



## *The Hardyeans' Club Newsletter*

Published in September, January and May

### *Annual Reunion Dinner 2019*

Some 90 members and guests enjoyed a convivial evening at the Thomas Hardye School 6<sup>th</sup> Form Centre. Former Club Chairman Godfrey Lancashire was invested with the Presidential Chain of Office by the outgoing Club President Tony Day.

Among apologies received had been those of Bob Howell, in the USA, Roger Newman and Rt Hon Sir Roger Gale, PC, MP. In his introduction Godfrey Lancashire spoke of the School's 450<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, which is celebrated in 2019.

In 1569 Queen Elizabeth 1<sup>st</sup> had been on the throne for 11 years, Shakespeare was 5, Walter Raleigh was at Oxford. As a boy Godfrey had always thought it was wonderful that the school was founded by a pirate, Squire Hardye of Frampton. Whether an actual pirate, privateer or not may be debatable, but there was a seagoing connection and tales of wrecks, and whatever his status he had great wealth in property in Frampton, Weymouth, Wyke and in Melcombe Regis and he endowed the school with money to construct the first building, adjacent to the site known now as Nappers Mite in South Street. In 1567 the people of Dorchester started work on the building and it was opened with pride in 1569.

Godfrey also thought it was, in modern parlance, "cool" that the school history records that in 1588 students were given a half day holiday to go to the Ridgeway above Weymouth and watch the Spanish Armada sail by. The first teacher was likely to have been the rector of St Peter's Church where a memorial to founder Thomas Hardye can still be seen today.

By the time of the Armada the Headteacher was Henry Harris who gained a BA and MA from Oxford and took up his post still only aged 17 – bright or what !

Without question the present Thomas Hardye School has a fine and proud history going back 450 years, producing leaders in all walks of life, always a Free School catering to the needs of the local community and what can be better than that. .

The new Chairman of the Hardyeans Club is Nick Grassby, whose school years were from 1993 to 1999. After working as a solicitor, Nick joined the family firm (Grassby & Sons) two years ago as a manager and funeral director.

Nick's late Grandfather, Clinton Grassby, was President of the Club from 1977 – 1980

At the beginning of Dinner, Chairman Godfrey Lancashire introduced Julia Moore, Chair of the Hardyeans Club Charitable Association, who gave an update on help given by the HCCA to former students and news of a substantial legacy received from the Estate of the Late Brian Freake, who had attended the Grammar School in the 1940s. She asked those present to consider giving regular donations to the HCCA so that it can continue to assist students in their further education.



*The new Club President Godfrey Lancashire*



*Tony Day with Guest Speaker Damien Lewis and Headteacher Mike Foley*

To stay

in touch

with your

Friends

Spring

2019

In  
this  
Issue

From  
the  
Headteacher

You Write

Report  
on  
2019  
Annual  
Dinner

Future  
of  
the Christmas  
Lunch

Around  
the  
School

Guest Speaker was author and journalist Damien Lewis who spoke about the importance of tolerance, how lack of tolerance was often behind wars, which he had reported on as a journalist and now as an author of books mainly about Special Forces operations during the Second World War and subsequent conflicts. In proposing the toast to The School he commended the sense of tolerance which was promoted, as well as academic excellence.

Replying on behalf of the School, Head teacher Mike Foley first thanked the Club for a donation of £2000 which would go towards purchase of a new lectern for the Theatre refurbishment and also towards furniture for the new Dining room. Secondly, he thanked the Club for arranging the date of the Dinner to avoid both the Six Nations and Crystal Palace Home Fixtures! Referring to the various fortunes of the School over its history, there were many challenges to face in the future. The Thomas Hardy School was open to all students, both from privileged and difficult circumstances, in Dorchester and District, as it had been at the time of its original covenant, to educate and instruct children of all degrees. He was very proud both of former pupils who had gone on to fantastic careers, and of the youngsters currently at the School. He was pleased to see the spirit of radicalism present at the School's foundation 450 years ago was still alive, and optimistic about the future while celebrating the past.



Out-going President Tony Day responded on behalf of the Club. He was sure that today's students would look back on their schooldays with fondness and recalled an amusing incident during his own first week at Wollaston House. Some 35 years after leaving school he served as Clerk to the Governors and Trustees and he would often look at the names of former Presidents of the Club, listed on the Board in the Conference Room. His job as President for the last three years had been made one of the least onerous due to the Club Council's support. He thanked them and wished Mike Foley and all the school staff the very best for the future.



