



# THE OLD PALUDIANS NEWSLETTER

May 2020

## WELCOME TO THE LOCKDOWN SPECIAL

**W**e have had a wonderful response to our email request for stories, memories and news of life in the lockdown. We had Old Pals sending in contributions the same afternoon the request went out. Love the enthusiasm!

Thank you each and everyone who has emailed their news, telling what is happening to them during this unique time of our lives. Also to those with reminiscences of their time at school and those who taught them. NB these were not only sent in by pupils.

Following on from my editorial in the March 2020 Newsletter, there have been a couple of comments about Vincent Evans, Art Master, and more personal ones about my father GAD, Maths Master.

One very good thing about sharing stories, either in this way through Newsletter articles or at a Reunion, is that it sparks the memory and all sorts of things come flooding back that have been long forgotten.

We will be posting copies of this interim Newsletter to all non-internet members who have not had the chance to contribute previously. We would love to have responses to the content herein, as well as stories and memories to publish in next year's edition. Never too soon to send in your copy!

We hope you enjoy reading the Newsletter and perhaps some items may even bring a smile to your face.

If any of you would like to get in touch with someone who has written here, or respond to anything said by them, we would love to hear from you. Please contact the editor who will forward on your message.

Please stay well and keep yourselves and all your loved ones safe.

GLENYS LAWS (DICKINSON 1959-65)

EDITOR

## 2020 REUNION CANCELLATION

In view of the future uncertainty of the Government advice on coronavirus restrictions the Committee has reluctantly decided to cancel the 2020 Reunion. We feel it would be better to wait until there is greater clarity on the safety of gatherings of reasonably large numbers. We are also conscious that members may not be comfortable to meet unless they feel the risks of infection have passed. We are optimistic that by the time of the next Reunion (20th March 2021) we will have resumed a normal way of life. Our suggestion is that payments made in respect of this year's Reunion be carried over to next year, in order to minimise the administration.

If you would prefer to have a refund, please let me know

**by email:**

ronfidler@oldpaludians.org,

**or by post to:**

17 Drury Close,  
Chalfont Dene,  
Chalfont St. Peter  
SL9 0FH

(enclosing a SAE),

stating whether you would like a cheque or bank transfer.

Do take care and stay well. I look forward to seeing you in 2021.

RON FIDLER (SGS 1943-49)

CHAIRMAN

## VIRTUAL AGM

17th April 2020

As a result of the postponement (and now cancellation) of the Annual Reunion and AGM, scheduled for Saturday 21st March 2020 the Committee, recognising the importance of the issue, and in accordance with the provisions of the current Constitution, quickly convened a "Virtual AGM" to take place on the 17th April 2020. The sole issue on the agenda of the Virtual AGM was whether or not the membership of the Association wished to adopt the proposed new Constitution. The purpose of the Constitution is to update and clarify the policies and procedures of the Association to make them fit for purpose in the current era. Furthermore the new Constitution allows for a greater use of virtual meetings and e-mail/postal votes.

Attendance and voting at the Virtual AGM was recorded either by the completion of an online ballot paper or a paper ballot returned by mail to the Old Paludians Association c/o Upton Court Grammar School.

At the time of writing it has not been possible to retrieve the postal votes sent to the Association c/o the School, as it is closed. However, the number of online ballots completed, significantly exceeded the number of paper ballots sent out and also constituted a proper quorum under the current constitution. All online ballots completed were in favour of adopting the new Constitution. There were no votes against.

It is therefore safe to say that the new Constitution has been approved and formally adopted by the membership. Formal tallies will be reported once all votes have been collected and counted.

I must also mention the hard work of those members of the Committee, especially Kav and Ron who worked hard to update our Constitution for the future and I'd like to express my appreciation for members who took the time to read the old and new Constitutions, to vote, and those who previously sent in suggestions for amendments. Given the urgency of the situation, it was not possible to consider them at this juncture, but it will be possible in the future.

RAJESH SHARMA (SGS 1981 – 1987)

OPA Committee.

## EMPTY STREETS

We start with a reminder of the time we now find ourselves living in.  
Thank you Barry Eaglestone for your photographs.

