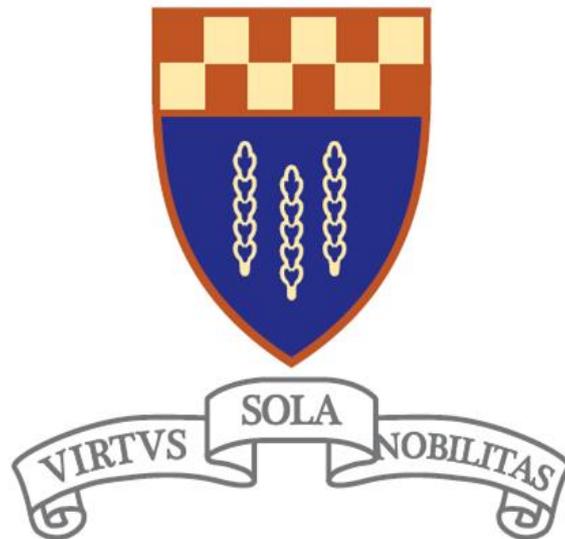


# The Pavior



The Newsletter  
of  
**The High Pavement Society**  
(founded 1989)

**August 2018**

### Your Committee

The Committee Members listed below are always delighted to talk to you on any matter – particularly if you have a contribution to make to this publication!

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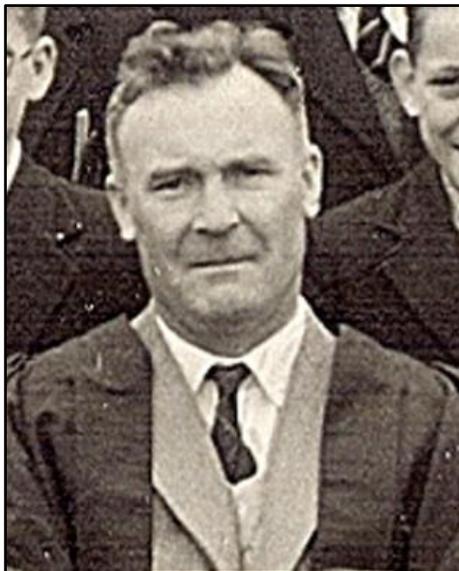
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**Faces to Remember**  
**Alfred Frederick Smith**  
**Languages Master at High Pavement**  
**1945-79**

**THE COMMITTEE-MEN'S COLUMN**  
**THE 2018 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The above meeting will be held at the  
**Welbeck Rooms, Welbeck Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham**  
on **Monday September 24th. Time 6.30 for 6.45 pm.**

Please make a note in your diaries now.

**Critical decisions may have to be taken at this meeting, which will commence at 6.45 and last about 30 minutes. It is important that all available members attend.**

Non-members may enjoy the facilities of the bar while the meeting is in progress.

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The AGM will be followed by a cold buffet meal at a cost of **£14.00 per head** followed by the usual **Raffle** conducted by **Ken Kirk**.

Our **Prize Quiz** will be conducted by **John Mason** as quizmaster.

A personal invitation is enclosed with this newsletter.

**ooOoo**

**CENTENARY OF THE ENDING OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR**

Old Pavors will remember viewing the list of the HP fallen on the Memorial Plaque which has been on prominent display since the 1920s in the various premises of High Pavement. John Mason has made arrangements for the cleaning and restoration of this plaque in time for a suitable ceremony when the restored plaque will be unveiled. The date is likely to be November 9<sup>th</sup>. (Please contact the High Pavement Sixth Form Centre for details of times.)

**ooOoo**

**EDITORIAL**

**Apologies for a 'circumstance beyond our control'**

Many readers will have anxiously awaited the arrival of the May newsletter (or so one fondly imagines) which was delayed for about one week due to a breakdown of the machinery used by our printers. This was rectified as soon as possible and we hope nobody was seriously inconvenienced. We are assured that it is unlikely to recur.

The same firm also deal with the preparation of the newsletter packaging and ensure that the delivery is as rapid as possible. This of course includes the many copies sent to distant parts of the globe where the influence of High Pavement School continues to be felt.

