

Chapter IV

Secondary School

Ackworth School 1954 - 1961



Ackworth Bound September 1954

This photograph was taken on the front lawn of the walled garden at East Hepple Farm. It appears the lawn needed some TLC attention? This was not unusual and the only option was a difficult hand mower which no one liked to push; least of all Dad! I occasionally obliged but not always with much good grace! I believe we all took our turn?

This marked my first foray into the larger world. Diana had already spent two full years at Ackworth (1952 – 1954). The difference was marked. I think this was a bit of a wrench for Dad who perhaps expected I might follow him down the path of becoming a farmer although he sometimes discouraged the idea? Norah Beatty from Hepple Garage was the first from the village to go to Ackworth under the Northumberland County Council Education Authority scheme to assist those from 'remote' locations to take advantage of an equivalent Grammar School Secondary Tier Education opportunity. I believe the NCC held up to six places per year at Ackworth for this purpose. At least seven Hepple children were to benefit by this including Norah Beatty, Diana, myself, John, and cousins David and Susan from West Hepple. In addition Roy and Sandra Wells from Harbottle were also recipients making a quite large contingent from the lightly populated Upper Coquet Valley. For some of us it was the launch pad to further fields on a grander stage.

This was a time of great excitement as well as much trepidation. The journey out was by car to Newcastle Station, train to York, change for Pontefract and then 'bus or three mile walk to Ackworth. Trunks were packed earlier and name tags sewed on every article of clothing with my school number 156. It was a time of furious activity and not without its own drama! The first term lasted about 14 weeks without break or respite. This was a long separation at age 11 or 12 but had the consolation of Christmas to look forward to. There were some long and very lonely moments. It was possibly much worse for some; I had Diana for comfort and support.

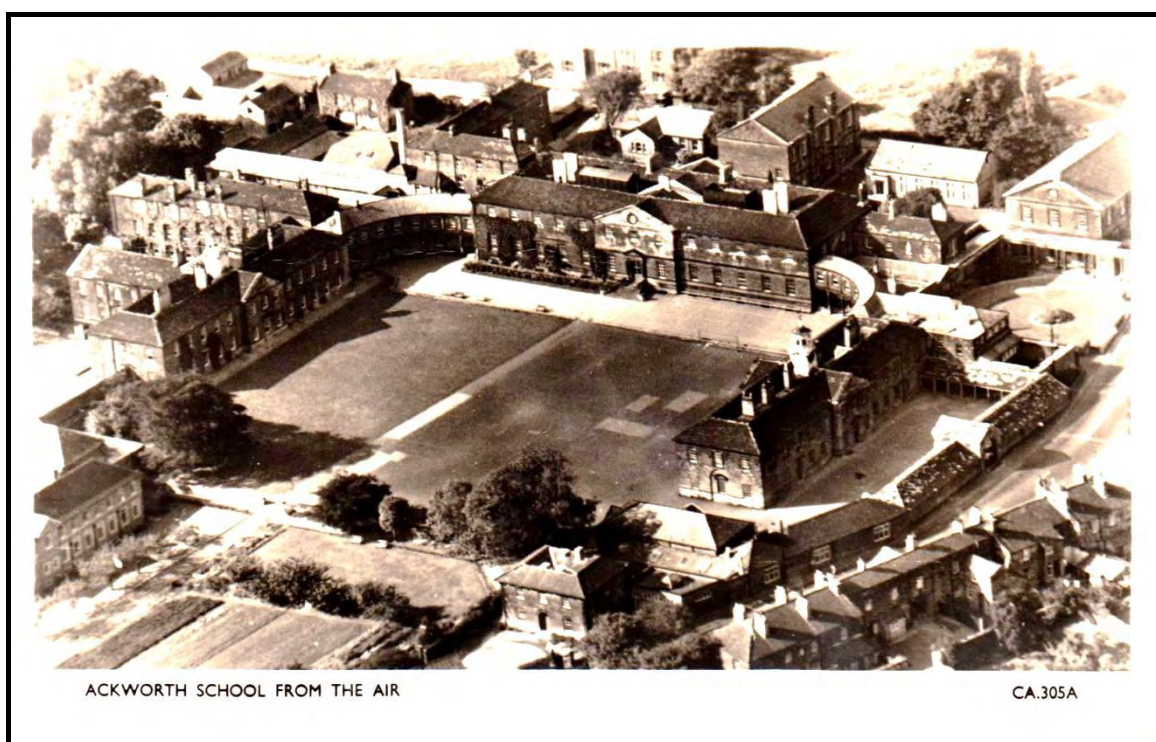


This is the only full family portrait we have. It may have been taken by Nana (Eliza Rogerson). Johnny would later join us at Ackworth from 1958 – 1961.