Barry remembers sharing a classroom with the Editor, Philip Bloxham, John Elder (SGS 1960-68) and John Pratt for Economics lessons back in the 60's. He writes:-

Regarding the email that was sent out, the only thing that I can offer that's connected to social distancing are photographs I've been taking in London since it was introduced. Three examples of which are, a totally deserted Royal Albert Hall, a popular part of Kensington Gardens virtually empty of people and a deserted Portobello Rd - no vehicles, no market traders, no people - unheard of at any

time let alone on a Bank Holiday. All very surreal but, on the positive side, offering an opportunity to take in the special nature and beauty of these famous places in a way that has never been possible, certainly in the last 70 years, if ever. I'm sure sights like these will be seen as historic moments in years to come.

BARRY EAGLESTONE (SGS 1960-67)



**Kensington Gardens**





**Portobello Road**



**The Royal Albert Hall**



# COPING WITH THE LOCKDOWN

During lockdown my wife Jenny and I have hardly ventured out, with the exception of my trips to the allotment, where one can work well away from others tilling the soil. Hopefully, this option will remain permitted and once one is working there, the world seems almost normal for a couple of hours. We did however manage to celebrate our Golden Wedding on Saturday April 4th, even if only in a virtual way. The plan had been for all eleven family members - children, grandchildren and us - to have lunch at "The Ferry", a pub/restaurant by the bridge over the Thames at Cookham. That plan obviously had to be shelved, but we did manage to hook up using our newly acquired skills with "Zoom". Jenny made a coffee and walnut cake (my favourite), so we were able to display that in front of the camera and make the grandchildren thoroughly envious. Apart from that, each day seems to consist of reading, a bit of DIY and a session on the piano. It's Easter week, as I write this so I've been playing through (and singing along to) Stainer's "Crucifixion" - always one of my favourite choral works; or, for something lighter, there's my book of 1930s classics like "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes", "Red Sails in the Sunset", "I'll String Along With You", "September in the Rain", "Love Letters in the Sand", etc. Haven't received any complaints from the neighbours - yet.

BOB MOSS (SGS 1956-64)

---

Thanks for keeping us in touch. My good news is I am drawing cartoon animals for the children's toddlers and trying to come up with stories. I haven't yet managed to extend their 30 second attention span but I do get to see their drawings!

Sad to hear Slough was a hot spot for virus, now no doubt overtaken by lots of other places. The good news? The kaleidoscope of peoples in Slough can be a great bonus in the future. This virus can help bring people out of their sub-communities and into one big one. Way to go Slough!

DEREK RAY (SGS 1956-63)

---

I have graduated and become a doctor!

It came several months earlier than originally expected because of Covid-19, and although it wasn't the ceremony with friends and family that I'd hoped for, I had a lovely day in my flat making the gingerbread class of 2020 and video calling my brilliant parents. Although the coming weeks are likely to be stressful and a steep learning curve, I'm looking forward to using what I've learnt over the past six years to do my little bit to help with this crisis, as I continue working in the emergency department of the John Radcliffe Hospital.

Wishing everyone safety and happiness at this difficult time!



EMMA FLINT (SGS/UCGS 2007-14)

# MEMORIES OF STAFF

## VINCENT EVANS

Thank you for the 2020 Newsletter.

I was particularly interested in the article by Bob Moss about Mr. Vincent Evans. I didn't know anything about his history other than he was from Wales, which was obvious from his accent. I enjoyed his art classes and, surprisingly, did very well in art in both final exams which I sat.

I was 15 when I sat the first exam in 1946 and got my Oxford School Certificate but the rules stated that I could not leave SGS until I was 16. So I stayed in Upper 5B for another year and sat the exam for a second time, this time getting the London University Matriculation, shortly after which I came to Canada with my parents. I even recall the subject which the exam paper called for - "Bad News". I remember sitting wondering how I could depict Bad News and glanced out of the window of the P.E. gymnasium where the exams were held and saw a Lockheed Constellation on final approach to the

new Heathrow Airport. Aha, I thought, if that plane crashed it would be bad news. A stipulation was that the drawing had to include a human figure. I was always interested in planes and was able to draw a remarkable likeness of the Constellation on the ground, fuselage suitably broken and a press reporter in a telephone kiosk in the foreground. It gained me a "distinction" (very good) in art. Yes, I recall there were a number of Mr. Evans's paintings hanging on the walls of the Art Room, one being of a typical Welsh mining village. It was of huge proportions and in exquisite detail. I can't say for sure it was the one pictured in the Newsletter, but in all likelihood it was. I know that one summer, after the war, most of his paintings were removed from the walls and we learned they were on loan for an exhibition in an art gallery in London. I agree his works were not given the prominence they deserved.

