

Winter 2016

Edition 31

# Small Beginnings

The newsletter of the former pupils of the old Barling School is published for the benefit of all ex-pupils, staff and friends of the school

## BOOKMARKS

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## Reunion Lunches

A group of us meet for lunch every few months to catch up on news, socialise and plan the main reunion events. We meet at the:

**Castle Inn, Little Wakering**

**Our Next Reunion**

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

**12.15 to 3.00 p.m.**

Anyone with an interest in our school or area will receive a warm welcome.

All friends and partners are welcome.

## Foreword by Peter Griffiths

### The Main Barling School Log Book

I have been able to peruse the main Barling School Log Book and I have included in this newsletter some comments on and extracts from it. After 115 years of use, it is in a tatty state now. Paying for it to be rebound could well be a future initiative for our group. The references to Eva Cook contain a name that I have removed in case living relatives are sensitive about it. I wonder why head teacher Mr Shepherd seems to have had reservations about him.

### From School to Retirement

Mike Prior has put pen to paper again and reminisces back to when he was a pupil of the House of Troy at Southend High School for Boys. He is old enough (78) to have done National Service, serving in Malaya and Ceylon. He and many others, including myself, have been extremely fortunate to enjoy good employment prospects without having to face a war first hand.

## Our Last Lunchtime Meeting

Around 30 of us met at The Castle on January 9<sup>th</sup> for a very jolly social gathering. Our numbers were boosted by newcomers and, as always, a warm welcome was extended to them and to our regulars.

In our 'business' discussion, we covered the following topics:

- Our intention to organise a big reunion in 2016;
- News of our revived newsletter and our new website (Richard Kirton);
- Finances (David Bailey);
- Laurie Street brought us up to date on two local issues: the dilapidated Parish Hall (formerly the WI) in Barling, which is now to be refurbished; and the proposal to build a new housing estate between Barrow Hall Road and Oldbury Road.

*Peter Griffiths*

## Carnival Float in 1965



I was sorting through some of my old photographs and came across the above attachment which reminded me of our local carnival held in 1965.

Unfortunately our float which was designed to be a four poster bed mounted on bicycle wheels and towed by my car did not make it to the start of the carnival in Barling.

Our float started out from the British Legion Club car park (Just as well Laurie was not on point duty that day as I could have picked up a ticket for towing an unsafe load.) and headed for Barling where the floats were to be judged prior to the start of the procession. All was going well until we turned into Little Wakering Road when

the bicycle wheels decided to part company from the metal bed frame.

It was at this point we decided to abandon the float and a kind resident agreed that we could park the float in the driveway of her house, providing we promised to remove it before her husband returned home that evening, which we did. To protect the identity of those wild young teenagers in the photograph I have not included their names. However, I can tell you one of them is me and another is my brother Vic!

Hopefully this e-mail will trigger other memories of past local carnival events which regularly took place for over twenty years or more.

*Dave Lee*

## *The Demise of Great Wakering Salvation Army*

My name is Major William Fraser, now a retired Salvation Army Officer living in Great Wakering. It was my very sad task fifteen years ago to close down the Great Wakering Corps of The Salvation Army. The Army had to close because the Corps members had gone down to a level which was too low to continue. Those who were left transferred to the Shoeburyness Corps, and sadly only two from Wakering are still alive both in their 90's with only one living in the village.

Regarding the Tuba, when the Corps closed all usable instruments were passed onto Shoeburyness, however I do remember that a number of instruments were not usable due to their age and condition. The Salvation Army insure every instrument and everyone is inspected every year, which means they all have an identification number or makers mark on them and every Corps has a Band Register and as all the 'Books' were sent to Shoeburyness Corps there could be still a paper trail for this tuba.

