I receive a call from Keith Huddlestone and 50 years slip away leaving me feeling as though I am back at Newport again. “Please write a few hundred words as an introduction to your year as O.N. President.” Use only one side of the paper? Name on each sheet? How long do I have – an hour and a half? Now, as back then, I do as I am told so here goes – just don’t throw the fruit too hard at the pillory!

I came to Newport in 1959, along with another couple of sprogs, from Waterside School in Bishop’s Stortford, having successfully got over the hurdle of the 11-plus exam. Waterside was small, so Newport seemed big, although I guess there were only about 300 pupils at that time. I was placed in form 2a and we were initially quartered in the newly completed block adjoining Bury Water Lane, under the eye of Jack Mason (for whom I came to have the highest regard). On our first day Jack spoke about the “O” and “A” level exams that awaited us in what seemed an incredibly far distant future, and how we would (hopefully) all develop to achieve a successful outcome.

The titular Head at that time was Maurice Willmore, but not long after the 1959 intake he was struck down by ill health and did not return in a teaching capacity. His place was taken by Owen Jones as Deputy Head whom I recall as a kindly man but sadly unable to maintain the necessary discipline that the school needed. Dr Geoffrey Elcoat arrived in 1961 and I remember his entry at assembly down the centre aisle of the new hall – gown billowing behind him and a bark of “Stand still boy” to some (perhaps imaginary) miscreant. Things were going to be different in future!

These were the days of the characterful staff – Wilfrid Sing, who became our form master when we moved to the old dormitory, was prone to throw the blackboard wiper at inattentive pupils, Harry Mitchell (chemistry) who had his weekly supply of cigarettes delivered by the caretaker to his desk in class on a Monday morning, and “Bill” Liddle with his infamous slipper, to name just three of the dramatis personae.
At some point the school moved to a six day timetable, a curious system which involved the issue of a cardboard calendar to each pupil at the beginning of every term showing what the timetable “day” would be for any given weekday. I do remember that Day 3 was my favourite although the reason is now obliterated by time. Probably an absence of double periods…

Apart from the normal curriculum biology lessons (in which I recall amoeba and spirogyra figured highly) my path seldom crossed that of the legendary “Spud” Taylor, probably because my sporting prowess was somewhat lacklustre. Activities involving bats, balls, rackets, and nets invariably found me in the wrong place at the wrong time, although I did shine moderately well at cross-country. There were at that time three courses – the junior, intermediate, and senior, and I remember the first occasion on which my year were let loose on the senior course on a misty autumn afternoon, with only the sketchiest instructions as to the route. I was fortunate in keeping fairly well up with the leaders and hence was piloted safely back to the School, but classmates who took a more leisurely pace became lost in the unfamiliar countryside and as twilight fell had to be rescued by Masters cars from the environs of Wendens Ambo.

Academically I think I was reasonably bright, although my wish to focus on Science was thwarted by the “O” level results, with Jack Mason (by then careers master) quietly pointing out the undeniable fact that the “arts” grades were so much better. So sixth-form arts it was to be, studying principally English, History and French, the latter subject focussing on a collection of books seemingly designed to reduce the student to a manic depressive. “Didn’t they ever write anything cheerful?” I asked a fellow sufferer.

Slightly disillusioned, I decided (to Dr Elcoat’s disappointment) that I did not want to go on to University and in 1966 applied to the Civil Service Commission and joined what was then the Inland Revenue. This seemed to offer the prospect of a worthwhile and interesting career, but a few years on, with that knack that Ministers frequently have of failing to think things through, an initial attempt at computerisation of the Revenue was proposed with a consequent move of East Anglian staff to Tyneside where the centre was intended to be. Predictably this resulted in a flood of resignations from qualified and expensively-trained staff un-enamoured with the prospect. Subsequently an election and a change of government resulted in the whole idea being thrown back into the think-tank.

Fortuitously at that time a local firm of Chartered Accountants were looking to expand their personal taxation department. My application was successful and so, in 1971, I exchanged my gamekeeper’s hat for a poacher’s. Over the years my role expanded and in due course I qualified as a financial advisor so as to be able to give a rounded service. I retired in 2014, by which time I was privileged to count many long standing clients as good friends.

