

CHB Alumni Newsletter

Spartam nactus es, hanc exorna

Issue No.2 | Autumn 2023



**KING EDWARD VI
CAMP HILL
SCHOOL FOR BOYS**

Educational excellence for our City

Welcome to the second edition of our Old Edwardian's Newsletter



1983—Gala Day, Soaking the Prefects

Dear Alumnus

Welcome to the second bumper edition of the Camp Hill Boys Alumni Newsletter, we hope you had an enjoyable summer, it now seems a long time ago. This is our second Newsletter and a special thank you goes to those who agreed to make a contribution towards it. We hope you enjoy reading it.

One of our key principles at CHB is to actively encourage independent thinking, self-reliance and social responsibility which extends to all our students past, present and future. Once a Camp Hill student always a Camp Hill student. We are extremely proud of all our past students and their achievements. Our Alumni family has shown that they are resilient, proud, determined, respectful and reflective learners who have adapted to life and the world around them as formidable citizens.

We always enjoy hearing the successes of CHB Alumni. If you have any news you would like to share, please drop us a line. Similarly, if you are able to support the school in anyway, be it speaking at a symposium, becoming a mentor, please do get in touch.

Whether you left in 1943 or 2023, we are always very happy to hear your Camp Hill tales! If you would like an individual tour or with a group of fellow classmates please get in touch, you are always welcome back.

Wishing you and your family a restful Christmas and happy, healthy 2024.

Camp Hill School for Boys Development Office

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Welcome to the World

Mr Duncan, former Head of PE and teacher



of English, who retired in 2021 welcomed baby Martha, his first granddaughter on 15 February 2023. Congratulations to Mark and his family from everyone at Camp Hill School for Boys.

In Fond Remembrance



Des Wright

Camp Hill 1957—1992
Head of Biology
Deputy Head

Sadly, passed away
12 March 2023

Aged 88

Our thoughts are with his family and friends

Newsletter articles: newsletter@camphillboys.bham.sch.uk

Development Office: alumni@camphillboys.bham.sch.uk

Headmaster's Welcome

Dear Alumni

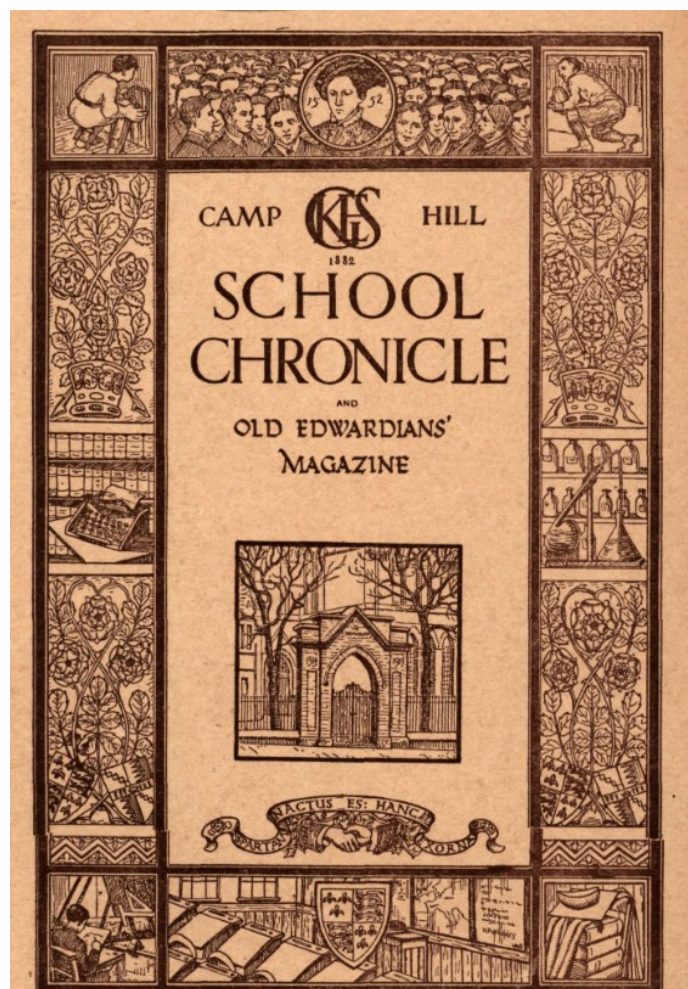
A warm welcome to the second edition of our Alumni Newsletter. Since I last wrote we have hosted many more official tours where I have been showing Old Boys around the school, some of whom had not been in the building for over 50 years! I love talking to our visitors and showing them around, but the best bit is hearing their stories from their time at Camp Hill, particularly the fond reminiscences of their former school masters. We have been successful in inviting back former teachers too, and it has been wonderful to see the former students engaging in wildly animated discussions with their old teachers.

