



Allan Palmer
97 Pakenham Road
Basingstoke
Hants RG21 8YA
e-mail: allan.palmer@bigfoot.com

This attempt at a "newsletter" is being sent to former pupils of the 1963 intake to Drayton Manor Grammar School that I've renewed links with.

Please feel free to distribute copies to other former Draytonians that you may be in contact with.

Contact Re-established!

Earlier this year, while using the Internet for some research, I discovered a community web site for Ealing (www.lammas.com). In turn that site led me to one set up by a former Drayton Manor Grammar School pupil providing a contact network for ex-students of DMGS.

Bob Seymour's site. Which can be found at - <http://members.aol.com/rhseymour/DMGS/> functions with one person from each year keeping an e-mail address list for their year, and acting as a "letterbox" for any general notices, reunions etc. It transpired that I was the first 1963 pupil to contact the site, and I consequently "inherited" the position of "1963 Year Contact".

I attempted some basic searching using the web to see if any names that I recalled from my time at DMGS could be located. I was surprised when one of my first searches turned up 'Paul T Curtis' through details on the Imperial College (London) web site. Reading the details I felt certain that this was the **Paul Curtis** who had been an astronomy buff (among other things!) at DMGS. Through the e-mail address on the IC site I made contact with Paul (the last time we had seen each other was 1974!) and we met up with each other and our wives on Easter Monday. We discovered that for at least the last 15 years we've been living within 30 minutes drive of each other...

And we started seeing who else from our Drayton Manor days we could remember and recollect. Armed with the full school photograph from May 1964 (when we were still in the First Form) and copies of the school magazine "Phoenix", we began...

Reuniting Friends

One additional element helping in the search for ex-DMGS students has been the 'Friends Reunited' web site (www.friendsreunited.co.uk).

The first contact via 'Friends' was **John Blackwell**, who was able to report that he had kept in irregular contact with **Kate Ridley**, who in turn had contacts with **Adrienne Pond** and **Dawn Mastin**. John also was in touch (again occasionally) with **Steve Hinton** who joined our year after 1963. So with Paul's contact with **Phil Slade**, there were at least 6 old Draytonians from our year "out there".

With John B's help, Paul and I were able to match more names to the faces on 1964 full school photograph. [I scanned the original I had and used Adobe Photoshop to add names to the picture; the electronic version went back and forth between the three of us a few times] However, there were a few unidentified faces and, in a one or two cases, two possibilities for the same name.

The More the Merrier

The 'Friends Reunited' web site has proved to be the most fruitful source of contacting ex-members of our time at DMGS. Personally, I've had contact from **Sue Brown, Peter Lockett, Tim Dean** and **David Butcher**.

Additionally, as I write this, the 'Friends' list also includes **Norman Brown, Lindsay Churchill, Bernice Claire, Derek Elliot, Janice Holley**, and **Graham Reynolds**.

The 'Friends' site can be slightly confusing at first, because it lists pupils by their year of *leaving*. Consequently, if you're looking for those who started at DMGS in 1963 but didn't stay on for 'A'-levels, you'll find them listed under 1968. [Those who stayed through the Sixth Form are listed under 1970]

But it was through a contact on the www.lammas.com site that more old Draytonians were located.

Keeping in touch

Janet Gibbons (nee **Rogers**) got in touch with the news that a group of ex-Form 1C pupils had kept in contact over the years, usually hosted by **John Winnert**.

Janet and I exchanged a number of e-mails, and we've established that the group referred to above has included **John McGreal, Steve Whittaker, Len Shilling, Evan Griffiths, Jane Barker, Mick Beattie, David Barker, Dave Hutchinson** and **Linda Wheeler**. Janet asked for a copy of the 1964 school photo as the group had arranged a get-together for the following weekend, and they hoped to be able to match all the names and faces (once they'd got over the embarrassment of seeing what they used to look like...)

And while I was e-mailing Janet, Paul had been in contact with Graham Reynolds, who in turn had kept in touch with **Rob Burns, Ged Nolan** and **Pete Floyd**. So the ranks of "our year" were gradually filling.

The get-together at John Winnert's that Janet referred to resulted in more faces being identified on *that* school photo. Paul had suggested that we ought to think about creating a 2001 version of the 1964 original - a set of photos of how we all looked now, and Janet provided some pics taken at John W's.

What next?

As well as Janet sending me identifications of 1964 faces, John Winnert booted up his PC and e-mailed me a lengthy letter.

Besides some notes on how people had kept in touch, John W went on to say:

"While I've never had everyone and their respective other halves etc. all turn up together for the same reunion (which is probably just as well from an accommodation point of view) - but usually a good half of these will make it for any weekend we have together here. We have it at my place each year because it's fairly central to where everyone lives and also I probably have more accommodation space albeit that it becomes sleeping bags and lilos when we have a good turnout.

We'd talked about doing something different next year to mark us all becoming 50, and so your contact with Janet may prove opportune.

While Janet and the others were here this weekend ... we discussed maybe making an open invite for everyone from our year, that hears about it and would like to come together with their partners, for a reunion day down here next summer, possibly mid July.

Going for July rather than September (when we usually do this) would mean dry ground so plenty of parking space in a field we have and, if the weather was favourable, we could mainly use the garden rather than be indoors. We've got a nice spot here on the edge of the New Forest, and I'm sure Janet will vouch for the assertion that our reunions are characteristically easy going, relaxed and informal, with a surprisingly modest level of alcohol consumption given the above list of usual suspects!"

So there you have it – as we all approach the big five-oh, would a reunion with fellow ex-Draytonians be a good idea?

If you have any thoughts on the matter, please get in touch. As an alternative or addition to the "50 years old" get-together, I've also suggested to John we should think about a reunion for 2003 – the 40th anniversary of our start at DMGS.

On top of all that, Paul and I somewhere along the line had the thought that perhaps there should be a "DMGS'63" web site to act as a sort of interactive focal point. [The 1967 year has already set one up]. So I'm toying with the possibilities of that – anyone got any photos of those days hidden away somewhere that could "enhance" such a site? Again, if you have any thoughts on this subject, **please get in touch**.

Final plea – please pass this "newsletter" on to anyone else you may be in contact with from your time at Drayton Manor. I have refrained from publishing other people's e-mail addresses – if you'd like your e-mail address circulated, please let me know. Would you be willing to write a brief biography to publish on this potential DMGS'63 web site?

Who would have thought that almost 40 years after those days in Hanwell W7 we would be communicating like this?

Keep in touch,

Allan Palmer