The provision of school uniforms for both Diana and I would have placed quite a financial strain on available resources. There were 'arguments' and some consequent subliminal feelings of guilt. This was well outside the ordinary family budget although I never remember anyone actually sitting down to formulate a financial plan of any kind. It was a more serendipitous approach with quite a lot of misplaced faith in the outcomes of the 3:30pm race at Epsom or the perennially optimistic Littlewoods Football Pools every Saturday. In my very naive way I thought all you had to do was to write a cheque in order to acquire more money. That seemed to be Dad's overarching philosophy although I recall he did take time out to explain it to me. The recommended amount of pocket money per term was the princely sum of £1. Even this was a bit of a strain for the family. Entry to Ackworth via the Northumberland County Council Education scheme was secured by success in the so called 11+ examination at age 11. Diana sailed through while I managed it at the next 'interview' attempt in Newcastle. I recall that we three siblings and Norah Beattie were the only successful candidates from Hepple Church of England Primary School in the immediate post-WWII period?

Ackworth seemed like another world. Everyone except us spoke with very strange accents. There was even the odd cockney or two. There were massive coal fuelled power stations (Ferrybridge) belching out smoke and fumes. The sheep in the fields were not white; they were grey. The River Went at the bottom of the Ackworth gardens 'frothed' with detergent effluent. The only living things were stick insects and sticklebacks. For us the atmosphere was extremely polluted. John did not come to Ackworth until the third year of entry. He excelled in the meantime at a private Preparatory School in Morpeth achieving a high mark in the 13+ so securing his place two years later. Possibly because of the 'gap' in the process and arrival when friendships and rivalries were already well established Ackworth was not John's 'cup of tea' although he toughed it out well for three years. As is usual in education there are many pathways and some take longer than others. While Diana and I thrived in the environment, although there were some dark moments, John was much less suited in temperament to voluntarily accept the relatively strict disciplinary protocols.

Ackworth Quaker School (Society of Friends)



Ackworth School had earlier been a Foundling Hospital and on first acquaintance seemed to be a forbidding and foreboding place. Ackworth School was founded in 1779 by John Fothergill on behalf of The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and the School Committee (or Board of Governors) is still accountable to this body. The School was established for Quaker boys and girls and the Quaker Christian ethos, with its emphasis on quiet reflection and the search for God within oneself and within others, lies at the heart of the School.

Periods of reflective silence form part of each day, during Morning Meeting and before meals for example, and each Thursday there is a short silent Meeting for Worship for the whole School. On Sunday morning boarders attend Quaker Meeting for Worship unless they wish to attend another place of worship. The importance of respect for others and honesty at all times emphasised by the Quaker faith helps to produce a calm, friendly atmosphere which is supportive and reassuring for young people. The majority of pupils are from non-Quaker families and about 10% come from other countries. Indeed, the international nature of the School, especially in the Sixth Form, is one of its distinctive features. As in any such community there has to be a clear disciplinary framework and our expectations are high. Ackworth pupils respond well to this and to the opportunities provided for assuming responsibilities, for example within the boarding houses and on the School Council.



The Meeting House

The heart of the Quaker way is the silent meeting for worship. They seek a communal gathered stillness, where anyone can be open to inspiration from the Spirit of God. In their meetings they find both peace of mind and challenging insights, deep community and a renewed sense of individual purpose, and joy to wonder at God's creation. Not everyone finds the word 'God' helpful – some Quakers use a different image or concept such as 'spirit' or 'the light'.

During meetings for worship, some may feel moved to speak: something anyone may do, as all are considered equal. Quakers do not have priests, or a hierarchy, as they believe all people can have a direct relationship with God.

You do not have to be a Quaker to attend Quaker meetings, which are open to all. Meetings can be held anywhere, at any time, although they are often on Sundays in Quaker meeting houses. Visitors are most welcome to join and share in the stillness. The Quaker way believes in an all-inclusive environment. 'The religious society of friends' movement began in the mid-seventeenth century. The belief is that all individuals are able to have a direct relationship with God.

This was all very strange to those of us exposed to the far more didactic Anglican diet. I must say that sitting in silence offered commercial opportunity to confined and constrained entrepreneurial infidels. The going rate for a contrived 'loud and rude noise' real (preferable) or simulated was about half a crown (2s/6d). The 'eruption' was always accompanied by barely subdued mirth which posed significant dignity problems for the supervising Head Master or equivalent. Feigning ignorance was the established routine but I'm equally sure subsequent intelligence revealed the identity(s) of the protagonists who would have suffered from some form of deferred discipline.

While some of the facilities were Spartan such as dormitories others such as sports fields were exceptional. I made full use of the latter and 'managed' the former.

Form 1 Alpha 1 1954/1955



Much to my chagrin I was assigned initially to Form 1 Alpha (1) which was actually the 'B' stream. I was especially aggrieved because Roy Wells from Harbottle was in 1A. I considered I was 'more equal' than him! I was elected Form Captain with Joyzelle Lloyd. We are both seated together at middle of the front row. I am wearing a sports coat which was an acceptable alternative uniform to the usual blazer. It possibly created a 'point of difference' which is not always appreciated by 11 and 12 year olds.

