

# *The Hardyans' Club*

TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FRIENDS

*Hardye's School, Dorchester, Dorset*

## *Newsletter*

Winter 2008 : Issue 104

Published Winter, Spring and Autumn

Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Editor

LONDON DINNER 2007 see report on page 4



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Menu for the Annual Dinner  
Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2008

**Cream of Asparagus Soup** Not Game Soup as previously advertised  
**Braised beef in red wine sauce with button mushrooms**  
**Served with green beans, garden peas, carrots and creamed mashed potato**  
**Sherry Trifle**  
**Tea or coffee**

### ***Hardyans' Club Information***

**President** Hugh GRIFFITHS  
**Chairman and Membership Secretary**  
A R (Bob) RENCH, 15, North Road, Parkstone, Poole,  
Dorset BH14 0LT (tel. 01202 746684)  
**Hon Secretary** Tony DAY (tel 01305 266095)  
**Hon Treasurer (Acting)** Colin LUCAS  
**Hon Press Officer** Michel HOOPER-IMMINS

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**Copy deadline for Issue 104: 15<sup>th</sup> May 2008**

## HARDYEANS' CLUB WEBSITE

Visit the website at: [www.hardyeansclub.com](http://www.hardyeansclub.com)

## E-MAIL CONTACTS FOR CLUB OFFICERS

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Also have a look at the school website:  
<http://www.thomas-hardye.dorset.sch.uk/>

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Since the last newsletter, Bob Rench has taken over as Membership Secretary from Peter Powell. Peter was struggling to cope at the same time as his other work.

Bob has found some long term problems that had resulted in at least 150 members not receiving their Newsletters by post. The number of the Lost Legion from the email list had also risen to over 100. This was due to members moving house and/or changing their service provider.

Those not receiving their newsletters by post should now receive them, unless of course they have moved and not notified us. After much work the number of the email 'Lost Legion' has been reduced by at least one third. It is to be hoped that this can be reduced further, but this will only be possible if we have a current address or phone number. Please let Bob know if any of your personal details have changed. It will also help if we know your full address and phone number in the first place.

The list of the 'Lost Legion' by email can be found by visiting the Club Website.

An appeal was made in the May 2006 newsletter (Issue 99) for members to update us with confirmation of their address and other details. This also gave members the opportunity to receive their newsletters by email, thus help the Club reduce the ever increasing cost of sending by post. **If you did not reply to that appeal, either because you did not receive the newsletter, or because you forgot. PLEASE complete the form at the end of this newsletter and send it to Bob Rench or visit the Club Website to update your details.**

## MONTHLY LUNCHEONS

Last Thursday of the month, except December, 12.30pm for 1pm at the Conservative Club, South Walks, Dorchester. Peter LEWENDON is unwell at the moment so please contact Colin LUCAS if you intend to come (Tel: 01305 265446)  
NB April and October luncheons feature a Gourmet Menu at £15 per head. ALWAYS EXCELLENT VALUE !!

## 2008 ANNUAL DINNER and AGMs

For both Club and Charitable Association are due to be held on Saturday 15th March 2008, beginning at 5.30pm\*, at the Sixth Form Centre, Thomas Hardye School (Coburg Road entrance). See booking form later in this issue. The 2007 AGM minutes were published in Edition 102 of the Newsletter. Raffle prizes would be very welcome from members - any donations should be brought on the night (5.00pm for the Charitable Association, 5.30pm for the Club)

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

John M Sonley email address now is [john.sonley@jmsconsultants.co.uk](mailto:john.sonley@jmsconsultants.co.uk)

## YOU WRITE

### From Robin FLETCHER 1954 - 60

I was rather alarmed to see reference in the last newsletter to blowing down a Bunsen gas pipe. Many must have done it, but I chose a particularly unfortunate occasion, which left me feeling guilty ever after.

Mr G----- was a probationary master and was on external inspection when I did it. Alas the air bubble hit his Bunsen at the climax of his demonstration and it flickered out, to the enormous mirth of the whole form. He said to me afterwards that I had ruined his career, hence the guilt. I have consoled myself with the fact that he will have been a lot better off financially and much happier as an industrial chemist.

Curiously I could have been sent down from Sandhurst for a jape in the lab, but for the good heart of the civilian lecturer.

On a happier note, in the eighties I met the nephew of one of our greatest masters in London. The chap came from Kent and his name was Thomset and I knew it had to be a relation of the great polymath Rex Thomset, who came from a noted Kent family. As some will remember, Rex, an Oxbridge alumnus, was Head of Classics, and at various times ran the choir, orchestra, cricket, hockey, and RN Section (he was a wartime RN ship's captain at Dunkirk).