Occasionally a change of address gets overlooked by me and needs to be quickly rectified, but that is a circumstance well within our control.

While we're at it, as they say, we would like to apologise for the somewhat delayed arrival of this newsletter which was caused by a major fault on the editor's computer, now happily resolved

**Regulars and Irregulars**

As announced in our previous issue, this issue of *The Pavior* will carry part four, the last section, of the 1948 Senior School photo which the late Peter Bentley prepared shortly before he passed away. Also in this issue is the conclusion of Brian Ferrill's childhood saga forming our End Piece.

The *Pictures from the Past* series will continue next time with a look at 1961, watch this space.

**Colin Salsbury**

### **Death of Kofi Annan (1938-2018)**

The recent death of the distinguished General Secretary of the United Nations has reminded us that he was educated at the Mfantshipim School, Cape Coast, in what is now Ghana, as a pupil of Old Pavior **Ian Roddick** (1925-2007; HP: 1926-43) teacher of Modern Languages. Kofi Annan had formed a strong relationship with Ian and kept in touch with his former teacher for many years, even during his most active years of office. Ian's younger brother, the late Ron Roddick, was a member of this Society for many years.

### **THE FIRST HIGH PAVEMENT SCHOOL BUILDING**

*[The Society has received an email enquiry from a correspondent in the Antipodes whose grandmother was a pupil at the original High Pavement premises when it was still on the street of that name. Our colleague **Graham Wybrow** compiled an extremely detailed response of which the following is an extract and slightly edited. I feel it is worth printing for general interest -Ed.]*

High Pavement (the street) runs along a high ridge, with an abrupt 60ft cliff-face dropping down to the plain of Broad and Narrow Marsh. The original High Pavement School buildings were, like several other buildings on that side of High Pavement, built partly on the cliff-face itself and, in the case of the school, this led to a particularly curious structure. The buildings are still there today, but have been converted into about 14 separate business office units called "Heritage Mews".

When approached from High Pavement (the street), the school buildings are largely hidden behind the magnificent High Pavement Chapel (now the Pitcher & Piano restaurant). The School Buildings appear as a *single-storey* building, although they are in fact of *two-storeys*, but with only the top storey visible. The Entrance was via this top-floor, which was used for the Infants and Girls Schools. The Boys would have used the same entrance but they would have had to go down a flight of stairs to the Boys School which was on the lower-floor. The Boys School would therefore have had no windows on the north (chapel) side as it was below ground-level and facing the cliff-face (a possible reason for the very large windows on the south side).



### **◀ HP Area from the South**

This shows the whole of the High Pavement Area taken in 2018 from the South, beyond Narrow and Broad Marsh. The HP Chapel (with the prominent spire) is at the left, with the School Buildings immediately in front of

it and slightly below (the 2-storey red-brick building with about 10 prominent windows on each floor). The Square Tower of St Mary's Church is visible to the right of centre. Broadly, High Pavement (the street) runs for about 400 yds between these two.

Particularly visible are the buildings on the cliff face, including the Shire Hall (the red-brick building directly below St Mary's Tower) which has an open yard at its lowest level similar to that at the back of the school. In the case of the Shire Hall, this was the Prison Exercise and Execution Yard. The entrance to the Shire Hall on High Pavement (from the steps of which the following Pan photo was taken) is via the Top Floor of that building. The present Shire Hall was built about 1740 but there had been law courts on that site from around 1300. Many of the cells below the Shire Hall are actually caves, carved out of the native Sherwood Sandstone (but with doors fitted).



**Pan High Pavement (street) from South-Side** ▲ This panorama was taken from the Steps of the Shire Hall on High Pavement (the site of many public executions). The panorama shows almost the full length of High Pavement (the Street), running almost straight (apparent curvature due to photographic process) from St Mary's Church (just visible behind blue board on far right) to High Pavement Chapel (and the School) both not quite visible but to the left of the distant bare tree extreme left.