*Major William Fraser*

### *The 'Tuba'*

Phil Couchman raised the query some time ago about a tuba donated by the Oliver family to Great Wakering Salvation Army and he responded to William Fraser's email as follows:

*Gentlemen, thank you so much for the emails concerning the Great Wakering Corps and for raising the possibility of a paper trail via the Shoeburyness Corps - most interesting indeed. I will forward this information to my friend Norman, who is currently still playing this tuba in the Eythorne Silver Band (Near Dover, Kent).*

*The instrument may have shifted from a Salvationist setting to a Baptist Church band, but Norman is one of three bass players in the band and much of the music played consists of hymns, carols and marches from Salvation Army scores. My father (& Norman) jointly founded the band in 1965 with a considerable amount of help and advice from the Dover Corps of the Salvation Army.*

*My Grandparents were Salvationists at the Folkestone Corps, so Dad was brought up to be a good Christian, married a Baptist girl in '57 and did the gentlemanly thing by following Mum who worshipped in the Baptist Church. He often used to confide that he was and always remained a Salvationist at heart!*



Should anybody be interested in joining The Salvation Army, the nearest Corps can be visited at Frobisher Way, Shoeburyness, Essex, SS3 8UT.  
Telephone: 01702 291500  
Email: [info@salvationarmyshoeburyness.com](mailto:info@salvationarmyshoeburyness.com)

*Phil Couchman*

# **Barling School Log Book 1901-1950**

## **Some Random Extracts from the Early 1920s**

### **Foreword by Peter Griffiths**

*School Log Books were kept by the head teachers of state schools from the start of compulsory education (following the 1870 Education Act) until the 1980s. There was no official cut-off date and even the Department of Education does not know why the practice fell away. Some heads, like Sue Taylor at Barling, continued to write in them into the 1990s and perhaps a few still do. The Log Book provides a fascinating picture of the educational, cultural and social life of Barling and I have included below a few interesting extracts by head teacher at the time, Mr Shepherd.*

### **Actual Log Book Extracts**

**1920 Jan 5** - School re-opened after usual Xmas Holiday. During Holiday on Dec 30th Mrs A Bentall of Earls Hall Prittlewell gave the children an excellent treat.....The children after tea were amused by a gramophone (sic) and also by a clown.

**1921 Sep 1** - Eva Cook commenced as Pupil Teacher here - appointed for four years.

**Sep 12** - Eva Cook (P.T.) absent today - gone to London with father to have her eye attended to as advocated by Medical Officer.

**Sep 19** - Eva Cook (P.T.) returned to school this morning but must not use her eyes until fresh glasses have been received.

**1922 Jan** - Eva Cook (P.T.) taking Miss Eve's class during her absence.

**1923 Feb 12** - Eva COOK (P.T) Transferred to Great Wakering School. Inattention to home studies and distracting influences, chiefly boy acquaintances in my opinion, caused her to do badly at Xmas Terminal Examinations at Centre. My observation is borne out by assistants and others in the district. One character A..... C..... is I know a very undesirable friend for a future teacher.

### **Eva Cook by Peter Griffiths**

*Eva Gertrude Cook was born on August 4th 1907. Thirteen years later, on August 30th 1920, she was admitted to Barling School, along with her sister Doris (10) and brother Frank (6). Previously, they had all gone to a school in South Tottenham. Now the family, including the father, Samuel, were living in Great Wakering.*

*Officially, Eva left our school on July 22nd 1921, but she stayed on as a Pupil Teacher (P.T.); that is, she intended to be a teacher and was given simple teaching jobs under the supervision of the head teacher.*

*Article by  
Peter Griffiths*

## Firemen's Children's Party 1945



During the war my Dad and Mum (Arthur and Eva Wiseman) frequently arranged dances in Great Wakering village hall, I presume on a Saturday night. Frankie Howard would often turn up and entertain the dancers with his latest jokes etc., especially as this was very close to Shoebury where he was stationed during the war and he became a frequent visitor.

Going back to the dances, tea was served during the interval, the milk being supplied by Mr Bentall the farmer. I was also told by my Dad that one Christmas Mr Bentall turned up with a crate of oranges (no questions asked) but he was very specific that they were for the children only!!

Dad also told me that he treated the floor of the hall with some candle wax to make it easier for dancing.

