

The Hardyans' Club

TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FRIENDS

Hardye's School, Dorchester, Dorset

Newsletter Autumn 2010 : Issue 112

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Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the

Editor

New Club Treasurer introduces himself:

Alan Brown (Hardye's 1957- 64)

No doubt by now you will have seen my name as having taken over the role of Treasurer for the Hardyans Club, and no doubt some are wondering who I am!

I was born in Weymouth in 1946, but by the time I was aged 6 we had moved to Charminster, just outside Dorchester, where my parents lived for the next 29 years. I went to Hardye's in 1957, one of only two boys from the village school. The other, Leslie Ralls, was a good friend of mine but unfortunately wasn't in the same class, so it was a bit of a culture shock for me. However I eventually settled in and looking back I suppose overall I enjoyed my time at Hardye's.

I can recall several teachers who had various degrees of influence on my future. Rex Tompsett gave me an interest in History which I still have, and Ken Batty inspired my love of church architecture, although I was pretty useless at Art itself. Bertie Cruse gave me a good foundation in French, which I have built on over the years. How he managed to teach us anything I'll never know, we played him something rotten! A teacher whose surname was Johns turned me off Latin completely, and even though 'Joe' Roberts taught it to me later it was the only 'O' Level I failed. Stan Walton aroused my interest in Science, and this was finally complete when Mr Barass taught me Chemistry at 'O' Level. Originally I was going to be an architect, but overnight decided Science was for me. Stan Walton, Alan Burton and John Hawthorne taught me at 'A' Level, all were really good teachers. Others I recall were 'Jake' Westlake, 'Basil' Bax, and Mr Lancashire.

An event I have always remembered with great affection was the trip to Provence that Joe Roberts organised in April 1964. About 24 of us went – is anyone else reading this who went on that trip? Quite an undertaking in those days, as it was nothing like as easy to organise a school trip then as it is now. I kept saying I'd go back there, and finally in 2004 my wife pointed out it had been 40 years ago, so off we went, and have now returned three times.

The one thing which sticks in my mind about my early years at Hardye's is Games – I hated them. I was physically quite small for my age, found it hard to keep up, and also had to wear glasses, so standing in the middle of a muddy field, unable to see properly, with a couple of dozen boys larger than me bearing rapidly down with the apparent aim of killing me wasn't perhaps the best introduction to sport. I distinctly remember one occasion, when I could only have been 13, the Games teacher punched me in the stomach because I touched a piece of apparatus without permission. He wouldn't have got away with it these days. Unfortunately I have never really gotten over the experience, and have not enjoyed any form of sport for the rest of my life.

I always enjoyed the CCF, I was in the Corps of Drums for 5 years, reaching the exalted rank of Sergeant, (although it took some effort to persuade David Lacey that I was the only member of the CCF in the 6th form who wasn't an NCO!) and being one of those honoured enough to play Last Post at the school gates on Remembrance Day. A few years later I joined the Dorset ACF as an adult instructor, eventually being CO of the Wimborne Detachment, with a TA commission!

During my time there we had the honour of being associated with the 3rd Royal Tank Regiment, which meant we wore a different uniform and cap badge to the rest of the units in the county. On one occasion we met up with David Lacey on an orienteering course. I didn't actually draw his attention to my rank! After leaving Hardye's I went to Bristol to study Pharmacy, but gave up after the first year as the course wasn't right for me and I couldn't settle. I came back home and got a job with BDH Chemicals in Poole. It was so much easier in those days, I feel sorry for the youngsters these days who can't get work. I spent three years there and gained a Higher National Certificate in Chemistry via day release, so didn't really lose out by leaving university.

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My brother Terry was at Hardy's by now, and he joined a Go-Kart club run by John Hawthorne. As I had a car I went along initially to help transport boys to the Clay Pigeon Raceway on Saturday afternoons, and continued to help for the next 5 years. It was during this time that John Hawthorne suggested I change to a career more suited to my qualifications and ability at working with youngsters, thus setting me off on my lifelong career of school teaching. I trained for two years at St Luke's in Exeter, gaining a distinction in Chemistry, and was lucky enough to land my first job 'back home' at Queen Elizabeth's School in Wimborne. From there I moved to Middle Schools, and over the years was Science Co-Ordinator at Canford Heath Middle, Heatherlands Middle in Upper Parkstone, and finally Broadstone Middle. We still live in Bournemouth.