You might also have heard that we have just launched our capital projects fundraising campaign, where we are hoping to raise funds to help build desperately needed new classrooms, dining space, toilets (very glamorous indeed), sports changing rooms and our first ever all-weather flood-lit sports pitch. If you are interested in giving your time, energy, expertise or money to this important cause then please contact Leanne, our Development Office Manager. Every gift counts, no matter how small, and your support will ensure that future generations of Camp Hill Boys will be served with the facilities and opportunities that they deserve.

So please read on and enjoy the stories from the Camp Hill archives, and if you would like to visit the school then please get in touch. I look forward to meeting more of you over the coming weeks and months.

Best wishes

Russell Bowen MA (Cantab) NPQH
Headmaster



If you would like to look at old copies of Vivat and the Chronicle check out the Foundation Archives below:

www.kingedwardvi-camphillforboys-archives.org

Calling all Alumni - join us via the CHB Alumni registration page and keep in touch:

www.camphillboys.bham.sch.uk

The CHB webpage has been updated providing links to school news of interest to ex-pupils, with news of its own activities and hopefully over time an expanding archive of material of interest to Old Edwardians of every generation.

If you are a former student or former member of staff we would love you to register your details to bring everyone together. If everyone asks one or two fellow alumni to join us, we will soon grow an even larger CHB community together. We post regularly on LinkedIn so keep a look out for future reunions and events.

In Fond Remembrance

John Cleak

Head of English

John started at Camp Hill Boys September 1956, the day the school opened at the new Kings Heath site. He retired 33 years later in 1989.

John sadly, passed away
March 2023

Follow King Edward VI
Camp Hill School for Boys
on social media



Upcoming Event...

As we head into a new chapter at Camp Hill Boys, our Alumni become an even more important part of the CHB story and we endeavour to hold more events to bring our alumni together over the next couple of years. We are starting off with a big **Open Day** and **BBQ** in June.



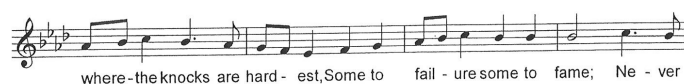
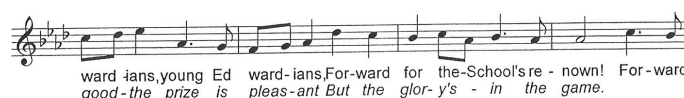
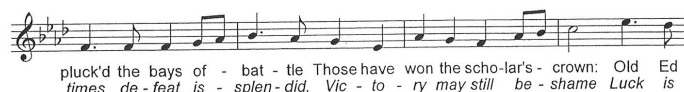
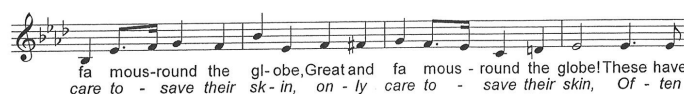
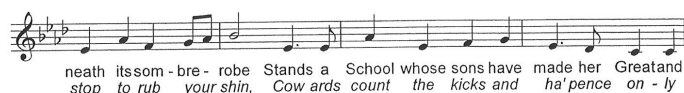
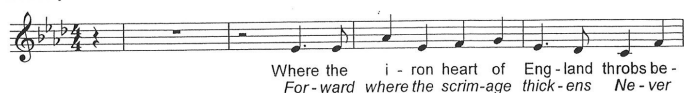
Remember this...

King Edward's School Song

Words by
Alfred Hayes

FORWARD!

Music by
Arthur Somervell



Development Office

Dear Alumni

We've been very busy in the Development Office over the last 6 months, the Headmaster and I have conducted many individual tours and small group reunions with Old Boys from near and far. We enjoy hearing their stories from snowy antics down the Chemistry corridor to creating masterpieces in Art which lined the walls in years gone by. We've noticed form rooms are very emotive and bring back many happy memories as do the rugby pitches and playground. I hope you enjoy reading some of the Old Boys' comments following their return to the school on page 5.