I was promoted to the 'A' stream and into Form 2A for my second year. I was joined by Joyzelle (on my left), Philip Heymans (3rd. from right front row) and Rosemary Dale (5th from left back row). Jimmy Keppie (2nd from left front row) was the 'exotic' among us. He was an evacuee from Kenya during the Mau Mau (Kikuyu) rebellion. Jimmy soon left to go to 'Bootham' in York. I thought Margaret Kendrew (top left back row) was pretty special but she left at the end of 3rd. Form to attend Great Ayton. Richard Richardson (far left middle row) suffered very badly indeed from stutter. He could not even say his own name but could sing beautifully without faltering.

Friends who were kind to me included Stewart North (4th from left back row) and Christopher Smith (3rd. from left middle row). They were locals from Sheffield and Wakefield respectfully and I think took me out from pity because our parents were infrequent visitors due to 'tyranny of distance' and cost. I was acknowledged the best sports person in the whole of Year 1 but Konrad Saunders (4th. from right middle row) was by far the best swimmer. Another 'exotic' was Isobel Alonso (far right middle row) who was the younger daughter of 'Spanish' English Master Casto V. Alonso

Form 5A 1959/1960



This form later produced three (3) full Professors and several others who excelled in academia and/or public life. At least three others reached the level of Associate Professor or above. I would not have guessed this at the time although Martin Bulmer (4th. from right front row) was in the 'genius' class. He was top in the Northern Universities Joint Matriculation Board 'A' Level Examinations in 1961 and awarded the Trevelyan Scholarship to Kings College, Cambridge on merit. He was in fact the 'love child' of Sir Charles Trevelyan and his Private Secretary Edith Bulmer from 'Wallington' Northumberland. Like Roy Wells and I he was a beneficiary of the largesse of the Northumberland County Council at the time. Peter Tod from Whitley Bay (3rd. from left back row) was another 11+ scholarship 'Geordie'. Roy Wells is 2nd left front row. The other full professors were Marcia Collin (middle front row next to Martin) and Maeve Cowan (5th. from right middle row). Marcia was the daughter of our history master Mr Collin.

At the end of this segment Sociology Professor Martin Bulmer has put together a very learned 'collective memoir' exposition of the cohort who attended Ackworth from 1954 – 1961. This was produced to 'celebrate' 50 years on and also to commemorate Ian Hogbin from Castleford who had only just passed away. Martin and Ian remained lifelong friends. Ian was severely compromised by childhood Poliomyelitis and walked only with the aid of two sticks. This did not prevent him from living a very full and productive life.

Ackworth School Staff 1958



The staff were good in parts but as is usual at schools we were not always appreciative of the quality of teaching we were given. In retrospect I think we were indeed fortunate to have enjoyed and benefitted from the education package we received. Martin Bulmer's 'collective memoir' bears adequate testimony to this premise. Many married teachers had children at Ackworth School.

Headmaster Albert Lindley is seated (with glasses) in the middle of the front row. Albert was a Cambridge Graduate 'Old Boy' and at this time still held the school 440 yards athletics record. He was a sound compassionate leader and I think succeeded before moving up the scale to Bootham Boys School in York. I did hear that he later succumbed to depression illness and may have met a tragic end? His elder son David was in the year behind me and was the outstanding cricketer in my team of 1961. He had a younger son Michael at Ackworth also. Phyllis Sadler (Deputy Head Mistress) is seated on Albert Linley's left. Deputy Ashton 'Tashy' Watts is seated next to Phyllis Sadler. He was 'feared' but managed to teach me some French. Housekeeper Mrs Williams is on his right. She was a termagant and owned a fearsome Corgi called 'Willie' who burst all our footballs on the green. We had no redress! Sports Master William Westwood in in 'whites' and next to him is history master Mr Collin (Marcia's father). Diminutive English master Peter Heywood is next to Mr Collin. His son Jeremy later reached a very high level in Government Public Service. Chemistry Master G. Phillips Harris (bearded seated far left front row) had a great influence on my career. He used to invite a select few to listen to Mahler on a Sunday afternoon providing home-made bread and tea. Mr Cashmore (tallest back row) was my first House Master and helped me through some difficult early times.