**School from South** ► This 2014 photo shows the school buildings and their height (about 30ft) above the base of the cliff and the flat plain of Narrow Marsh. The small irregular shaped yard on lower floor is also visible. It is clear why there was no school entrance on this side.



*[The project contains much more information plus other photographs, suitably interpreted, as above. NB the photographs supplied to the enquirer are of superb quality to which our newsletter is unable to do full justice. If space permits a further section of this project will be included in the next issue of The Pavior –Ed.]*

**ooOoo**

## AN APPEAL FOR HELP

*[This letter, like many we receive, has been received via our website and asks for assistance in finding information about a relative who was an Old Pavior.]*

Dear Sirs, I am the grand-daughter of **J E Milnes** who is listed on High Pavement's Roll of Honour. I see from the pdf document on your website that there is no other real information



Mrs. Milnes, of 21, Bonnington-crescent, Sherwood, has received news of the death of her husband, Sgt. J. E. Milnes (above), off the Scottish Coast, in an attempt to save members of the A.T.C. Sgt. Milnes was the son of Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Milnes, of 1, Osborne-grove, Sherwood, and prior to joining the Forces was teaching at Claremont School. He was educated at High Pavement and Nottingham University College, was a member of the Britannia Rowing Club for several years, and also played Rugby for the college.

about my grandfather. If we were to provide the relevant information about his rank, family, grave etc would they be able to be added to your document? My grandfather died 75 years ago, next year, having saved the lives of several cadets in the sea off Fraserburgh but sadly he himself drowned. His actions were commended by the Royal Humane Society and he has a Commonwealth War Graves Tombstone at a cemetery local to the airbase where he was stationed.

Do you as a society have records about the school? If not, do you know where records are kept? We are interested in trying to find out more about my grandfather and his time at High Pavement. My mum (an only child) was only 1 year old when her father died and her mother died in 1964, so there is no family from whom to get information. Any records the Society has that might help, or pointers you could give would be much appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

**Catherine Shingler**

*[Mrs Shingler had previously emailed the Society as long ago as December 2001 but it is not known if she was able to make proper contact. Over the next few weeks our Archivist and other members are now attempting to tackle the matter. If any reader has any useful information about the enquiry, please get in touch with the editor.]*

ooOoo

## FROM OUR READERS

### FROM JOHN RANDALL

*[John Randall, of Sydney Australia, contacted the Society and has recently become a member. He is very anxious to contact any old classmates, to whom I can pass his email address -Ed.]*

### A Brief Biography of an Old Pavior

On completion of my A Levels in the summer of 1961, I left HP to start a career in the Insurance industry. A university education was not considered due to financial considerations. I spent four years in the Insurance world before joining an Engineering group located on Gregory Boulevard, adjacent to the Manning School. It was during my four years with this firm, Becorit, that I began to develop some early management skills. By the time I left Nottingham in mid-1969 for a spell in the Bahamas, I had picked up professional qualifications in Insurance and in Company Secretarial studies. I passed three very enjoyable

years living in Freeport and in a new role as Financial Controller, I travelled extensively throughout the Caribbean and the Eastern USA.

Rather than return to London into a leadership role with the private group that I had worked with in Freeport, I changed the direction of my career and joined an Executive Search group as the Head of their Midlands office, based in Birmingham. After two years, however, I was offered a transfer and spent a one year spell in Sydney to develop an Australian based Search business. Life in Birmingham had not been particularly enjoyable, and a chance to return to live in warmer climes was too difficult to turn down.

So in September 1974, I set off for Sydney and my wife and two small children followed just before Christmas. I handed back my return air tickets in April 1975, and joined a large Australian group, owned in part by P&O. I became Head of Finance and Company Secretary of a container terminal and depot operator. I remained at this organization until February 1981, when I accepted an offer to join P&O Australia as Head of its largest division which owned and operated port activities throughout Australia, and in New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. I remained with P&O for the remainder of my career, retiring in early 2006.