My career suddenly ended in October 1998 when I suffered a completely unexpected heart attack at the age of 52. Fortunately I survived and my pension was enhanced and I officially retired in August 2000 – aged only 54! As a result of the heart attack various tests were done and it was found that I had some congenitally narrowed arteries, and these had been a problem all my life. Suddenly I realised why sport had been such hard work! Fortunately minor surgery has corrected the fault and I'm now fitter than I've probably ever been.

Colleagues I particularly remember (who may rather forget me!) include John Barbara, Dave Pope, Roger Parry, Don Moxom, Steven Merlin, Tony Firshman, Ian Broom (who was later my best man), Bob Hutchings, Trevor Jesty and Pete Broad (Drum Major when we were in the 6th Form), to name but a few. I also knew Michel Hooper-Immins quite well, although he was a year lower.

If anyone out there does remember me do get in touch, my address is as below.

OLD HARDYEANS TIE AGAIN IN STOCK

The Old Hardyans' handsome blue, gold and red tie is an essential accessory. The new stock is now in the possession of our Treasurer Alan Brown, who will be pleased to sell you one. The cost is only £10. Send your cheque, payable to *The Hardyans Club*, to Alan Brown at 40 Valette Road, Moordown, Bournemouth BH9 3JD. Telephone 01202 535034 or email: alan@ajbrown1946.plus.com

Hardyans' Club Information

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Hardyans' Club Website : www.hardyansclub.com

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

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

MONTHLY LUNCHEONS : Last Thursday of the month, except December, 12.30pm for 1pm at the Conservative Club, South Walks, Dorchester. 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 !!

LONDON DINNER : is scheduled for **Tuesday 9th November 2010**. Price £37 per head, please see booking form repeated at end of this edition.

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE : **Thursday 11th November** from 10.30am at the School Gates, Queens Avenue.

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON : **Thursday 16th December 2010** 12.30pm for 1pm at the Dorchester Conservative Club, South Walks, Dorchester - price £15 approx - seating maximum 50. Bookings please to the Treasurer, Alan Brown, contact details as for orders for the Club Tie, above. Cheques, payable to Dorchester Conservative Club, to Alan on the day, who will then be able to advise the exact amount due.

From The Chairman, Colin LUCAS

50 years ago (courtesy Dorset Echo).

On the 6th April 2010 the Echo published the report of an incident which occurred in 1960. Local Hardyens may or may not have noticed this and those on foreign shores most certainly would not have seen it. It referred to Captain Terry Parsons a serving Officer with our military forces in Malaya.

Terry was invited to go on a 'big game' hunt in Malaya during a spot of leave and spent a short spell on a British controlled plantation relaxing from the pressures of terrorist attacks. Suddenly he was aware of unusual movements on the forest edge and suitably prepared himself for the unseen peril. He soon realised that he had probably stumbled into a small camp of terrorist suspects. An exchange of arms fire took place and when firing ceased Terry made his way back to the estate residence and the incident was reported to his C.O.

Following the reported incident, a patrol was sent out to investigate the occurrence, a discovery of a hurriedly indecently made internment was found. On investigation it was revealed that Terry had slain a notorious wanted terrorist and it was his prowess as a trained soldier and hunter which indeed had saved his life.

Terry retired some years ago as Lt Colonel R,A. and now lives in Dorchester he has been a stalwart supporter of The School and the Hardyens Club. In the days when Newsletters were delivered locally by hand he had his area of deliveries. Always keen to help and assist. A brave soldier and good servant of the community. Sir we salute you .

Colin Lucas

The Annual Cricket Match Hardyens Club vs School

In the pre match banter it was anticipated that the School side this year were considerably stronger than in previous years. The club's sports officer Tony Foot went to considerable lengths to field a side which would give the School eleven something to think about.

It was a damp morning and the possibility of play was doubtful.

Yes, this year could well have been the year that The School took its revenge to put right some adverse results in the past. But it was not to be, the weather worsened and by mid morning it became obvious that play would certainly be delayed, furthermore by lunch time it became apparent that the School would be cheated of their chance to beat the Club by the fickle conditions of an English summer. The sports officers of both Club and School would like to thank all the team members of both elevens for their co-operation in the arrangements and perhaps another sports competition can be arranged where the weather may not play such an important part.

Food for thought perchance.

Colin Lucas

Members are reminded that legacies are a very valuable way of supporting the aims of the Hardyens' Charitable Association.

