Bushy Tales

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

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Visit the Bushy Park Website at http://www.bushypark.org/

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

1953 – Jackie (Brown) Kenny
JKYKNY@aol.com

1954 – Betsy (Neff) Cote
betsycote@Atlanticbb.net

1955 – Volunteer Requested

1956 – Edie (Williams) Wingate
WingW@aol.com

1957 – Shirley (Huff) Dulski
sedulski@gmail.com

1958 – Pat (Terpening) Owen
nemoamasa@sbcglobal.net

1959 – John "Mike" Hall
MGHall@Q.com

1960 – Ren Briggs
rpbjr@frontier.net

1961 – Betsy (Schley) Slepetz
bslepetz@comcast.net

1962 – Dona (Hale) Ritchie
DonaRitchie@aol.com

A little reminder to all –if/when you change your email address, please let Pat Terpening nemoamasa@sbcglobal.net or me know, if you want to continue to receive the newsletter. Too many times we only find out when you send us an email saying you haven't received the newsletter in few months. Thanks, guys.

Classmates Who Have Transferred to the Eternal Duty Station

John E. Owen, husband of Pat Terpening (58) Owen, passed away of cancer on August 23, 2017.

John was born in Kansas and served in the USAF from 1955-1965 and later worked for the USPS as a computer programmer.

He enjoyed accompanying Pat to the Gatherings and Reunions and met many great people on these jaunts. Many became great friends to him as well as Pat.

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Robert Charles Goodeve (58), age 69, of Cicero, NY, passed away July 9, 2009, at Francis House in Syracuse, NY. Born in Duluth, MN, Robert was an accomplished and well-respected, licensed land surveyor. He was a devoted husband, loving father and loyal friend. Robert is survived by his wife, Philomena; sons, Robert, Sean (Nicole) and Eric (Sandra); and stepchildren, Kelly Imbesi (Jeff), Kevin Cloonan (Amy) and Bill Cloonan; eight grandchildren; sister, Katherine Dowd; and nieces and nephew. Memorial services will be private. Contributions may be made to Francis House in Robert's honor. To leave a special message for the family online, visit NewcomerSyracuse.com NewComer Funeral Home.

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Memories of Bushy Park

Robert Harrold (60) maintains a Bushy Park website at BushyPark.org Among the things you can see at this website is a "Guestbook" in which many website visitors have left comments. There are many entries, dating back to April 2007. A direct link to the Guestbook is below:

http://users3.smartgb.com/g/g.php?a=s&i=g34-06015-b1&m=all&p=1

Memories from London

In the July 2017 edition of "Bushy Tales", Susan Dalberg sent a photo and recollection of her first car, a 1961 Austin. She reminded readers that it was an Austin, not an Austin Healy (actually spelled Healey). The mention of an Austin Healey brought back a flood of memories.

We moved to London from Houston in 1959 when I was 15. My father was a project engineer for a petrochemical engineering and construction company and our anticipated overseas assignment was to be a year and a half or so. Even though we were from car-centric Houston, my sister and I acclimated to double-decker buses and the Underground very quickly.

However, one Friday evening at the dinner table, after having lived in London for about a year, my father mentioned that he had stopped in at the BMC (British Motor Corporation) auto showroom in the city near his office.

"That Austin Healey is a pretty nice-looking car", he said casually.

Picture a teenage boy hearing his father, who had only owned Chryslers, talking enthusiastically about a British sports car.

I don't remember my mother's reaction, but it wasn't an absolute "No", because my father and I traveled back into the city the next morning to the BMC dealership to have a further look. The model on the showroom floor was gorgeous. My father pointed out the fine sleek styling and they had that famous British engineering. He poured over brochures, he huddled in conversation with the salesman, he asked about options.

Before I knew it, there were papers on the salesman's desk and my father was signing here and initialing there. I dare not utter a word for fear that anything I said at this moment would cause this entire dream scene to collapse and I would wake up riding in the back seat of a Chrysler.

Two months later the car was delivered. It was red and had every option available. It was also an

export model for the US market which meant it could stay in country for 12 months duty-free but then it had to be shipped.

The plan was to leave London within the 12-month limit, but, our timing was off and the Healey needed to leave before we did. It was consigned to the US importer and sold; I never saw it again. But, my fascination with Austin Healey remained forever.

My father retired in the early 1980's and my parents moved to Tucson, Arizona. On one particular visit to Tucson in 1983 my father and I spotted an Austin Healey on the side of the road with a "For Sale" sign. We made a quick "U" turn and made note of the phone number. The Healey belonged to a University of Arizona student who was graduating and needed to sell the car; it was his daily driver.

My father had never forgotten the red Healey and all the trips we took around England as a family. Yes, it is possible to get four (small) people in an Austin Healey plus a little bit of luggage. Now, this was my chance to acquire a Healey.