I was able to compensate for my early lack of campus education with a spell at Harvard Business School and taking an external law degree from London University. I travelled extensively throughout my P & O life, and lived in Los Angeles, Manila and PNG. In 1992 I transferred to another division of P & O and became Managing Director of that business in 1996. The business was expanded quickly throughout North and South America. I joined the Board later that year, and sat on the Executive Committee of P&O UK from 2001 until the sale of P&O to Dubai interests in 2006.

I have remained active in the business world since leaving P&O. I have spent ten years coaching a wide range of senior executives of Australian companies, as well as sitting on the Board of a major listed company. A three year term as Chairman of a private equity owned business provided quite a different view of the investor world.

Now, in 2018, I enjoy excellent health and work in a family business managed by my son. I check on a range of investments, assist with the development of four grandchildren and a beagle dog, play a lot of golf and travel frequently with my wife of fifty plus years. A varied, exciting, challenging, great life.

**My best wishes to all other Old Paviers**

**John (1945-50)**

**FROM ALEX RAE**

**Dear Colin**

Not long ago, while looking through a catalogue of paintings forming part of the Nottingham City art collection I came across an artist - William Benner (1884-1960) - noted for his railway pictures.

I initially thought that Benner was a native of Suffolk but talking to a friend who had known his widow I discovered that he had taught art at High Pavement for nearly 30 years in the first half of the 20th century.

Can fellow Old Paviers provide any further information on Benner's life and career?

**Kind regards**

**Alex Rae**

pto/

[Your editor compiled this message to put Alex in the picture:

*I knew Bill Benner when I was at HP in 1942 and he took our first form for Art until the re-grouping in the following February after which we studied Mechanical Drawing. It was a most delightful encounter as he was a superb schoolmaster, full of good humour and jokes. He was a gentle and helpful person when he criticised your sketches and other art work. In the school generally he was well-known for singing comic songs of his own composition at school end-of-term concerts.*

*He was tremendously popular. At his retirement in 1949 he and Winston Snowdon (who was moving to a new job) received gifts from the school in the assembly. Mr Snowdon wisely gave a brief speech of thanks and cleared the way for Bill. The cheers then became thunderous and long lasting. Bill dwelt on his service with a cheerful delivery and thanked everyone for their gift. More thunderous cheers but there was many a lump in the throats of the assembled Pavors.*

*In an earlier copy of the Pavior I wrote a brief note about a pilgrimage I made to see his grave in Blythburgh Churchyard. The simple headstone said 'William Benner, Artist' and the dates. I shared a few thoughts with him as I stood there. He retired to Blythburgh and many years later I saw some of his paintings in a church hall when I was on holiday nearby.*

*I gather that Bill was recruited to HP by G J R Potter to start up the use of Rugby rather than Soccer, as most other grammar schools also did. Bill had been a Notts Rugby Club player of distinction and supervised the Rugby for some years, organising the pitches on the various grounds which the school was given by the Council. He was also given such work as his artistic merits justified, including Architecture for School Cert in some special cases. When an interviewer asked him how he came to be a schoolmaster he replied 'I starved into it!' (Typical Bill humour).'*

*We also supplied a Bill Benner Miscellany but, we have insufficient room to print here -CS]*

### **FROM BARRIE STARBUCK**

**Eric, or Little by Little** [with apologies to Frederick W Farrar]

A bright, if icy, day for rugby at Strelley. Forest House versus School House? The Forest Housemaster, the ever-enthusiastic Eric Shepherd, in charge.

The first scrum was awful, a dreadful tangle. Eric slipped smoothly into coaching mode and, with a complete disregard both for his personal safety and for his rather dapper dark grey three-piece suit, crawled inside the tunnel to realign arms, and in some cases, heads. At the point where he became totally isolated by both encroaching front rows, a voice not unadjacent to the Forest No 8 cried, 'Now's yer chance, Forest House!' Without any loss of dignity, Eric's rapid exit from the tunnel was spectacular, but only the short interval resulting from the collapse in laughter of both front rows, secured his safe escape.

