

Memories of Barrie Rundle
Pupil at Devonport High School for Boys 1939-1946

Started at Belmont Methodist Church. DHS had rooms for 1st years at these premises situated opposite the top of Albert Road (now pulled down and developed). Mr H.A.T Simmonds used to take us for RI (Religious Instruction) on Saturday mornings. I was caned by him once at 12.00 after school.

Joined Latin stream and Gilbert House. Lived adjoining Central Park during early part of war and blitzes (Barn Park Road, Peverell). House hit by incendiary bomb and kitchen burnt out. Lived part of time at Gara Bridge and travelled into school daily from there -Milk round wagon.

Evacuated to Penzance in 1941. Initially billeted at Ponsodane (a large house-just before entering Penzance). Slept on mattresses on the floor. Girls from another school also billeted in part of the house. ? Housemaster

After short period went to 'The Rookery' at Marazion (Lord and Lady St Levan's mainland home opposite St Michael's Mount).

Each day walked from there to Marazion Station and caught train to school in Penzance and then back after school (Mr Ken Sparrow-Housemaster). Weeks were sometimes taken off to help farmers pick potatoes , strawberries, sprouts etc.

Transferred to Tredarvah , a beautiful mansion style house in Penzance with glorious grounds- a very happy existence prior to the bombing, although a bit stark when we first moved in.

We were bombed out of Tredarvah on the 26th September 1942.

Personally, I was in the cellar with several other boys when the bomb hit. I can remember a terrible screaming like noise as the bomb came down and then an explosion when most of the house was destroyed and we were completely covered in debris and dust. However, no one was seriously injured.

After coming out of the cellar after the raid we were taken for the rest of the night to 'The Queen's Hotel' on the front at Penzance- a beautiful hotel. We were only in our pyjamas, the only things we had left.

The following days we were split and went to various DHS hostels in the town. I went to Mount Prospect (a Raleigh House). I thought how I wanted to be with my friends from Gilbert House who were at other hostels.

At Tredarvah we were under Mr Joe Chamberlain- Housemaster and Music Master at the school- (a very strict disciplinarian).

After Mount Prospect went to a new hostel in a lovely old house in a permanent position overlooking Penzance and Marazion and St Michael's Mount in the distance, named Trevidren under Mr W Hamley-Housemaster.

This house also had lovely grounds and several of the boys cultivated various areas to grow vegetables etc for the use of the house cooks.

At this house I made friends with David Cliffe, and we have been friends since that time- over 50 years. (NB David Cliffe is now deceased)

Schooling

This was carried out at various premises in Penzance, and initially we shared Penzance Grammar School, going for 1/2 a day, each day. In due course full days were carried out at various premises.

We had to travel across Penzance from one lesson to another in all sorts of weather and were often in trouble for arriving late, due mainly to trying to buy food of some sort, or a quick tea or coffee between lessons. Several Masters were called up so lady teachers were used, I believe, for the first time at the school. Many of us had bicycles, and visits to St Ives at weekends were very popular. I joined the ATC (197 Squadron-DHS) and went flying from St Just Airfield at Land's End and also at RAF St Mawgan where an annual camp was held.

Sport

This took place at Ham playing fields.

Athletics- I ran the sprints, 100 yards and 200 yards for my house.

Cricket-played for my house and the school

Rugby-played for my house-Captained the 2nd XV, and played for the 1st XV (at centre or on wing)

I played for the Old Boys Rugby team on various occasions between 1946-1951 (on a field close to the George Hotel)

Penzance

One memory I have is leaving Church at St John's in Penzance and meeting up with Rex Powell (now deceased) and being adventurous we thought it about time we entered a pub for a drink-this we did but on entering the first person who saw us was Johnnie Gore, the Latin Master, who quite quickly got us out and we had to report to him next day. I don't remember how many Latin verbs we had to write out, but it was several hundred!

Sunday evenings in Penzance were often spent on the promenade where larger numbers of female and male youngsters paraded up and down trying to strike up relationships with the opposite sex. How this went down with the local boys I am not quite sure , probably not too well.

Penzance gave me a good foundation to my life which I was able to build on - good friends, and discipline which was accepted. Boys came from all walks of life, but were all treated the same, and one never felt anybody was different from the next. I had a good academic life, although I personally did not take the full advantage I should have done.

We returned to school in Plymouth in 1945 (and I left the school in 1946). This broke up our being together for three years, and came as a shock when we had a completely different life , now living at home, and it was indeed strange to go on our own to school.

After leaving school I met up with the old boys on Saturdays, in Goodbody's on Mutley Plain, and spent holidays together. We also met in the Nissan Huts opposite the library. Some Saturdays we met up in the Duke of Cornwall Hotel, or the Continental Hotel. NB These were my classroom friends rather than my hostel friends.

After school

After leaving school I trained as a quantity surveyor, passing my examinations in 1950. I had deferment for this to happen.

My national service was spent in the Survey Regiment of the British Army between 1951-1953. I had a fully paid salary from my company - no other person in the Regiment , or very few at all, were paid by their companies.

I rejoined my company (Dudley Coles in Plymouth) and I was seconded to English China Clay as a Surveyor in Hereford looking after that area, Oxford, and the works at Harwell Atomic Centre, between 1953 and 1957. I taught surveying at Hereford College, part-time.

I married in 1957, in Hereford, and then returned to Plymouth to rejoin my company. I carried out surveying duties throughout the Westcountry. I had two children, a daughter in 1958, and a son in 1960, the former now a lawyer, and the latter in the banking industry.

I was seconded by my company to an associated company of Consolidated Gold Fields (Marples Ridgway), working in Iran from 1976-1979. I was the senior surveyor working on the last part of the Trans-Asian Highway into Pakistan. I was the Sole Governor of the British School in Eastern Iran during 1976-1979. The company pulled out of Iran in early 1979 when the Ayatollah returned from exile.

I returned to my company and was made a Director in 1980, and took early retirement in 1990.

I am still keenly interested in the school and its achievements and follow these in the local press. Having read much about various education systems which have existed like DHS for 100 years and new systems which have been instigated over the last 30-40 years my own personal view is that DHS has, and is going, the only way a school of this stature can go and I will still follow its future with interest.

Thoughts

The coming together of several hundred DHS boys will, I am sure, rekindle many happy times they spent together and, perhaps, resurrect the Old Boys Association. I am sure the Centenary Appeal will be a success and that DHS, DHS OBs and all those involved in the school will make use of the facilities in the coming years.

Post-script

My father wrote the above notes on the occasion of the Centenary of the school. He always spoke fondly of his time at DHS, in spite of being evacuated, and having much of his schooling separated from home and family.

Dad enjoyed his retirement, travelling the world with my mother, and spending much of his time playing an extremely active part in the lives of his family, including his much loved five grandchildren. He was very proud of us all. He played bowls for the Sir Francis Drake Bowling Club in his retirement years, and was actively involved on the building committee of our local church. Sadly, my father died very suddenly on the 15th September 2008. We remember him with much love and affection.

The above Notes were prepared from the original handwritten notes left by Barrie by his daughter, Patricia Wass, in October 2016.