Godfrey Lancashire was then invested with the President's Chain of Office and he thanked Tony Day for his support over the past three years and looked forward to his attending Council meetings as a Life Vice-President. He then introduced Nick Grassby as the new Chairman. Godfrey thanked Elizabeth Day for producing the floral table decorations and reminded those present about helping with the mock job interviews for Year 10 and 12 students. He recalled the Late Graeme Browne who had recently passed away and had been a great supporter of the Annual Dinner in the past. He also recalled the Head teachers of the past, including Miss Parkes of the 'Green School' and Mr Dawe of the Modern School, before proposing the Toast, 'Absent Friends' to close the evening.



*Some members of the catering team*





## *From the Headteacher*



This has been an exceptional term even by our own high standards. I was particularly proud of the team that brought home the Landrover 4x4 trophy following the national finals in Coventry. It is a competition to design a car from scratch that can be scaled up and made to work as a fully working vehicle. That means that it has to be researched, designed, manufactured and funded to a very sophisticated brief. Even the software has to be written by the team. We have won the regional finals on six different occasions but never really got close to winning the nationals against the best young engineering talent in the country from some of the most prestigious schools. The team of four are incredibly talented and three of them hope to go on to make a career in engineering (the fourth one is applying for medicine!); one has even been offered an apprenticeship by Landrover. It is daunting to think where these 4 might be in 10 years' time!

I also had the immense pleasure to attend evensong at Westminster Abbey sung by the school choir. Schools can only do so by invitation, following a rigorous vetting procedure. To attend as the headteacher was a proud moment in my career. We have since been invited back and I will try to remember to give early warning of the date in case any London based members would like to attend next year.

To complete the picture, three teams made it to the last rounds of the national football finals. The U-14 boys and the boys' first team were knocked out in the quarter-finals and the U-14 girls went one better to reach the semi-finals. We don't know of any Dorset team to have reached the final rounds before and we have never got this close, so to have three teams is very special. Although exam results are important, they are not everything. Sport, the arts, STEM, CCF, Duke of Edinburgh, volunteering.....all contribute to a rich and broad education and the best possible preparation for later life. Long may it continue.

Best wishes

**Mike Foley**

## *Staff Pen-portrait* – in this edition we feature **Lou Thompson, the School's Catering Manager.**

Lou has been Catering Manager at Thomas Hardy School since 2014, after a variety of posts including chef in ski resorts in Switzerland (Klosters) and Valloire, France, deputy restaurant manager in Tunbridge Wells, and Catering Manager at Kingston Maurward College, and Barrington Court in Somerset. She has also been a self-employed complimentary therapist in Weymouth and Dorchester, qualified in Natural Nutrition, Kinesiology and Reflexology combining a love of food and nutrition with new skills as a therapist to help people resolve their health problems using a range of therapeutic measures including diet and lifestyle changes. She also offers party and events catering to family friends and acquaintances and started a micro bakery supplying a local health food shop with sourdough bread.

Lou's parents are from Ghana, but she was born and grew up in Oxted, Surrey. moving to Dorchester in 1991. At school she liked practical subjects, food and nutrition, Textiles, Physical education and biology.

Lou started her catering career in a school kitchen as a Saturday job aged 13. Her passion has always been for events catering.

At Thomas Hardy School, Lou is responsible for Main Meals production for the main Kitchen, also menu planning and ordering. There are assistant cooks and catering supervisor and assistants with their own jobs,

but she says 'everyone mucks in with washing up as we go along and clearing down at the end of the day.

For the Sixth form dining area , there is an Assistant cook, and a Catering assistant, who are both responsible for serving customers food and drink throughout the day together with food preparation and cleaning. We work very much as a team. Although everyone has jobs that they usually do, everyone chips in and does everything.

Out of School, Lou likes to sail once or twice a week most of the year, and loves to ski when she can. She adds:' My husband and I do ballroom dancing classes from time to time. I like to walk, run and cycle although I have been a bit lazy lately. I enjoy cooking for friends'.

Some students have worked with us in the kitchen on work experience in the past. It would be great if we could offer a catering apprenticeship in the future.

I feel exceptionally privileged to have been given the opportunity to take over our brand new kitchen and dining rooms. I look forward to the challenge of further increasing our sales through maximising the use of our facilities for our students, staff and to external users.

