 1966, on the day that England won the world cup, John and Lydia set off for a holiday in France on John's BSA motorbike. Lydia had overdone the packing a bit and by Wakefield the bike's rear wheel bearing gave out. The holiday had to be abandoned, and John had to borrow his dad's Anglia van to recover the bike. He didn't even get to watch England's famous victory.

By July 1967, son Martin came along, and he turned out to be the best son that John could have wished for (Martin wrote this so it could be a bit biased). The family enjoyed life on a modest budget, holidaying in the Norfolk Broads, Scotland and the Lake District, combining family holidays with John's interest in sailing. As the family became more established and the budgeting became a bit easier, the holidays became a little more elaborate with yacht sailing on the Clyde and in Brittany, and a cruise through Germany being particularly memorable. John also managed to afford his one and only new car when he bought a Mk1 Ford Escort in the mid-70s. He wanted an MGB GT but the finances wouldn't run to that.

John's interest in sailing continued when he studied at night-school for a Yachtmaster certificate and took part in weekend sailing trips off the Fleetwood coast with friends Bob Allen, Richard Horsfall and Pete Hendy. He also participated for quite a few years in a regular late-autumn sailing trip on the Norfolk Broads with a group of friends including his cousin, Brian Priestley.

Over time, as John's DIY and construction skills became more advanced, his plans became more ambitious. He embarked on a plan to extend the family home through a long-term self-build project that culminated in a single-story extension comprising garage, laundry room and sun lounge. It was a fine achievement but did take John over 30 years to complete.

John's career with the civil service was an entirely unhappy one from a work perspective as he consistently felt that the department was badly managed and under-resourced. The lack of job satisfaction though was very much offset by the friendships that John formed with colleagues throughout his time in the Civil Service. John saw himself as a principled and conscientious worker but always fought what he saw as a management that were more concerned with their own promotion prospects than the welfare of their team members. John set his stall out to challenge weak managers and felt that his bosses saw him as an awkward and difficult employee. The constant battle with management and the system took its toll, and John had a couple of periods of absence towards the end of his career with work related stress. When the opportunity came along in 1990, John took early retirement from the DHSS at the age of 50. Although John's career was not to his liking, his work did once make the national newspapers. During one of his periods in the role of Special Investigator working on benefit fraud, John was working on a case involving a claimant who was also working as a Fortune Teller in a shop in Haworth High Street. During the school holidays John took Lydia and Martin to Haworth and sent Lydia in to have her fortune told by "Madame Lavinia". Having taken a witness statement from Lydia, John pursued a fraud prosecution against the unsuspecting claimant. The Daily Mail reported on the situation with a headline saying "Fortune-teller didn't see that one coming!" John's perseverance in sticking with the DHSS for 27 years finally paid off in retirement with the security of a government pension meaning that John never had to worry too much about making ends meet financially during his later years.

John subsequently took on other jobs including a role on the caretaking staff at the Crossley Heath School, a spell as a white van driver for Dixons Wireworks (he was released after twice filling up the diesel van with petrol) and a period as a salesman at the studio of artist and friend Geoff Cowton. Out of work John and Geoff enjoyed walking trips to the Yorkshire Dales. John also had a short-lived career as a self-employed odd-job man. He enjoyed all of these jobs much more than any of the roles he held in the Civil Service.

During retirement John continued his connection with the Bradford Pothole Club and the Heath Old Boys Association through committee work. At the pothole club headquarters in Horton-in-Ribblesdale John and a friend put many hours converting an old pig shed into a weekend accommodation apartment for club members

use. After 30 years of pothole club membership, John achieved the status of honorary life member of the club and had over 60 years membership by the time of his death.

John and Lydia enjoyed holidays abroad including coach trips with Gain Travel, trips to France to stay with friends Brian and Sheila Kerfoot at their property, and regular trips with cousin, Brian Priestley and his wife Sheila on their narrowboat, exploring the canals of England. There were also countless trips out to local garden centres, where the coffee shops usually got a visit. The couple's last holiday together was a highly memorable cruise on the Danube with Viking River Cruises to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

During their retirement, John and Lydia also enjoyed trips to the theatre to see music acts and musical theatre shows. Jack Jones was a favourite performer, and they enjoyed many of the West End musicals, both in the West End and on tour in Leeds or Manchester.

Sadly, Lydia fell seriously ill in 2020. It was a highly stressful time for John, who lost a lot of weight with the worry of it all. Lydia finally passed away in the August of that year. Knowing she had suffered badly through her illness, John bore the loss with fortitude and got on with life, supported by Martin and wife Jayne. He continued to engage in DIY activities, enjoying building, welding, and woodworking projects. He was also a prolific generator of firewood for friends to use on their wood-burners. Every piece was meticulously cut to length and packed in a reinforced wine box recovered from the supermarket. Boy was he serious about his firewood production!