Our registration page on the CHB alumni webpage has reached over 300 registered Old Boys with more signing up each month. To help promote the webpage we post weekly on LinkedIn which seems to be the preferred social media platform.

I'm a Shropshire lass and lived in Shrewsbury all my life until 4 years ago. Peter Jack showed me a poem following the sad passing of Des Wright. 'A Shropshire Lad' was written for Des when he retired in 1992, I couldn't resist sharing it with you all on page 4.

We look forward to welcoming you to an alumni Open Day on Saturday 8 June, keep an eye on the webpage in the new year for more details and to register for the event.

A reminder that the best way to reach me is by email chbalumni@camphillboys.bham.sch.uk or via the [alumni webpage](#). I am looking forward to meeting many more of you in 2024.

Lea

Leanne Beckett

Development Manager & Pastoral Support

Call for Articles

Dear Readers

Our CHB Alumni Newsletter is distributed to all registered Alumni, Governors, donors and friends of the school. For upcoming issues, we would like to invite you to send us your articles describing your time at CHB :

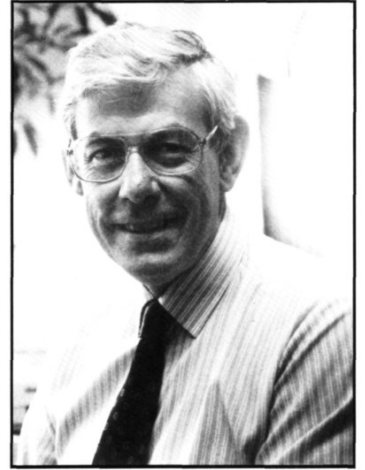
- ◇ Your full name
- ◇ The year you left the school
- ◇ Your current/former career
- ◇ Your best memory of CHB
- ◇ Teachers who made an impact
- ◇ The influence the learning has had on your career

Please share with us your thoughts and ideas. We welcome contributions from all over the world! Please send your articles to the following email address: newsletter@camphillboys.bham.sch.uk

In Memory of Des Wright

Raised in Shropshire, Des had a distinguished sporting career at Priory School in Shrewsbury, Shropshire, becoming Head Boy, House Captain, rugby colours, Athletics Captain, Hockey Captain and cross-county runner. He proceeded to graduate in Zoology at Birmingham University, and took a Diploma in Education at Lincoln College, Oxford. He started working at Camp Hill Boys School in 1957.

Des was a popular, active member of the school and was more of a friend than a colleague to many. He was passionate about his job and was always ready to support the students and staff of Camp Hill specifically running clubs and societies including the 'Family History Society'. He became Head of Biology in 1961/62 and when in 1964/65 a new House Master was needed for Seymour, Des was the obvious choice. He was well known for his sporting prowess, not everyone receives the ASA Gold Award for swimming one million metres in 5 years.



In September 1974 he joined Harold Greenaway as Deputy Head. He was characterised by always looking at ways that the support he provided could be improved in order to benefit the Camp Hill Community and was known for his positivity and can do approach. After serving the school for 35 years, Des left in 1992 to enjoy a richly-deserved retirement. Read the full article in the 1991-92 issue of the Chronicle on pages 8 and 9 [here](#)

It is with the deep sadness we learnt that Des passed away in March 2023, aged 88. The poem below was written about Des by his good friend and colleague Glyn Matthews on Des' retirement. Both Glyn and Des retired to the Lake District, the poem perfectly describes Des or 'Lefty' as he was known. Mr Wright will be sadly missed by everyone who ever met him.

A SHROPHIRE LAD BY A. E. HOUSEMASTER

He chose, from haunts of Severn,
The Camp upon the Hill,
To educate the heathen
With sympathy and skill.

He taught of birds and bats' wings,
Of bees and all things live,
While treating wasp and gnat stings,
And faintings in room five.

Societies he guided
With nous and expertise,
Much thought and time provided
For searching family trees.

His lore of Natural History
He selflessly employed,
The magic and the mystery,
The birds he so enjoyed.

Most faithful House supporter,
He urged his men to shine,
Exhorting sporting slaughter,
Sedately from the line.

