

HILLSIDE SCHOOL

*Hillside Avenue, Borehamwood, WD6 1HN
1939-2014*

More Old Pictures of, and information about,

The School and its Pupils:

- 1. from Keith Kiff (1941-1944)
and*
- 2. from Barry Stevenson (1955-1959)*

*Reproduced for the
Elstree & Borehamwood Museum Exhibition,
to mark the 75th anniversary of the
opening of the School in September, 1939.*

A summer's day at Hillside in 1958-59:



*Jane Davies, Pauline Poole, Heather Shand, & Jean Moss
relaxing on the School Field*

*A copy of this and other Exhibition documents can be found on-line, at:
<http://robertnewson.co.uk/hillside>*

Welcome back to Hillside School!



*This document was prepared in October, 2014 by
Keith Newson
(7 Lings Coppice, SE21 8SY; kip.newson@gmail.com)
from material presented, given or lent to him
by ex-colleagues and former pupils,
for the 75th Anniversary of the opening of the School
(in September, 1939).*

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1. From: **KEITH KIFF** (born 1930; pupil at Hillside, 1941-44)

I left Hillside in December 1944 but unfortunately my leaver's certificate is my only remaining, tangible record of my time at Hillside; as you can imagine wartime restrictions on film meant that photos at that time were few, although I do remember Mr O'Keef taking some.



This is what I look like now, and (right) what I looked like some time before I joined the new school in 1941. Green Street, where I was born, was part of Shenley, and I went to the school in Shenley Village. Mr Brew was our headmaster there until he moved to Hillside, and then we were transported daily to Hillside by coach.




1940 and 1941 were the years of the Blitz, during World War Two. The School sports field was ploughed under and planted with various crops, and a large part in front of the school was used as a vegetable garden, and tended by pupils as a class project.

There were not too many times when daylight raids took place, but on at least two occasions we did use the area behind the hall stage as a shelter. As far as I can remember there was only one fatal incident at all close to the school: it took place during an overnight raid. A bungalow close to the school on Hillside Avenue was hit by a bomb. Many bombs were dropped around Boreham Wood and Shenley and collecting bomb fragments, and the shrapnel from the anti-aircraft gunfire, was popular.

I did have the opportunity to take the 11+ exam but declined: in those days it was felt more important to enter the work force ASAP in order to feed the family. The 1930s depression had hit our family hard and an extra wage earner was more important than further education. However in those days working for a company that provided work experience plus day/night school was almost comparable. Elliotts provided me with such an opportunity.

I recently joined a Facebook group called "Borehamwood not Elstree" and several posts have been started regarding Hillside. I was trying to remember some of my own classmates when I remembered one that should receive mention, David Tomblin. He and I both left in December 1944, with Certificates like this one I have kept. My life took me away from Borehamwood whereas David stayed in the town, and

made a highly successful career in the Film industry (see **Wikipedia** entry, quoted below, *p.4*). The only thing in common was that as able-bodied Brits we were required to enter the Armed Services at the age of 18. He was in the Royal Marines, I was in the RAF. This 2-year part of our lives was, I believe, a positive episode; it generally gave us discipline, comradeship, and for many the opport-

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL.	
Headmaster: P. D. GERNAT, D.A. Tells Elstree 1929.	HILLSIDE SENIOR SCHOOL, BOREHAM WOOD.
Leaver's Certificate.	
Name (in full)	Keith Lionel Kiff.
Date entered	9.9.41.
Date left	21.12.44.
Reason for leaving	Exempt from further attendance.
*General Classification for scholastic ability	First. Grade.
*Attainment within the above grade	Excellent.
Best subjects	Arithmetic, Geography.
*Regularity in Attendance	Good.
*Punctuality	Excellent.
*Conduct	Excellent.
*Reliability	Excellent.
*Speech	Good.
*Appearance and Cleanliness	Excellent.
Remarks	A trustworthy willing boy of good record at school for work and character.
 Headmaster.	
*Grades:—First, Second, Third. *Scale of assessment:—Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor.	

unity to learn a trade. I wouldn't be surprised if it also took some young men, who were drifting, and changed their lives for the better. It only lasted for about two decades after the war but I have often thought it should have continued in some form.

