



Bushy Tales

Dedicated to all who attended London Central High School in
Bushy Park, London England from
1952 to 1962



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Visit the Bushy Park Web Site at <http://www.bushypark.org/>

Class Representatives



1953 - Jackie (Brown) Kenny
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1954 - Betsy (Neff) Cote
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1956 - Glenda (Fuller) Drake
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1957 - Shirley (Huff) Dulski
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1958 - Pat (Terpening) Owen
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1959 - Jerry Sandham
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1960 - Ren Briggs
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1961 - Betsy (Schley) Slepetz
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1962 - Dona (Hale) Ritchie
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Roster Changes

New Email address:

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Look Who We Found



From Richard Cunliffe (60)
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I don't know how you found me. It really is amazing to me. Last month, I was contacted by an English friend that I palled around with in 1959!! I did attend Bushy Park from 8th grade to my Junior year in school. Dad got transferred the summer of 1959 and I graduated from Limestone High School in Maine in 1960, so I guess I am a member of the class of 1960. Since I was a bussed student, I do not remember many students, but I remember Mr. Mitchell (French), Mr. Bell (Chemistry) and Ms. Parrish (English). I played trumpet in the band. I used to have nightmares about missing Bus 101, the first one in line. Please include me in your newsletters.

Memories of Bushy



From Kaye (Caldwell) Jones (56)
kayeone@cox.net

I received this message from my brother, Principal at Alconbury Elementary School in England. Thought it worth passing on. I am making tentative plans to attend.

News Release

US Ambassador to Speak at London Central's Closing

WIESBADEN, Germany – The United States Ambassador to the United Kingdom will be the guest speaker at the May 15, 2007 closing ceremony for the Department of Defense's London Central Elementary – High School, located in Daws Hill in High Wycombe, west of London.

The Honorable Robert Holmes Tuttle, the U.S. Ambassador to the Court of St. James's, will deliver remarks at the 1:30 p.m. ceremony commemorating the closure of the oldest American high school still operating in the United Kingdom. All alumni, family and friends of London Central are invited to attend.

The closing ceremony is intended to offer alumni the opportunity to share memories of the school, and to reflect on the historical significance of the school, which has been in the London area from the beginning of the Cold War to the present.

London Central School opened at Bushy Park in South London in 1952 and remained there

until 1962. The school was relocated to Bushy Heath in Northwest London until 1971, when it was finally moved to its present location on RAF Daws Hill.

The school complex, which includes a dorm for students, is closing as a result of downsizing by U.S. Navy and Air Force units in the London area, making it impractical to provide continued logistical support to the facilities.

Principal Theresa Barba, in a message to students, wrote that she accepts the closure with sadness. "Our school has a rich history and tradition of student achievement and teacher dedication. Current and past students and teachers must hold London Central traditions with great pride. Our school is special because of the people in it and communities we serve."

Alumni of the 54 year-old school include retired Air Force Lt. General Thomas C. Waskow, who attended London Central at Bushey Hall from 1962-65. Members of the pop group "America," Dewey Bunnell, Dan Peek and Gerry Beckley met while attending the London School. They went on to record the hit single "Horse With No Name" in the early 70's. Author Robert Davenport is a London Central High School graduate with the Class of 1968. Starlet Kathleen Turner attended the school in London in 1972. Bo Bice, the runner-up in the 2005 "American Idol" television program, and now a successful recording artist with RCA, attended the school from 1990 to 1992.

Persons desiring more information about the closing ceremony can contact Cary Sand, Closing Ceremony Chairperson, at London Central High School by calling (DSN) 235-5720; or through commercial telephone at +44 (0) 1494-795720; or email Cary.Sand@eu.dodea.edu.



From Nancy Reed Robinson (56)
robinisonn@aol.com

My Year in a British School in 1953

In London we moved three times before we had our rented house in Hampstead Garden Suburb. Even before moving into our home, Daddy marched me up to the local school for an interview and to take

their entrance examination. After the exam we got a list of things I would need at school, a schedule for homework, plus a bedtime of 8:00 pm. I felt my life as an American teen was over. I was now in uniform at Dame Henrietta Barnett School for Girls. This was a private, or government school, with British girls who qualified to get in by passing an 11 plus exam.

My fourth form class was based in Miss Rigg's room and she was strict. We had regular fingernail inspection, dirty neck check, and a check for skirt lengths among other things. Miss Rigg told us how fortunate we were, since during The War (WWII) they had school on Saturdays too. She once took me aside and asked if I, like other American girls, had dates and wore lipstick. I told her, yes. She may have decided to save me since she taught us that one should **always** keep the throat bare to prevent colds, **never**, eat in public, or worse chew gum. Once she also mentioned wearing tennis shoes and blue jeans was a true travesty! I cannot do that even today when I travel!