And School teams felt his radiance,
On bleak November days:
"Ne'er mind the kicks and ha'pence,
Annihilate Five Ways!"

He supervised excursions
And trips throughout the land:
His end-of-term diversions
Meticulously planned.

For wastrels and for wizz-kids,
His praise was praise enough:
He coached the NatWest Quiz kids,
An academic Clough.

He soothed the new-boys' trembles,
Dried tears with tact and care;
Quelled riotous assemblies
By scowling from his chair.

Cold coffee, unchewed dinners,
With resignation bore,
As queues of saints and sinners
Stretched endless from his door.

Infrequent relaxation:
He left his judgement seat,
Swam lengths with dedication
With Glyn and BAT and Pete.

Probationers and prefects
Attended every word;
He probed the system's defects,
The heartless, the absurd.

With calm collected features,
When angry words were said,
He pacified the teachers,
Then pacified the Head.

He dreams of Lakeland beauty,
Far, far from bustling bells,
Intending Litter Duty
Will smarten up the fells.

G D Matthews

Old Edwardian's return



Dr Saket Singhal brought back 3 good friends for the first time since they left in 1985. The Headmaster gave them a tour of their Alma Mater and they enjoyed meeting Peter Jack and George Cookson who both still work at the school.



Read Alistair's article on page 6

Many of you may recognise former Old Boy, Deputy Head, Head of Sixth Form and teacher of History Alistair Bulloch (far left on the photograph). Alistair brought a group of close friends who stayed in touch with each other since they left CHB in 1970. They visited the school at the start of the new academic year—60 years from the day they started at Camp Hill.

They reminisced with the Head and enjoyed walking the familiar corridors and classrooms telling each other of the times they were in trouble or had a laugh at their teacher's expense.



In July Dip Chandra (1978) returned to the school for a visit and tour with the Head. Whilst he visited he met with a couple of former teachers including Peter Jack (pictured) who remembered him fondly.

Dip now lives in the USA and tries to visit the UK whenever he can. He will be supporting the school and it's current students by offering training on professional skills and techniques to enhance their future careers and life experiences.



Mark Hayman (1972) brought his daughter along for a visit to his former school in October. They both enjoyed looking round and pointing out key places that stirred most memories for Mark. Mark found the whole experience incredible. George Cookson found Mark's completed Annual Report and we sent it on to him following his visit.

If you have any photographs you'd like featured in the next newsletter please email them to:

newsletter@camphillboys.bham.sch.uk



"Your Alumni Voices"

"I left Camp Hill in 2014 and visiting earlier this year was a nostalgic journey filled with heart-warming moments. As I stepped onto the familiar grounds, a rush of memories flooded back, evoking a sense of belonging and happiness. Meeting my old teachers, who had once shaped my academic journey, was incredibly uplifting. Their smiles and warm greetings reaffirmed the lasting impact they had on my life. Walking through the school corridors, I relived cherished moments, from classroom discussions to laughter-filled breaks. The school grounds echoed with the sounds of students, reminding me of the vibrant community that had made my school days unforgettable. It was a truly positive experience, reminding me of the enduring bonds and valuable lessons that Camp Hill had imparted upon me and many others".

Shuranjeet Singh (2014)

"I will forever remember with deep fondness the opportunity to spend an afternoon visiting Camp Hill School for Boys nearly 40 years after I last set foot in it. I am grateful for the time spent by the current Headmaster, Russell, in showing me around the school in an unhurried manner, to have the opportunity to meet with teachers who had been present at the school when I was there and who, remarkably, are still involved in school activities, and to relive some fond memories of my time spent at the school between 1978 - 1985"

Saket Singhal (1985)

"A recent visit to the school was an encounter with much that was familiar and much that was changed. Walking around with George Cookson, who arrived at Camp Hill when I was a fifth-form pupil, conversation inevitably turned to masters and boys whom we knew half a century ago. Many of the former were memorable characters; some eccentric in ways that would be unacceptable within today's more regimented system.

Amongst the dozens who taught me, one man stands out. He died only last year at the age of 92. His name was John Cleak and he taught English. He possessed a sharp mind and an equally sharp tongue, and was an exceptional teacher. Mr Cleak had a crucial influence on my life, brought about in two ways. Firstly, his teaching at A-level inspired an interest in the subject which was unique to my experience at the school. It awakened an intellectual engagement which had not been the case until then. Secondly, Mr Cleak recognised my interest and ability. His encouragement was crucial in my gaining a place at Birmingham University. This led me to a career in teaching, mostly at university level.

