



# YEARS TO 1969 GROUP NEWSLETTER

The newsletter has always carried accounts of recent social events, and this issue is no exception. Two members of the Group have responded to requests for reports. John Wilson prepared the one on the Old Members' Day. The response from Duncan Hunter, asked to write an account of the visit to Railfest, was however to send the article you see here from his daughter. Her fine contribution is most welcome.

Members should by now have received a communication on the future aims and constitution of the Group, but by way of

a reminder, and for the benefit of those who might not yet have heard of the discussion, there are a few words from our Secretary, Julian Le Patourel.

Julian has also submitted a less happy contribution in the form of a short obituary on Alan Harrison, whose memorial service in October was attended by several members of our Group.

*(For reasons of space the customary brain teasers have been held over until next time).*

## YEARS TO 1969 COMMITTEE

*Julian Le Patourel, the Secretary, writes:*

Members will by now have received information and a consultation about the future of the Years to 1969 Group. The committee have decided that the context in which it has been working has now radically changed with much of its work having passed to the Development Office. Moreover its members have now served for twelve years and believe it is time to make room for others. They will not stand again at the next AGM on 6th April 2013.

The Treasurer has offered to see the financial side of our affairs through to a proper conclusion and this will provide an element of continuity. However, the key message is that if members want the organisation to continue in some form then new volunteers must come forward.

Please contact the Secretary, Julian Le Patourel: [jlepat@btinternet.com](mailto:jlepat@btinternet.com) if you are willing to volunteer or have comments on the consultation.

## OLD MEMBERS' DAY 2012

*Oxford City Walls and Castle*

On a rare sunny Saturday morning in June, twenty Old Members and partners (or carers, in some cases) met in the Ship Street Centre for a talk and guided tour of the City Walls. The ages ranged from some who matriculated in 1951, to youngsters who graduated in 1969. I was glad to find that there were several from my own year, 1962 – a vintage year for OMs, obviously.

Our guide, Brian Lowe, was a professional Oxford City Guide, with a wealth of knowledge and a suitably mordant sense of humour. He started off on a good note by saying that he likes Jesus College as the porters let him bring in tour groups at 10.45 each morning.

Brian showed us a map of the city dating from 1375 – see overleaf – and told us the history of the City Walls. They were begun in 901 in the reign of Alfred the Great (Alfred the Cake,

to borrow from '1066 and All That'.) They were extended by the Normans and the remains that we went to see are mostly Norman, and enormous - up to seven metres high in places, with bastions every few yards. There were originally seven main gates, and a number of smaller postern gates.

The City Walls were never used for defence, but they figured in two famous royal escapes – that of Empress Mathilda (or Maud) fleeing the forces of Stephen in the 12th century, and that of Charles I, fleeing the forces of Parliament in the 17th century.

We then went to 'walk the talk', starting in Ship Street, which was itself built along the line of the north wall. Indeed, the College's Ship Street Centre has a bastion at its rear. We didn't get to see that one, but saw another by going down an alleyway off The Broad. This was to be the pattern of the walk – discovering



places most of us had never seen during our time at Oxford. We made the excuse that three terms of eight weeks for three years don't allow much time for aimless wandering...

At the end of Turl Street, Brian suggested that the name might have come from the 'twirling' of the postern gate that used to stand there. We wondered if Blackwells Poster shop at the corner should be renamed Postern Shop...

Brian then took us past the Sheldonian, crowded with visitors (some of whom tagged on to our party for a time.) The Sheldonian complex was built in 1666 by removing a section of the wall, which was already in disrepair by that time. Brian explained that the wall was demolished to make entry of food and other goods easier (and perhaps to punish Oxford for having been on the wrong side in the Civil War)?

Our next stop was at the Turf Tavern, nestled in a corner of New College, which has the most extensive remains of the original wall, and is famous around the world, apparently. Then on to St Edmund Hall (Teddy Hall - Richard Burton's college) and past The Queen's College. Brian mentioned that the Queen in question was Philippa of Hainault; for some of us the name summoned up shades of the London Underground...