Though the building was always cold to me (55 degrees Fahrenheit) and the formality was strange, I adjusted to such things as the single water spicket that posed as a fountain with the metal cup attached to a chain outside near the playground and the smell of pubescent girls who customarily shower once or twice a month in the gym changing room. Out on the playing fields I could compete except in tennis and excelled in some sports. I loved gymnastics!

I did have a wonderful time in the school. The other girls were delightful to know and the classes I took were fascinating and numerous. I was not included in French because it was an advanced course. I did take science, history, English, mathematics, scripture, art, English Geography, and Latin, *Caesar's Gallic Wars*, which was equivalent to Latin III. The art class was exceptional, a professional artist taught it. I was thrilled to learn to paint fog!

Lunch was a big event. We talked and walked to a building down a hill, several blocks away; we stood in line outside among high thistles and nettles rain or shine. Inside we stood at tables of 10 and waited until ten people were there, joined in the noon prayer, and then sat together. We were each given a

loader plate of food that we were expected to consume completely. What we actually did was finish what we liked, and someone else ate what we did not so we could be excused. This was all done by surreptitiously sliding the plates around because neither sharing food, nor throwing it away was acceptable. Lunch was a silent event. When we finished, someone dismissed us, we rose together as one, and then walked and talked back to the school. I rarely liked the food so my plate went all around the table before it was clean and we could leave. Fortunately, others were hungrier than I.

Science was wonderful. We went out and scooped what we wanted out of ponds or off the soil for exploration under a microscope or cut up frogs to see their insides. Everything was a hands-on experience. The teacher had a tapeworm on her lectern, which a friend of hers had given to her after a gourmet trip to Italy. It was about four yards long and wrapped around two metal rods inside a large beaker of clear preservative. One day in an animated jester the science mistress hit the tapeworm beaker and it splashed all over the front row of desks. We screamed and jumped away. The teacher screamed, "My tapeworm, save my tapeworm!" as she rushed to save her precious specimen!

In history we studied The Napoleonic Era, which included Napoleon's attempt to colonize Mexico. The message was that the Monroe Doctrine was really a British creation, which was developed during our Civil War. I did question that since it is called the Monroe Doctrine. I was assured it was a British document but England allowed us to claim it since both countries interests were served. The teacher was attractive, challenging and very interesting. Everything she taught us had to be written into a little booklet in pen, for future study. The lectures were interesting and I did well. (History, English, and science were the only subjects with content that was offered just that year. Everything else was a continuation of the year or years before.)

In English there was literature and composition so we wrote essays. (The British do not teach grammar, everyone is supposed to know grammar since they speak English!) We read *The Count of Monte Cristo*. The teacher was Welsh and I could

not understand a word she said, nor could she me. A student translated for us. She asked me to read daily. I do **not** like to read in front of any class so one day, I closed me book, said, "No more!" and sat down. That was the end of my oral performance.

There were challenging courses as well. I had studied Latin one year before. I was put in third year Latin with the rest of the class to study *Caesar's Gallic Wars*. My Dad got me a tutor who tried to teach me with different texts, but I never accumulated enough vocabulary to be successful. That tutor actually grabbed my hand and his ruler in an attempt to rap my knuckles. I glared at him and withdrew my hand. That did not happen again! I finally got a crib book of *Caesar's Gallic Wars* in English to learn what I was reading, but I still did not pass. What a tough subject!

I was hopelessly lost in Math with pounds, shillings, crowns and guineas plus meters and centimeters. Since I was in the low group I had the poorest teacher, especially for me, she had a lisp. She talked about rathoos (ratios). In math we had business math on Monday and Friday, geometry on Tuesday, trigonometry on Wednesday, algebra on Thursday. Remember if it was math the money and measurement problems were done using the British system. They do not even use that money any more! Geography of the British Isles was also a floundering subject for me. The other students had at least heard the names like "The Lake District", the Moors, and the Cliffs of Dover, before and maybe been on holiday to some of them.

I had wonderful friends in the school. There was Irenie who invited me to her birthday party right after I arrived and her best friend Valerie who became my friend as well. They made me feel welcome. Irenie lived in a coldwater flat with a bathroom and a WC down the hall. Althea lived not far away. She loved to join me when I got together with the other Americans in the area to play softball. The Americans boys loved her as well.