Biology Master Mr Mendham is standing on the right at the end of the back row. He was another 'favoured master' who greatly influenced my career. He took us on a field trip to Alderney Island in the summer of 1960 to study the 'littoral zone'. It was he who persuaded me to aim for something other than becoming a Doctor! Lawrence Fitton (glasses, 4th. left back row) was the 'eccentric' Physics Master who had a very different approach to teaching; it was basically self-help. G. G. Brown (seated far right) was a fellow Northumbrian who taught Geography. He was a bit dull! The Reverend Gregory Mappin (Religious Instruction & Scripture) is at the back top left. He was a Congregational Minister from Pontefract who has been a missionary in Madagascar. I rather wish he'd stayed there! I was not one of his favourites and did not excel at scripture. Albert Ainsworth (middle back row, 8th from left and right) managed to instil in me enough sound mathematics to enable me to do quite well in the 'O' level examination which was pivotal in gaining entrance to University in order to study any scientific subject.

Australian Wilma Strugnell is right in the middle just behind Albert Lindley's right shoulder. She used to make a very strong case for Melbourne versus Sydney when head of the lunch table! On her right is bachelor Mr Needham who we all liked especially the girls. It was rumoured he sometimes frequented the only pub in Ackworth 'The Brown Cow' which was revelatory and very un-Quaker like! He once took me and a few others to a great Golf Match in Leeds featuring the Ryder Cup Team captained by Dai Rees. I also had the opportunity to watch the first day of the 'Ashes' Cricket Test at 'Headingley', Leeds in 1960. Local Yorkshire idol Fred Trueman took 5 wickets and bowled Aussie Captain Richie Benaud for a duck! Woodwork master Mr Scott is at the end of the third row standing on the right. He was not very popular. There was an interesting rhyming ditty composed about his nocturnal relationships with a music mistress Miss Williams who he eventually married. It was not complimentary. I think my brother John might have had more than a little to do with its composition and delivery! He was certainly very good at it!

Albert Brighton is standing third from the right in the third row. He taught mathematics and was a Coquetdale local from the tiny hamlet of Fontburn. One of my Hepple School Teachers Miss McKenna had taught him and he was here pride and joy! Roy Wells and I stayed at his house in the Great Gardens for one term in our lower 6th year. This was considered a privilege and we were both later created Vice Head Boy and Head Boy respectively. One of many music teachers Miss Stephen is seated next to 'Tashy' Watts. I only saw her in first form and never again! I did not mind. Another music mistress Miss Froggatt is seated next to G. G. Brown (2nd from right, second row). I liked Miss Froggatt very much. She taught me where 'Middle C' was on the piano (white key next to the two black keys just to the left above the key hole on the piano). Miss Froggatt had severe advanced 'Parkinson's Disease' and sometimes broke into an involuntary running shuffle. Everyone understood. We all enjoyed her ghost stories with which she embellished music lessons.

The Matron (white cap) is seated on the left of G. Phillips Harris next but one to the end of the second row. Next to her is the visiting Irish Doctor from Pontefract who the girls did not like. He was regarded by them as 'a bit of a sleaze'; or so they told me. He always looked like he needed a shave!

Combined 6th Form 1960/1961



This photo was taken on the steps at the front of the main building of the complex. It was clearly taken in summer (1961) with some of the boys with open necked shirts. The dining rooms are behind on either side. I am seated in the middle with Roger Allen. On his right moving along are Peter Catterall, Christopher Roberts and Martin Bulmer. Guy Millington and Roy Wells are on my left. Joyzelle Lloyd and Stephen Kelsall who were by then an 'item' are seated just in front. Joyzelle and Stephen married and later ran the Ackworth Olds Scholars Association (AOSA) from their home in Manchester. Stephen was good cricketer. It was by far his best sport. Philip Heymans and Maeve Cowan are seated just behind and to the right of Joyzelle. Both were actually Jewish but we were either ignorant or dismissive of the fact. Each excelled. Our cohort formed the core group of Prefects (Monitors) more or less responsible for 'discipline in the junior ranks'.

I think my relative prowess in sporting teams added cachet to my position in the school. I must admit that I had limited opposition from within my own year. We were not a very high achieving sporting class. Significantly many from the forms below filled positions in the main teams.

Ackworth School Senior Sporting Teams

2nd XI Hockey 1960



Hockey was my weakest team sport although I was an 'also ran' in swimming and athletics. Hockey provided a platform for some players who did not handle other balls sports such as football or cricket. Dexterity with the hands became a major factor. The catchment for this team was limited because not very many had played hockey at junior level before attending Ackworth. Also the number of schools playing hockey and therefore competition was limited.

Players in this team who did not make the first teams in other sports included the captain 'Skinny' Atkinson (centre front) who was in Diana's class. Others in this same category were Guy Millington (seated on left), Roy Wells (standing second left), Kier Lusby (standing third right), and Simon Chandler (back right). Roy Wells actually played County Hockey for Durham later in his professional life so could be judged the best in this group based on that mature form.

Roger Allen (sitting on right) and Archie Worthington (seated right) were both Lancastrians and committed sports people. Roger was shaded by his elder brother Ken who was a school legend in all sports. Hockey was played in the short spring term (January – March) of each year in usually bleak conditions. There was no other choice so you did it but I much preferred football where I had made my mark earlier. I think this team achieved modest results at best.