***We send Lou and her staff the best of good wishes working in the new facilities, and if you want to see the sort of meals currently produced, check out the Thomas Hardy School Community Zone Canteen pages. School Dinners have come a long way!!***

### *Club functions - The Christmas Lunch - will it continue ?*

**On the subject of food**, the low turn-out for the last (post-Christmas) lunch was very disappointing. The Club Council are debating whether the lunch should continue or what members would like to see in its place. So far results from the Club 's Facebook page have not been too helpful. Should we try it one more time or it is time to say Goodbye to what was once a very popular event drawing up to 60 participants ? We acknowledge that time moves on and the 'younger generation(s)' perhaps no longer feel the need for a fairly formal meal. Perhaps locally organised get togethers, for a drink and maybe a meal, would work better. Do let us know what you think, either on Facebook or via this newsletter. The next edition would normally carry a booking form...but..???

## **Forthcoming Club and other events**

**Monthly Luncheons** take place on the last Thursday of the month at the Poet Laureate pub in Pummery Square, Poundbury. These are informal gatherings, 12.30pm onwards. Do come along!

**Annual Club v School Cricket Match** is arranged for **Wednesday 17 July** at 1.00pm at the Dorchester Recreation Ground. Contact Tony Foot to take part : [tonyfoot@maxgateproperties.co.uk](mailto:tonyfoot@maxgateproperties.co.uk)

**Date for your diaries: 2020 Annual Dinner** is scheduled for **Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March** and a guest speaker has already been organised – more details in the next issue!

## **Thomas Hardy School Community Lectures**

***The current series of Lectures has now concluded but more information will appear on the School website during the Summer***

*Venue: All lectures will take place in the School Theatre*

*Time: All lectures start at 7.00pm*

*Admission: Free of Charge, tickets available from school reception (or ring 01305 266064) and Tourist Information Centre (in Dorchester Library) from 9.00 am on release date (normally 2 weeks prior to each lecture). Maximum 4 tickets per person.*

*Donations are welcomed at the end of each lecture. (The money raised goes to charitable causes.)*

***Also check out the school website for other public events that may be of interest!***

## Congratulations

To the Rt Hon Sir Roger Gale, MP, who in February was sworn in as a member of the Privy Council

## Hardyans Club Contacts

**President:** Godfrey LANCASHIRE Life Vice-Presidents: Gordon Crocker, Anthony C W Day, Peter Foster, Hugh Griffiths, John Pearson

**Chairman:** Nick GRASSBY

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[www.facebook.com/groups/Hardyans](http://www.facebook.com/groups/Hardyans) is the official Club facebook page for news of Club members and friends. and check out the School site

[www.facebook.com/thomashardyeshool](http://www.facebook.com/thomashardyeshool) which links into the main

school website [www.thomas-hardye.net](http://www.thomas-hardye.net) on which can be found news of events at the school including the Community Lectures. See also [www.facebook.com/groups/452234394961667/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/452234394961667/) for news of Dorchester Secondary Modern; Thomas Hardy School, Dorchester, Dorset. There are other Thomas Hardy School-related facebook sites.



Find us on  
**Facebook**

Among recent posts: **Andrew Blackler** with a photo of Central Dorchester Scouts' Summer Camp in 1981; **Damien Lewis** with a 1980/81 Under 15 Colts picture; **Mark Miles**, who has written a spy thriller called *Shelter Rock*; and ex-Green School **Dottie North** nee **Ford** have posted; Also recently **Paul Matthams**, **Kelvin Bird**, **Chris Hopkins**, **Andrew Painter**, **Jonathan Pullen**, **Robin Attride**, **John Scott Harris** and **Tim Keats**. **Neil Archer** was looking for a back number of **the Durnovarian** and **Chris Stephens** was able to oblige

*Do have a look - make contact with old friends!*

## You Write

**RE 'Major' Willis** *There was quite a response to Ian Carr's query in the last Newsletter:*

In the latest Newsletter, Ian Carr asks for information about Major Willis, who taught Divinity at the School in the 1940s and 1950s.

I feel I ought to respond ( although I doubt that anything which I can now remember will come as news to anyone), since I have come to realise, quite late in life, that Major Willis probably influenced my thinking more than anyone at the School, except possibly the great and good Ralph Hill himself. Divinity was not a major, or even an examination subject, so this is a remarkable achievement.