There was Joan who lived the nearest and we walked to and from school regularly. Joan was Jewish and we lived in a community of Jewish families who had escaped from Germany just before the war. Most parents did not allow Gentiles into their homes. One time one of the girls was going to

have a party and the girls tried to convince me I could pass for Jewish and should plan to attend the party. I said thank you but not this time. My father certainly would not have wanted an international incident right there in the neighborhood.

One day when my mother was not home I decided that Joan and I should go to my house for coffee sometime in the late morning. It was a perfect opportunity for a break from the school day. When we returned Miss Rigg met us at the door and asked if we knew we were truant. I said, "No, what is that?" The answer must have surprised her for she explained the infraction and that was that.

Another friend Molly who was very good at art did not pass her exams that June. She had to leave school. That surprised me. I could not imagine leaving school at 15 like that. She was no more mature than I. I wondered how she would manage. We did still see each other again; in fact we went to London and toured some British coffee shops where her new friends went. She went to art school and to work daily and I went by bus to Bushy Park.

The play that year was a special event at the end of the year. With a sense of humor, I was assigned the part of the third citizen in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. When I, in a crowd of Roman citizens on stage, yelled in my southern accent, "Halt, who goes there?" the whole audience broke into uproarious laughter including us. It was a great finale.

The next year I was invited back to the first dance the school traditionally offered the girls from my class who were now in the fifth form. Boys from near by complimentary schools were invited. It was a very stiff and formal event. The dance was the two step in a large circle with couples spread out sparsely in the circle around the room. I took an American friend and we had a good time and met several members of the opposite sex. We were probably less shy than my British friends and we dressed like Americans. We talked to the boys easily. When a male friend who had been in a boys' school told me about his lack of experience with females, I was glad I had moved on to coeducational Bushy Park.

From Craig Barnes (54)

Cbarnes355@aol.com

Walt Hunt wrote a note enquiring about the Teen Club. Here is a brief response.

The Teen Club was on the grounds of the Windsor House which was on the edge of Regent's Park. The big house had been a home of Betty Hutton and after the war was taken over by the Air Force as an officer's club. The Teen Club met in the garage which was huge because Betty Hutton could afford garages bigger than most people had schools. My recollection is that the club might have been started in 1952 by Jim McMillan, the son of Colonel McMillan. Those were years before Bushy Park and we all had to go to school somewhere else scattered around London. Jim had dropped out of Michigan and was the most mature, wisest, and smoothest talking college whiz any of us had ever met. Then suddenly he decided that Michigan was better than the Teen Club and he went back to school and we were left on our own.

One night early in that first fall after Bushy Park opened, we planned a dance in the Teen Club for all the new kids. I was the Vice President of the Club, I think, and we invited everyone from Bushy Park. That included a couple of African American kids and all hell broke loose because my girl friend's father was a general from the South and wanted in the worst way to stop the integrated dance. One dark night he called and told me to call the whole thing off. This was serious trouble. One panicked call led to another, from one general to another, and finally General McConnell (I think) said "Go ahead with it." Well, that ended my relationship with the first general's daughter which turned out not to be such a bad thing because then I met Snookie Garrison and everything in my world looked pretty good after that.

So, yes, to your question, there was a Teen Club and it was in the garage of the Windsor house.

From Diane (Lathrop) Zumwalt (56)

dhzumwalt@comcast.net

I just read the Bushey Park newsletter and saw the questions about the Teen Club. Am I wrong or was it in the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square? I

remember going to a dance there. It was (I think) formerly the London home of Woolworth heiress, Barbara Hutton, before the Embassy moved in. I remember the gold water faucets in the bathroom! Anyway, I just thought I would add my two cents to the inquiry.



From Noel (Ahlbum) Bailey (59)

baiey@verizon.net

Gary - You will probably have a ton of answers on this one - TAC (The American Teen- Age Club) was housed at the Columbia Club, 95 Lancaster Gate, London. I can say this fairly certainly as I just found some old papers in a pocket book that was my mother's - a blue card dated 15-11-56 (November 15, 1956, for those of us who have forgotten how folks in other countries write the date) declaring my mother a "Dependent" member, Number 1450. At least I guess it was a membership card. I also found a raffle ticket to raise money for The American Teen-Age Club, organizer: Mrs. C. E. Stewart, 114 Eyre Court, NW 8. The tickets cost "25 cents or 2/- (2 shillings) for one ticket, 1 dollar or 7/6 (seven shillings and sixpence) for 5 tickets" The drawing was on Sunday, April 14th, but the year has been torn off! (Someone could figure it out, I'm sure) The prizes were: \$50 cash, given by the Columbia Club; Sports Jacket, Harris Tweed given by Alexandres; Two dozen brandy glasses; Musical Cigarette Box; Two dozen Champagne Glasses; \$25 cash given by Bank of America; Bel-Air Electric Cooker --Deep Fryer; "Ronson" Wedgewood Table Lighter; "Rosenthal" Tea Set Pappageno Pattern; GE Steam Iron given by Blancols.