Today (Monday 13th October) in Canada, it is Thanksgiving Day when families usually gather for a meal of Turkey and Pumpkin Pie. I had a visit from my son and youngest grandson yesterday. As a family we have been fortunate and I believe our move to Canada was a turning point. It was by pure chance that in February 1963 I saw an advertisement in the Sunday Telegraph for Designers in Ottawa. My wife and I decided that we should apply, and after an interview at Canada House I was accepted in March. I was asked if I could start in July and decided to make the big move. We had sold the bungalow in November 1962 and had placed a deposit on a house that was due to be completed in June of 1963. The agent through whom we were buying the house recommended we shouldn't cancel the purchase but put the unfinished house up for sale (remember this was the early 60's and people were lining up to buy new houses). The house sold quickly and we made 10% on the sale. Everything then went pretty smoothly, and we left by the Cunard Line *Carmania* from Southampton in the first week of July with our two children Ann 3, and John 6.

Many people when they think of Canada talk about how cold it can be, but the day *we* arrived the temperatures were in the 30's and our English summer clothing was too heavy! We were given lots of help by the company and we were all settled by November '63 and placed a deposit on a detached 3- bedroom bungalow that would be ready for occupation the following May.

My children have moved away from Ottawa. My son received a BCom from Carleton University and spent 25 years with the Bank of Canada (his last boss there was Mark Carney, now your bank of England Governor). He was lured away from the BOC in 2005 by the International Monetary Fund in Washington DC and is a Senior Financial Annalist, finally being offered a position at the IMF as a Senior Financial Analyst in Washington DC. He travels a lot, recently to Chile. My daughter Ann lives in Montreal and runs an on-line support group for Diabetics. My eldest Grandson Christopher obtained an Engineering degree from Ottawa University and made his way as a commercial pilot, he is a Captain with WestJet. He still lives in Ottawa but plans eventually to move out west to Calgary, where WestJet head office is located. We still have another Grandson in Ottawa who is taking a course at the local community college and a granddaughter going to the University of Guelph in Southern Ontario, and we have one 5-year-old great-granddaughter.

I'm extremely grateful for the start in life that Hillside gave me, and look forward to hearing of future additions to the story of the school and its former pupils.

Postscript: I mentioned that **David Tomblin** was in my class at Hillside, and left (at 14) in 1944, when I did. We have found on-line what was, in effect, an Obituary about David's working life.

K.K. (October, 2014).

*Extracts from Wikipedia: about David Tomblin (October 18, 1930 – July 20, 2005),
a film and television producer, assistant director, and director.*

Born, educated and bred in Borehamwood, as a producer, David Tomblin was best known for the *Prisoner* TV series. As a first assistant director, he worked on a number of high-profile films, including the *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* series, and the 1978 *Superman*, and with commercially and critically successful directors including Richard Attenborough, Steven Spielberg and Sydney Pollack. As a director, he was best known for work on Gerry Anderson's productions, including *Space: 1999*.

Having worked on *The Return of a Man called Horse*, directed by Irvin Kershner, when it filmed for a few days in England, Tomblin was invited by Kershner to be first assistant director on *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back*. He subsequently worked as first assistant director for Lucasfilm on *Star Wars Episode VI: Return of the Jedi* and the first three *Indiana Jones* films *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Indiana Jones* and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*.

Tomblin later worked with Kershner again when Kershner directed 1983's *Never Say Never Again*, and with Spielberg on *Empire of the Sun*.

Tomblin often maintained multi-film working relationships with directors.



Continues on page 5.