First XI Football 1960 (Captain)



This team was made up of mainly younger players with only 5 out of 13 from the Upper 6th Form. Guy Millington seated on my right was goal keeper albeit somewhat reluctantly. He realised there was no other place for him in the team. Roy Wells (middle back), Neale Holmes-Smith (sitting right) and Roger Allen (standing second left) were the others in my class. The most talented were the younger players such as Ian Binks (standing far left), Ian McKay (standing third left), David Lindley (Headmasters Son, standing third right) and David Kirby (standing far right).

Roger Jones sitting on my left was a good player as was 'Shinner' Howarth seated far left. The latter went on to do Medicine at Leeds University while Guy Millington obtained a Doctorate at Durham University. John Guest (sitting far left) was a good all round sports man at this level and represented in most of the teams I did although a year younger. What becomes apparent is that the same few students formed the core group in most of the teams

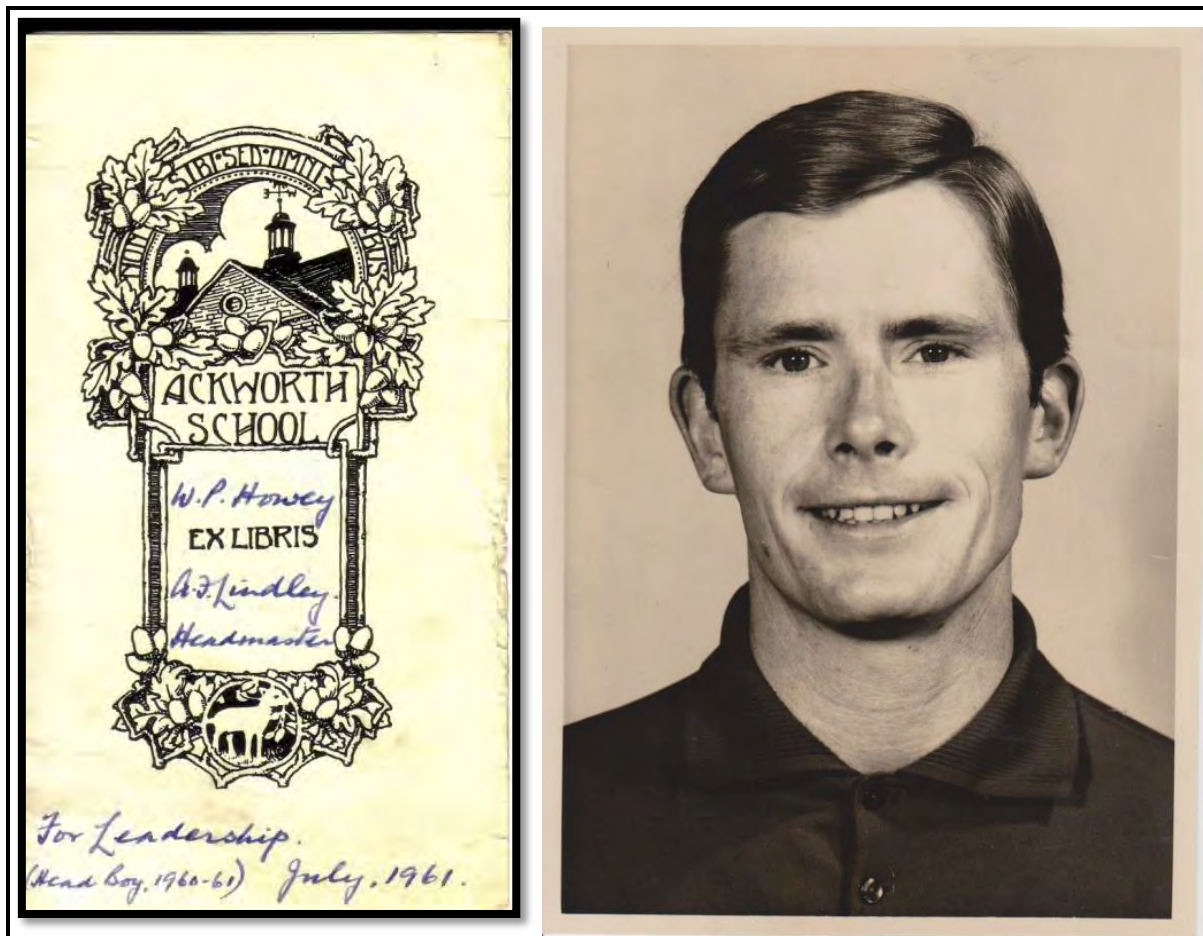
First XI Cricket 1961 (Captain)



This was possibly the best of 'my' teams. I think we won more matches than we lost which we considered quite a good record. The only two 'senior players' were myself and Stephen Kelsall seated on my right with open neck shirt and sports coat. Stephen was a good bat and cricket was really his only sport. David Lindley (standing back left) was the most naturally gifted and the best in this team by far. At his best he was a most attractive batsman. Cousin David Howey (sitting far right) opened the bowling and always gave his best. David Hare sits between us and again cricket was his best sport. Alan Walker (standing far right) was a precocious talent three years my junior who also opened the bowling with David Howey. David Muschamp and 'Corky' Gibson sitting in front were also talented juniors who made it into this senior team. Ian McKay (seated left) and John Guest (with glasses at rear) were both committed contributors. Ian (from Barnsley) once bowled unchanged from one end and took 7 wickets in an innings.