On another occasion at Stanley Road, Forest House were assembled for a House meeting. Their Housemaster, Eric Shepherd, was berating the cross-country teams for their inclination to ease up at the first signs of laboured breathing. He recommended the adoption of a simple rhythmic ditty to help preserve concentration upon the task in hand.

At this point Eric stationed himself on the extreme left of the front of the classroom, his customary élan and panache enhanced by a flowing academic gown, and set off across the floor, chanting '*We are tough, mighty tough, in the west*', perfectly matched to his stride, until abruptly confronted by the classroom wall opposite.

**Barrie**



**PICTURES FROM THE PAST**

Part 4 of the late Peter Bentley's copies from the 1948 panorama of the Senior School. The patient remainder of the eager members who can remember 1948 may now seek their images. Note the presence of the two admin ladies, Kathleen Chawner and Jean Scott

## LOUIS ESSEN COMMEMORATED

As announced earlier, a presentation has been made by our member Graham Wybrow of two volumes to be placed in the HP Sixth form Centre's library. One of these is the WW1 memorial *We Will Remember Them* and the other a copy of the book *The Birth of Atomic Time* by Ray Essen, son-in-law of Old Pavior and renowned physicist **Dr Louis Essen**. The book includes Dr Essen's own memoirs, so modestly written, and a review of his work in the special field of Time Measurement. A second copy was presented to the Society for use by its members. (*Contact the editor for loan of the book*)

Conventional clocks are inadequate for establishing a suitable scientific calibration standard and it was Dr Essen, working at the National Physical Laboratory who in 1955 devised the first successful clock using the resonance of caesium atoms. Others had attempted to devise clocks using the technique but the Essen timepiece was the first to give results that could be put to use in scientific measurement. Since then further advances have been made but there is no doubt about the importance of the Essen clock as the turning point in the development of time measurement.

Of particular interest is the chapter headed *Two Remarkable Schoolmasters*. One of them was a Mr Wallis at the Bentinck Road School who helped to kindle Louis Essen's interest in science and the other was the legendary Ralph Crossland, then a young man just back from the war. Mr Crossland was instrumental in helping and encouraging Louis Essen to enter our school and to pursue scientific interests while at the school and beyond.

It is a fascinating read and the book may be borrowed by contacting the editor. Our thanks to Graham for his generous gift. **CS**

ooOoo

## THE HIGH PAVEMENT SOCIETY TIE



*[This article was printed in the last issue and elicited a number of replies but these were insufficient to enable us to place an order with our suppliers without investing our valuable funds in stock which might never be sold. If you have been thinking about placing an order but for one reason or another (eg Brexit or perhaps the amazing antics of Donald Trump) never got around to doing anything about it, you should **act now!** To refresh your memory read on...]*

The use of our colourful tie is a matter of pride and we are always gratified to see such a large number worn at Society functions. Our exclusive design means the ties must be made to order. We have been contacting suppliers and as far as we can gather we must order a minimum number of 36. We are quite ready to do this **if we can be sure that we can sell most, if not all, of them to our members**. A polyester fabric should cost £10 +pp.

If you would like to acquire one and look as smart as all those others, please let us know by contacting the project leader, John Mason at **22 Arnold Smith House, Bridge Street, Shepshed, Loughborough, Leics. LE12 9AD** (or [j.mason.144@uwclub.net](mailto:j.mason.144@uwclub.net)).

If there are enough takers (and surely with a membership as numerous as ours there *must* be) we will place an order with the suppliers. No need to send cash yet. We will announce through these pages when the stock is available and, after confirming the price, will arrange to collect the necessary cheques prior to despatch. **The Committee**

## HIGH PAVEMENT SIXTH FORM ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY

The High Pavement Sixth Form Centre held its Annual Awards Evening on Monday June 18<sup>th</sup> 2018. As announced in the last issue, the Society was invited to be present and to participate.

All the awards recognise a particular level of achievement, or in some cases, *endeavour*, by individual students during the previous academic year. Most of the awards are in the form of a suitable certificate but four items included a modest *prize* in the form of a Book Token (for £25), donated by this Society, following their usual tradition. To present these special awards the Society was represented by Ken Kirk, John Elliott. Graham Wybrow and Robin Taylor.