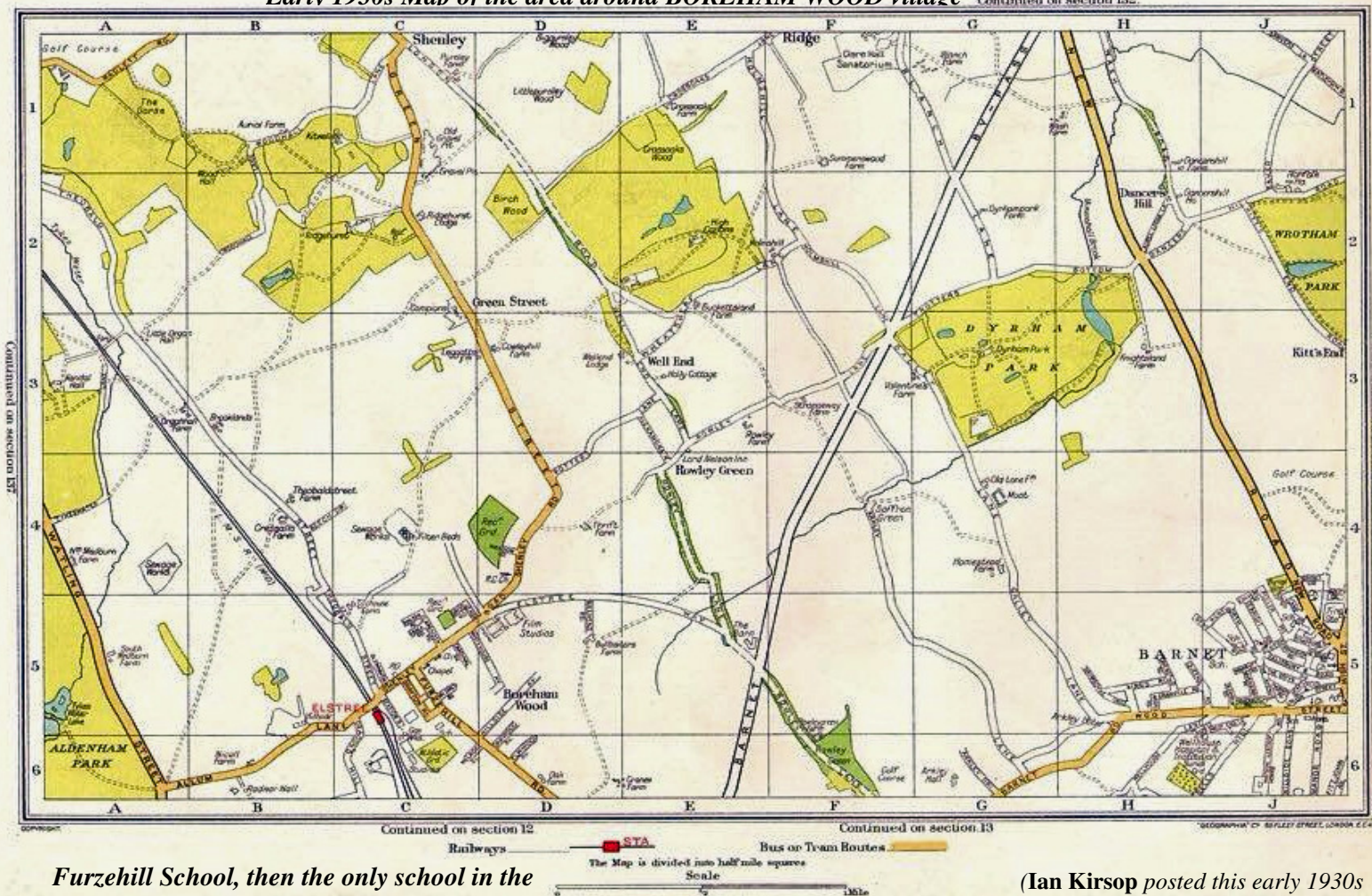
He worked with Richard Donner on *The Omen*, *Superman* and those parts of *Superman II* directed by Donner. With Richard Attenborough, Tomblin worked on Attenborough's major multinational productions *A Bridge Too Far*, *Gandhi*, *Cry Freedom* and *Chaplin*. For *Gandhi*, Tomblin supervised the reconstruction of Gandhi's funeral in Delhi, to which the general public were invited, involving the direction of 250,000 extras. With Sydney Pollack, Tomblin worked on *Out of Africa* and *Havana*.