Peter Catterall (third left back row) was the 'ring in'. Peter could not catch, throw, kick or hit a ball but he loved cricket. He was very uncoordinated; possibly as a result of a premature birth which also left him with a vestigial left ear. We made him scorer which he adored. He travelled with us to away games and he became quite a 'celebrity' on the local Grammar School circuit.

Awards 1961



The highlight of my last year at school was possibly the award of an inscribed cricket bat presented to me at School Assembly. I might have been lucky! David Lindley was by far the best cricketer but as the Headmaster's son it might have seemed a trite nepotistic? I think he won the bat he next year anyway.

My most enduring sporting memory came in the match against Castleford Grammar School. I carried my bat for about 30 runs while I think David Lindley made 90+? The Captain of Castleford GS Bill Roberts warmly congratulated me after the game and shook my hand. Lustre was added for me a few years later when Bill was chosen to play for Yorkshire County Cricket Club. I almost felt part of the team myself. I also played against G. Boycott at school. This much is true but it was Gordon Boycott from Woodhouse Grove and not Geoff Boycott of Hemsworth Grammar School. Gordon and Geoff were cousins. Nonetheless I have dined out on the embellished tale a few times! Geoff was much the better player! I met up with Geoff at the Sydney Cricket Ground during an Ashes Test fully fifty years later. His distinctive accent never wavered!

Ackworth School Collective Memoir January 2012

Compiled by Professor Martin Bulmer Email: m.bulmer@ntlworld.com

Foreword

This “collective memoir” is dedicated to the memory of Ian G Hogbin, 1942-2011, who died age 69 in November 2011. He and I attended Ackworth School in West Yorkshire in the second half of the 1950’s, and were in the sixth form together from 1959 until 1961. Ackworth is a co-educational boarding school of the Society of Friends [Quakers] founded originally in 1779. At Easter 2011 Judith Davison, our contemporary, organised a reunion for those who had been in the fifth form together fifty years previously. Unfortunately Ian was not mobile enough to attend that reunion, even though he lived only ten miles from the school, but he remained a keen Ackworth old scholar with a deep affection for the school and an interest in its doings. In the six months prior to his death, he and I had taken an interest in the prominence achieved by Kwaku Adoboli, a Ghanaian former pupil and head boy who, a foreign exchange dealer for the UBS bank, was arrested in 2010 for having incurred the largest loss for a British-based bank due to one individual, £1.3 billion. Shortly after, Jeremy Heywood [now Sir Jeremy] became the Secretary of the Cabinet Office at No 10 Downing Street. Though not a pupil at this Quaker school, we had been taught by his parents Peter and Brenda, who had met and married at Ackworth while we were pupils there. The material which follows stems from these exchanges and correspondence at the time of Ian’s death and funeral, which four of his contemporaries attended and to which fourteen sent messages of condolence although unable to be present in person.

The pages which follow contain four types of material. A brief overview is provided by myself as the compiler. This is followed by a list of names of those who were members of the cohort for some of the years between 1954 and 1961, but who did not for one reason or another submit a statement about what they had been up to since leaving. Then 29 of our cohort describe what they have done since leaving Ackworth. The document ends with a list of members known to be deceased, with obituaries of six of them.

Putting this document together also reminds one of the World in Action TV programme made by Michael Apted called **7 Up** [see his book **7 Up**, London Heinemann, 1989, looking at the experience of 14 children over the years up to age 42]. Originally begun as a study of contrasts in social class, by the age of 42 it was focusing on the characteristics of the children themselves. It seems to me that is what we are doing here, and asking ourselves what we have learned about ourselves going through life. The class spectrum covered in the accounts here is narrower than in **Seven Up**. This is a vignette of middle Britain, with a strong emphasis upon those who professionally were involved in education. But it reflects upon what was for our teenage years at school a quite compelling collective experience. Whether “collective memoir” is quite the right description, it is hoped that what follows is of interest.

Thanks particularly to Judith Davison for sharing the list of names with which to contact people, and to Bill Howey for writing out of the blue from “down under” after many years of silence and sharing a range of photos of the time.

