

103 Leicester Road,
Ashby-de-la -Zouch,
Leicestershire.
LE65 1DF

31st January 2006

OLD ASHBEIANS` ASSOCIATION DINNER

Dear Member,

This will be held at the Lyric Rooms, Lower Church Street, Ashby-de-la –Zouch on Saturday, 11th March, 2006 at & p.m. for 7.30.p.m. Parking is available in the school grounds using the Boarding House entrance.

During the evening the School musical department will provide entertainment.

A meal will be provided at a cost of £15 per head and the following menu has been selected.

Leek and Potato soup

or

Fruits of the Sea baked with Chive and Shallots with a Parmesan Crust

Marinated Leg of Lamb in a rich currant and black pepper sauce
Served with fresh seasonal vegetables and potatoes

Homemade Apple and Plum Crumble with a Pastry Case

or

Meringue Nests filled with Kiwi, Raspberries and White Chocolate

Coffee with cream and mints

Hopefully you will wish to join us. An early reply would be appreciated. Please indicate on the slip below how many places you would like me to reserve and return it to me by Saturday, 4th March, 2006.

J.B.Exton(Hon. Sec.)

.....
Pease reserveplace(s) for me. I enclose a cheque for£.....
made payable to The Old Ashbeians` Association.

Name.....

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OLD ASHBEIANS` ASSOCIATION
JANUARY 2006

I find that keeping pace with the building work which has gone on in the past few years within the school a most interesting exercise. As I write the plasterers and electricians are at work to complete a new complex, covering what was left of the girls school hockey field, which when completed will house the art and music departments. This year has seen the completion of a new needlework room, the refurbishment of the electronics room and two kiosk cafeteria cabins to satisfy the healthy appetites of the present pupil generation.

On the academic front Ashby School was the highest performing state school in the county for GCSE results this summer, with more than 75 per cent of students gaining five or more GCSE at grades A to C. The school also achieved its highest A level results, with a pass rate of more than 98 per cent. Of the 220 students who collected A level results this year, a record 189 secured university places. Three gained entrance to Oxbridge.

In November the school received a new style OFSTED inspection. The Sixth Form, Boarding House and Governance were rate Grade 1 – outstanding – and everything else in the school was rated good. Ashby School was the first Leicestershire Upper School to be inspected under this new framework and these first class results are a reflection of all the hard work put in by all staff and pupils.

There is no resting on laurels in the school as they have met the stiff criteria to become one of the few schools in the country to take on an extra specialism in Modern Foreign Languages to add to their Technology status. Together with this is an unprecedented joint bid with its two feeder High Schools, Ibstock and Ivanhoe. Staff from the Maths, Science and Design departments of the three schools, together with all three headteachers, have worked together to ensure that this bid is a genuine collaboration with continuity across the key stages.

School House remains a constant hive of activity and the most cosmopolitan area of the school. During the summer, 35 gifted and talented Leicestershire students spent a residential week in School House with a 14th C theme. The youngsters met a Cistercian monk, found dozens of pottery shards in a medieval midden, met a village Reeve 1340 and sampled a medieval lifestyle.

In July twelve students raised more than £7000 for the children`s hospice charity, Rainbows, by completing a coast to coast cycle ride.

An additional prize for academic excellence will be presented at the School's annual awards evening in May. The Woodcock Prize – which is awarded in memory of former headteacher Thomas Arnold Woodcock – is being reinstated after a lapse of many years. Clive Jones, Chair of Governors has spearheaded the moves to revive this prize and the Association has supported this venture.

Autumn Reunion. (Peter Dalton)

Having, over a meditative glass of wine, overcome the feeling of guilt that this year I had not cycled to the Reunion from Solihull, since I have now moved house and live in Ashby I reminded myself that it is exactly 50 years since I left Measham, and I feel it is most pleasant to “come back” again. It is also 60 years since I started school at ABGS. Years have rolled by since then, when I first passed the gates of the school; but “what boots it to repeat, how time is slipping underneath our feet!” I must have been keen and anxious to start there on that first day, since I fell off my bicycle at Five-Lane-Ends on the way. Thinking back to those days at the old Alma Mater, I regard them as formative, crucial years, as a springboard from which we entered into life and which helped us to face all the “slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.” Having sat for a while “byding my tyme”, I was soon aware that my torpid peace was being disturbed by an avalanche of humanity entering the bar of the Royal Hotel, as Old Ashbeians from my “in statu pupillari” days were meeting up again for our 22nd Reunion, and exchanging recent news and distant memories as they sipped their pre-prandials. 37 attended this year.