Awards:

Tomblin was presented with BAFTA's Michael Balcon Award (now known as The Outstanding British Contribution to Cinema Award) in 2003. With Richard Attenborough, he was named as a winner of the 1982 DGA Award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Feature Film for *Gandhi*.

David Tomblin and **Keith Kiff** were in the same class at Hillside School (1941-1944), during the Second World War. This map includes an incomplete Hillside Avenue before the war, where the new Secondary School would soon be sited (just above the "ham" in "Boreham"!). The LCC estates were a long way from completion when the war broke out.

Early 1930s Map of the area around BOREHAM WOOD village Continued on section 132.



Furzehill School, then the only school in the village, is marked here. Pupils who won 'scholarships' at 11+ usually went to a Grammar School in Barnet.

(Ian Kirsop posted this early 1930s map on Facebook, on 10.10.14.)

On-screen, this map enlarges well.

Barry Stevenson was at Hillside (1955-1959), a decade after the war. By then the school had become a 'Secondary Modern' school (for boys and girls, from 11+ to 15, or sometimes, voluntarily, to 16). Barry really had little choice of schools, when he transferred from Summerswood School aged 11. Holmshill had not yet opened as a secondary modern, and the new Borehamwood Grammar School did not open until 1956 (and then only took children who had done well in the 11-plus exam). The other newer 'secondary moderns' (Lyndhurst, opened 1954, and Champions, in 1955) were on the northern edge of what was then an infant 'new town'.

2. *HILLSIDE and BOREHAMWOOD – in the 1950s:* from BARRY STEVENSON (*Hillside 1955-1959*)

Hillside was a well-established school still under its first Head, Dennis Gernat, in the latter 1950s, and Barry remembers both Miss Blythe and Mr O'Keefe with respect and affection, as good, experienced teachers who cared about the pupils. In the Headmaster's Logbook they are not mentioned as formally holding senior positions, until January 1959, when they were Deputy Head and Second Master respectively. In May-June 1958 Gernat was in hospital, and the routine staff absences in the logbook were in Miss Blythe's handwriting for about a month. That indicates their status; so they also both administered the corporal punishments: fairly and formally, recording each incident in a (now lost) punishment book. Other teachers, also, could send naughty children down to the Deputy's office for 'the Book', and then administer and record the punishment *they* had given.



After leaving, Barry soon joined the Royal Corps of Signals - for 9 years. It was later that he returned to the area and found much interesting work in and around the film and television studios in the town. The first of those studios was already on the pre-war map, and others were just opening up. They did not, however, offer very secure careers. Both the production companies and the actors, and certainly all the other skilled and unskilled workers in the industry were constantly put on new contracts - and often on the move. In this photo (from Barry's Facebook page), he was in the driver's seat of a Central TV Minibus, en-route to London from Nottingham, to pick-up the children who regularly appeared in Central TV's '*Rod Hull & The Pink Windmill Show*'. For a period he moved his family to Nottingham, returning a few years later. Thus it was that Barry was on hand to take the last record photographs of the interior of Hillside, soon after the 13-18 mixed Upper School had closed in 2000: he was back on the premises in

in connection with the locations for shooting various films and tv productions that preceded or followed the BBC's "*Grange Hill*" series (which had classroom scenes set in Hillside classrooms).

Back in **1957-8**, Barry, as a 13- or 14-year-old, had posed with six of his class-mates, sitting on the low wall at the back of the 'Extension' (on the edge of the, then, exclusively *girls'* play-ground), while their class-mate Ken Terry, took this photo. **Barry** was smiling (and crouching behind the others), *2nd from the left in this picture*.