Ian Cairns wrote about Richard John Cork, a WW2 fighter ace. I remember Mr. Clarke announcing, at one morning assembly, that one of the former



**'At The Coalface' by Vincent Evans**



pupils (or perhaps a staff member) had been lost while piloting a Hawker Hurricane in the Mediterranean Sea area. After Googling Cork's name, I see that, while he flew Hurricanes in that area for a period, he was killed in a mid-air collision over Ceylon. Does anyone have a record of who the Hurricane pilot might have been? Perhaps it was Cork and I only remembered part of Mr. Clarke's announcement, given, I do recall with some emotion. Also, on one of the sports days, the remarkably fit Mr. Luck, laying on his back, was lifting a vaulting horse with two or three boys on it into the air with his feet, when a Westland Lysander flew over the field at very low altitude and circled a couple of times. The comment was made by a couple of the Masters present that the pilot was a former pupil or staff member of SGS. Again, my memory fails me as to his name. Must be a sign of my age, 89. I was booked on a cruise starting May 3rd. Just a seven day run on the Celebrity Equinox from Vancouver, where we live, to San Francisco and return, taking my family for a week into warmer climates. Unfortunately, the cruise has been cancelled and everyone is asked to stay at home, going out only for supplies.

**FRED COLLINS (SGS 1941-47)**

---

I had the privilege to know Vincent. He was my Form Master (Form 3B) in 1947/48. Our form room was the Art Room. There was no spare space in the school after the war for a dedicated form room for 3B. When I was in Form 2B we were in Nissan huts down the Lascelles Road (the St Bernards end). The painting in the Newsletter did indeed hang on the wall of the Art Room. We understood he had been hung at the Royal Academy and could add RA after his name. He did pencil sketches of pupils and did one of me. I am ashamed to say I have lost it.

**DR. GINA BARNEY (SGS 1946-52)**

---

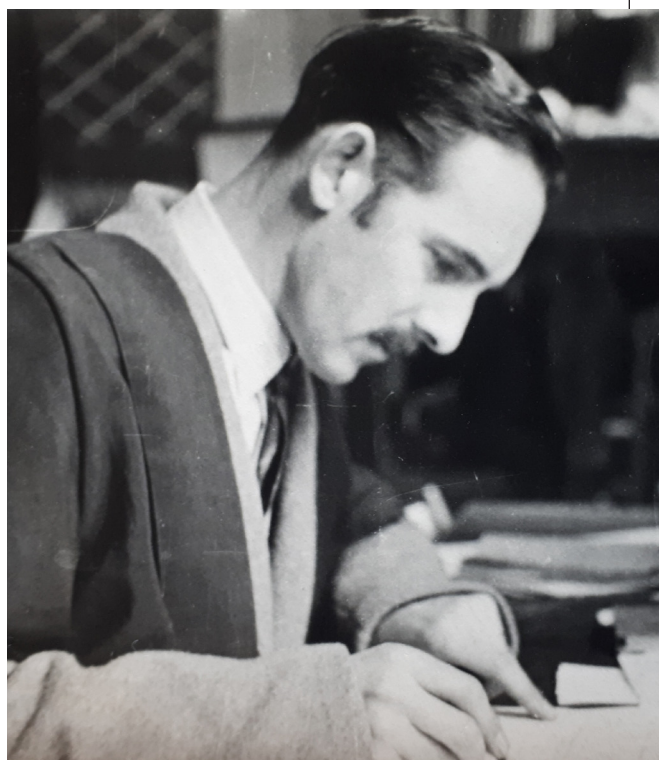
## **GAD AND OTHER STAFF**

The 2020 Newsletter has jolted my memory bank from its retirement slumber.

GAD was my Maths Teacher in the sixth form 1957-58. He was responsible for showing me the beauty and power of the subject and I kept in touch with him for many years, either calling into school or visiting him at his home. One of his tasks was the creation of the school timetable and he spent the Summer Term surrounded by multiple coloured pencils, card, erasers and the obligatory ash tray.

**DAVID HARDING (SGS 1951 - 58)**

---



**George Arthur Dickinson (GAD)**

When I realised that Glenys Laws, the new OPA editor, was the daughter of Mr G A Dickinson (GAD) I was reminded that not only was he my Maths Master but also involved in teaching me bridge. I wrote to state that I remembered GAD with great affection and that I'd played bridge at the Houses of Parliament, the (C of E) Church Commissioners & New Scotland Yard. Glenys asked how I'd managed to play in those places.