Unfortunately, the last 15 months or so has been a struggle for John. His physical and mental health has been failing him, and it has curtailed a lot of the activities that John so much enjoyed. In late 2023/early 2024 he picked up a bug that threw him off his food and his medication. As a long-term diabetic that allowed his sugar levels to creep up to dangerously high levels. One evening Martin had to rush him into hospital and he was put straight onto the resuscitation ward and was diagnosed with ketoacidosis, sepsis and acute kidney injury. That really took it out of John, and he was never quite the same after that. From then on, he received daily district nurse visits for insulin injections to control the diabetes and he never drove again after that. That limited his independence as he loved to be able to pop out to Tool Station or Screwfix or into town when the mood took him. During the summer of 2024, John's mood started to dip, and some strange and quite compulsive behaviours started to surface. After some time, he was diagnosed with psychotic depression and hospitalised in Wakefield for a few weeks, before returning home in much better spirits. The improvement was short-lived and as the winter nights started to draw in and John couldn't potter outside like he loved to do, some of the same behaviours started to

reemerge. More recently in mid-February John has a day where he fell three times in the same day at home. During one of the falls, he took a nasty bang to the head on the way down. Martin took him to A&E, and he was admitted for assessment and treatment. While in Calderdale Royal John suffered a heavy stroke, on his 85th birthday of all days. Sadly, the damage was too severe to come back from and John passed away peacefully a few days later.

There is absolutely no doubt that the mates John made throughout his life were hugely important to him. The camaraderie that came through school, the Boys Brigade and team sports meant a lot, and he made strong and enduring friendships. From the backstreets of Hanson Lane, through the Warley Road and Heath schools, the Boys Brigade, cricket and football teams, his sailing groups and work colleagues John forged relationships that lasted a lifetime. It was his potholing that was probably the most important interest though. The friendships made in adverse circumstances underground where the conditions could be harsh, and mistakes could be costly, were some of the most important to him.

Another aspect that can't be over-looked in summing up John Davey is his love for working with his hands. His building, woodworking and metalworking filled countless hours, and he was never happier than when working on some project or other to help family or friends (much to Lydia's annoyance at times when her job list wasn't getting any attention).

The other vitally important aspect of John's life was his family. In Lydia he had found the love of his life and, since her passing in 2020, life hasn't been quite the same. For son Martin, losing John is going to be tough. The two have always been close, perhaps even more so since Lydia's death. John also thought the world of daughter-in-law Jayne, who Lydia had taught many years ago at Warley Road Junior School.

Martin and Jayne will take comfort in the fact that John led a long, full and happy life. He spent his time

with people he thought a lot about and doing the things that made him happy. He was always looking to help others and loved to laugh at a good (and often old) joke.

Oh, and one other thing, as many of you will know, boy could he talk!

With thanks to **Martin Davey** who provided this tribute.

### **John Firth: 10 October 1942–13 June 2025 [Heath 1954–1959]**

John Firth died suddenly at home aged 82 years on 13 June 2025. Dearly loved husband of the late Gloria, a much loved dad of Dawn and Mark, a dear father in law of Lee and Diane, a much loved grandad of Aiden, Eleanor, Hannah, Olivia and William and great grandad of Charlie, Noah and Harriet.

The service and cremation was held at Park Wood Crematorium, Elland on Thursday, July 10th 2025 at 10.30am.

### **Brandon Shackleton: 5 November 1940–22 August 2025 [Heath 1952–1957]**

Brandon Shackleton passed away peacefully, surrounded by his family, at Leeds General Infirmary on 22 August 2025, aged 84 years. Dearly beloved husband and best friend of Susan, devoted father of Guy, special father-in-law of Karen, cherished grandad of Freya and Erin, a loving brother to Rodger, the late Brenda and brother-in-law, a caring uncle and a good friend to many.

A celebration of his life will be held on Thursday, 11 September 2025 at 10:45am at St. Jude's Church, Halifax, followed by the committal at Park Wood Crematorium, Elland. In lieu of flowers, Brandon's chosen charity was [Yorkshire Air Ambulance](#).

## Subscriptions

### Your Association needs you NOW

New subscription rates were agreed at the AGM on 26 September 2015.

- *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 your 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.

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.

The Association donates to a variety of local good causes and charities, most recently to the [Royal British Legion](#).

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 World Wide Web.

### 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

#### Heath Old Boys Association Committee:

**President:** J S Robertshaw

**Chairman:** J Farrell

**Vice Chairman and Secretary:** [Jon Hamer](#)

Mob: 07770 697176

**Treasurer:** J D Turner

18 Newlands Road  
Norton Tower  
HALIFAX  
HX2 7RE  
Tel : (01422) 355081

**Newsletter Editor and**

**Website Manager:** [John R Hudson](#)

34 Boothtown Road  
HALIFAX  
HX3 6NE

**Members:** Mr J T Bunch Mr J Charnock Mr A Connell Mr R Eastwood Mr A Hoyle Mr T Stringer Mr R Sumner *ex-officio* Dean Jones

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

---

[Crossley Heath School](#)

Savile Park  
HALIFAX  
HX3 0HG

Tel: (01422) 360272

Fax : (01422) 349099

email: [admin@crossleyheath.org.uk](mailto:admin@crossleyheath.org.uk)