We are fortunate indeed if, at pivotal moments in our lives, somebody helps us to find the right path. Many years after leaving Camp Hill, I met Mr Cleak on a golf course and thanked him. Times may have changed, with progress to university now virtually assured. What has surely not changed, and never will, is the capacity for great teaching to transform young lives."

Mark Hayman (1972)

"I hadn't been back since 1966, having lived in the US for 40 years. It was both moving and eye opening. I gained the impression the standards of the school were even higher than when I was there from 1959 to 1966. The sports facilities were greatly improved. That was clear. A memorable visit and tour by the Head".

Robert Oxenburgh (Owen) (1966)

"The sixth form block (including the teaching rooms named in memory of Phil Bates, former Deputy Head and Head of Maths) and music room was newly built in my lower sixth year - that was very important to me.

My first attempt at university (Sheffield Control Engineering) was not happy and I left in the first year. I graduated from Manchester Computer Science (Alan Cholmondeley's recommendation—absolutely bang on) in 1978 so I thought I should return to Camp Hill to tell them. I spoke, of course, to Norah Downey. She said "you were never really happy here, were you? The only time you were was when you were playing on that bloody stage of yours!" If Harry Greenaway hadn't asked me if I'd like to join the lighting crew my life would have turned out very differently.

I played a practical joke on Geoff Sanders (Deputy Head) at the end of my last assembly ever. I arranged for a large amount of confetti to fall on his head from the stage loft, just as he dismissed us with "1J, Lead OFF!" As I was ending my conversation with Mrs Downey a voice from down the lobby said "Richard Birdsall. I want to talk to you. A small matter of some confetti."

In spite of Norah's acutely accurate observation (it made me realise just how important the Headmaster's Secretary is), I look back on my Camp Hill days rather nostalgically."

Richard Birdsall (1971)

Class of 1970 Reunion

Old Boy & former History Teacher, Head of Sixth Form and Deputy Head Alistair Bulloch 1965—1970 and 1974—2013



In early September, a small group of Alumni from the Class of 1970 visited the School. They have remained in contact with one another since leaving and still meet every 3 months or so for lunch and a few drinks. Not all were able to attend this particular gathering (the normal number is about 10/12) but John Kimberley, convenor of the group, subsequently circulated a resume of the morning's events to the group and to several others around the country with whom he remains in contact.

A tour of the School impressed the group. Relatively minor changes such as the boxing in of staircases, the one-way system and the loss of the Fives courts and the old gym were noted but what stood out to those who had not been back since 1970 (or 1968 in some cases) were the changes that had taken place because of the increased school population, the growing bias towards the Sciences and the need to modernise. So, the Sports Hall, the new Science suites, the Library and the extended Sixth Form Block attracted a lot of attention. The tour was very enjoyable and I would encourage others to contact the School and see just how far it has moved on since their days – they will receive a very warm welcome from Leanne Beckett, as we surely did.

In the wake of the visit, I reached out to the wider group and sought their views on how Camp Hill had affected their careers. I had replies from 2 of my old colleagues – the first time I'd had contact with them since 1970.

Richard Birdsall recalls two significant influences. Harold Greenaway (Head of Science then Deputy Head), with whom he had a particular rapport, encouraged him to join the stage crew and Richard credits this with putting him on the road to his eventual career as a telecoms systems engineer. The other influence was Glyn Matthews (Head of Mathematics) who taught him the value of a sense of humour.

Jonathan Cole acknowledges that Camp Hill provided him with the stable environment and academic foundation he needed to approach his medical career but, more specifically, is grateful to Des Wright for changing his life. Des, who along with Neil Holmes, had stimulated Jon's interest in Biology, called him into his office one day and suggested that he try for Oxbridge which Jon duly did (he went to Brasenose College, Oxford). Jon has since gone on to enjoy a very successful academic, medical and publishing career and continues to work in the NHS as a Professor of Clinical Neuroscience. His favourite teachers were Des Wright and Neil Holmes (Biology) and Glyn Matthews who "took me from outside Maths looking in, to inside it, understanding and enjoying it. I'll never forget that." Jon also remembers "a lovely English teacher in our first years who looked way past retirement age, but who had such a love for the subject." That would have been one of the legends of the Camp Hill staff, WW (Bill) Drysdale, who joined Camp Hill in 1928.