Out onto The High, where Brian pointed out the Eastgate Hotel, and said that was where CS Lewis met his wife (not at the

Randolph, as portrayed in the movie 'Shadowlands'). Brian also explained that there had been five churches - St Peter East and

West, St Michael North and South, and St Mary's in the centre. A short walk down Logic Lane took us to University College, and along to Merton, passing the original Real Tennis Courts owned by the OUTC. We learned that Magpie Lane was formerly Grove Street; Brian suggested the real name was Grope Street, in view of the notorious nature of the activities that took place around there. I was disappointed that there was no plaque to mark my third year digs on Bear Lane. (No running hot water, and a toilet at the end of the garden...).

Standing outside Merton Fields, Brian told us of a Mr Sadler who experimented with hot air ballooning in the 18th century. Martin Harris told us that the only connection with Jesus College was in 1967, during his post-graduate time, when he followed this pioneering example and helped a friend fly the first modern hot air balloon near Oxford. Asked where the hot air came from, Martin said there was a lot of it all round Oxford...

The map showed that we were approaching what used to be St Frideswides Priory - now Christ Church ('The House.') Brian reminded us that it was the daughter of the Dean of Christ Church who was the original for Lewis Carroll's 'Alice in Wonderland'. Apparently, Queen Victoria so enjoyed the book that she asked its author (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, a



Professor of Mathematics) to send her his next one. He did so – it was 'Principles of Algebra'...

We crossed a small stream, which usually goes unnoticed. Brian told us it was Trill Mill, and flows into the Isis. He said people had died trying to punt on it – skeletons had been found. But TE Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia, a Jesus man) had done it successfully.

On leaving Christ Church gardens we noted an inscription at the gate: 'My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage'. It is from Pilgrim's Progress and continues: 'and my courage and skill to him that can get it.' I would have liked to ask Brian what prompted that inscription; does any reader know?

One puzzle Brian set us was the following Latin inscription he had found nearby: ORE STABILIT ITI SARA REPLA CETO E AT. (He found it near a restaurant, in fact...).

From Christ Church we crossed St Aldate's into Brewer Street, formerly called Slaying Lane. We saw Littlegate and Turn Again Lane. We also saw in another section of wall an ancient stone plaque for Roger Bacon who died in 1292. He pioneered the experimental method in science.

Our walk ended at the Castle, which was built in 1071 by Robert D'Oilly (an ancestor of Martin Harris.) Until quite recently it was the city gaol and there was an inscription over one door: 'Through these doors walk the best team in the world'. It still has the tunnel down which prisoners were 'sent down' from the court.

A lot of work has gone into converting the castle and mound into a tourist attraction – the ubiquitous (and demeaning) 'good luck' symbol of the Heritage Lottery Fund was well in evidence. The Queen opened the new complex in May 2006 and its centrepiece is the Malmaison Hotel. We didn't go there, however; but instead had a very pleasant lunch at the adjacent Living Room.

Many thanks to Chris Butterfield for arranging a very worthwhile tour which took us in and out of the old city several times, and showed us places most of us never knew about. Oxford is a fascinating place and it was good to get to know it better in the congenial company of the OM Group.

*John F Wilson (Law, 1962)*

## RAILFEST 2012

*National Railway Museum, York*

I went with my father to visit Railfest 2012 at the National Railway Museum in York this half-term, on a trip organised by Bill Parker, another old member from 1966.

The vast site is a stroll from the station and, given the wet weather on the day, was conveniently divided between stationary indoor exhibits and a wonderful collection of classic locomotives on the tracks outside, all steamed up for action. All the famous record-holders of the last century were on display and giving rides - Mallard, Duchess of Hamilton, Flying Scotsman - as well as Tornado which is a full-size modern steam replica.

Our first task was to track down Richard Gibbon who was formerly the Engineering Curator at the museum. Richard is what my dad calls a 'top man'. He is an encyclopaedia on the collection but, more interestingly, is keener on the social history of the railways and he brought to life the permanent exhibits at the museum. We found Richard outside where he was driving a working model engine he had made himself, capable of towing the whole Jesus party. We sat on simple open 'carriages', pulled along a length of track laid especially for the event. After our free ride and introduction to the 'toot-toot' of steam, Richard took us inside the museum he used to run.