Major Willis lived in Prince of Wales Road, on the side opposite where Godfrey Lancashire was brought up, and, like Walter Lancashire, sent his son to the School, which was then nearby. The Newsletter reporting David Willis's death a year or two ago may contribute more information about his father. As Ian says, he served in the Great War, and apparently had been a renowned high jumper in his youth. He could not have been as old as he looked, which leads me to think that his life had not always been easy. On his retirement from teaching, he took Holy Orders.

He adopted a very practical, open and broad, approach to his subject - quite the opposite of the strict "this is

what you must believe" approach which, in those days, was much more common. He confided, for example, that the miracles were an obstacle in the way of his Christian faith, since he could hardly bring himself to believe that the Son of God would have behaved like a music hall conjurer - presumably this was an obstacle which he overcame before taking the cloth. His object, I think, was to induce his pupils to try to reconcile religious faith with their sense of right and wrong - something which, sadly, I find increasingly difficult to do. He introduced us to T.S.Eliot's "The Wasteland" which was written in the aftermath of the First World War; on first reading this as an early teenager, I could make no sense of it ( I am not alone in that - when the poet read it aloud to George VI and his family, they could not suppress their giggling). For at least a term, Major Willis led us through the poem, leaving us to work out what we could, and explaining much that was beyond us.

The experience has stayed with me - a privilege and a real education. I owe him a lot.

Yours,

**David Culver**  
**(1946-1954)**

With reference to Ian Carr's question about this divinity teacher, my quirky memory recalls his full name as Rev Arthur Gilbert de Laval Willis. Googling this distinctive name results in a few hits which might be relevant, including his being rector of West Stafford in 1959. Details of Olympic Games entrants are available on line, but I couldn't find him in the high jump category (neither running nor standing - they did both in those days, it seems). I remember Rev Willis as a kindly, mild-mannered elderly gentleman teaching us in Wollaston House. Sadly, he had some difficulty in maintaining order - nothing to do with me of course!

**Dave Le Breton (1955 - 62)**

Likewise, **Kevin Kibbey** responded

I note on Wikipedia that an Arthur Willis (1893 - 1979) was a British athlete who competed in the Men's high jump at the 1924 Olympics.

*and in a 2013 edition of the Hardyans' Newsletter is this item:*

#### **OBITUARIES**

**WILLIS David Raphael de Laval**, 79 years of Donyatt, Somerset.

From Don Culver:

Contemporaries will be sorry to hear of the death at the age of 79 of David R. de L. WILLIS (c .44

-52). David was a quiet, self-effacing character, with artistic bent and engaging personality. *His father, A. R. de L. Willis*, was a teacher at the Grammar School, nominally of Divinity, but, especially for the Sixth Form, a kind of moral philosophy. His discussion group, which included girls from the Green School, was often a place of vigorous debate and a haven for teenagers in the deadly Sunday evenings of those times.

A First World War veteran, he won a blue for high-jumping at Cambridge, where he was a friend of Harold ("Chariots of Fire") Abrahams. Abrahams visited the School on at least one occasion, when he presented the cups on Sports Day. Both father and son deserve kindly and grateful remembrance.

From Don CULVER (43-51)

*And from Club Webmaster Terry Stone:*

As far as I remember Major Willis or 'Dagwood' as he was known by his students retired from teaching in 1956 or 7 and became Vicar of West Stafford where he served for some considerable time.

Regards  
Terry

**If any other members have a question for the Can You Help? Column, please get in touch – the answer must be out there somewhere!**

## ***OBITUARIES***

**Graeme Browne** (1943-50) died recently, more anon. Was one of the first boarders at Southfield House in 1943, aged 8. He was a great supporter of the Annual Dinner

### **David John Palmer**

I regret to inform you that my husband, David John Palmer, died on 6 January 2019 of cancer, aged 80.

He was very proud of being a pupil at Hardye's School from 1949 to 1956. He especially respected and was influenced for life by Mr Batty, the Art master at the time, and he often spoke to me over the years of his admiration for him.

The other teacher who he felt had had an especial influence on him was Mr S A Fox (my father) who, as well as being Mathematics master, ran the RAF side of the CCF. Seeing that David found it easy to learn to fly gliders and had a great love of flying, he encouraged and supported him to get as much flying experience as he could (including flying Chipmunks) as his dream was to be a Pilot in the RAF.

Sadly, although he passed all the interviews for the RAF, he was turned down as, unknown to him, he had a perforated eardrum. He then was persuaded by the father of one of his friends to consider studying to become an Architect, and so he left Hardye's School to study Architecture in London at the age of just 18. He led a very successful life both in Architecture and in the Civil Service, where he had an interesting, responsible and varied career.