I personally was so enamoured of Camp Hill that I returned in 1974 to teach History, remaining another 39 years until I retired in 2013. Often asked how it felt to return and work with people who had previously taught me, I can say that there was no problem in doing so and that I was welcomed with open arms. I was fortunate to have a Head of Department in Mike Southworth (one of the greatest teachers in the entire history of the School) with whom I enjoyed a very strong working and personal relationship which made it easy to remain. I might also add that the students were brilliant in many respects and it was a pleasure to help just a little with their education.

And, lastly, I still retain fond memories of those days in the 60's, in part because of lifelong friends made in class and on the playing fields and, in part, because of a clutch of decent teachers who reinforced my ambition to teach. In particular, there was obviously Mike Southworth but also John Smith (English), Geoff Sanders (History), Glyn Matthews (Mathematics), Dick Spiby (Physics), Jim Parke (Geography) and Roy Crittenden (Chemistry) to name but a few. It was a splendid environment in which to spend our formative years - I didn't realise when I arrived from Scotland in 1965 that Camp Hill had not always provided such a superb environment in which to teach young men, it being less than 10 years previously that it had moved from inner city Camp Hill on the Stratford Road.

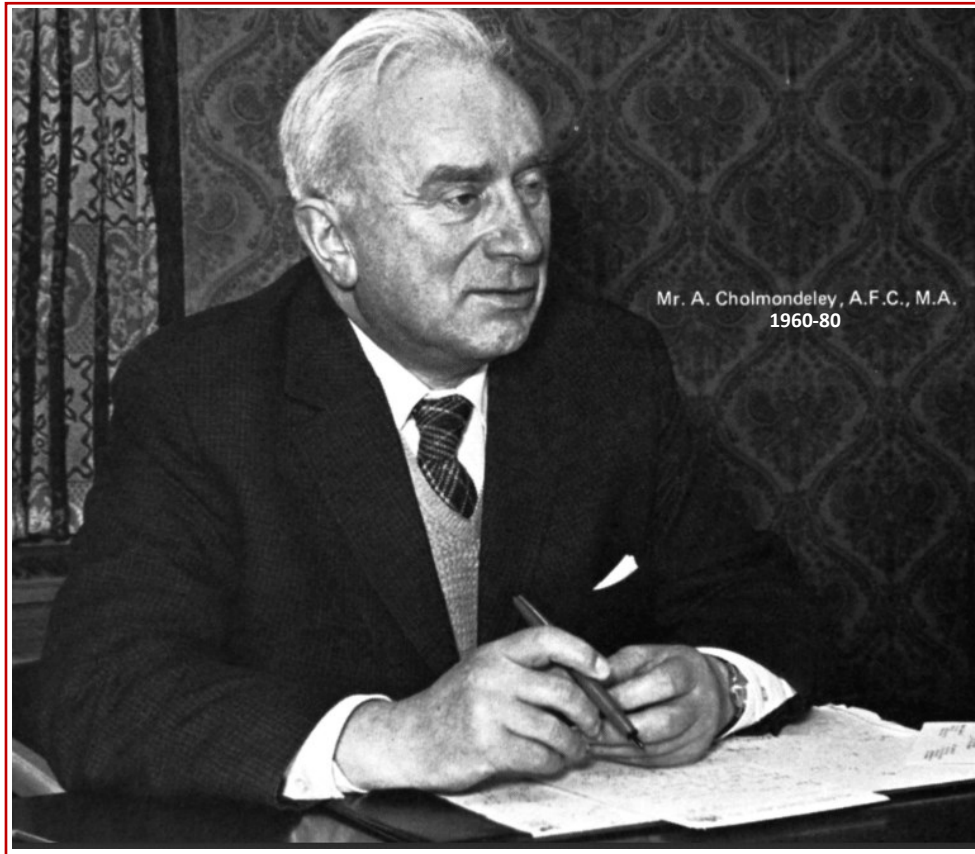
AJ Bulloch

Tony Appleby Caricatures

Many 'Old Boys' will recognise the caricatures of their teaching staff, drawn by CHB's very talented Head of Art Tony Appleby.