Looking back, I am so grateful to the School for planting two entirely disparate seeds. First, an appreciation and enjoyment of light opera, stemming from that lacuna between the “A” levels and the end of the final term at Newport during which I, together with a group of demob-happy sixth-formers (as the Newportonian subsequently put it) staged a production of Gilbert and Sullivan’s Trial By Jury. Completely undeterred by the lack of players for the female roles, and with that “can do” confidence of youth, we secured the services of Mrs Weatherup – wife of physics master Michael - to sing the role of the Plaintiff. More daringly, an appointment was made with the headmistress of the Friends’ School in Saffron Walden, and the plan was put before her. This resulted in a contingent of female pupils being loaned to Newport to appear as Bridesmaids. The result was a happy and thoroughly enjoyable production which set me on the road to 20 years membership of the Bishop’s Stortford Amateur Operatic Society (now B.S. Musical Theatre Company).

My second vote of thanks goes to Alec Selby who presided over the woodwork shop although my attendance at classes was shorter than I would have wished due to the aforesaid switch to the “arts” curriculum. Whilst my efforts at the customary matchbox holder and teapot stand would not (and indeed did not!) win any prizes they taught techniques -which of course was the whole idea- and instilled a love of working with wood and my hands that is still with me today.

So here I am, half a century on and now Captain of the O.N. ship for the coming year. I am humbled to be following in the footsteps of so many illustrious predecessors and am grateful for the privilege that you have accorded me. I look forward to renewing old acquaintances, and making new ones during my year of office.
FORTHCOMING EVENTS

1. Sunday 28th January 2018, 11.00am: Church Service at Newport Church to Commemorate the Founding of the School in 1588:
   This will be the ninth such service to be held at St. Mary’s Church, Newport to commemorate the Founding. The previous services have been a great success and very well supported by Old Newportians. As usual the service will be part of the Newport Parish Church’s normal 11.00am service of Morning Worship. This service is being advertised to everyone connected with the Academy [Pupils, Parents, Staff, Governors as well as Members of the Society]. There will be some refreshments after the service. The Vicar of Newport, the Rev. Neil Macleod and the PCC are very much in favour of this service and of supporting links between the Academy and St. Mary’s Church so the committee hope that as many members of the Society who are able to attend will do so. It will only be a success provided that members of the Society come in good numbers to support it.

2. Friday 16th February 2018: 20.00 onwards; Gathering of ONs at the Coach and Horses, Newport
   This was a most successful event last year with over 20 Old Newportians attending at some time during the evening, a number of whom had never attended before. If you are in the Newport area on the evening of Friday 16th February 2018 do please try to drop into the Coach and Horses if only for a short time.

3. Saturday 28th April 2018: Annual Football, Hockey & Cross Country Matches v the Academy
   As in previous years there will be two Hockey Matches. The Women's Hockey Match will start at 9.30am and the Men's Hockey Match will start at about 10.45am. The Football Match will start at 10.15am and the Cross Country Match is at 11.00am. This occasion has now become a major event in the Society’s and the Academy’s calendar. Apart from the players many other ONs [as well as parents of students who are playing for the Academy] also come along and support the matches. Refreshments will be served in the Club House [next to the cricket pavilion] after the matches. Anyone wishing to take part in any of the matches please inform the Secretary of the Society by email [ckh1941@hotmail.com] or by contacting the Academy.

4. Sunday 24th June 2018: Annual Mixed Hockey and Cricket Matches against the Academy
   The Mixed Hockey match will start at 11.30am and the Cricket Match at 2.00pm. If you wish to take part in either or both of these matches please contact the ON Society secretary by email [ckh1941@hotmail.com] or by contacting the Academy. Arranging for the mixed hockey match to be played in the morning and the cricket match in the afternoon makes it possible for ONs to take part in both matches if they so wish. Tea, to which everyone is invited, will be taken between the two innings of the cricket match at about 4.30pm in the Club House next to the Cricket Pavilion. The PE and Games Department at the Academy is very supportive of both the above events for which the Society is extremely grateful.
   Please make a note of the two above dates and try to support the occasions either by taking part in one of the ON Society teams or by being a spectator. If you wish to take part in any of the above matches on either 28th April or 24th June please contact the Secretary by email [ckh1941@hotmail.com] or the following member of the PE and Games Department at the Academy:-
   Dan Grindrod: daniel.grindrod@jfan.org.uk
   Alternatively telephone the Academy [01799 540237] and leave a message

5. Saturday 6th October 2018: AGM at 5.00pm: Annual Dinner at 6.00 for 6.30pm.
   Please make a note in your 2018 diary of these two most important events. Further details will be given in the next newsletter which will be sent out in July 2018.