The short answer is that about a year after I qualified as a Chartered Accountant I met an attractive blue eyed brunette with a soft Scottish accent called Angela, who not long after this was offered a job at

CERN in Geneva. As our relationship was looking fragile, I applied for jobs in Switzerland and eventually was accepted for an Accounting job in Basel with a company who was part of an American oil company "OXY" who were planning to get involved in North Sea Oil.

Whilst in Switzerland I managed to persuade Angela to forgo her skiing and give up her job to return to Britain and marry me as my company were relocating to London. We spent five years in London and a further five in Aberdeen, during which time we had a son and daughter. Then back to London, and after nearly a decade I was made redundant. A few years later I got a Treasury job with CDC (formerly Commonwealth Development Corporation) in Pimlico. They had a Bridge Club and amongst other venues we played at the (C of E) Church Commissioners and New Scotland Yard. Angela and I were invited to play bridge at the Houses of Parliament by a former OXY colleague who worked at the House of Lords.

Angela was educated in Scotland so didn't go to SHS, but curiously her stepmother's good friend Daphne Botting did and I met her a few times at OPA reunions. Small world!

PETER FIRTH (SGS 1957-64)

Thank you, Glenys, for what you have written in the recent 2020 Newsletter which sent me back in memory to the time I attended Slough Grammar School from 1950 to 1957.

I do indeed remember your father, although he never attempted to teach me Maths! Towards 'O' levels we had a Mr. Monk. However I do remember GAD's portrait hanging in Vincent Evan's Art Room – I was hopeless at art too! Wearing his gown and with moustache he was an impressive figure looking down on us as we attempted to draw apples and pears. Also 'A Welsh Family Idyll' hanging there – although the significance of this was not explained to me at the time. (I have found Bob Moss's article on Vincent Evans fascinating.)

My first year was under 'Nobby' Clark(e) and we were at, or about that time, accommodated in the huts across the road – 'Nobby' found it necessary to cane boys and from time to time because of their misdemeanors and would process into assembly with the cane securely tucked under his arm. We knew someone was certainly in trouble! However Mr. Anderson the Deputy Head took over at the end of

that year as 'Nobby' retired on health grounds. We then spent a time having our lessons at the Methodist Church in Slough whilst some rebuilding took place. Ray Buddy from the States was on placement for a year with his wife – the first Americans we had ever seen. As young lads we would have preferred of course to see more of his glorious and typical film starred American wife than we did, but that was not to be so .....!

Then I think Dr. Long.

After 'O' levels I managed to get into the Sixth Form and took Economics, Geography and History at 'A' level with Mr. Purvis for the first two – perhaps he taught you? Failed History with Mr. (or Major) Wharmby so no university for myself. Major Wharmby, as we know, was in charge of the school cadet force together with the assistance of Mr Bell and we were on parade every Monday afternoon after school. The highlight of the year was the annual camp where, with other local cadet forces, we travelled afar – once I remember to a camp outside Weymouth near the Chesil Beach (including its stinking tree toilets which I will refrain from describing the construction and personal use of) and on another occasion to Fort Tregantle just inside the Cornish border. Whilst at the latter we witnessed the armada of Royal Navy ships going off to the Suez Canal to

maintain our influence there.

No university meant getting a job! Nothing in particular came to mind – until I remembered going on a recruiting day laid on by Barclays – and the fact that we each had been given a whole chicken leg on our plate for lunch! Never before had I been given a whole chicken leg all to myself – that was the deciding factor! To Barclays at Windsor I was sent before a year of National Service (and believe it or not 'they' managed to put me in the Pay Corps) – followed by fifteen years in other local branches. Then a change of direction – to Lincoln Theological College (C of E) and ordination as a priest to serve at Woodley, Wokingham, in Northumberland and Tyneside – all different parishes in their way with their own joys and sadnesses – but a privilege to serve in. Now I am just a grumpy old vicar who likes good wine and spends much time operating his model railway in the roof, as well as occasional writings such as this, even to the extent of having two, yes two, letters published in The Times!

To anyone who might by chance remember me ... cheers!