Former CHB Headmasters



A trip down memory lane...



The October 1998 Mediterranean Cruise

An excerpt from T Phipps diary of the trip...

Unfortunately, those people who had purchased (usually thick, usually black) 'designer goods' in the morning suffered for their hubris in the afternoon by baking in the sun. Slowly. Those more discerning customers who knew their stuff (Kash...!) merely contented themselves with laughing at those less well informed, pointing out 'errors' in the style of their clothing.



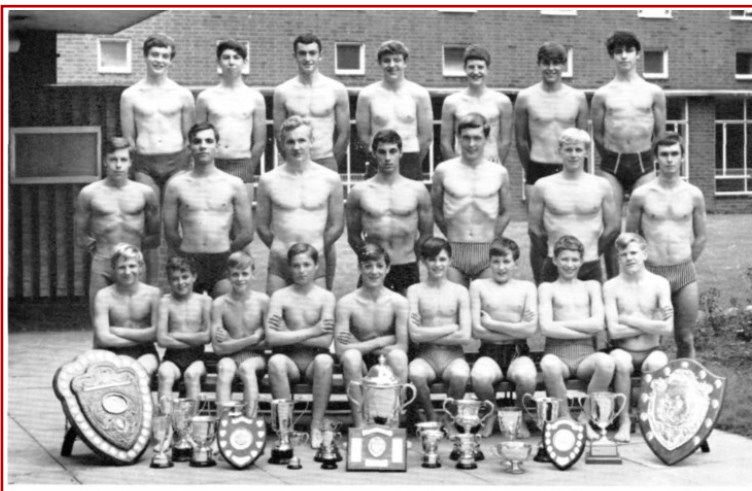
West Midlands Chemistry Quiz 2015

Dr Taylor reported on the quiz as follows...

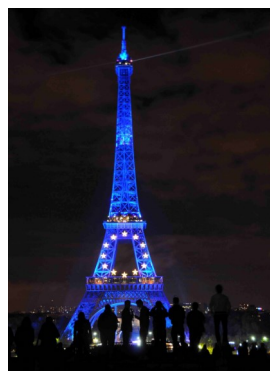
CHB were looking to regain the trophy after narrowly losing to KES the previous year. KES and CHB were pitted against each other again in the final and it all came down to one of the rounds and being able to tell the time.

Teams were asked to imagine a clock where the numbers on the face were replaced by the first 12 elements of the Periodic Table. They then had to describe which elements the big and little hands were pointing to, at specific times. CHB scored 9 out of 14, KES scored 0 after they confused the big hand and little hand.

With an unassailable lead CHB cantered to victory 74-59 and brought the trophy home for the 10th time in 13 years.



School Swimming Team, 1966



P
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S

2
0
0
8



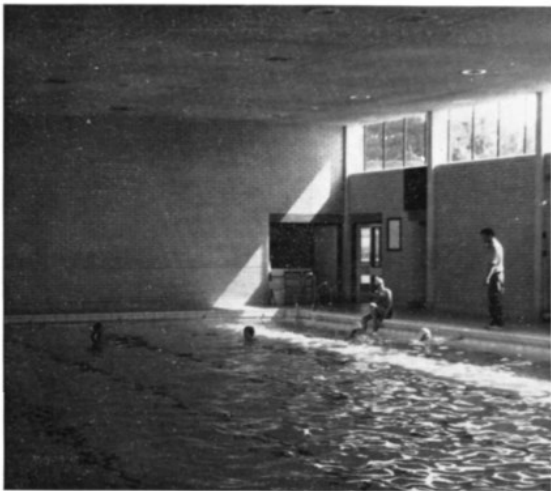
An informal photograph of the XI, 1961.

More Camp Hill memories...

To intelligent young men of character the Midland Bank offers an interesting and worthwhile career. Opportunities for promotion are numerous and the Bank gives every assistance to those who have the will to succeed, by providing comprehensive training at every stage. A considerable proportion of the Staff hold managerial appointments with remuneration ranging from approximately £1,450 to £3,500 per annum: the highest posts within the Bank, for which the rewards are much greater, are open to all.