Obituaries - rather a lot this time sadly. We send condolences on behalf of the club to all friends and relatives of those mentioned

Christopher David BELING (1974)

Colin Bailey [mailto:colin.bailey@keble.ox.ac.uk] wrote

I edit the Keble College Record, the college's annual publication, and one of my tasks is to write obituaries on old members (about 50 a year!). One of this year's entries was also an Old Hardyean, presumably he left the school in 1974 or 1973. I thought you might be interested to see what will be published in October. Do feel free to use any of it.

Best wishes,

Colin Bailey (Hardye's 1941-49)

Christopher David Beling (1974) died on 18 June 2010 aged 54. He was educated at Hardye's Grammar School, Dorchester and came up to Keble to read Physics. He left and carried out research for a PhD. He moved to Hong Kong (1987) as Assistant Professor at the University and had been there for 23 years. Back on holiday this summer at Preston Beach, Paignton he suffered heart failure as he swam out to rescue his younger brother Jeremy. Despite the efforts of his teenage daughter Cathy and paramedics he was pronounced dead at the scene. Jeremy (Keble 1976, PPE) survived. Chris's son John, a second year physics student at Liverpool University, wrote in the South Devon Herald Express 'my dad not only taught his students with passion but also wanted them to think critically and challenge their beliefs concerning matters of science and faith and their relationship with Christianity. My dad always made time for his students and sometimes there would be very little family time together. But when we did have it, we appreciated the time we had with him. He leaves a wife Evelyn, son John and daughter Kathy.

Colin Bryant 1928-34 died 2008

Ian Bryant 1930-35 died December 2009

We were advised by Betty Bryant of the deaths of her husband Ian and his brother Colin which took place during the last two years. Betty Bryant herself was a part-time teacher at Hardye's from 1975-1980 in the French department and remembers David Lacey. She likes receiving the Newsletter.

Chris ETHERINGTON

Sadly passed away 25th May 2010 - notified by Nigel Newbery. [mailto:nigelandann@blueyonder.co.uk]

A service of thanksgiving was due to be held at St Mary's Beaminster on Monday 14th June

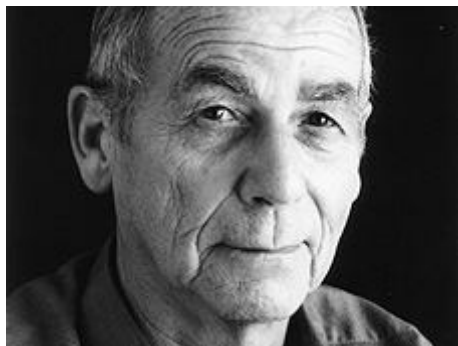
Donations were requested for Help for Heroes c/o Grassby Funeral Service,—8 Princes Street, Dorchester, DT1 1TW

Geoffrey HUTCHINGS (1950-57)

Several members wrote to advise of the death of actor Geoffrey Hutchings, including David Culver, Adrian Stear and Nigel Newbery

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-1291559/Geoffrey-Hutchings-dies-aged-71.html?ito=feeds-newsxml#ixzz0xwVfUATq>

GEOFFREY HUTCHINGS forwarded by Nigel Newbery



Geoffrey Albert Hutchings was a respected character actor who was born in Dorchester on 8th June 1939, the only son of a Council officer. He attended Hardyes School between 1950 and 1957 where he became Captain of Pope House in his final year. A compact but speedy right-winger for the First Rugby XV he set a 100 yards Intermediate record of 11.6 seconds in 1954 and is remembered by many as a fine athlete.

His ability as an actor came to the fore in the annual school play. In 1951, aged 12, he appeared as 'A Young Cherub' in Dorothy L. Sayers 'The Zeal of Thy House' which prompted the reviewer in the local paper to write, '*mention must be made of young G.A. Hutchings, the little cherub. He is a wholly delightful little creature.....the part is a small one so far as words are concerned but there will be many who will remember that little cherub for a long time.*'

A few years later, in 1956, he gave a memorable performance as 2nd Lt. Trotter in R.C. Sheriff's 'Journeys End.' A number of his old school friends recall his wit, humour and talent as a mimic.

From Hardyes Geoff won a scholarship to Birmingham University where he studied French and Physical Education. He was presented with the Actor of the Year prize at a National Union of Students Festival before training at RADA where he won the Ronson Prize. He made his professional debut in London's West End in the Richard Rogers musical No Strings and after spending a few years in rep he joined the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1968 where he played many roles over the next 16 years.