He always felt he was fortunate to have attended Hardye's School and very much enjoyed reading the Hardyeans Club Newsletter about some of his old school friends. He felt sorry at not having been able to get to the Dinners over the years.

Thank you for your hard work keeping the Hardyeans Club going. I'm sure it means a great deal to many people as it did to David.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Deirdre (Fox) Palmer

### **Jeffrey Perks**

John Duckett advised in early April that Jeffrey Perks had passed away.....'He was in Southfield House from 1957 to 1962. I played in the 2nd XV with him and he was a good friend. His parents lived in Marnhull and his father was a Captain in the Royal Navy. He was involved in farming and I think lived near Plush. The funeral was held on 12<sup>th</sup> April

Further report hopefully in the next edition

### **Helen Rench**

The Hardyeans Club Council were saddened to hear of the death of Helen Rench, wife of the former Membership Secretary and Chairman of the Club, Bob Rench. Helen was a great support to Bob and the Club, particularly in helping to organise the raffle at the Annual Dinner for many years and also, when the newsletter was sent by post to some 150 members, Helen was to be found cheerfully folding and enveloping up the stack of paper.

***Most sincere condolences are offered to Bob Rench, and also to the relatives and friends of those mentioned above.***



## *Around and about the Thomas Hardy School*

This edition of the Newsletter has been rather tardy in production for which we apologise. As this issue was going to press, a lot of events were being planned at and around the School and here follows news of just a few, together with news of students national successes. Do have a look on the Thomas Hardy School website *News* pages and the Twitter feeds – there's lots of activity.

**A major fundraising Dinner** was being held on **Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> July**, and we understand tickets (at £50 per head) were virtually sold out

The black-tie dinner was to celebrate and raise funds for the new 'Hardye Rooms' dining facilities, currently being built and due for completion imminently. Last year the School won a bid for just over £2m to fund the project which will offer amazing new facilities. The seating capacity will double, there will be an outdoor balcony area and two performing arts studios for dance and drama. It will also be available to the wider community for use as a functions and conference facility, raising income for the school through lettings.

**Apollo – One Giant Leap On 19th July**, all Year 5s in the DASP (Dorchester Area Schools Partnership) pyramid, plus students from the Thomas Hardy School, alongside many professional musicians, will be taking part in a large-scale performance, organised by Dorchester Arts at Maumbury Rings. [www.moonburyrings.co.uk](http://www.moonburyrings.co.uk) celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first Moon landing.

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Adam Heaton who has just signed his scholarship contract with Yeovil Town Football Club. An amazing achievement for a talented young footballer. THS PE are super proud and wish him every success

### **Visual Arts**

As well as running a wide range of visits and clubs, the Art and Photography department offer a fantastic range of enrichment activities. Every year, Art and Photography students enter the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition Competition, with a chance to have their work displayed here. Last year, Emily Young, one of Thomas Hardy's Year 13 photography students was selected to have her work displayed over 2000 other entries. The Photography department are currently collaborating with Age UK, to put together a calendar, "Growing Old Disgracefully", which they plan to sell to raise money for the charity. As well as this, the Art and Photography department have links with renowned artists, photographers and illustrators. Last year Marc Wilson, Paul Cleden and Tim Warnes ran workshops for students.

**8 THS A level Photography students** have had work accepted for the **2019 Royal Academy Young Artists** Summer Show. This out of 6200 submissions nationwide. it continues 6 or more years of this success for the Art & Photography Dept <https://youngartists.royalacademy.org.uk/>  
*A fantastic achievement !*

**Thomas Hardy MFL Department** have started a crowdfunding initiative to raise money to help pay for a Foreign Language Assistant for A' Level language students. These assistants are invaluable for helping students with their language knowledge and pronunciation.

The Department were recently filmed by the BBC, who were interested in this novel initiative. The films were shown on BBC Spotlight (although these have now expired on i Player).

It was also reported in the Dorset Echo:

<https://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/17719597.dorchester-school-sets-up-justgiving-page-to-pay-for-teaching-assistant/> Please donate to the JustGiving Crowdfunding Page and help make it happen:

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/foreignlanguageassistants?>

Thank you for your support and please share.

*With thanks to the THS website, Twitter feeds and 6<sup>th</sup> Form webpages*