There are some decisions in life that require complete naïveté. This was one of those. The original plan to ship the car from Tucson to Houston fell through, so my wife and I decided we would just fly back to Tucson and drive the car the 1000 miles to Houston. After all, the previous owner's mechanic said it was a passable car with the best maintenance a college student could afford.

I recall it was Memorial Day weekend. We flew back to Tucson. I came prepared with an old black briefcase filled with heavy tools and bound with duct tape. The briefcase fit neatly under my seat. I think about this scene from time to time and wonder how things have changed in air travel security.

The Healey by this point was safely in my father's garage. This was the first time I had laid eyes on it since jotting down the phone number from the "for sale" sign. I checked the oil and water, drove around the block, topped off the gas tank.

The next morning, we started out down IH 10. The local bank time and temperature sign said 105 degrees. My father followed us for about 50 miles. The tires didn't fall off, the engine didn't explode, so my father waved us good bye and returned to Tucson and we headed east.

You may suppose this is the place in the story describing all the mishaps along the way. Well, the only mishap was a collision with a tumble weed that blew across the highway and left spiny sticks in the grill. Anne tells the story to this day about having to get out on the passenger side and pull all the sticks out of the grill while cars and trucks flew by. We made the trip safely in three days; testament to my father's enthusiasm for British engineering.

The Healey is still with us. Over the years it has been thoroughly restored. It is still a delight to drive and turns heads where ever we go. We have driven or trailered to many Healey and British car events around North America and have made fast friends along the way.

It all started with a casual conversation around the dinner table in London many years ago.

Mike Johnson (62)
masprite@sbcglobal.net

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I enjoyed the August issue of Bushy Tales, but found it both sad and happy. Sad that so many classmates have passed away, but happy that others are left to share their memories and keep them alive as long as we can. Living in England and going to Central High School was such a unique experience for us and being able to share those experiences and memories with each other is pretty special. Ours is a rich heritage as military brats, because it forced us to make friends easily, be adaptable to moving often and sometimes, for long stretches of time, having our Dads off fighting wars or on TDY or going to OCS, The War College, etc. But, we survived and for the most part are better citizens, sharing a love for our country.

I just wanted to share one more memory about the special night that Mary Lou DeCoursey (55), Penny Mele (55) and two other girls from the class of (55), whose names escape me, and myself Billie Culp (54) were lucky to attend a concert in downtown London, with the heartthrob Eddie Fisher as the entertainer. And, we not only had our picture taken with him, he gave each one of us his personal autograph (remember those were the days when we collected autographs everywhere we went). This concert was before he became in disfavor because of his personal life, so we were very much in awe of him.

Billie Culp (54) Bules

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Letters to the Editor

Good Morning Bill,
I have a joyful reunion to announce. My youngest son took me back to London for a week and I not only got to find the house I'd lived in, see the site of Bushy Park Central High, revisit many wonderful sites in London...but the BEST was on July 21st ~ a 3-1/2 hour visit to Martha Gail Kelly...my absolute favorite teacher. We've been in touch for years, but I've always wanted to go back and visit with her. I had intended to stay only a short time so as not to wear her out, but we walked down Memory Lane together for hours and when her son, Sean, suggested that she might want to nap she said, "Oh no, I'm too excited!" She may be a bit incapacitated, but her mind is as sharp as a tack and we had such a grand visit.

Here are pictures:

Here I am standing by the gate we teens used to enter to go downstairs to our teen club (TAC)...this Hotel used to be the old Douglas House.

I have so many more photos..but don't know how many you can handle at one time.

Gail sends her greetings to all of you...we spoke of so many of you and she remembers all of you so fondly. I took her a copy of Bill Cooper's Funeral Mass Program, one of his Mass cards, and a book of some of his poetry that I made up in large print for her. The poetry was given to her with the permission of Bill's family. She said "Oh, how wonderful...Billy's poems!"

Joyfully submitted,
Sherry (Cheryl Burritt) (57) Konjura

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Hi Bill

I am an English historian presently writing a book about Americans in Britain in the 1950s. I am, as you would expect, interested in USAF service personnel and families who moved to Britain. My objective for this research is to understand more about what visiting Americans thought about Britons and Britain. As well as the USAF, I will be researching tourists, American residents in Britain, businessmen, actors and musicians.

I hope that you might fill in a short survey about your experiences in Britain in the 1950s. It is anonymous and should take no longer than a few minutes to fill out.

The survey can be found at https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/M28XYD3

If you would like to chat a little more about your memories, I have left a space on the survey for you to leave an email address. More information on the survey and the way your anonymity will be preserved can be found at www.johnlaw100.com/survey

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