In 1963, for the BBC television arts programme 'Monitor', he made his screen debut as DH Lawrence in Death of My Mother. His small-screen roles remained occasional over the next 20 years but in 1990, he took over the role of George Fairchild in the third series of the television sitcom Brass. He also played the hapless Sgt Lucas in Maigret (1992-93) alongside Michael Gambon.

In 1982, Geoff won the Society of West End Theatres' Best Comic Performance Award for his role as Lady Dodo in the RSC's pantomime-style musical comedy Poppy. The actor also performed with the National Theatre Company, joining in 1986, where he appeared with stars such as Diana Rigg. In 1998 Geoff drew rave reviews when he played the late, real-life comedy actor Sid James in the play 'Cleo, Camping, Emmanuelle and Dick' which told the story of the actor's affair with his co-star Barbara Windsor. With his leer and creased-up features he did more than conform to Hattie Jacques's description of James as 'a dissipated walnut'. Two years later he reprised this role when the drama was turned into the ITV drama 'Cor, Blimey!'

In recent years he was hardly off the small screen, usually taking one-off character roles in established series or single plays. These included the women's prison drama Bad Girls, Holby City, Foyle's War, Midsomer Murders and Wild at Heart. In 2009 he played Jane and Christian Clarke's father, Roger, in EastEnders. The actor's final role was in a new sitcom, Grandma's House, due to be screened in the summer of 2010. Amongst his work on radio was a role as Bill Robertson in The Archers. His many films included appearances with John Cleese, Clint Eastwood and Hilary Swank.

Although he was much admired for taking many character roles on screen and stage over almost half a century, Geoffrey Hutchings did not become a 'star' until he appeared in the current television sitcom Benidorm. He played 'minted' Mel Harvey, the working-class businessman who frequently boasted of becoming a millionaire after setting up, then selling, his 'five sunbed shops in the Greater Manchester area'. From his first appearance in the programme, at the beginning of the second series in 2008, Geoff stole the show. There were several near-death experiences alongside the sight of his wearing

a revealing thong around the pool and the excruciating sound of his karaoke version of '(Hey There) Lonely Girl' in strangled tones. He played this all completely straight, which added to the comedy. He described the experience of playing Mel as one of his most enjoyable but added: *'The problem was standing in the sun every morning in a paper thong, getting sprayed with sun tan and then washing it off in the evening.'* A one-off special and another series were due to be filmed when he contracted a viral infection and died suddenly on July 1st. His second wife, Andi Godfrey, survives him together with one son and two daughters from his first marriage.

His versatility as an actor was well known in the business. He could assume comic, tragic and demanding dramatic roles with apparent ease – the hallmark of a distinguished career. Geoff's agent Roger Charteris said: 'Geoffrey was a delight to work with - he was absolutely one of a kind.'

Graham LOCKYER

From Nick Murzell njmurzell@ukonline.co.uk in May 2010

Hi Michel,

You probably will not remember me but we were both in the Upper 5C class at Hardye's in 1963-64. You and Peter Foster joined us from the year above. I see Peter quite often as we are both volunteers on the Swanage Railway.

My wife and I have been friends with Graham and Liz Lockyer since 1964. You may recall that Graham transferred from a Bournemouth school to Hardye's in 1963 to do his 'A' levels. Graham's wife, Liz, and my wife, Mo, were together at Weymouth Grammar. About six months ago Graham forwarded me one of your '58ers' emails. I sent emails to three of them who might have remembered me but only one of them replied.

The sad news is that Graham died recently. At Christmas, when he and Liz attended my daughter's wedding, he was fine, but in February he was diagnosed with asbestos related cancer. In the late 1960's during his student apprenticeship he had worked on a power station construction site and they were not particularly careful with asbestos dust in those days. His condition deteriorated quickly and he passed away on May 21st. We attended his funeral on Wednesday and the church was packed with his family, friends and colleagues from his business career. At two days short of his 63rd birthday, this is a very sad loss.

I am sending you this email so that you can pass the word to any of your 58ers who remember Graham, but more importantly, to ask you and the other 58ers to remove Graham from your email circulation lists. Emails intended for Graham will be very difficult for Liz.

Best regards
Nick Murzell
Hardye's 59er

You Write

A. J. ACUTT writing to Membership Secretary Bob Rench

From: anderson John Acutt [<mailto:acutt@torbayvillage.org.au>]

Sent: 14 July 2010 Subject: RE: Hardyeans Club - Lost Legion

Dear Bob,

I thank you and your associates for your untiring efforts to rescue me from the "Lost Legion". The retirement village where my wife and I live, recently updated their server. The correct email for the foreseeable future is address:-

acutt@torbayvillage.org.au

Congratulations on the Newsletter.