The museum has three areas, all developed under Richard's time there. He described how the old railway sheds were falling down from 'concrete cancer' – high alumina cement. The main hall contains all the rolling stock and early locos, each with their own story to tell. Richard showed us how passengers were separated into four classes of comfort down to 'parliamentary class' - standing room only, but costing (by law) only a penny a mile. We also saw a cut-open replica of the original 'Rocket', built using the exact original methods. Not only was this father-and-son design a competition winner; but many of its engineering features and concepts remained crucial to the efficient performance of steam engines built 100 years later.

Richard's favourite engine in this shed was a large black DC electric loco which had hauled steel and coal over the Pennines, between Manchester and Sheffield. Though retired at an early age, he felt it was an unsung hero because it employed 'regenerative braking' so that the heavy trains running down one side of the hills powered those climbing up the other side. Everyone knows how trains speeded up mail deliveries between cities and rural communities, but Richard was keen to tell us the less familiar story of the glass-lined milk wagons. These sped milk from Wales directly into central London so that schoolchildren



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from the poor inner city areas could enjoy daily fresh milk. Scotland did not want to be part of the scheme, so the United Dairies wagons were painted with a livery map of the UK which excluded Scotland.

The next area was the museum 'storeroom', but all the stored artefacts are labelled and available to be viewed all the time by the public, stacked to the ceiling in transparent crates. Richard pointed out a collection of models left to the museum by a 90-year-old enthusiast who had spent all his life making them since 1928, after passing a weekend watching and noting down everything he saw coming and going in a railway yard. He started working on them when he got home that evening and never stopped, making everything himself. This area also stored the signalmen's training layout which, from a room above Manchester Victoria station, has been used to train and examine railway signalmen and is still in occasional use today.

The final area is a balcony walk above the real engineering works of the museum, with gantry cranes to move wheels and castings when they are being repaired. There were no apprentices working though, when we were there - maybe it was their half-term holiday too! The best bit about this higher level was the viewing balcony over the mainline railway outside where real trains pass through York, on their way between London and Edinburgh. Just inside is a huge electronic screen, just like a signalman's, where you can see trains coming in both directions from afar and then run out to the balcony outside and watch them pass.

After a hasty pork, crackling and apple sauce bap for lunch, it was Bill Parker's turn. Bill owns a 'Prairie' tank loco (number 5521) which, he explained, he had rescued and restored over many years. After pulling passenger trains around the West Country for its working life, it faced the fate of being broken up for scrap along with all the other steam engines. Once restored to its former vigour by Bill, it was dispatched by boat to Poland where it pulled regular passenger trains for over a year and was once awarded the honour of leading the glamorous Orient Express train out of Budapest in Hungary. Bill gave us a great lecture on the ups and downs of being a steam engine owner and described his engineering works in the Forest of Dean where he restores and rebuilds these monsters of steam. Surely the likely destination for another day out, though beware of catching the steam 'bug' - as Bill explained, it can end up taking over your life.

We were still inside 5521 when my dad realised we were in danger of missing our real train home, yet I still had in my pocket a voucher to ride on the footplate of the City of Truro, reputed to be the first loco to reach 100 mph in 1904. Imagine my disappointment when we had to stop on our run back to York station to let that actual loco come past with my footplate place empty.

Many thanks to Bill and Richard for a hugely interesting and varied day out, if exhausting for dad - who slept on the train back! I hope to be able to do it again.

*Heloise Hunter (14)*

## ALAN STUART HARRISON 1944-2012

Alan Harrison (1964, Chemistry) died peacefully of prostate cancer on 6th October 2012. He had maintained his connection with Jesus College *inter alia* through The Cadwallader and the Years to 1969 Group, serving on the latter's committee for a time. He had a broad career in industry and academia concluding as Professor of Operations and Logistics at Cranfield University.

Alan had enormous energy and a cheerful and outgoing personality. He was interested and involved in a wide variety of subjects - botany, astronomy, golf and hiking - and was an active Rotarian in Northampton. It was as a hiker that I knew

him best: we climbed many of the peaks in the Lake District and Snowdonia. Our last trip together was to scale Ben Nevis when Alan was already weakening. On the way down we fell to talking about our next peak which would have to be in Ireland. Alas this was not to be but it was typical of Alan's courage that his last words to me, inscribed in a book this summer, were 'still more peaks to climb'.

Alan leaves a wife, Cathi, and a son and a daughter by his first marriage.

*Julian Le Patourel*