I'm intrigued that the drawing was on Sunday, and wonder about the present generation looking at this list and wondering why anyone would want to light tables (on fire?) And WHO would need 2 dozen brandy glasses!

All this was in a nice small alligator purse, along with a program from our Senior Class play, "You Can't Take it With You" in which I had a part. Neat "coincidence."

In answer to the question about a staging place for those who came into Southampton - we took the train directly to London where we stayed in a guest

house until my mother and step father found a house to rent. I remember that my brother Chris drained a beer bottle found in our train compartment, and seems none the worse for it all these years later (we went over in August, 1956, he was 2) and the guest house served two breakfasts, alternating day by day - corn flakes or scrambled eggs with all the cold toast we could eat.

I "just happened" to have these pertinent items at hand as my brothers and I and our families gathered in San Diego to inter Mom's ashes with Paul's at Ft. Rosecrans and we divided up some of her smaller effects - very peaceably, I must say! I hope that we can keep the same peace as we divide up the bigger pieces, and gather for a cruise to Alaska in August planned to celebrate Mom's 90th birthday. She died rather suddenly but very peacefully and will be with us in spirit as we continue to remember her. One of the items I brought home is my grandfather's jewelry box with some of his ribbons and medals (he was a liaison to the British Army in India during WWII and died in a plane crash there) and collar buttons. I found it interesting that my brothers thought I should have the box even before they looked into it because I am the only one in the family to be wearing collar buttons these days to hold my clergy collar on! Another neat "coincidence"!



From Ren Briggs (60)
renpat1671@uneedspeed.net

I sent this e/mail to Toni (Cooney) Clem class of 62. You can read my e/mail to her and what she sent back.

Hi, I am Ren Briggs. I am the class rep for 60' I went to Bushy from 58 to 60. The camp you are in question about is "Camp Mohawk". Every summer the girls would have it for 4 weeks and then it would be the boys turn for the next 4 weeks. The kids would come from all over England from all the Bases. I spent 5 weeks there in 59 as a "JLT" Junior Leader (in Training) The last week of the girls time there, the boys JLT's would come in for orientation and get ready for the boys. The group I had was 7 to 9 year olds. It was a wonderful time spent. I hope this helps you.

Thanks so much for your information...I attended the camp in the summer of '59 and I couldn't remember the name of it...there was a red-headed counselor there whose name was Charles something. He went back to the states that fall to attend college and eventually, I believe, made a career out of the Air Force...anyway, I've always had fond memories of Camp Mohawk and wanted to include those in something I am writing for my boys. Thanks so much for taking the time to respond to my query. **Toni (Cooney) Clem (62)**

From Ren Briggs (60)
Renpat1671@uneedspeed.net

She (Toni) was there the same time as I was. Ronnie Streed and Joe Jordan were there also. We came in when the girls were still in the last 1 or 2 weeks of their camping time.

We had one or two weeks training as to the location of everything and what was expected from us. The night before the kids got there (a Friday night) we went into town and picked up some booze. It was the FIRST TIME I really got drunk. I was so bad that around the camp grounds they had the tents grouped for the kids by age. They had put up fences from tree limbs and such all made by the campers. I fell down on the fence and brought the whole darn thing down.

The next day the kids got in around 10 AM and I was SOOOOOO hung over I wanted to kill all of them. I was given the youngest age group. The first night they all wanted to go home from being home sick. It was their first time away from home. We had to sit with them and calm them down -- ALL NIGHT).

All is all I had a great time. I still have the certificate they gave us at the end of our time.



From Jim Hartung (60)
hartungj@bellwouth.net

Just read the March newsletter. Toni Clem (62) had a question. I could answer directly, but others may be interested in this, so, perhaps you can include in the next issue. The summer before I entered CHS as a freshman, some of the 14+ year olds from RAF Manston somehow got tapped as summer camp "counselors". We were permanent residents for the

summer of the American youth camp at Shaftesbury Forest, and got a new group of 9-10 year olds to watch over each week. There was a small lake with canoes, an archery range, a mess hall...all the normal summer camp activities. Around the campfire one night each week ghost stories were told, and one of the scariest was concerning the Mad Monk of the Abbey (there were ruins of an old Abbey near the camp). One of our counselors was an older teen named Mark Trail (no joke!) and he and some of the older guys took white sheets and slinked in the woods near the fire at the end of the story, moaning and clanking chains...the little kids were scared out of their gourds! We almost never got them to sleep that night. Another memorable memory of that summer was the weekend one of the adults took some of us counselors on a trip over to Bournemouth, on the coast just south of the camp. We went to the seaside cinema there and saw Alan Freed's "Don't Knock the Rock" with Bill Hailey and the Comets and the Platters....my first visual on the new phenomenon of rock and roll. Fascinating! So, Toni, I think you are remembering Shaftesbury Forest Camp. My best to all.