A. J. Acutt

Mark DICKINSON writes with a request

I used to be a student at Hardye's School between 1988 and 1991. I was wondering if it was possible to still get hold of year/school photos taken during that period?

Many thanks,

Mark Dickinson Mark.Dickinson@noc.nhs.uk

Peter GRUNDY (Staff 1968-71) grundypeter@btinternet.com

wrote at the end of July to tell members about his proposed Hellsport Swim attempt. The swim, from Europe to Asia, was due to take place on 30th. August. 'The measured distance is 4.7 miles but because it's current-assisted, the true equivalent is 3-4km. I've done several 2.5km swims so far and swam 120 x 25 yard lengths on Monday. I'll be trying for 3km later this

[PTO]

week. According to the training schedule sent by the organizers, I'm supposed to swim 3km this week, 3.5 km next week and 4km the week after. I also had a very helpful swimming lesson in June, where my many faults were pointed out. I've also been eating bananas, as they're said to prevent cramp! If the weather's good on the day, I think I can get the distance, but if it's bad, well... I plan to drive to Croatia in mid-August for a few days sea swimming, and then on to Turkey at the end of the month. Taking gift-aid into account, enough money has been pledged so far to fund a three-year higher education bursary. This will be wonderful news for a hard-pressed student at the Thomas Hardy School. '

We await more news of the outcome - Editor

Jonathan PULLEN (1958-65) jonasbish@hotmail.co.uk

I have no copy of the 1958 publication but I distinctly recall a poem by J.A.Eades (I knew him slightly through my sister, Jane) about a prospect of Dorchester, Autumn 1958. I think the first line went like this, "The scuttling rat now hesitant".

I take it that he was not, however obliquely, referring to one or other of the 1958 intake !

A curious recollection; I seem to recall that Brian Taylor spent a year at Puddletown secondary mod. (a good school from what I heard) before joining Hardyes in '58 and that he was born on either 4th or 8th August 1946.

Another anniversary beckons. The 50th anniversary of our ascent (not ascension !) to the rigours of the 'Main' school after the relatively relaxed atmosphere of 'Bunny' Lee's seemingly benign regime when we were big fish in a little sea. I can recall little about this era now except the sheer size, noise, hulking seniors, the CCF, (we were in mufti for a few weeks before being doled out items of mostly ill-fitting, scratchy uniform). I wonder if we seriously imagined if the 'cold' war..almost unimaginable for current pupils nowadays, would suddenly heat up with with horrendous intensity. Sadly, we can no longer convene at the 'old place' any more.

Philip J.SWINDELLS (1942 - 53). Philip.swindells@btinternet.com

I was very interested to read the latest Hardyans Newsletter, especially the article by Ernie Goss, mentioning so many teachers I knew. I would agree that Mr Steemson ("Boat") was a favourite, but would name as equal favourite Bertie Cruse. I was also delighted to see, not only that Tom Hearing had won the Young Scientist of the Year competition, but also that he was going on to Teddy Hall Oxford, where I went. I wonder whether any other Hardyans went there in between?

My own personal current news is that I married Jean in October 2006, and that I celebrated 50 years in the priesthood in June 2009. In connection with the latter I was not at all surprised to read Ernie Goss's remarks about Mr Willis; he must have been the most sceptical Divinity master of all time. I realise now that he was trying to introduce us to the - then new - higher criticism, but at the time I crossed swords with him on many occasions.

Best wishes

PHILIP J.SWINDELLS (1942-1953).

Membership News

LOST and FOUND Since 27 May 2010 we have been notified that the following members have died.

Chris Etherington (1952-6) who lived in Beaminster he passed away on 25 May 2010.

Chris Beling (1968-73) who was living in Hong Kong- he passed away on 18 June 2010.

We have five new members

Darren J Williams (1978-83) Living in Reading

David R White (1988-93) living in Dorchester

William J Wilkins (1968-75) living in Pennsylvania USA

Alex Trevelyan (1996-2001) living in Dorchester

Paul G Sharrock (1963-71) living in Bromley, Kent

Welcome to all of these

Two of our postal Lost Legion have been recovered and will now receive their newsletters by Email.

These are Carl Yeo (1992-97) living in Blandford Forum and Richard Malpas (1983-87) living in Tamworth Staffs.

Four other members have now opted to receive their letters via email instead of post – thank you all.