ALAN CLEMENTS (SGS 1950-57)



As our Editor reminded us, she was the first girl to be allowed to take classes at SGS, thanks to her father, who was Head of Maths, because Slough High School did not offer Economics. Thus, I became the first man to have a female pupil at the School. Glenys has asked me to write about my experiences of working at SGS in the 1960s, and as I am now approaching 80 and the Coronavirus is in full swing I thought I ought to write this article now, even if it is published posthumously!

I arrived in September 1964, straight from the London School of Economics and the University of London Institute of Education. I had been educated in the private sector at St Albans School (exact contemporary of Stephen Hawking) and done my teaching practice at the excellent Haberdashers' Aske's School, so I did not know what to expect from the state sector. I soon found out and nearly ran away after one week. This would not have been a record, as there was subsequently a chap who arrived, was sent into a classroom without even meeting the head of department, said 'shut up' 128 times and legged it! Somehow I survived – for 32 years- so here are some memories of the Masters who taught at SGS in the sixties – my apologies to anyone I have forgotten.

In deference to the editor, I must mention George Dickinson, Head of Maths. No-one ever knew his Christian name – he was Dick to his colleagues and GAD to the boys. He did the timetable – and started by giving himself a free period last lesson on Friday. As I played golf with him, I received the same privilege. The timetable was done by plugging-in variously painted golf tees into a pegboard. Years later, Brian Roberts, a deputy head of renown, and a fine cricketer, was mortified to find that the cleaners had knocked over this board as the timetable neared completion. Dick was a superb bridge player, who played every lunch time. Indeed, at one time, there were two if not three tables in play during the lunch hour.

Then there is me... I had stayed for 32 long, weary(?) years, introduced Business Studies, became a Chief Examiner in A Level Business Studies, am still involved in work for the Cambridge Board, wrote a couple of textbooks, and various articles, watched Luton Town for 999 games (then got married, which stopped that!), still try to play golf at Gerrards Cross GC (at one time in my forties I was playing golf on a Sunday morning and cricket in the afternoon). I am a member of Middlesex CCC, go to geriatrics keep –fit (I ruptured my Achilles tendon on my first appearance 23 years ago), attend advanced French lessons, was walks organiser for the Chiltern Society

for many years, collect stamps and generally try to keep the senility (and hopefully the virus) at bay. I think my golfing career might be at an end as all but one of my mates are dead, the winter rain, which caused a six month buggy ban, and now the lockdown means I have not played since last September and my current handicap is 27 (the lowest was 12 many years ago). So it might now be time to go. If I had my time again, would I pursue the same path? One of my earliest pupils, who became a senior civil servant in the Treasury, once told me; 'You are worth better than this.'

We shall never know. What I do know is that I am a member of the 'lucky generation' who 'never had it so good' and it was as good a time as any to be a teacher.

DAVID BROWNE (SGS STAFF 1964-96)

*David has really interesting and amusing memories of many other members of staff, starting with Dr Wilfred Long, but as our space here is limited the full article will be available on the website.*

*However in deference to all the hard work that David has put into his article, I have also included his school "autobiography." (Ed.)*

## CONFESSIONS

When I was taking a practical cookery exam. I had to make pastry for a pie and the rolled pastry had to exactly fit the dish - I had a little over so when Miss Beedie turned away I threw it out of the window. I passed!

MARY JOHN (SHS FILE 1944-50)

I learnt to drive, from a very early age, on SGS's field. My father used to take me there at weekends when no one else was about. Not sure what damage was done to the field!

GLENYS LAWS (SHS DICKINSON 1959-65)

## AN APRIL FOOL'S DAY PRANK

I would like to share with you the story of a prank from many years ago. I'm pretty sure it happened when I was in the first year at SGS. So that would make the date April 1st 1954, only 66 years ago! On this particular morning as I arrived at the junior end playground the air was absolutely electrifying. It didn't take long to find out why. Up on the highest part of the school roof, that part which was over the original hall and facing approx northeast, there was a line of washing strung out across it! Wow! Who? What? When? Where? Why? Rapid enquiries pointed to two sixth formers. Apparently they had taken the washing from a local garden in Lascelles Road, or thereabouts, and had somehow managed to climb up onto the roof the previous evening, or very early that morning before school opened. One of them must have walked across the roof with one end of the line to secure it, there's no handrail, no safety net nor any scaffolding.