Toni Cooney Clem (62)
toniclem@suddenlink.net

Thanks so much for your information...I attended the camp in the summer of '59 and I couldn't remember the name of it...There was a red-headed counselor there whose name was Charles something. He went back to the States that fall to attend college and eventually, I believe, made a career out of the Air Force...anyway, I've always had fond memories of Camp Mohawk and wanted to include those in something I am writing for my boys. Thanks so much for taking the time to respond to my query.



Vicki (Brown) Tidwell (61)
d.tidwell@charter.net

Was the camp that Toni Clooney Clem inquired about called "*Camp Mohawk?*"

I was reminded of that camp after I was graciously invited to the annual celebration of the life of Erin (Keefe) Crowe (class of '62) given by Erin's sister,

Susan McColl, and Erin's daughter, Kelly Guiberson. This year it was held on Feb. 10 at Susan's lovely, 101-year-old home in Poulsbo, WA. (Erin died eleven years ago, in Seattle.) She was one of my best friends while we were stationed in England--in fact, I named my daughter after her. I had lost contact with her about 20 years ago, but, because of the "Bushy Park Newsletter," was able to contact Susan, last year. I had planned to fly to Washington to see my son before he deployed (again) to Iraq at the end of March, so I decided to attend Erin's party and then stay a few days with my son and his wife in Olympia, WA. (By the way, thank you, Susan Miller Dalberg for the request for prayers for our soldiers. We covet your prayers for Staff Sergeant Brian Tidwell, age 24, about to be a new father two months after he deploys.) Anyway, back to the party. Kelly had scrapbooks of Erin's life, and there was a brochure of Camp Mohawk. I, too, was a counselor there one summer. I don't remember much about it except that one day, one of the other counselor's had tacks in her mouth as we were decorating for a party for the campers. Someone came up behind her and slapped her on the back and she swallowed one of the tacks. The medic at the clinic had her eat lots of bread and told her to watch for the tack when it "passed" (difficult to do since the camp had outdoor toilets.) We had fun threatening the campers by telling them that if they didn't behave, we'd lower them down the hole and make them look for that tack! I also remember that, one day, some of us sneaked away from camp in a car to get some fish 'n chips--a welcomed change from the camp chow.

In closing, may I take this opportunity to thank Susan and Kelly--especially Kelly, who drove me all the way to Tacoma to be picked up by my son after the party. I regret that I did not live close enough to Erin to be blessed to witness her courage and resolve during those last difficult years. Her mother told me that the way Erin lived--and died--taught them all how to live life to its fullest. I know she touched *my* life the short time I knew her. It's a worn-out cliché, but she really did make me feel special. Friendships, formed by Military dependents while stationed abroad, can evolve into such permanent treasures of the heart that they are difficult to explain to outsiders. And today, after all of these years, the "Bushy Park Newsletter" continues to make it possible for so many of us to

share our treasured memories with one another. Pat and Gary, "jolly good show!"



From Chip Delap (62)
cdelap@duffordbrown.com

Here are two photos. The black and white one is from the 1959 Christmas Formal at the West Ruislip TAC. My date was Phyllis Duesenberry. We were both sophomores at Bushy Park then.

The colored one is from the Bushy Park 1961 Junior/Senior Prom at the Grosvenor House. My date was Bobbie Ayles. I think she was really Dennis Harder's girl friend and I'm not sure how or why I asked her. Maybe because she was a sophomore and the J/S thing was a big deal. I'll send you a copy of the invitation and the tickets.



This and That

From Charles Bailey (One of our English Friends)

chasbailey@blueyonder.co.uk

This is of great interest to me as I was in a Children's Home in Teddington between 1954 and 1960 and visited the camp (Bushy Park) all the time. All of us kids in the Home had an adopted American uncle and were well treated by them, I've never forgotten the kindness shown and would love to be able to say thank you to at least one of the servicemen who were stationed there during those years.