I have a puzzle that I hope some member might help me with. According to our records, we have two J. Lannings as members. This might be a glitch as a result of the muddle our records were in a few years ago, but I would like to clarify the situation.

[PTO]

The first name is Jack Lanning. His years at the School are shown as 1940-41. The email address we have failed some time ago and we have no other details.

The second is Jeremy Lanning. He years at the School are shown as 1957-62 and he is remembered by our webmaster. The email address we have for him seems to work but the only address we have for him is Perth, Western Australia. We had update from Jeremy recently of his personal details, but using the email address we have for Jack Lanning. I tried contacting him using this address, but of course it failed!

Jeremy does not want his details published on the website, but I should be grateful if he or any other member who reads this would contact me so that we can get our records straight. I am sure that the two 'members' are one and the same and that Jack Lanning should be removed from our list!

His details will not be published but we do need to get our records straight.

Best regards

Bob Rench,

Membership Secretary

* * * * *

LONDON DINNER - TUESDAY 9th NOVEMBER 2010

Hugh GRIFFITHS is making arrangements for the London Dinner to be held at University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT.

Time : 7.00pm for 7.30pm

Dress: Lounge Suits

Tickets: £37.00 per head, including wine

Transport from Dorchester can be arranged. Please contact Colin LUCAS in good time. Tel: (Home) 01305 265446. If writing to Colin, the address is: 4, Fir Tree Close, Poundbury, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 2PY

Hugh organises an excellent event

PLEASE REMEMBER that ladies are MORE THAN WELCOME TO ATTEND.

LONDON DINNER BOOKING FORM

To : Prof. H. Griffiths 34 Rochester Square, London, NW1 9RZ

Telephone: (Home) 020 7267 4009 email: h.griffiths@ee.ucl.ac.uk

Please send. ticket(s) for the Hardyans' London Dinner on 9th November 2010,

for which I enclose, by cheque, payable to H. D. Griffiths (£37.00 per head)

Please help Hugh by sending a stamped, addressed envelope. Or enter your email address here for an electronic confirmation of booking

From the Headteacher

The examination results season has just ended and the school is feeling exceptionally positive about the outcome as the largest and most successful school in the south west.

Our guarded optimism regarding GCSE was well founded with the best ever results, with 79% of the students achieving the key indicator of 5A*-C including English and Mathematics. Our results were 12% above our nearest Dorset rival and 18% above the Dorset average. Hardyeans will know there has been much concern about modern languages, specifically French, and single sciences, physics, chemistry and biology, I am sure you recall all three with great affection. Our results included 92% of the students undertaking a modern language and 50% taking single sciences. These figures are indicative of the fact that Hardy's students are taking real, worthwhile examinations and doing exceptionally well.

A Level and International Baccalaureate results were of equal quality. Our A*/A grades (33.4%) were 7% above the national average and the A*-C grading (84.2%) 9% above. These are exceptional, once again the best in the history of the school and miles (kilometres?) ahead of our nearest rivals. As ever Mathematics led the charge with A*/A grades of 47.8%; and this with 134 candidates, but many others did equally well. All of our Oxbridge candidates were successful and those going to Imperial, UCL, Bristol, Edinburgh etc equally so. Indeed the newspaper panic about entry this year was not a problem we experienced.

I am always asked why we did not figure in this or that national newspaper table, suffice to say our GCSE score placed us 9th in The Guardian table of comprehensive schools and our A Level performance 46th in the A Level league. Perhaps more satisfying is that our A level result would have placed us 88th in the newspaper's grammar school league table, beating such institutions as Torquay girls and boys grammar schools and Bournemouth School - remarkable.

Of equal note and importance to future generations of students was Peter Grundy's swim in the area of the Hellespont. Leaving aside the physical effort, Peter's success in raising £2000 for The Hardy's Charitable Association is much appreciated. As far as I am aware Lord Byron was not so successful in his fund raising. The school owes a significant debt to Peter and so many Hardy's for their contributions and support of this charity. The higher education finance it provides is crucial to the opportunities of so many, especially these days. It is impossible to recognise the contribution of so many but I know the award of the Chairman's Prize to Colin Lucas at our Presentation evening was in recognition of all those who have worked with him.

There can be no question that we are about to embark upon a period of significant change - academies, free schools, new examinations and structures are all on the agenda. At the same time perhaps nothing changes if schools have the support of their community and young people understand and recognise what is expected of them and what they can achieve. So many who read this newsletter have done that in their lives - it is comforting and a source of great pride to me that so many are following them.

Dr I E Melvin