Age on Appointment	Usual Qualifications	Minimum Remuneration per annum on Entry	Central London
17/18	A good General Certificate of Education	£275/310	£335/370
20/21	As above, Subjects at Advanced level would be an advantage	£365/390	£425/460
22/26	Applicants, including those with University degrees, will be considered	£420/665	£490/740

An excerpt from a job description for Midland Bank - December 1959



The Swimming Pool was opened on Tuesday 19th September, 1972 by the Bailiff, MR. R. J. GARRATT, D.F.C., and dedicated by the Bishop of Aston, the RT. REV. M. GREEN.

(Photos H.G.G.)



And even more
Camp Hill
memories...



Saint Malo
France

2006



So many happy memories...



Do you recognise any of these faces from the 2009 performance of CHAOS (Camp Hill Amateur Operatic Society)

Grand Charity Soccer Match programme

Price 3d

Proceeds from match devoted to 'World Refugee Year'

Price 3d.

KING EDWARD'S CAMP HILL SCHOOL FOR BOYS

GRAND CHARITY SOCCER MATCH

MEMBERS OF STAFF

v.

THE SCHOOL

on Monday, April 4th. Kick-off 4.10p.m.

MEMBERS OF STAFF Colours:-varied.

G.W. Swinden H. Brown

D.C.D. Marden R.A. Jones D.I. Thomas J.N.C. Clerk

J.H. Riddale R. Watson J.D.M. Wright G.D. Matthews B.A. Tomkinson

Referee: F.G. Thain.

D.G. Mallen C. Protty D.R. Williams J.D. Bradford M.J. Parkes

K.A. Austin K.R. Bates J.N. Rutledge

R.D. Smith R.J. Palmer

R.S. Tranter Colours:-claret and blue hoops.

THE SCHOOL



Sweeney Todd 2009

Even more memories...



1st XV RUGBY 2004/2005



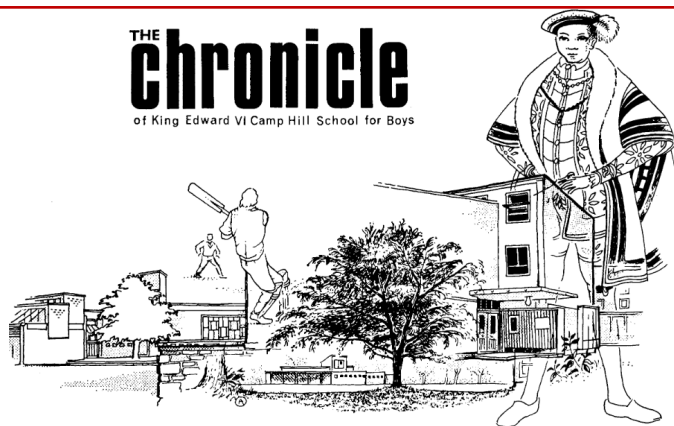
The Chronicle 1989-90

U15 XI - Winners of the Docker Shield Birmingham Schools Cricket Competition

More Camp Hill memories...

THE chronicle

of King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys



The CHRONICLE front cover 1973—80

1975: Two things happened this year—the commissioning of another school minibus and the inauguration of the Association of Friends of the School (AFS).



School Performance 1999 - 'Grease'

Mr Southworth and his cast had 5 weeks to put this show together!



Prestatyn —2000

An excerpt from D Hewings memories of a welsh adventure at Plas Y Brenin, Snowdonia...

Again, it rained throughout the day, but this didn't dampen people's spirits. As the weather was so rough, we couldn't go on the canoes individually, so we were split into teams and had to tie canoes together to make a kind of raft. We then had a race to the other end of the lake. Our team got stuck on a rock, so we decided to turn back and go down the rapids at the other end of the lake instead. No one fell in from our group, but apparently numerous people had fallen in the day before!



The new English classrooms, library and Sixth Form study area were finally completed in June, 2008.



LEAVING A LEGACY

Regardless of the size, legacy gifts are vital in helping charities like The Schools of King Edward VI in Birmingham to be able to continue their work in investing in top quality education and facilities meeting the needs of our future generations. After providing for your family and friends you may wish to leave a charitable gift in your will to support the continued development of CHB.

KEEP IN TOUCH

We're always keen to keep in touch with the Camp Hill School for Boys Alumni community. Whether it's memories of your school days, stories of your travels, career details or reunions.

Please email alumni@camphillboys.bham.sch.uk with your news

**"A caring and inclusive community where everyone
can do and be their best"**