Reports

1. AGM: Saturday 7th October 2017 at 5.00pm
   This took place at the Academy and was attended by 23 members of the Society. Minutes of the 2016 AGM and the secretary’s report for 2016/17 were distributed shortly before the meeting. A statement of the audited accounts for 2016/2017 was also distributed to all those present. The Treasurer, Christopher Szaj explained the salient points and informed the meeting that the statement of accounts clearly showed the Society’s finances to be in a very healthy position mainly due to the continued great success of the 100-Club.
   The following elections were made for 2017/18:
   President: Ian Smith [1959-66]; Treasurer: Chris Szaj [64-70]; Secretary: Keith Huddlestone [64-02]

2. Annual Dinner: Saturday 17th October 2017:
This was as usual a thoroughly enjoyable occasion. 60 people attended. The toast to Dame Joyce Frankland was proposed by the Head Girl, Victoria Hill and the Head Boy, Euan Deal proposed the toast to the Old Newportian Society. Rick Reynolds gave an informative speech in proposing the toast to the Academy. The Vice Principal, Ian Stoneham in replying to this toast on behalf of the Academy thanked the Society for all their support and then gave a very positive report on the progress the Academy is making currently.

3. The Old Newportonian Society 100-Club: As reported in the July newsletter, 2017 has been another highly successful year for the 100-Club. 210 membership tickets were sold, a little below last year’s number but still an excellent result. The committee are most grateful to all ONs who support the 100-Club which enables the Society to support the Academy in a number of different ways as well as ensuring that all the necessary administration costs are covered. **Current membership of the 100-Club will end on 31st January 2018.** The committee very much hope that all those who purchased tickets this year will renew their membership for 2018. The cost of one ticket is £12 and there is no limit to the number membership tickets anyone can purchase. If you wish to join as a new member then please complete the pro-forma on page 6 and send it with your cheque to the ON Society Secretary at the Academy. Please make cheques payable to the ON Society 100-Club. The closing date for entry into the first draw of the New Year is 28th February 2018. Those ONs who are already members of the 100-Club will, as usual receive a separate invitation by post to renew their existing membership.

**Winners since the last Newsletter**

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<tr>
<th>Date/Amount Prize</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>No.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 17</td>
<td>1 £30</td>
<td>J Forrest</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2 £25</td>
<td>N Jewitt</td>
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<td>3 £20</td>
<td>A Bubien</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 17</td>
<td>1 £30</td>
<td>J Hung</td>
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<td>I Macdonald</td>
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<td>3 £20</td>
<td>I Hilder</td>
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<td>Oct 17</td>
<td>1 £120</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2 £75</td>
<td>D Brown</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>J Dodd</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4 £40</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5 £30</td>
<td>P Gallimore</td>
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**New Members since the last Newsletter**
The following have been elected to the Society:- Daniel Fitzgerald and Emily Rendell both 2010-17

**Deaths**
The following deaths have been reported to the secretary since the last newsletter:- Robin Clarke [47-53]; Alex Collins [40-47]; Derek Diamond [46-54]

Robin Clarke entered Newport from Manuden Primary School in 1947. He was a member of the school orchestra and became the main student involved with running the school printing. Printing was to become his main hobby and in due course he attained a diploma in printing. On leaving Newport in 1953 he had a career as an Animal Research Technician working at various time for Smith & Nephew, Shell Research and Pedigree Pet Foods. He was a Fellow of the Institute of Animal Technicians and also an Associate of the Institute of Science Technologists. He died in the summer of 2016.
Alex Collins came to the school from Newport Primary school in 1940. He was a member of the First XI Football team and played first violin in the school orchestra. On leaving Newport in 1947 he had a career in engineering. He was the younger brother of Peter Collins [36-44], President of the Society in 72-73. Alex Collins died in September 2016.