Overview Professor Martin Bulmer

The idea of compiling this document came about through a combination of writing to people from our year about the death and funeral of Ian Hogbin in November 2011, and hearing from Bill Howey in Australia out of the blue, whom many of us had not heard from since he emigrated there in 1967. Bill later circulated a small selection of photos from our years at the school which jogged the memory further. In my own case, the realisation that we are none of us getting any younger, and that of three of us who shared a boy's study in School House in 1960-1961, I am the only one left, was a further impetus to find out what we have all been doing in the intervening half century.

The boundaries of the group included in this document are a bit hazy at the edges. There is an ineluctable fuzziness about it, even though the core is meant to be those who were in the fifth form together in 1959. This means that it covers the group most of whom arrived at Ackworth in 1954, and many of whom left after being in the Sixth Form in summer 1961. But this is not wholly accurate. Some came to Ackworth after 1954, into higher forms, and others left earlier or did not stay into the sixth form. A few for one reason or another repeated a year. Others moved from fifth form to Remove and like Ian joined us in the Sixth Form. So I cannot vouch for the rigour of the criterion for admission to this list. Moreover, memory is partial, and who can now reconstruct the structures of yesteryear? Bill circulated a photo of Form 1Alpha One from 1954. What was that? Was it the name for the form which became 2B?

What you have here then are three types of information about our year.

First, from those who chose to provide it, about thirty of us, a short summary describing what they have been up to since we left Ackworth. Second, there is a list of others who were members of our year who did not want to participate in the exercise, or with whom we have lost touch. For many, but not all of this second list, we have addresses, but in some cases not even that and a few of them are definitely abroad. Third, there is smaller group who have died. For some of these, biographical information is given, for others there is just a name because information is sketchier. There are clearly gaps here which might be filled, if people have the will to do so.

Yet the experience which we shared together does mean something, which one is reminded of at gatherings like the one last Easter. For me, Ackworth means the experience of growing up together in the fairly intense atmosphere of boarding education. I think of two examples. Travelling to school at the start of term was distinctive. Many of those in the group from Northumberland were there at the behest of Northumberland County Council, and when we gathered at Newcastle Central Station to take the train for York and Pontefract were bound together. The name of our fellow pupil the mercurial Billy Dawson from Ashington even now brings a smile to the lips. And at this time of year, singing carols reminds me of gathering in the boy's dining room in dressing gown and slippers to drink cocoa at Xmas 1954 and Xmas 1955 to sing carols. These are the intangible results of going away to school.

My first job in the mid-20s was studying the course and effects of the decline of mining in the Durham coalfield. It was with considerable surprise that I realised that at Ackworth I had lived in the midst of a mining area. Not that we would have known it. Parts of the Yorkshire coalfield lay to the south around places like South Elmsall.

A good proportion of the male inhabitants of Ackworth Moor Top were miners, not that we were aware of it. Ackworth scholars tended to be from the middle middle-class, and we were kept that way. Fraternisation with the locals was fairly severely discouraged. Unsupervised walks in the locality were made largely impossible. We interacted very little with local people. [A notable exception to this was the relationship between Ian and Janet Tutton. She was a local Ackworth girl. Ian reports that he faced discouraging remarks from staff about having a girl-friend from the village, but he persisted.]

The brief you were given said

- a) This is not mainly an account of occupational success. Domestic life is just as important as what you did as a job.
- b) Excessive praise for the achievements of children was not required
- c) Reveal what you wish and keep private what you wish to keep private.

Some of the twenty-nine accounts which follow in alphabetical order are remarkably frank, and few of us seem to have led wholly predictable or uneventful lives. As a sociologist by occupation, an occasion life this is an invitation to generalise, and I therefore offer the following generalisations on the basis of our collective experience.

- (A) International orientation. Quite a few of us have been international in one way or another, to quite a considerable extent. Either in living and working abroad, in emigrating ourselves, or in choosing a foreign spouse, or in having children who live abroad, we are quite an international lot and have a good deal of experience of foreign parts. Thus one of you, commenting on Bill Howey's account of himself, said that his daughter lived about 50 miles away from Bill in New South Wales, and he hoped that he would go and visit him next time he went out to see his daughter.
- (B) Traditional occupations like medicine and advocacy are not much in evidence. What stands out is the extent to which numbers of people have been involved in school or university education. For me, the account which strikes one is that of the late Philip Heymans was a highly regarded schoolmaster teaching in a specialist grammar school in another part of the country. But there are many examples one could pick.
- (C) Marriage is a lottery, or so it seems. Some marriages endure, others have had a finite life and have ended in separation and divorce. This is essentially a private matter, but marital breakdown seems to have been not infrequent. The details and pain of separation are often played down, but that facet of experience is frequently there between the lines.
- (D) One's health is also imponderable, and some have experienced health challenges as one grows older. Others have faced these challenges and overcome them. The late Rosemary Stephenson, for example, became a pilot and mastered the necessary skills of that job. The accounts are discreet; several have had brushes with cancer, and having family members with mental health problems is not unknown.
- (E) Several of you have experienced bereavement, the impact of which may have been considerable. Perhaps it tends to be glossed over, but it is clear that the loss when it has occurred has been very great. There are more widows than widowers.
- (F) Many of you have had a satisfying, if at times challenging, personal life, which has fully occupied you, sometimes centred on children. This can be no less challenging than the world of work.

