

Letter from Gordon Holmes, Headmaster, to All Old Boys of Walton Lodge Preparatory School, Clevedon (post-1950)

To all Old Boys of Walton Lodge Preparatory School, Clevedon

Many of you will already know that in 1934 a few Old Boys of the School, meeting in the School Pavilion on Sports Day, decided to found an Old Walton Lodge Society with the object of providing an organization to keep Old Walton Lodge boys in touch with one another and where possible to promote the interests of the School. The Earl of Devon was made the first President of the Society and it was largely due to his efforts that the Society quickly began to flourish.

As you will appreciate there was a vast amount of work to be done in unearthing and sorting out old records and by tracing in various ways the whereabouts of as many as possible of the hundreds of men who had passed through the School in its long history before 1934. Fortunately School lists of various kinds have been preserved from the year 1872 that is from a year or two after the founding of the School, and so it was possible to make an almost complete list of all the names of those who had passed through the School. Unfortunately, many of these remain just names on the list but in a surprisingly large number of cases it has been possible to find out more of their subsequent history and, in the case of many of those still living, to persuade them to become members of the O.W.L.S.

There must still, however, be many of you, particularly we find, those of you who left the School between the years 1920 and 1950 who are unaware of the existence of the Society and it is to you that this circular letter is particularly addressed. At the present, the keenest supporters of the Society, those who always attend the Annual Meeting, the School Sports Day and the Annual Dinner are the older generation, those who left the School before 1900. We are anxious if possible to give the Society a new lease of life and to try to persuade some of the younger generation to take a more active part in its affairs.

Up till the present, membership of the Society has been confined to those who paid the Life Subscription of 10/6d on leaving the School or £1. 1. 0 if joining later. This has now been altered so that all boys leaving the School automatically pay their subscription and so all boys passing through the School become OWLS.

When I became Headmaster in 1949, it at once occurred to me that a good deal more could be done to make the Society a more vital and interesting Society and also one which could more adequately fulfil its two objects as given above. i.e. First, to keep Old Walton Lodge Boys in touch and Secondly, to promote the interests of the School. Perhaps some of you will think that my motives in this are principally concentrated on point 2, and are entirely selfish. I hope this is not true, but I will say that I believe the School to be a good one and that it is a worthy aim to try to promote its interests. There can be few Preparatory Schools which have such a long history or who have turned out so many eminent and distinguished men. We intend that it shall continue to do so and we hope that very many Old Boys of the School will wish to send their sons to the School which they themselves attended as boys.

My reasons for sending out this circular letter, therefore, I will sum up as follows

(There would appear to have been a further page of this letter which is not available.)

Note: Gordon Holmes was the Headmaster of Walton Lodge Preparatory School from 1949 to 1971, when the school closed.

With grateful thanks to Jane Lilly for providing the scan of the original document.