Derek Diamond entered Newport from Stansted Primary School in 1946. On leaving Newport in 1954 he went to New College in London and obtained a Batchelor Divinity degree and became an ordained priest. He was awarded an MA at University College, London and an Academic Diploma in Education at the London Institute of Education. He had a career in teaching mainly in East London eventually becoming Head of Humanities at Hatcham Wood School. He died on 31st May 2017.

New School Building: As the population in North West Essex [District of Uttlesford in which the Joyce Frankland Academy is situated] continues to increase, more school places, both primary and secondary, have to be created. Essex County Council has designated the Joyce Frankland Academy, Newport as a school suitable for expansion to accommodate the increasing number of secondary school pupils and is therefore defraying the total cost of a new school building. This new building is already in the process of being built. It is situated on the Rider Field just to the North West of the Sixth Form Block. For older ONs the Sixth Form Block was built on the site of the caretaker’s house in 1998. It is well outside the boundary of the cricket field. This new block will have eight classrooms most of which will be designated for the teaching of mathematics. One of the classrooms in the new block will be specifically fitted out for Media /Photography Studies. This new block should be up and running by the start of the new academic year in September 2018.

The Cloisters: As all Old Newportonians know the Cloisters is one of the most attractive features of the original Nesfield Building [a listed building]. For some time now it has been in a very poor state of repair to such an extent it has had to be put out of bounds to everyone. It is now undergoing a complete overhaul. Everything is being done to ensure that it will look exactly as it was, once this extensive repair work has been completed. It is hoped that all work on the Cloisters will be completed early in the New Year.

Update of the School History: As reported in previous newsletters the updated school history, written by Malcolm White [1961-68] has now been published. Although a lot of copies have been sold there are still some available from the initial printing run of 300. If anyone would like to purchase a copy please contact the ON Society Secretary at the Academy either by email or letter [see contact details above]. The cost is £5.00 per copy or £7.50 to include postage and packaging. Cheques should be made payable to the “O.N. Society”.

This updated history of the school which covers the period from 1988 to 2013 has been very well received by all those who have purchased a copy. It is of A5 size and consists of 60 pages with a large number of photographs many of them in colour including a fine aerial picture of the whole school site.

Prints of the Academy and Notelets
In 1988 Martin Tomlinson [64-69] produced a limited number of copies of a pencil sketch of the School for the 400th Anniversary appeal. All of these were sold very quickly. At the instigation of the Committee, Martin [who was President of the Society in 2013-14] agreed to produce another such sketch which can be purchased as well as notelets which have the sketch on them. He has written the following about this.

As a reminder of your days at the Academy, you can now buy a limited edition print of a pencil etching which I was pleased to be commissioned to do. The A4 print is mounted on a hand-cut mount and is limited to just 250 individually signed and numbered prints. Strictly sold on a first come first served basis the cost is just £19.00 each including postage and packaging. In addition, you can buy a set of 10 printed notelets [with envelopes] which feature the drawing. These cost £8.00 per set of 10 which includes postage and packaging. If you wish to purchase prints or notelets please use the pro-forma on page six of this document.
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP TO THE O.N. SOCIETY 100-CUB FOR 2018/19

[Those who are currently members of the 100-Club should receive a separate invitation to renew their membership. This pro-forma is for those who are not currently members of the 100-Club]

The cost of annual membership is £12.00. There are no restrictions on the number of tickets any member can hold. Cheques should be made payable to the O.N.Society 100-Club.

I wish to apply for [please print in words] ____________________ ticket[s] for membership of the O.N.Society 100-Club.

I enclose a cheque for £_______ Name [Block Capitals] __________________________________________
Address [BlockCapsitals] ___________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
Post Code______________________________________Tel. No.___________________________
Email Address____________________________________________________________________

Please return the completed form with your cheque to the Secretary of the ON Society to:
[Joyce Frankland Academy, Newport, Newport, Saffron Walden, Essex  CB11 3TR]

PROFORMA FOR PURCHASING PRINTS AND NOTELETS

Please send me ________ print[s] [cost is £19 per print]

Please send me _________ packet[s] of 10 printed notelets [cost £8.00 per packet]

I enclose a cheque for ___________ pounds made payable to the ON Society

Name [Block Capitals]______________________________________________________________
Postal Address [Block Capitals]____________________________________________________

Email address_____________________________________________________________________

Please send this order to Martin Tomlinson, 21, Greenacres, Duxford, Cambridge CB22 4RB