Technical limitations have precluded the inclusion of photographs, but it has occurred to me that if we wished to take this further, we could if we wanted set up a website on which we might post information about those who did not contribute to this document, and could show photos both from Ackworth in the 1950s, and some more recent photos of ourselves and our families. What is the betting that we would find pictures of our childhood selves more attractive?

Martin Bulmer

25 January 2012



Ackworth Old Scholars Association (AOSA) Gathering London 2012 '50+ Years On'
Fellow Northumbrians: Peter Tod far left Professor Martin Bulmer far right
Kathleen Waddell third left Joyzelle Lloyd/Kelsall mid left ('blond' with scarf)
Neale Holmes-Smith (bearded) fourth left Stephen Kelsall fifth left
I vaguely recognise a few of the others?

Footnotes and Comments (WPH)

I am amazed at Martin's Scholarship but not surprised. There are many revelations for me in the 'collective memoir'; all of them agreeable. It was no eye-opener that Martin succeeded from his early platform of 'academic brilliance'. It was perhaps more enlightening that both Maeve Cowan and Marcia Collin reached the exalted platform they did? Maeve's father had been Music Master at 'Marlborough'; then an exclusive Boys School and now the alma mater of the Duchess of Cambridge. Christopher Morell Roberts also excelled in music which was greatly encouraged at Ackworth. I was the abject failure! Peter Catterall overcame quite severe birth defect which left him with one vestigial (left) ear. He achieved immunity by defending himself with a fierce razor-sharp intellect. He was even a match for Martin in the political debate; one from the extreme left (MB) and the other the far right (PC).

Peter was the most unco-ordinate of boys and could neither catch, kick, hit nor throw a ball. We made him scorer of the cricket team which he loved although he was the most untidy writer. Jean Hewitson is the last person in the world who I thought would indulge in a political career. Veronica Bird is the only one to have received a National Award (OBE): and Veronica was in the 'C' Stream. She was careful custodian of some of the most notorious criminals ever in British Legal History. The number who have achieved academic 'Doctorates' is very high and apart from the Professors include Dr Jean Hewitson Dr Guy Millington and Dr Roger Allen (Industrial Chemistry). There may be others.

The obverse might indicate that only those who wanted to tell their story responded? Others may well wish to hide their tale for whatever subjective reasons. I do clearly remember Head Master Albert Lindley reporting to the school that the Ku Klux Klan had burned an effigy outside the home of African American Carrie Mae McCant (adopted by senior wealthy white Americans) following her return to the USA after one year at Ackworth.

Footnote:

2005 Australian of the Year Dr Fiona Wood is an alumnus of Ackworth School

Holidays at home

We always looked forward eagerly to holidays at home. Equally I could hardly wait to start each new term at school. Vocational activities obviously depended a lot on the seasons. During the long summer holidays there was often quite a lot of work to do with harvesting, haymaking, sheep dressing and all the rest. Diana was the best help at the spring lambing. It's something I should have taken on better than I did. For Diana riding her horse of whichever hue was paramount. Johnny and I looked forward to home games for Newcastle United at St James Park. Dad was very good in supplying the means and methods but only once came himself.



Learning to drive in the back fields

We all needed to learn to drive although our mother never did. I'm not sure whether this was due to lack of interest or opportunity? Dad could be difficult; but so could mother! All our family cars had minds of their own. Each was purchased second hand; or possibly third, fourth or fifth. Dad's defence was to acquire an unregistered 'clapped out' old Rover Sedan for £14. This was a smart move and quite a lot of money. We were denied access to Dad's current chassis but we could do what we liked with the old jalopy. It was a ton of fun. Of course we didn't learn the rules of the road; but we became familiar with the basic abilities of operating an aged recalcitrant manual sedan. It was quite a good introduction to the literal life skills we would need later on.



Presentation of the Rothbury Cup 9th April 1960

Dad presents the cup to Morpeth farmer George Reed who bred, broke in, trained and rode the winner grey mare 'Megsbridge'. Dad was local club chairman.

This was arguably the apotheosis of Dad's home area, social and public career. Sadly it was also the beginning of the end. Within five years (1964) racing at Rothbury ceased to exist. We lost the farm. Phillip Payne-Galway rode at this meeting. Almost thirty years later I met BBA agent Sir Philip Payne-Galway at a Doncaster Calcutta Dinner in the Australian Club in Sydney. We became firm friends.