The junior end playground was used by years one, two and three, so there could have been approaching 270 boys to witness this truly amazing spectacle. I wish I had a photograph to show you - certainly no mobiles in those days. I have never discovered quite how they got up there. All I can say is that by the mid-morning break, about 11.00 am, someone or maybe a certain pair had got back up there and removed the evidence.

Oh to have been a fly on the wall in the Headmaster's Study that morning. I have often wondered what Dr Long had to say to the guilty pair. I feel sure that to say he was very unhappy about this April fool prank is the understatement of the year. Whereas the boys in the playground were in fits of uncontrollable laughter, we loved it!

It would also be interesting to know what the reaction was of the lady whose washing had been taken, I can't imagine she enjoyed the joke. I wonder what sort of state it was in when it was returned - it must certainly have needed washing again - not many washing machines around then. Was it damaged? Did the school or the culprits, have to make any reparations?

I don't know what kind of punishments they received. I'm pretty sure that they were not expelled but I wouldn't have thought they got off scott free. At the very least they must have been sent to apologize to the lady who owned the washing.

Those 2 lads must be in their mid 80's by now. I wonder if they are Old Pals? I wonder if a photo does exist? I would be the first to admit this story is short

on detail. So is there anyone out there who can add any more interesting facts? Please don't keep them to yourself!

DON FRASER (SGS 1953-58)

---

## KEEPING IN TOUCH

I think this is a marvellous idea to keep in touch. I am not doing anything particularly different during the lockdown as I am somewhat immobile with Rheumatoid Arthritis, and don't get about much. So I am considered to be vulnerable and therefore "shielding.". Currently I live in Windsor. I have three married daughters and four grandchildren. I would love to hear from anyone in my year. I started at SHS in 1946 and left to go to teachers training college in 1953. Unfortunately at recent Reunions there are fewer girls from my year attending. I am also known as Doreen Jones. I hated the name "Doreen", so when I was 20 I just decided to change it! Atherton is my married name.

PAULA ATHERTON ( SHS 1946-53 )

---

## **FOUR MEMORIES OF SLOUGH HIGH SCHOOL 1955-60**

**1** I am still reminded of the music played on the piano as we left Assembly in the School Hall to return to our form rooms. Whenever I hear “The Wedding Day at Troldhaugen” by Greig it brings back memories of Miss Davidson playing this in her own inimitable style.

### **2 Slough High School 21st Birthday Outing 1957**

The whole school travelled on a train from Slough Station to Stratford on Avon for a visit to The Memorial Theatre. We saw a production of “As You Like It” with Dame Peggy Ashcroft as Rosalind. I remember the excitement of the journey and eating our picnic lunches as we travelled.

We walked from the station to the theatre in a long crocodile of schoolgirls.

### **3 Country Dancing Club with Miss Perry**

We took part in Slough Arts Festival at The Community Centre in Farnham Road. Performed a Handkerchief Dance at Eton Church Fete 1959? We used to dance in our Gym kit (long grey pinstriped shorts and Aertex shirts as part of our PE Lessons) but I can’t remember if we dressed differently for public performances

### **4 Visit to Paris April 1960**

A first opportunity to go abroad and try out our French. I think there were about 60 schoolgirls with five Mistresses accompanying us. After an extremely rough ferry crossing from Newhaven to Dieppe we finally reached our accommodation in the centre of Paris. We spent the week viewing all the usual tourist destinations including The Louvre, Sacre Coeur, Left Bank of the Seine and an outing to Versailles. Parisian Café Culture was experienced one evening by being taken in “a crocodile” to the Champs Elysee for a cup of coffee. The highlight of our trip was to be the ascent of the Eiffel Tower. We saw the Tower gently swaying in the breeze but decided to be brave and go to the top. I still remember our disappointment on being informed that we only had time to go as far as the first stage as we had to be back for lunch at our Student Hostel at The Sorbonne.



Kathleen Goldsmith (SHS 1955-62), Maureen Rouse (SHS 1957-61) and I finally made it to the top of the Eiffel Tower in 2004. We celebrated our 60th birthdays by taking a day trip to Paris by Eurostar and went to the top of the Eiffel Tower. It took us 44 years to get there. The view was magnificent.

I wonder if these accounts of extra curricular activities will bring back memories to others.  
Happy days indeed!

JENNY BROOKS (SHS 1955-60)



## VE DAY SOCIAL DISTANCING 1945 STYLE