Has anyone else any information about the dances. Who played the music etc.? The above photo was taken at a Firemen's' children's party. I think this could have been the Christmas after the war ended in 1945. I am standing on a chair at the end of the table. Can anyone else recognise themselves?

*Carol Osborne (née Wiseman)*

## **Mike Prior from School to Retirement**

Thanks to the teachers at Barling School, in particular Mr. Learmond, I managed to pass the 11 plus exam and was offered a place at Southend High School although I would have preferred going to Rayleigh Tech. Still, parents insisted, and I was outfitted with the green blazer and cap.

At first, it was a strange experience having different teachers for each subject and referring to each other by surname but I soon got used to it. I enjoyed the science subjects (apart from Biology - UGH!) Maths and Woodwork. History and Geography were quite interesting but I wasn't too keen on Languages and English Lit. I was never much of a sporting type but I liked the idea that everyone could contribute by being awarded House Points for achieving a set standard in each event. I found that I could throw things and won points for my House with Javelin, Discus and Cricket ball.

I managed to get a few 'O' levels including, much to my surprise, French. Then I entered the job seeking school leavers group applying for posts on Foulness and GPO Telephones. I had interviews for both. I had sound advice on interviews from my Uncle Jack, "Polish your shoes. Tell them what you know and let them find out what you don't".

I heard nothing from either of these interviews and a friend told me there were vacancies at Ekco and I walked straight into a job there. Two days training and I was put on production line testing. The TV chassis would come down the line and we testers had to plug them into a test rig, make sure they passed and send them down the line for assembly. The noise was tremendous and, if you were silly enough to walk behind the assembly ladies, you risked getting burns as they flicked their soldering irons over their shoulders.

After 8 weeks at Ekco I was offered a 2-year apprenticeship with GPO which I accepted. Then a few weeks into my GPO career I was offered a post on Foulness but, as I was enjoying being a telephone-engineering apprentice, I declined the offer. These two years seemed to fly by. We spent time with all the different engineering disciplines from digging holes and putting up poles to telephone exchange construction and maintenance. We had day release to attend Southend College and residential training courses at Bletchley Park. At the end of my 2 years, I managed to achieve the City and Guilds Telecom Technicians Certificate and was promoted from Apprentice to Technician.

Then came National Service. As a telephone engineer I was destined for the Royal Corps of Signals at Catterick. That's another story which I may relate in the future. It includes my time in Malaya and Ceylon helping hold back the Communist Hordes. After 'demob' I was back in Southend as a Telecommunications Technician and was assigned to the External Planning and Development Group. We were housed in a converted stable behind the Telephone Managers Office at the junction of Victoria Avenue and Dowsett Avenue. After several years we all moved into a new building in Victoria Avenue where I continued as a Planner until I took early release in 1992.

GPO Telephones became a Corporation called British Telecom. This heralded a change from the old Civil Service mentality where every screw, nut, bolt and washer had to be accounted for to a much more streamlined customer orientated attitude and procedures. I had witnessed some amazing developments in the telecommunications field. The change from lead to polythene sheathed cables, from analogue to digital transmission, introduction of fibre optics. The telephone exchanges changed from the manually operated switchboards through the electro-mechanical Strowger and Crossbar equipment to computer controlled electronic switching.

In 1993 BT offered to roll out fibre optics to every customer provided they could carry entertainment. To borrow a phrase "we had the technology". I know because I was recalled as a consultant to be part of the group which was to cost this project. There was a lot of talk about the "Information Superhighway". The government of the day turned this offer down because it was deemed unfair to all the private telecommunications firms that had sprung up when BT was privatised. They were too busy "cherry picking" the lucrative parts of BT's business.

Just think, we could have had super fast broadband and cable thieves would be out of business. It's very different now - job opportunities for young people are few. We no longer have the state owned utilities which used to train apprentices. That was all lost during the "Age of Greed" when everything was flogged off so competition would drive down prices (that hasn't worked either). Directors, Board members etc. got their noses in the trough and our bloke got a Knighthood. I remember his quote on receiving this honour; "A tap on the shoulder for me was a pat on the back for BT". I think Macmillan hit the nail on the head when he criticised Maggie for "Flogging off the Family's Silver".