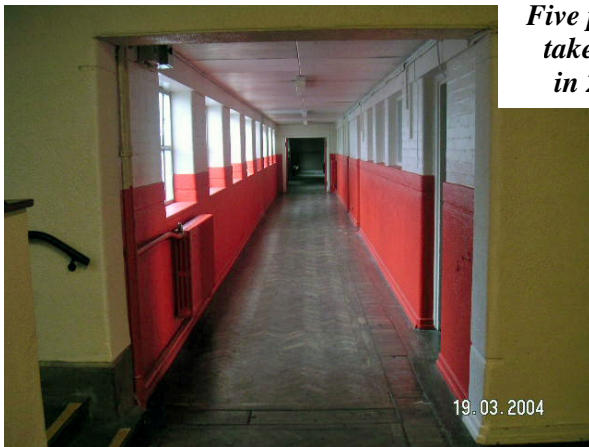
Barry did not take photos in the 1950s; these old pictures were either Ken's, or have been collected by Barry recently, mainly on Facebook. In 2002 Barry organised a reunion, held at '*The Directors Arms*', formerly '*The Bull and Tiger*', in Ripon Way. (This pub



Does anyone else recognise themselves or any of the others here (or in the other old photos that follow)?

appears in one of the 1950s photos on *page 8*.) By then the former Hillside School building was closed, but Barry was there in 2002-04, working in connection with the filming of scenes for the

BBC's '*Judge John Deed*', and he also took the opportunity to take these inside photos (before the interior had been very much altered, and adapted to the 21st century needs of Yavneh College).



*Five photos taken
taken by Barry
in 2002-2004*

Top left: Main Foyer from Entrance corridor.

Top right: Barry, outside the Front Doors.

Above, right: The one-time "Boys' staircase" to the 1st floor classrooms.

Bottom left: Along the corridor, to the east.

And next, below left: Way out, to front doors.

All the above 4 interior views, and the one (*below left*) from the main foyer to the entrance doors, changed little between **1939** and **2004**. (The Upper School had closed in 2000). However, in this **2014 photo, below right** (taken by Lesley De Meza on a visit to Yavneh College), the same entrance hall, and the view of security precautions on the drive beyond, had changed - *beyond recognition!*



2004 & 2014

Cameras & photography were more affordable after the war, and at some time 'J.J.' O'Keefe (who taught science and P.E./Games) set up a 'dark room', and ran a school club – though Barry thinks *not* in his time at Hillside. Portraits were better in outdoor sunshine: one spot was behind the 'Extension', another in front of the School. Barry's recent collection includes the next 4 **1957** shots:

In this photo (*left*), Senior Master Mr J.J. O'Keefe, was photographed with June Simons (now Mrs Williams), Marie Peck and another girl, on the lawn in front of main entrance. We don't know who the third girl was, nor is it clear which year each pupil was



in, when this group of four were photographed in **1957**.

After 1948, the school leaving age was raised nationally to 15, so pupils could not leave school for work, until their 4th year (i.e. after their 5th birthday). From the Logbook we know that in 1957 some Hillside pupils were staying on, voluntarily, to complete a 5th year, to take public exams.

Ken Terry took this photo of Dave Nicol and Carol Owers (*right*) in **1957-58**. Both of them



probably left school in 1959 - although their results were not listed by the local paper (*see the cutting on p.9, below*). Ken also took the next two photos.



Above left: Mick Welch with Joyce Tuffrey; this is another photo taken at the rear of the "Extension", by Ken, in **1957-8**.

Above right: Six Hillside lads at the Mill Hill Pool, **1957-8**. (There was no swimming Pool in Borehamwood then.)

Lower right: Geography and games teacher, Don Angood, with two senior girls, in **1958**. Carol Cope is on the left of the picture, and Geraldine (Gerry) Blight (the future Mrs Counsel) is on the right (i.e. on Don Angood's left). Gerry left in 1959, but Hillsiders hadn't heard the last of her!



1960

**Miss Geraldine
Blight,
Borehamwood &
Elstree Carnival
Queen.**

*The coronation
procession for
Gerry Blight,
former pupil at
Hillside Secondary
Modern School, is
outside the "Bull &
Tiger".*

(The pub is now the
"Director's Arms",
in Ripon Way.)



Although Gerry Blight had already left school in 1960, there must have been many other children and adults in this crowd still known to some ex-Hillsiders. Can you recognise anybody?

The tennis courts appear in many post-war photos, and this time the "cricket cradle" (for bowling and catching practice) is also in shot.