I remember going to the camp at Christmas, Easter, and on July 4th, I also remember having a look round your School in the camp. At Christmas our adopted uncles would come to the Home and we all had a party together (the only time I got to drink coke). When it was our birthdays we always received nice presents and our birthday cake. I'm wondering if you knew of any of this was going on and if so it would be good to hear from you and others if at all possible. I look forward to your reply,

From Walt Hunt (56)

walt@lobo.net

Does anyone remember the jazz drummer that appeared at Royal Albert Hall in the fall of 52? The incredible drummer soloist...



From Peter Burnett (58)

peterb40@sbcglobal.net

Just a note to bring you up to date in our household:

After a year of being retired, I had become BORED AS ALL HELL! I accepted a deployment for a 45 day assignment to work on the heat/freeze damage to the avocado & citrus industry. Location was great in Oceanside, Calif (best beach in the state). Then I got two offers while deployed: The first: To become a business manager for the Diocese of Sacramento in a large parish in Sacramento. Or, secondly, to become Associate Director of Sacramento Area Emergency Housing Center.

I was very happy to accept SAEHC's offer and reported to work on 26 February. We are a not-for-profit organization of some 37 years serving 250+ of the homeless in Sacramento, CA. We have about 103 employees in several locations and all areas are staffed 24/7. Already I find my new employment personally very rewarding, and I hope to spend about 5 years at this work. I work for a great boss and in a great management team. So I am very happy to be here!



From Linda "Michele" Roberts Jenkins (62)
Catspaw@palmnet.net

I noticed that my name is listed as Linda M. Roberts (62) Jenkins. I have **always** been called/known by my middle name which is **Michele**. No one would know be by Linda Roberts.



From Martha Connor Bartsch (56)
Talon3811@aol.com

Your efforts are very much appreciated each time I receive the "Bushy Park Tales", but I thought this last newsletter was exceptional. I loved reading about Mr. Francis and John Meurer, as those are some of the few names that I remember. What days those were!! Thanks to all!

From Felicia Londre (59)
LondreF@umkc.edu



I am delighted at the plans to gather in Kansas City and enjoyed William W. Cooper's piece on why this is such a great place. I need to add a couple of comments to what he wrote about Kansas City.

In addition to all the attractions he listed, best of all is Liberty Memorial, which has attained official recognition as the national World War I memorial. A new museum of the Great War opened there last year, and it is exceptionally good. When I came out on my initial visit, I was amazed that three hours had passed. There is so much to see, and it is all

beautifully presented. A visit to Liberty Memorial and its museum will be a highlight of your visit. Sadly, Buck O'Neil died last fall, but he lives on in Kansas City memory.



(Editors Note: Below is the last chapter of the "Bike Tour". With regret I had to leave out the two pictures that were a part of it, but if I had used them the newsletter would have been over 3 MEGs . When you send pictures attach them as a separate file so if they are too large I can work with them to get them to a size that will work in the newsletter.)



From Tony Taylor (58)
saltydog64@mac.com

**A Continental Sojourn – Europe by Bicycle
Summer 1957 (Age 17)**

We continued our ride north hoping to get to Liege before dark; from Liege we would go west to the port of Ostend. But we did not quite make it to Liege that day; we were riding against the wind and off-and-on rain showers. There were no other hostels along our route, so by late afternoon we decided to take shelter in a hay barn that we saw off the road. It was dry and warm, and we were protected from the elements. We were not sure who the owners were since we did not see a farmhouse in the immediate vicinity, so we decide to risk staying here. I can recall it crossing my mind whether or not any Allied soldier had hidden in this very barn as they were trying to escape the Germans during the War. Ric and I climbed on top of stacks of sweet hay and soon fell asleep to the rustle of mice scurrying around the barn.

The next morning was clear and sunny, so we were on the road once more expecting to reach Liege within a few hours. It was during this ride that we started to see posters and billboards advertising the coming "Expo 58," the Belgian World Fair scheduled to open in Brussels in the following April.

"Ric, I have another idea." I said as we were riding along. Often our best ideas come to us in solitude when our minds are not cluttered with the mundane.

“I have been noticing all of these posters promoting the World Fair in Brussels in the spring... what do you think of the idea of our senior class going to Expo 58 in the spring as our senior class trip? If we were back in the States we would be thinking of taking a trip to New York or Washington, D.C., but here we could really go some place different.”

Ric has the tendency to be quiet at times as he thinks things through very methodically. After a few moments he said, “But where would we stay... and could we really afford it? You know, not everyone could afford a trip like that and pay for hotel rooms during a big event like that.”