I used to run into him as a 16 and 17 year old at the third day of the fifth Test Match in London which in those days was always on a Saturday at the Oval. Afterwards he would take me to dinner in the West End. Lifetimes later, when I worked there, I realised one of my watering holes was that very restaurant. You couldn't take a young teenager out to dinner now--sad no one can be trusted according to current wisdom.

Rex had an open top car, and always wore a sports jacket with leather elbows, and flannels. My abiding memory of him is with his gown flapping in the wind jocularly snapping 'unhand me boy' as a crowd of what are now known as 'kids' or 'students' clustered round him wanting to know the arrangements for their particular activity. His nephew was one of three, who were not much younger than Rex, and they regarded him as a marvellous uncle, which explains why he was so at ease with irritating youths like us!

None of us really believed the story of his sacking from Kelly College, which turned out was true. Their loss, our gain.

Mention of the greats must include the totally self made DC Whittaker, Lieutenant Colonel, MBE, TD, BA, LRAM, who we now know was the man chosen to be the resistance leader if we had been invaded in WW2. What a man.

Some of your readers may remember Andrew Alexander, not a master, but who ran fencing (as a former Public Schools' Champion-I was Captain of Fencing). He has a stratospherically successful journalistic and executive career which is still going with the Daily Mail. Decades later, we lunched occasionally in the West End (he has his own table at the Savoy Grill), and at that time he was in touch with Geoffrey Hutchings, the distinguished West End actor, and Old Boy.

I notice in the photograph of the reunion, which I hadn't realised was on, was Andrew Nickell. I was at Rydal School in Weymouth with him—he was far ahead and a big star—and his sister Anne. I last saw Andrew at Sennelager Training Area in Germany in 1963 when he was a subaltern in the Duke of Wellingtons Regiment, and my regiment was camped up the road.

I joined the Club because of Paddy Kemp (who won the Sword of Honour at Cranwell). After leaving the Army (for the second time) in 84, I stepped out of a taxi in Victoria and Paddy K was going to step in. Instead we went to the nearest hostelry where he made me sign up. We had last met two decades before when I was doing the Para course and he was driving the aircraft from which we were jumping.

I had the pleasure of saying hello to Jake Westlake in Berlin in 82 at the Queen's Birthday Parade. He was visiting his niece Sue, also an Army Officer.

In the 57 Panoramic picture I am three from the right (as you look at it) in the top row, between Hare and Derby (of Derby Engineering fame). I am not in fact a dwarf—they were both unnecessarily tall. Whilst burbling, I recall that the innocent looking bespectacled chap at the left of the photo in the middle row sprinted round the back of us all, once the camera had passed him, to the other end of the panorama in the hope of appearing twice. The photographer was wise to this and waved him away when he arrived at the other end.

It was very nice to see the irreplaceable Peter Lewendon in the reunion picture. I think the last time I talked to him was at the closing down service at St Margaret's Westminster, and perhaps at a London dinner since then. Do they still make them like him----I think not.

**Robin Fletcher**

**From Simon HAIGH**

I was very interested to see in the latest edition of the Hardyans newsletter that Simon Winchester is an old-boy. He very modestly says that he "he writes books" - which rather underplays his success as a best-selling travel-writer and once highly-acclaimed national newspaper journalist. His website contains a brief biography but a fuller one is at: <http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/english/MFA/simonwinchester/>- I guess he can tell you how accurate this is.

I discovered his writing through The River at the Centre of the World - an account of his journey up the Yangtze river from Shanghai to Tibet, which gives an entertaining insight into both modern Chinese cities and rural China through his highly readable prose. It's a shame his life-history on his website starts at Oxford University, rather than Hardy's!

**Simon Haigh**

Hardy's 1984-89  
now living in Beijing, China  
[sihaigh@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:sihaigh@tiscali.co.uk)

**Colin LUCAS writes about Peter LEWENDON**

On Thursday afternoon(10<sup>th</sup> January) I again visited Yeovil Hospital to see Peter, I took the opportunity to deliver the rest of the emails with good wishes for him. He seemed very much improved and he said the chest infection was now under control. Gill was also there together with another family member who had driven her there. Peter said that David Lacey had been in on Tuesday to see him and he certainly seemed more perked up than previously. He still has the lack of mobility problem but I think the physio people will sort that out and enable his confidence to be restored. I am sure he will be pleased to hear from former Colleagues and students or have visits from anyone living locally. So there we have it a much brighter picture than before, let us hope the improvement continues. He is on the 9th floor at Yeovil Hospital.

**FROM THE PRESS OFFICER**

**OLD HARDYEANS RETURN TO LORD'S CRICKET GROUND**

The Old Hardyans' London Dinner was again held in the prestigious President's Suite at Lord's Cricket Ground. A splendid event overlooking the world famous ground, there was general agreement that the dinner and service were first class.

A number of members travelled from Dorset and joined London old boys for this annual reunion, beginning with a reception in one of the private hospitality boxes.