There were mixed doubles that summer day in 1958. Bill Chambers and Hazel Scarfe were tennis partners - but where was the tennis ball?



HILLSIDE SCHOOL SUCCESES

A number of pupils of Hillside Secondary Modern School, Boreham Wood, have scored examination successes. They are:

General Certificate of Education. Four subjects: Peter Bellinger, Derek Reynolds and Barbara Marshall; three subjects, William Holmes, Tony Palmer and Geoffrey Sheffrin; two subjects, John Badham, John Conley, Colin Smith, Margaret Gates and Loria Levy; one subject, David Tinkler, Patricia Daniell, June Southwood, Joan Wakelin and Ceinwen Williams.

Union of Educational Institutions Secondary School Certificates. Six subjects: Peter Bellinger (five credits), John Conley (1) and Derek Reynolds (4); five subjects: John Badham (3), Ingrid Cadwallader (1), Geoffrey Sheffrin (3), Colin Smith (1), David Tinkler (1) and Patricia Ryan (1); four subjects: William Holmes (2), Tony Palmer (2), Patricia Daniell (2), Gloria Levy, June Southwood (1) and Ceinwen Williams (3).

This cutting from the local paper, in 1958, shows that Hillside Fifth formers were beginning to find success in the GCE (O Level) exams, as well as at sports and games, and practical subjects.

The 1956 Logbook tells us that while Don Angood (with Miss Moss & Miss Cann) was taking a group to Nth. Italy, Mr (& Mrs) Marshall took 29 children (including their daughter, then a pupil at Hillside) to Bruges, Belgium, that same year. But this photo (*right*) included only 7 of the 29 pupils on that trip.



In **1958**, 18 girls were grouped in front of a big tree at the front of the School (near a tennis court, later the site of some new buildings).

But we don't know who they were, nor what they had in common at that time.



This next group, photographed on the lawn outside the front doors, may be the **1958-59** 5th form. The caption says it includes: *Tony Horne, Mick Freeman, Paul McClusky, June Simons, Marie Tarrant & Veronica Males*; but it doesn't name the remaining 7 boys and 6 girls, nor does it tell us who is where in this picture.



In **1959** there was scaffolding round the roof turret above the School Entrance Doorway, but Barry is sure that this feature was not finally removed at this time.

I think it had been removed by January 1970: no doubt because the roof joints around it were again leaking.



It is likely that at least the girl at the centre of the three in this **1959** picture (left) is in the group picture above; the photo was perhaps taken earlier in the **1958-9** school year, and certainly taken at the back of the main building.

Maybe the four boys photographed in this **1958** picture (right) are also somewhere in one or other of the two **1958-9** group photos? (Boys did then often change their hair-styles!).

Barry confirms that Tony Palmer, (who got good exam results in summer, 1958) is the boy in the centre here.



We wonder why Mr O'Keefe chose this group, in **1959**, and asked someone (whose elbow we cannot recognise!) to take this photo, with himself central in the front row. Marie Tarrant, Veronica Males, June Simons (now Mrs Williams), Mick Freeman, John Trigear (back row, right), & Tony Horn were all there.



Two other photos that Barry collected from other ex-Hillsiders, via Facebook, were dated **1959**, but May have been taken in 1958. This one (enlarged and used as a frontispiece to this document) has Jane Davies, Pauline Poole, Heather Shand, and Jean Moss relaxing in the foreground (probably from left to right). The classroom block, the Gymnasium and changing rooms, the Hall (flanked by corridors), and the 3-storey 'Extension' classrooms, are all clear, as they were in the days of the Secondary Modern School (though the post-war 'HoRSA huts' are not in this picture). The whole scene is very much as I found the School, when I first visited it ten years later. Mr Gernat retired in April 1961, and Mr Bert Smith then became Head - until he moved on in 1969.



Whoever took this photo of the **1959 School Cricket XI** must have arranged them with their backs to the field, so that the distant background is those houses that have surrounded the school play-ing playing field, certainly since the late 1940s.