“Well, I have been thinking about that too, but I have another idea. Here we have been taking this great sojourn around the Continent, and we have been able to find a couple of friends we once knew at Bushy Park who now live in Germany and on the Riviera, right? OK, so we do not know anyone in Brussels, especially anyone who would take in about 70 kids, but what if... and here is the big “if,” we could somehow locate about 70 Belgian teenagers who we could invite to come to London and stay with all of us in our homes... and then when it came time to go to the World Fair, we could stay with them? How does that sound for an idea?”

“Hmm, where would we find these kids in Belgium? How would we go about the whole thing?”

I replied that this would take some thinking and planning, but I bet that I could find someone through the Embassy in London who could find a contact for us in Brussels who might work with us on the idea. “What do you think?”

“Sounds like a neat idea to me if we can work it out... it is your idea, so why don’t you propose it to the class after school starts?”

(Note: So it came to pass that our classmates really liked the idea. My father asked someone at the Embassy to see if there was anyone in Brussels who we could contact to make arrangements for such a swap. He came home one day with a piece of paper and handed it to me. On it was the name “Association Belgo-Américaine,” and a contact address, the director of the association in Brussels.

The Belgian-American Association (Association Belgo-Américaine), had been created in 1945 by Belgians anxious to recall the memory of the American soldiers fallen during fights on the Belgian soil during World War II.

I wish I could remember the name of this gracious lady, but as soon as I contacted by letter, she responded with wonderful enthusiasm saying that she thought that she could easily find enough interested Belgian students, the equivalent of “seniors,” who would love to make an exchange trip. Over the next several months we worked out the details by mail and a couple of phone calls.

The exchange process began when the Belgian students came to London in March of ’58. We had a committee all set up to make arrangements as to who stayed with whom, and what would be the agenda while they were here. The first meeting was when they arrived at Bushy Park and spent the morning with us in school. We even arranged for a “Belgo-American” paneldiscussion in the cafeteria/library. I think we had 5 students from each side addressing topics of interest while the audience asked questions. This was followed by a bus tour of London so that they could see the sights before being dropped off to spend the night with their host families. The Belgians were in London for a long weekend, so there was time for their hosts to show them more sights of London and become more acquainted. On their last night in town we had a party for them at the American Teenage Club (TAC) in the basement of the Columbia Club in London. As I recall this was the first time many of them had ever tasted a popular fruit juice and ginger ale punch we often made for special occasions at the TAC.

In late April we were ready to board the train for the ferry crossing to Ostend and then onto Brussels. We were met by a contingent of the students who had been our guests in London along with some of their parents and our host, the director of the Association Belgo-Américaine, who had arranged for me to be a guest in her home with her husband. Although they had arranged for us to have a tour of Brussels, most of our time over the next few days was attending Expo ’58. One of the highlights of the expo was the Soviet Pavilion with its model of Sputnik I, the world’s first modern satellite

launched by the Soviets in early October of 1957 (it re-entered the atmosphere and burned up three months later). Many of the World Fair pavilions were an introduction to the latest in modern and never before seen architecture. The "Atomium" was the central attraction at the expo. It was a structure designed to celebrate scientific progress. It represented the lattice of iron crystals magnified 165 billion times, and was accessible to the public. Although there is little today to remind anyone of Expo '58, the Atomium still stands as a major attraction in Brussels just as the Eiffel Tower still stands today as a reminder of a World Fair in 1889.)

And so a seed of an idea that sprouted in my mind as we rode our bikes through Belgium in July of 1957, became another memorable trip that this teenager (plus 50) has never forgotten.

By later morning we had arrived in Liege, but we still had more than 130 miles to go to Ostend, most of it along major highways; not the type of roads we liked to ride... country roads were safer and easier for bikes. Time for another pow-wow.

We had reached that point in the trip when we were really looking forward to going home. Other than Brussels, there was nowhere along our route that took our fancy, so what shall we do? Our decision was to buy a train ticket and head to Ostend now and be there in time to take an early-morning boat-train the following day. We did make a point of stopping in Brussels for a few hours to walk around the city. Brussels has since been near the top of the list as one of my favorite cities, and as you read the notation above, we were to return to Brussels again in nine months.

Our adventure was not quite over yet... there were people to see and a girl to meet. On the train between Brussels and Ostend, we shared a 3rd class coach car with a group of German university students who were on their way to London to perform in a harmonica contest. These guys were great; they were real professionals when it came to playing the harmonica. We truly enjoyed their company not only for the musical entertainment, but also for the camaraderie. One of the guys had his sister traveling with him... she was as lively and as fun as they come. I don't recall her name, but I

remember that she kept us all in stitches laughing at her jokes and impersonations of others, especially of famous people. I do remember that she was from the Ruhr in northern Germany; she had a strong guttural accent more common to those from the north.

