



THE OLD EAGLE HOUSE SOCIETY

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The School Archives (click [here](#))

The website is now moving into its second stage which is going to allow us to upload a great deal of material. We are always looking for material and of course asking for you to identify pupils in photographs.

SDS, the company who is digitising and indexing the material are so conscious of archive material being so precious that only two senior members of the staff will collect the items and then return them when the work has been completed. They do not use any courier services.

The next phase is uploading electronic material and this is through a piece of software which the company has provided. There is new material now on the website covering the 1990s.

The Society is funding this funding this project.

1980s reunion is ON!

The response has been good so please put Saturday 21 May 2017 in your diary for a lunch reunion at the school and meet old friends and look at the changes at the school.

Staff memories

Paging through my material I found these two extracts from past members of staff:

Sadly Roger Jones passed away a few years ago suffering from the dreaded motor neuron disease. Liz now lives in Liverpool near their daughter, Tabitha.

Pau Brewster has now retired from teaching having had four headships in his career and also became a lead inspector for the private sector. He now does overseas school consultations and lives in Bath.

PAUL BREWSTER (1981 – 1988): Eagle House provided a very happy start to my prep school teaching career. The sense of community was wonderful, both for staff and for the full school family.

ROGER JONES (1986 – 2003)

In all the 17 years spent at EH, I always felt challenged and happy to be a part of the overall team. Setting up the Design Department (or CDT as it was then called) was an experience I enjoyed, and to see just how children responded to the opportunities of being able to design their own items and then create them in wood, plastics and metal was very satisfying.

The most rewarding project was undoubtedly the Tudor House, though it soon became clear that the children would not be able to have the involvement I had envisaged at the start. However, a team of parents did step in and it was through their keen interest and dedication that the whole mad-cap idea came to fruition.

Do you have any positive memories about your teachers at Eagle House? I am aware that John Watson (French) tops the charts but are there any others which inspired you to do better things? Please do send me your stories.

India to Eagle House

This is the first of many parts of Michael Ponting's (OEH 1935 – 41) memories of his life at the school.

My father had been in the Indian Army since 1907. My mother was born in India to an Indian Civil Service family and married in Simla. My older sister was born there, too. So we had strong Indian connections and no permanent base in England. ...a fairly common situation for many Imperial public service families in the Thirties.

We spent our first years in England with our grandfather and went to India when I was six. While there, we were educated by a governess using the universal PNEU postal courses which seemed very effective, although the lack of interaction with other children was a later disadvantage. However, a decision had been made to send us back to school in England when I was eight. Since both of our parents would be spending much of their time separated from us, they were particularly concerned about selection of schools as we only had our retired widower grandfather as a backstop. As it turned out, we were both lucky.

Selecting Schools

Susan joined a small school in Sussex. Later she moved to St Swithun's in Winchester which she left in 1943 to join the WRNS. She became involved with the ultra-secret Ultra decoding organisation at Bletchley, like many other Wrens of secure background, and where she met her future husband. *We never knew anything about their work till 1974 when some of it became public knowledge.*

For me, we saw two prep schools: the first I didn't take to, possibly for the frivolous reason that the headmaster's name was Bulley. The second was **Eagle House**, which I liked instantly. We visited on Sports Day and I ducked for apples, also entering the 'Future Boys' Race' I was given a good (excessive?) handicap of many yards and the winning box of Terry's Gold Chocolates reinforced my enthusiasm.

My clothes were bought at Swan and Edgar's in Piccadilly Circus ('£23 pounds!' gasped my mother, overheard phoning a friend), but it did include a trunk, a grey suit for Sundays, a blue and grey flannel uniform, cap, boater for summer, patent leather shoes for Saturday-night dances (even at 8). Items which must have pained my parents more than most were the two pairs of white cricket flannels which had to be replaced each year as I grew, but which were unused until reaching the First XI, which I didn't manage till I was twelve.

EAGLE HOUSE SCHOOL – a prep school at peace and war. A personal account.

On 20th September 1935, my father drove me aged just 8 in his new large new American car (grey Hudson V8 Terraplane, due to be exported to India and in which he and I had already achieved 87mph); first to Aldershot, where we had tea at Darracotts and then on to Eagle House. Remember', said TJP, 'your name is Ponting, not Mick' (as I was called at home). I had no other advice and didn't know what to expect. I can recall little of my first days which passed in a daze. Work presented no problems, as our PNEU postal lessons in India ensured that I was on a level or better than the rest of my (bottom) class.

The staff were kindly, much more so than some of the boys; and the games, mostly scampering round trying to learn rugby, presented few problems, but the fact remained that I had never been with other children except my sister and had never experienced any school. I was supremely homesick, wondering each night whether the steam train I could hear puffing away through the (always-open) window of Anchor Dormitory, would be going near home. After the first three weeks, we were allowed out for Sunday after Chapel. But this, if anything, made things worse at parting; 'Look here', said my father in one of his infrequent talks to me, 'if you are going to be upset like this, we won't be able to come and see you'. Eventually, things got easier. We didn't see our parents much, and not at all in the first three weeks of term. Of course, short of emergency, we didn't telephone. Just an exchange of Sunday letters.

However, during my first term (in October 1935) I was mysteriously taken to London and a small hospital / nursing home where to my surprise I found my mother in bed. I assumed later that she had been quite ill but it was never referred to again.

Our first headmaster, usually charming, sometimes forbidding, was J D Parmiter, nicknamed 'Parmi' which we were startled to discover he knew about and approved: 'parmi' to us budding linguists meant 'among' and indeed he was always among us. Also amongst us was Mrs Parmi, who seemed colder and quite ready to dispatch minor miscreants to her husband for immediate attention. However, in my early days, JDP showed me a kindness I always remembered.... In Ranikhet, in the foothills of the Himalayas, I had been introduced in 'The Club' to a Captain Bonnett, who had just become the first man to fly over Everest in the Lady Houston / British Thomson-Houston Expedition. He kindly took the time to tell me at length about the trip, the planes they flew, the downdrafts that threatened them, the ruptured oxygen pipe which had to be held together with a handkerchief, and a lot more. His signed photograph stayed beside my bed for several years. In my first term when I was in the EH sickroom for some minor ailment, I wrote all this out as a story. It found its way, via Miss Dobson, the Matron, to JDP. Next day, I woke to find by my bed, a quite considerable story he'd just written, especially for me.

JDP was one of an earlier generation of headmasters. His Victorian values produced a successful if somewhat rigid education and a number of major scholarships to the larger public schools, thus attracting new, and occasionally bright pupils. Eagle House was about two miles away from Wellington College, where many Leavers went, including myself. He and his predecessor, one of the Bruce Lockhart clan, introduced a number of the Scottish hierarchy into EH, including Arbuthnots, Bruces, Hamiltons, Stuarts and Elphinstone. Many wore the kilt on Sundays, of which the rest of us were envious. Our grey flannel suits didn't have quite the same cachet. I remember a Stuart particularly from inheriting one of his books..... H.I.E.R.T. Stuart (Henry Ivan Euan Robert Thomas – how's that for a name – and memory?) They were a tough lot who went on, mostly, to make their mark north of the Border.

..... to be continued

Final words

Once again I thank all contributors to the newsletter and do remember there is never too much material especially from recent years. Have an enjoyable and healthy year.