After dinner, Club President Professor Hugh Griffiths thanked those who had organised the event, particularly Old Hardyean Godfrey Lancashire- an MCC member- who had first suggested the venue in St. Johns Wood. He thought it important to maintain the tradition of the London Dinner. The President recalled this was a landmark occasion- the last to be attended by Headmaster Dr. Iain Melvin, who had been a "truly wonderful influence" on Thomas Hardy School.

Dr. Melvin responded, saying he had been privileged to be Headmaster for 20 years. His first London Dinner with the Old Hardyans had been at Queen's Club in 1988. "It is important to maintain and sustain the Old Hardyans- and it is a wonderful opportunity to come to this venue." He spoke of the importance of the bursaries being given through the Charitable Trust and revealed the school now numbered 2,300 students, including 850 in the sixth form. The Ofsted inspectors had highlighted Thomas Hardy School as "one of the best schools in the country" and he was very proud.

Colin Lucas read letters from two students who had benefited from the Charitable Trust's bursaries and encouraged more donations and legacies from Old Hardyans.

Godfrey Lancashire particularly welcomed the four ladies present and said it had been a fine occasion in superb

surroundings. He joined in thanking Dr. Melvin for all he has done- both for the School and the Old Hardyans- over 20 years.

The menu had started with woodland mushroom soup, followed by roast maize-fed chicken supreme, served with Dauphinoise potatoes & roasted Mediterranean vegetables. Dessert was seasonal fruit crumble with toffee apple ice cream, then coffee & chocolates to finish. The best possible attention was given by the staff at Lord's, which made for a most enjoyable evening.

[Editor: Heather and I thoroughly enjoyed our first visit to Lord's and the London Dinner. It was a pity that the floodlights were not switched on so we could see the Ground, but we certainly recommend the experience]

## **FROM THE HEADTEACHER**

Recently there was a great deal of publicity about the fact that 100 schools in the UK provided the vast majority of students studying at Oxbridge. These schools are largely independent and selective, no school such as this figured in the list. It is in this context that our success in gaining places for 12 students this year should be viewed. These two universities figure in the top 5 in the world and this is a record-breaking number for us. They are:

### **Oxford**

Saranna Blair, English, Brasenose  
Laurie Holt, Biochemistry, Pembroke  
Christopher Le Pard, English, Keble  
Susan Warden, Law, St Catherine's  
Megan Burdon Jones, PPE, St Hilda's

### **Cambridge**

Amber Branch, Geography, Newnham  
Matthew Cox, Medicine, Selwyn  
Sam Gamlin, Mathematics, Downing  
Chris Hinde, Mathematics, Pembroke  
Amelia Mannerings, Science, Jesus  
Sophie Topham, Biological Science, Downing  
Emily Wakeford, Engineering, Downing

You may note the wide diversity of subjects studied here and the fact that we have three students going to one Cambridge College - Downing, this is very unusual and just cause for celebration. We are very proud of these students and those who have places at many other universities including The Royal Veterinary College, Imperial, York, Warwick - the list goes on. Taken alongside the recent league table points score for A Level, in the top 200 nationally, these achievements are pointers towards what any student can expect to achieve here.

I was very concerned to hear that Peter Lewendon is unwell. The word 'legend' is bandied about these days but in the context of the education of boys in Dorchester Peter is deserving of the description. I know how much he would enjoy the achievements noted above. All those who know him here send Peter good wishes and wish him a speedy recovery.

The search for my successor is now gathering pace and there will no doubt be some news by the next newsletter. There will be time for valedictions nearer the time but I would like to thank all those Hardyans who have already been in contact to wish me well

Dr I E Melvin

**ANNUAL DINNER - SATURDAY 15TH MARCH 2008**

Since the Centenary Dinner the booking of tables for parties from the same school years has been popular, so you have the option to do the same this year. Also....  
a Raffle Prize would be welcome !

**PLEASE FEEL FREE TO BRING YOUR OWN WINE**

✂ .....  
**BOOKING FORM**

Name(s).....Years at School.....

.....PARTY OF.....(Nos)

Please reserve seat(s) for 1 / 2 persons / table for 4 / 6 / 8 persons PLEASE SPECIFY

for the Annual Dinner at The Sixth Form Centre

Coburg Road, Dorchester. 7.30pm for 8.00pm 15th March 2008

cost £ 15.00 per person

Please forward to The Treasurer, Colin Lucas, 4, Fir Tree Close, Dorchester DT1 2PY

**Enclose a stamped addressed envelope**

DON'T FORGET - WIVES AND PARTNERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME !

✂ .....

**HARDYEANS' CLUB NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION**

To: Bob Rench, 15 North Road, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH14 0LT (tel. 01202 746684)

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.....

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