Before the start of the lunch, Mike Gilman gave a short, very moving and lucid talk regarding the Old Ashbeians who gave their lives in the Two World Wars. As we thought of their sacrifices in this 60th year since the end of World War Two, John Exton read out the Roll of Honour of the 44 deaths in World War Two. Together with the 94 deaths in World War One this seems an amazing total for one school. We remained in silence for a while in memory of them, who gave their tomorrows that we might have today.

An excellent lunch followed, at the conclusion of which John Wroughton, who so efficiently organises this reunion spoke of certain events of the last year, and mentioned the sad deaths of Alan Matterson and Nick Felgate. Maurice Harvey spoke humourously of his own personal memories since he started teaching there in 1955, having been appointed by Tom Woodcock.

Erdington Girls Grammar School Evacuation Sept. 1939

Earlier in the year I received a letter asking if the school had any records or information on this period of time. Several people remembered their stay and I learned that two of the staff became more permanent residents in Ashby as they married and stayed in the area. A 94 year old resident remembered her house acting as a staging post for twenty evacuees, before they were placed in local homes. She still keeps in contact with one to this day.

Henry Hand – 1929 -37

Henry wrote asking if I could locate copies of the Ashbeian, 1937 -41. the museum had some of these copies and I photocopied them. Henry wrote back- “So many memories! Geoffrey Arthur for example; a brilliant classical scholar, a year or so ahead of me, who won an outright scholarship to Christchurch, Oxford, married Mr Woodcock's daughter, Margaret, was knighted and became master Of Pembroke

College, Oxford during my time as a schoolteacher in this area. Not that I ever got to meet him again after ABGS days, such was his exalted elevation.

Then there was the unforgettable trip to the Berlin Olympic Games which I was privileged to attend, in the company of The Boss, Frank Addison, Dr. Read and the inimitable Jimmy Jones of Geography, Music, Weather Forecasting, Detection, and Camping renown, who was together with “Matt” was about my favourite master at ABGS. Memorable times indeed!”

This next letter I have to quote in full as I feel it expresses the feeling of his generation towards “The School.”

Edward Hardy – 1939 - 1944

“The contents of this package will doubtless come a surprise as well as a sincere apology that this trophy has been in my possession for well over fifty years.

I won the Old boys race over 220yds some time around 1950 with one of the masters – Mr Dolman – being second. At the time we lived in Swadlincote but later moved to Leicester for business reasons, moved house whilst there, and the again to Rawdon near Leeds, then to Harrogate, before recently moving down here to Surrey. It was during this last move that I came across a box of Athletic trophies, which contained this cup.

As far as I can recall I was never advised of any subsequent Old Boy races, which would have prompted me to either defend or return the trophy. It became tucked away with my other cups and medals and I am afraid became forgotten and shrouded in the mists of time.

I sincerely hope that the school still promotes sport and physical activity for I can certainly endorse its benefits, as my life has been greatly enriched from athletics – and it started so innocently at Ashby.

From a chance remark from a friend telling me of a cross country practice run and suggesting we should go, it set me on a lifetime involvement in athletics. On that first afternoon I discovered I could run faster than my peers as I managed to run away from the current Junior Cross Country Champion. I repeated it the following week and then went on to win the Junior Championship and later of course the Senior Race, as well as the mile on the track.

Unfortunately as this was during the War – I was at Ashby from 1939 to 1944 – there were no Inter School or County Championships, etc, but as a member of Swadlincote ATC I did go on to win Derbyshire and Midland area races and it was when I finished runner up to a well known athlete in a Championship in Birmingham that officials suggested I should join an Athletic Club, as they “thought I had a future.” I have often wondered if they ever discovered how prophetic that statement turned out to be.

As a result I joined Derby and County Athletic Club and won their Youth Championship just before going into the RAF where I eventually became the Group and then Bomber Command Champion at Cross Country, 880 and Mile.

After demobilisation in 1948 I continued my running with Derby and won the Midland Counties Junior and later the Senior Championship on three occasions as well as gaining my first International Vest and running for England between 1951 and 1956. I also had success on the track over one, two and three miles as well as the 3000 metres Steeplechase, at which I narrowly missed selection for the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne, Australia.

Later that year, due to recurrent Achilles tendon and knee problems I retired from serious competition to concentrate more on my business career, but continued my involvement with sport in an administrative capacity.

I was Midland Counties Cross Country Team Manager and upon moving to Yorkshire became Northern Team Manager. I became a member of the International Selection Committee for 18 years and went on to senior office in Yorkshire, Northern and English Cross Country Associations as well as coaching and officiating. I finally gave up my last commitment some five years ago, after an involvement of over fifty years.

I have chronicled all this to show what resulted from such inauspicious beginning. Discovering my ability to run, which was nurtured at ABGS, gave me a self confidence which shaped and benefited my life. I met people from all walks of life, including the pope, travelled widely and enjoyed the camaraderie of all those involved in a wonderful sport.