1. Ken Kirk describes the work of the Society to the assembly.
2. **Cosmina Stanciu** and
3. **Emma Stirland**, receiving their awards from **Jeannette Mortimer**, Head of Faculty.
4. The award winners display their certificates as they leave the assembly.

The evening's programme was conducted in a rather informal atmosphere compared with earlier years, which our



members thought robbed it of some of its impact. However, it was duly completed and our representatives were able to take part in it and maintain the link between our two institutions.

*[The presentation of the Society's own Awards for Excellence, which are of a different character to the above awards, will take place soon, once the 'A' Level examination results are published and assessed.]*

## PUB LUNCH NEWS

The pub lunch group held two events since the last issue of the Pavior. In a Society with a scattered membership like ours it is good that so many regulars living in the locality are able to support the efforts of the organisers who do so much behind the scenes.

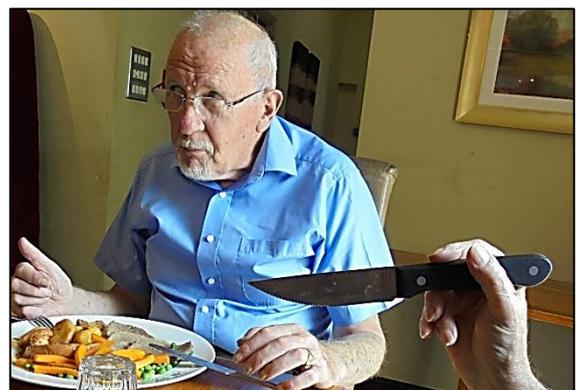
### The Nag's Head, Main Street, Woodborough.

It was on Thursday June 14<sup>th</sup> that we held a very well-supported lunch at one of our favourite venues. The event held at Nag's Head in Woodborough, Notts was organised by John Elliott with help from John Mason. The weather was good and so was the food and drink. Approximately 30 members and their guests attended, and a good time was had by all (as they say).



### The Plough Inn, Normanton on Soar.

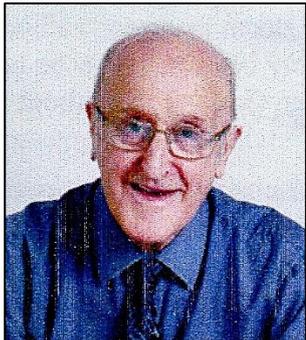
The Society met yet again, this time on Thursday July 26<sup>th</sup> with a splendid gathering at the Plough Inn, Normanton on Soar, Notts (just! – across the river lies Leicestershire). We had some 20 members attending the event, organised by John Mason. The river Soar flowed idly by as we consorted together.



▲ All went well, as the pictures show.

However, John Mason found the huge steak knives intimidating in the extreme! ►

### **Ron Martin**



It is with great regret that we announce the death at the age of 89 of our member Ron Martin who passed away on June 10th 2018. His funeral was held at Bramcote Crematorium on June 26<sup>th</sup> when the Society was represented by Colin Salsbury, a contemporary pupil at Stanley Road.

Ron had a successful career in management within the coal industry but was also a man of great dedication to the service of the community and for many years was the Chairman of the High Pavement School Parent-Staff Association.

Ron was a prolific poet with an idiosyncratic style and had several of his collections published. Many members will remember some of his compositions which we printed in these pages.

Anticipating his passing, he wrote a poem called *At My End* which was read at his funeral by Matthew Leiper. With great respect we have selected another of our favourites from his many poems and print it here in his memory.