We were being downsized and outsourced and gradually losing control of our network. There were reasonable early release packages being offered so I grabbed the chance to leave. One little niggle convinced me it was time to go - we received a memo telling us how to explain to members of the public why our CEO deserved his colossal salary and bonuses. It was sad in a way, I had made a lot of good friends, and particularly the chaps who used to carry out the work my group had planned. An occasional meeting in a pub helped overcome numerous problems.

I suppose lately there are a few apprenticeship opportunities but some of those are just cheap labour or have no full-time career at the end. The trend seems to be to "Go to UNI". Hopefully, every one will get a well-paid job so they can pay off the fees. Still I don't regret my decision to leave BT and to take up employment as a part time apprentice picture framer at Star Frames - Thanks Jeanne!

*Mike Prior*

## ***Before the days of Health & Safety and Smartphones***



I think that this photograph was taken in July 1955 . It shows children sitting on the wall of the British Legion Club and captures those days when children's play time was not restricted by Health & Safety regulations and Smart Phones had not been invented. From left to right: Christine Belton, David Belton, Dave Lee, Roger Clements, Jim Ketchen, Vic Lee and Eddie Ellis.

*Dave Lee*

## Great Wakering Sports and Activity Centre

In September 2011, Great Wakering Sports Centre closed leaving the community with no access to sports facilities. Now, great new sporting opportunities have been created at Great Wakering Primary School, thanks to a National Lottery Award. Awards in excess of £72,000 have funded improvements to the school's sports hall, including a sprung floor.

A climbing wall has been added and outside existing hard areas have been converted to provide two floodlit ball courts. The sports pavilion has been refurbished with new changing room and showers. You may know of some groups of people in the village who could benefit from all of the activities on offer. There are also other great facilities including:



- Badminton Court £10 per hour
- School Hall from £20 per hour
- Netball Court / Playground from £10 per hour
- Field / Football Pitches (5,7,9 a-side pitch sizes) from £10 per hour
- Climbing Wall (own instructors) from £25 per hour
- Bouncy Castle Parties £100 for 2 hours
- Climbing Wall Parties from £130 for 2 hours

All parties have the use of the Dining Hall with tables and chairs for their own refreshments.

Telephone: 0770 859 2013

Email: [sports@greatwakering.essex.sch.uk](mailto:sports@greatwakering.essex.sch.uk)

*Richard Kirton*

## Website Statistics Report

The report below is typical of that sent to Peter Griffiths each week. The week shown highlights the actual number of people visiting the site for the first time along with those returning from subsequent weeks. The report also indicates the number of individual page loads per day.

Weekly Stats Report Summary: 28 Dec 2015 - 03 Jan 2016

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total	Avg
Page Loads	28	78	23	13	7	4	186	339	49
Unique Visits	8	74	1	7	5	4	108	207	30
First Time Visits	5	73	1	4	2	4	103	192	28
Returning Visits	3	1	0	3	3	0	5	15	3

*Richard Kirton*

## ***Villages Websites***

Our new website - Barling and Wakering Villages Plus - is expanding all the time, as site-manager Richard Kirton adds new photos frequently. If you have any pictures showing people or places in the area, please do get in touch. We would love to add them to the thousands already there.

It is easy to get from the new site to the old one and vice-versa. The new one can be reached here:

<http://www.barlingwakeringvillages.co.uk/plus/index.html>

The Original Website can be reached here:

<http://www.barlingwakeringvillages.co.uk/index.html>

*Peter Griffiths*

## ***Situations Vacant***

We are still looking for a volunteer (or more) to edit our newsletter. It has been suggested that the job could be split, with one person being responsible for content and another for layout. So, if you would like to help, please don't be shy in offering your services, even if only for one or two editions.

*Peter Griffiths*

**There will be  
More Happy  
Memories in the  
next edition**

## ***Contacts***

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