We have no information about the names of the 11 cricketers or their adult coach – who is presumably a member of staff; and we don't know who they had played that afternoon; we have only their smiles to tell us that it was Hillside that scored the winning 50 runs, in the sunshine that day.

Can anyone tell us more, about all of these photos?



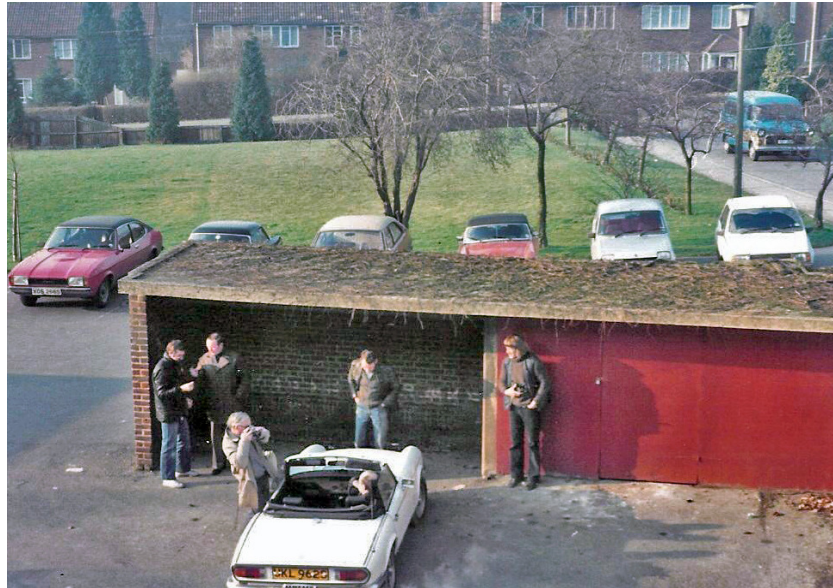
POSTSCRIPT – Barry has just (23.10.14) sent me this additional material:

The first of these last 2 photos tells us that he had the unique experiences of, first, being a young pupil at Hillside, in the 1950s, and then, returning to see his old school as a film-set location: he did this on very many occasions - starting in the 1980s (in school holidays), and continuing into the 21st century.

Here, in **1982**, Barry was taking a photo from an unusual angle - from an upstairs front window of the School, when he was working on location with ATV.

This is a shot of the late George Wiggins as camera-man, filming 'Diamonds', in (of all places!) the bicycle sheds, at the front of the old School he had left in 1959.

(Note the ATV Minibus coming up the drive).



And in another recent email Barry sent this list of pupils on Mr George Marshall's school trip to Holland & Belgium (in April 1958 – see p.9, above).

Barry has also just sent me this additional group photo (taken in front of the pillars at the back of the 'Extension', in **1955**). I quote from his email about this photo, and other matters, *below*:



“Have found some names for the 1955 photo; Have no idea now who sent it to me. 1955 Back row: Robert Ianson. Bustin John Thacker. Alan Kelly. Richard Knighton. George Lawrence. Noel Waller. Michael Knolls. Other names - John Crossland Robin Loudon, Bruce Cheesman. One other note, Keith, hardly any girls wore school uniforms, only the boys who had to....”

Barry also remembers from the 1950s, that the school's kiln and ? a wheel, for pottery, was then in the cellar/boiler room (which was also an air-raid shelter in WW2; and was, *later*, the Caretakers' Messroom).

Pupils on the Belgium Trip in 1958:

Frances Aarons
Geoffrey Axtell
John Bateman
Sheila Boxall
Pamela Bradshaw
Iris Brown
Doreen Carbis
Paul Edwards
Janet Farlow
Bernard Fox
Marilyn Gardner
William Hammond
David Hobden
Brian Holt
Carol Hook
Norma Males
Barry Marchini
Barbara Ann Marshall
Peter Andrew Marshall
Josephine Mile
Roberta Miller
William Naylor
Susan Randall
George Reeve
Stuart Robertson
Barbara Scott
Colin Swaithes
Margaret Ward
Kathleen Wells
Ruth Wilkie