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### **ANOTHER CHANCE TO PLAY**

We know we cannot change a pig's ear into a purse of silk  
And we say it's no use crying when we spill our milk  
But these are well known sayings that we often use  
When our failure leads us to find a suitable excuse

But the reason for our failure is often widely known  
And the reason for this failure is often ours and ours alone  
For it is very often caused by the things we've left undone  
And we have lost when we really should have won

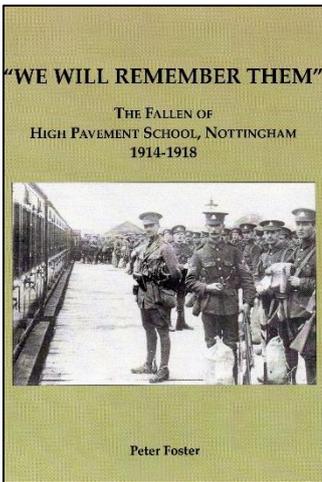
Just a little bit more effort was all that was really needed  
And there is a good chance that we could have succeeded  
But the final whistle's gone and there's no more time to play  
We've missed the opportunity that life gave us today

Don't let your mind be filled with sadness or despair  
Let hope and confidence be the motivator there  
For tomorrow will be another day  
And you will have another chance to play

Make sure you do your best and maybe you will succeed  
And of these old sayings you will have no further need

**Ron Martin**

## **YES, HERE'S A FURTHER REMINDER!**



In this year, when we commemorate the centenary of the end of the Great War, we want to sell more copies of this excellent memorial book. Perhaps your grandfather or other relative attended High Pavement in the early years of the 20th Century and sadly lost his life in the Great War. This book will have the details.

Written by war historian Peter Foster, it commemorates all those Old Paviers who died in the conflict. The text is well illustrated and it is particularly absorbing to read.

Copies are available at all our Society functions, priced at only £10 each. They can also be ordered by post at an extra charge of £3.

The Society has helped with the cost of producing the book and will be able to recoup the expenditure from any sales.

**Robin Taylor**

**ooOoo**

## **CHRISTMAS IS COMING - eventually!**

The HPS **Christmas Lunch** is always an enjoyable gathering and we have again managed to book the Mapperley Golf Club for this year's gathering. The date is **Wednesday December 12<sup>th</sup>**. Time 12 for 12.30 pm. Put it in your diaries now. Menus and other info will follow in due course. We are advised that the cost will be similar to previous visits.

**ooOoo**

## **OUR END PIECE** **Brian Ferrill Looks Back**



*[Brian Ferrill concludes his story of a Nottingham childhood, in the years before starting as a pupil at High Pavement. This episode is one that affected everyone who was around at that time.]*

### **The War**

As I slowly became aware of things around the age of four, I knew that we were to have a change of king because I remember children singing 'Mrs Simpson's got our King.' I thought our new King, with his two children and their mother, the Queen, so often photographed for the newspapers, were doing well. I had seen them in the newsreels when I had been taken to 'The Grand', near Gregory Boulevard (behind Staddons') or perhaps to Leno's not-so-grand on Radford Road. Both girls were in the Guides which interested me when I later joined the Cubs.

However, Grandpa told me that there were people in Britain who wanted us to change things and be more like Germany, France and Spain. They would wear black shirts to indicate their intensely united feelings. Well, things did change but not the way they wanted.

I noticed changes when, aged seven, I was taken to Skegness for our summer holiday. Carrying our suitcases, we always caught a bus from the town, to get to Winthorpe where Uncle George and Auntie Florrie had a house. From there it was only a short walk to the beach where you built castles in the sand, with a wary eye on the tide which could wash it

away in seconds. This year though, we couldn't get to the beach as it was closed off with barbed wire.

We just had to take a bus to Sutton-on-Sea and thence to Mablethorpe and sit on the promenade, eating sandwiches (and, I clearly remember, plums!) Father explained that if another war was to come we might be evacuated and he might have to be in the army. He had been too young for the 1914-18 war but yet again might be too old for this one. Nevertheless he had made enquiries about serving in the Fire Brigade.

We had excellent weather on that holiday but never managed a paddle in the sea. On Saturday we packed our bags and set off back to Nottingham. It was late when we arrived and there were only dim lights on in the station. When we caught the No 43 trolleybus for home the windows were 'blued' with some kind of thin coating to reduce the amount of light emitted.