The experience gained certainly helped me to success also in business life – so you see, I have much for which to thank Ashby Boys grammar School. I must add though that the education helped too!

So again, my sincerest apologies for “losing” trophy and I do hope you will be able to put it up for competition again.”

The cup is back with the sports department !

Sadly I record the deaths during the year of the following.

Alan Matterson - 1940 – 47

Formerly of Ibstock , who after leaving the school went to Jesus College, Oxford. Later he worked at Harwell on the effects of radio activity. For many years he was a keen supporter at the meetings of the London Group under Mike Gilman.

Stanley Cook - 1968 - 75

Stanley taught Geography at the school. He married Gladys Grainger, who was a housemistress at the Manor House School.

Dr. Nicholas Felgate - 1951 - 59

From the South Derbyshire area, Nick practised as a doctor in Newhall after leaving college. In his early years he was a keen playing member of the Old Ashbeians Rugby Club.

Eric Orme 1939 – 42

Eric took an engineering degree at Birmingham University after service in the RAF. In later life he lived at Seascale, Cumbria.

Finally may I record that the association has received a legacy of £1500 from the estate of Clifford Jackson of Woodville. The committee have decided that this will be put into trust and the interest added to the Woodcock Prize to be awarded annually to pupils in the school who show outstanding excellence and ability.

Ladies' News

Following the successful celebration in 2004 of the 50th anniversary of starting school, two further lunches took place in 2005.

These were held during the summer and in November at The Beeches in Ashby.

A number of this group – who all started school in 1954 – also attended the dinner in March at The Lyric Rooms and were already looking forward to their invitations to the March 2006 event.

Dorothy Watson (nee Gutteridge) writes: "Please give my good wishes to anyone who may remember me. After all, I left school nearly 70 years ago."

Barbara Dennis writes: "Please can you tell me how I can get in touch with a contributor to the January newsletter? Ann Livingston wrote about the death of her mother, Elsie Baker, and mentioned my father, Les Dennis, who was her father's cousin. My father (an Old Boy of the ABGS) taught Classics there until his retirement in 1976 and was in charge of School House. We lived at Castlemount, a part of the boarding house. My twin brother John and I were at ABGS and AGGS respectively.

"I went on to read English and retired early from teaching at the University of Wales, Lampeter. I am now in Oxford where one of my neighbours is Margaret Woodcock, aka Lady Arthur, the daughter of Mr Woodcock, who was the distinguished Headmaster of ABGS for many years. I would welcome the opportunity to keep in touch with friends from the old days. I would be obliged for any help you can give me."

Joan Rand writes: "Many thanks for your email about the Old Ashbeians' AGM. I won't attend but am looking forward to the dinner in March. It's on the calendar for next year!..After living in Beckenham for 34 years, Es and Joan Rand are celebrating their retirement by moving to the West Country."

Robert Lewis writes: "In the 1940s, I was evacuated, first to Woodville and then to Burton-on-Trent. I lived with a family called Hudson. They had a daughter called Audrey May Hudson who was a pupil of AGGS. She would have taken her School Certificate about 1942 or 1943. She then left school and became a telephone operator at the exchange at Burton-on-Trent. Subsequently, she married Norman Cadus and they went to live in Derby where I visited them in the 1950s. Unfortunately, I completely lost touch with them after that. I wonder if you, through the Old Ashbeians, can provide me with any information. It is a bit of a long shot but I thought I would give it a try."

If anyone can help with this – or any other enquiry – please contact secretaries Mrs C. Walmsley or Mr J. Exton.

When the AGM took place in September, it was agreed that future minutes would no longer be written up by hand. A summary of the items discussed follows. These appear as draft minutes as they have to be approved by the AGM in September. It was proposed and agreed that the draft minutes be circulated with the newsletter.

Minutes of the 33rd Annual General Meeting of the Old Ashbeians Association held on Thursday 22 September 2005 at 7.30pm in Lockton House, Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

Present: Mr John Exton Chairman
Mr Ian Massey
Mr Clive Jones
Mr Maurice Harvey
Mrs Christina Walmsley

Apologies: Mrs V. Keller-Garnett President
Peter Dalton, Bernard Daws, Ken Land, Don Swindell, John Williams, Barbara Murfitt, Anne Wileman, Dianne Briers, Hazel Finch, Cynthia Sharpe, Dorothy Watson, Wendy Lloyd, Ann Brownless, Mary Bassett, Patricia M Jackson, Judith Finch, Ena Clifford, Joan Rand, Joan Struthers, Joyce Hutchinson, Jack Pickering, J M Rice

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the 33rd AGM and asked the Secretary to formally declare the meeting open.

The Secretary formally opened the meeting and, in the absence of the President, asked John Exton to take the Chair.