So that night we were once again in the Youth Hostel on Luxembourg Str. in Ostend. This would be our last night on the road, and we were ready to get home again; we still had the rest of the summer ahead of us.

I do recall that as Ric and I were standing in line to board the ferry to take us across to Dover, that the German girl whom we had met on the train the day before was suddenly standing by my side. She was full of chatter and stayed with us on the ferry and then on the train from Dover to London. But once we had arrived in London, Ric and I were quick to hop on our bikes and ride through the streets of this city we currently called home. We headed to the bike shop where we had rented our bikes almost a full month before to turn them in. The bike shop was within walking distance of where I lived on Brompton Square. As I was walking up the square toward our house, I happened to look up and saw this beautiful girl with short blond hair looking out a third floor window of the house next to our home... and she was looking down at me. I had never seen her before, but she took my breath away as we just stared at each other as I passed by. I had come home to find the love of my life.

It has been 50 years since I first saw her... and it has been almost 43 years since we married. Her name was Brigitta Grüner, a German au pair. Her name is now Brigitta G. Taylor and we are living happily ever after....

Epilogue

- Our sojourn lasted exactly four weeks.
- Distance traveled: 3061 miles
 - By bike: 965
 - By hitchhiking: 1196
 - By train: 900
- Number of countries traveled: 8 including England
- Money spent by Tony: \$101 total (or about \$568 in today's dollars) that is about \$3.35 a day in 1957 dollars, or about \$18.95 a day in 2007 dollars

For anyone who has been following my story, "A Continental Sojourn: Europe by Bicycle... Summer 1957 (Age 17)" as each chapter has been written over the past five months, and would like to see the entire story in its entirety including photos that had to be cut from the "Bushy Tales" version due to memory issues, you can log onto <http://homepage.mac.com/saltydog64/FileSharing6.html> and download it into Microsoft Word. For those of you who have been so generous in your encouragement, thank you.

(Editors Note: We have some very talented classmates in our ranks so starting next month we will have the start of another story written by one of our classmates about their time at Bushy Park.)



From William English (57)
ametalartist@yahoo.com

Written by an Australian Dentist

To Kill an American

You probably missed it in the rush of news last week, but there was actually a report that someone in Pakistan had published in a newspaper an offer of a reward to anyone who killed an American, any American. So an Australian dentist wrote an editorial the following day to let everyone know what an American is. So they would know when they found one. (Good one, mate!!!!)

"An American is English, or French, or Italian, Irish, German, Spanish, Polish, Russian or Greek. An American may also be Canadian, Mexican, African, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Australian, Iranian, Asian, or Arab, or Pakistani or Afghan.

An American may also be a Comanche, Cherokee, Osage, Blackfoot, Navaho, Apache, Seminole or one of the many other tribes known as Native Americans.

An American is Christian, or he could be Jewish, or Buddhist, or Muslim. In fact, there are more Muslims in America than in Afghanistan. The only difference is that in America they are free to worship as each of them chooses.

An American is also free to believe in no religion. For that he will answer only to God, not to the government, or to armed thugs claiming to speak for the government and for God.

An American lives in the most prosperous land in the history of the world. The root of that prosperity can be found in the Declaration of Independence, which recognizes the God given right of each person to the pursuit of happiness.

An American is generous. Americans have helped out just about every other nation in the world in their time of need, never asking a thing in return.

When Afghanistan was over-run by the Soviet army 20 years ago, Americans came with arms and supplies to enable the people to win back their country!

As of the morning of September 11, Americans had given more than any other nation to the poor in Afghanistan. Americans welcome the best of everything...the best products, the best books, the best music, the best food, the best services. But they also welcome the least.

The national symbol of America, The Statue of Liberty, welcomes your tired and your poor, the wretched refuse of your teeming shores, the homeless, tempest tossed. These in fact are the people who built America.

Some of them were working in the Twin Towers the morning of September 11, 2001 earning a better life for their families. It's been told that the World Trade Center victims were from at least 30 different countries, cultures, and first languages, including those that aided and abetted the terrorists.

So you can try to kill an American if you must. Hitler did. So did General Tojo, and Stalin, and Mao Tse-Tung, and other blood-thirsty tyrants in the world. But, in doing so you would just be killing yourself. Because Americans are not a particular people from a particular place. They are the embodiment of the human spirit of freedom .. Everyone who holds to that spirit, everywhere, is an American.

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