Back at home we listened the radio the following Sunday morning. We had a very good radio, a press-button Bush set which regularly gave us access to the 'Home Service' and the 'Forces Programme' (later to become the 'Light' Programme). And we could get Radio Luxembourg, famous for the 'Ovaltineys' Sunday show for kiddies. I was an Ovaltiney and had a badge to prove it.

However, this Sunday we tuned in to hear Neville Chamberlain, our Prime Minister, tell us we were 'at war with Germany.'

On the Monday I was due to leave Forest Fields Infants' School and start at Stanley Road Boys' Junior School but all schools were now closed and remained so for many weeks. The war was making our lives undergo many changes. Grandfather Joe Hall took me on one side and told me that I might not see much of my father for some time. My mother would be working long hours on the manufacture of soldiers' uniforms, so Grandad would now take care of me for a while.

Well, one of the things he did was to take me to a rifle shooting range in, of all places, the Meridian factory on Haydn Road. He had trained in the army in 1914-18 and knew the superintendent of the range. As we arrived, we found this man in uniform of what was to become the newly-formed 'Home Guard', then a rough and ready outfit, mostly of them veterans like him. (Grandad was involved in the 'ARP' or 'air-raid precautions' organisation.)

As time passed, along with several other boys, I was lectured on the safety precautions associated with shooting and given a 0.22 rifle with which to practise. I spent two evenings going through the loading, aiming and firing routines for standing, kneeling and lying (prone) positions. This man was a very brusque, no-nonsense person and appeared wearing the tapes of a sergeant on his sleeve! When he was satisfied that I understood the safety drill I found myself one day in the 'lying' position, holding my breath as I squeezed the trigger for my first shot. It was a bullseye! Wow! (To his delight) the training had paid off and I was given four more bullets for the BSA 0.22, lever-operated single shot rifle. All five shots had formed a half-inch wide group and I was as happy as could be! I went regularly to the range and paid a shilling for six bullets (quite an outlay in those days when a barber charged sixpence for a haircut!). I practised in the kneeling and standing positions which I found more difficult as the rifle sights seemed to wander which was not surprising in one so young.

Grandpa also took me along to the ARP who had a place allocated in Scotholme School on Beaconsfield Street. Here I learned how to deal with an incendiary bomb by

smothering it with sand or using the water spray from a hose. My job was not to fight fires but to act as a messenger (private telephones were not common and the red street boxes were few and far between) using my trusty rusty bike, reporting back to HQ if and when the ARP men tackled a fire: place, time, any casualties etc.

My father had worked at Gunn and Moore's, the cricket bat makers but the workforce was stood down 'for the duration' and as he had some training with the fire brigade he seized the chance of a job as an 'Auxiliary' fireman, as did many older men, at the extensive Boots factories in the town centre. Suddenly he had a smart new uniform with a peaked cap, working 60 hour weeks on 12 hour shifts, doing this for the remainder of the war years. He was stationed, appropriately enough, in Station Street but covered Island Street as well.

Christmas 1939 was a subdued affair compared with previous parties we'd enjoyed pre-war. It was not considered safe to be in a crowded place when air-raids were likely so football matches, cinemas and theatres were closed by government decree but someone had second thoughts and such places were wisely re-opened to maintain public morale.

In November 1939 a letter came to tell me to go for schooling at a house on Burford Road, Forest Fields. Here Mrs White would be holding classes for a few hours a week. This continued until after Christmas when we started to attend the school in Stanley Road, where she was our teacher for the first year (or what was left of it!).

Thus passed the first year of the war but it made big changes to people's lives. The thirties had been a bit drab. Now, with many men now in the forces, higher employment and higher wages became more general. Everyone seemed to be 'waking up', there was a sense of urgency. 'Do your bit – and get something out of it.'

I became a 'Sixer' in the Cubs. I would be nine in March. The fourth decade of the century was starting with a bang, albeit an unwelcome bang for some.

**1940s – here we come!**

**Brian**

*[Our thanks to Brian Ferrill for compiling this set of experiences, so well-remembered, from his infancy and early youth. This episode concludes our extracts from his extensive notes.-Ed.]*

**ooOoo**