2. The minutes of the 32nd Annual General Meeting held on 24 September 2004 were read to the meeting. It was proposed by Ian Massey and seconded by Christina Walmsley that they be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

3. Secretary's report:

John Exton presented his report. In March, we had a successful dinner with entertainment by the school music department. The raffle raised £77 which was gratefully received by the music department. During the year, I know there have been three other gatherings of former pupils. John Wroughton brought together more than 40 former boys' school pupils of the 40s and 50s at The Royal Hotel in October. Mike Gilman held two functions, one at New Scotland Yard in January and the second in June at another police establishment off the M25.

A sporting cup won by Eddie Hardy in an Old Boys' race in the 1950s was returned to the school. Eddie, who beat George Doleman to win the cup, was an English cross country international runner and, in the accompanying letter, he was most appreciative of his time at the school. I will quote this in full in my next newsletter.

In February, I received a letter from Mrs Maureen Bowyer regarding the Erdington Girls' Grammar School evacuation of 1939. Using the press officer, I succeeded in getting her appeal for information into the local press. This elicited a number of replies which I subsequently forwarded to Mrs Bowyer. I have received no further correspondence from her.

Henry Hand (1930-36) wrote requesting copies of The Ashbeian from 1937-41. I found these in the museum, photocopied them and sent them to him. He sent me a cheque for £25 for the Association. I intend to give a full account of his correspondence in the next newsletter.

On behalf of the Association, I must congratulate Clive Jones on his work regarding the Bent Victoria Cross and encouraging the production of the video on the First World War for use in school. His latest project to revive the Woodcock Prize will be mentioned later in the meeting. I am also informed that Ashby Museum is producing a CD which contains photographs of the school and old Ashbeians which can be used as a resource by the school and by old Ashbeians, to help deal with any enquiries which may arise.

Finally, in May, I was informed that a small share of the residual estate of Mr Clifford Jackson, 3 Court Street, Woodville, has been left to the Association – in the region of £1,500.

Christina Walmsley then read to the meeting correspondence received during the last 12 months.

Thanks were expressed to the Secretaries for their hard work and commitment during the year.

A Report from the Memorial Trustees

Clive Jones summarised the work of the Trustees in relation to the Memorial Field. The drainage system is fine and working well. The field and running track are extremely well used, mainly by The Manor House School. There have been problems with the fencing around the car park at the top of the bank by the Castle. The fencing has broken down and the Trustees are obtaining quotations. There is a query to be checked out on the title deeds as to whether the fence is the responsibility of English Heritage or the District Council or the Trustees. Contact has been made with the Conservation Officer at NWLDC and further discussions were to take place. It is estimated that the cost will be about £2,500. Finally, the hedge planted around the field is now thriving. Thanks were expressed to Clive for this report.

4. Treasurer's Report

As Ken Land is on holiday, Ian Massey presented the Income and Expenditure Account for the year to 31 July 2005. The balance was £1,271.62. After questions were answered, thanks were expressed to Ian for

presenting the report and examining the books. Thanks were also expressed to Ken Land for his day-to-day work as Treasurer.

5. Election of Vice-President

Mike Gilman was nominated Vice President for the next 12 months. Mike regularly comes to the dinner and has organised reunions at New Scotland Yard for more than 20 years.

6. Election of Officers

Secretaries:	Mr John Exton	Mrs Christina Walmsley
Treasurer:	Mr Ken Land	
Independent Examiner:	Mr Ian Massey	
Committee:	Mrs Anne Wileman	Mrs Barbara Murfitt
	Mr John Williams	Mr Maurice Harvey

7. Any other business

School Governors. John Exton's term of office as a representative of the Old Ashbeians was due to end in October. It was proposed by Maurice Harvey and seconded by Christina Walmsley that John be elected to serve another term of three years. It is also noted that the other Old Ashbeian representatives are Peter Bourne and Hazel Finch.

The Woodcock Prize. Clive Jones presented a copy of the proposal put to the Governors. It was proposed that an additional prize for academic excellence be presented at the School's annual awards evening in May. The Woodcock Prize – which is awarded in memory of former headteacher Thomas Arnold Woodcock – is being reinstated after a lapse of many years. It was agreed that the Association would give full support to this venture. Any contributions to the fund can be forwarded to the Association. The fund would be held in trust and managed by Leicestershire County Council in the same way as the Nora F Lockton Memorial Fund and The Old Girls' Lockton Memorial Fund.

Thanks to Year 12. Those present at the meeting wished to record their thanks to the Year 12 students who help voluntarily at the Disabled Day at the Ashby Statutes fair.

Ashbeian Musical Theatre Group are to present 'Guys and Dolls' just before Easter 2006. Flyers will be available to circulate with the newsletter in the New Year.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 8.30pm and was followed by light refreshments.