

GETTING TO KNOW YOU



■ **Name:** Vernon Wareham
 ■ **Age:** 90
 ■ **Home:** Ware
 ■ **Where are you from?** I was born in Catsfield, Sussex, and lived in Hastings until 1952 when I came to Ware because of my job with the Post Office
 ■ **Job?** I started as a sorter for the Post Office and was promoted to telephone executive then on to work for the Ministry of Labour
 ■ **Hobbies?** I enjoy DIY and gardening as well as holidaying. I have been retired for 25 years and have been all over the world

FAVOURITES

■ **Film?** All James Bond films
 ■ **Book?** I like Jeffrey Archer novels
 ■ **Food?** Steak with roast potatoes
 ■ **TV programme?** Eggheads
 ■ **Song?** My old army song *Sussex By The Sea*. I enlisted in Chichester and fought as part of the British Expeditionary Force in the Second World War. I fought in Dunkirk and was wounded twice and have a nun to thank for saving my life. As I was lying unconscious in the road and tanks were coming towards me, she ran into the road and pulled me to safety
 ■ **Claim to fame?** I met the Queen at the 50th anniversary of the Dunkirk invasion



DESERT ISLAND CHOICE: The inspirational Field Marshal Montgomery (Monty)

■ **Which famous person would you like to be stuck on a desert island with?** Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery (Monty). He was our divisional commander in the war and was inspirational

VIEWSON WARE

■ **What does it need?** More policing to get things straightened out and more for the young people to do
 ■ **What would you change?** I would keep the Green Belt and have less development
 ■ **Favourite pub/bar/restaurant?** Jacoby's, for the food and the service
 ■ **Favourite place?** The Priory – walking down by the river
 ■ **Where do you like to shop?** Tesco, but we do like to support local businesses when possible
 ■ **Best thing?** The position of the town. We're adjacent to London and the countryside; we have the best of both worlds

Mercury Memories

DAY OUT: Hertford Grammar School first year pupils in 1963 visit the British Museum; inset, below left, the reunion last month

Photo: PNHDRZYL-01
 below right, Alwyn Williams, centre, with old boys Eric Riddle, left, and Geoff Cranville at the annual Great Hornead cricket match (s)



School pals enjoy a day of nostalgia

THERE were plenty of tales to be told when a group of former classmates from a Hertford school got together to remember their schooldays.

The classmates joined Hertford Grammar School in 1963 and left in 1968-70, by which time it had been renamed Richard Hale.

The idea for the reunion arose when Old Hertfordians Andy Johnson, Eddie Wilkinson and Mark Surridge met at the White Horse pub in Castle Street to meet former classmate Rodney Blake on a visit from Australia. The four used the internet to make contact with nearly 50 former pupils and 30 met on September 27, travelling from Hampshire, Norfolk, Yorkshire, Northumberland and Australia.

Andy Johnson said: "Plans for another reunion are being made, possibly when we are 60 in 2012, the Olympic year."

One of the recollections at the

By CATHERINE LOFHOUSE
 CHIEF REPORTER

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reunion concerned a teacher who made pupils write out lines of Latin as a punishment.

They soon realised that he always specified the same text, and so a market built up with boys writing lines out in advance and even rescuing old lines from waste baskets and selling them on.

Once the teacher gave 100 lines and the pupil handed them straight to him. He was so taken aback that he set even more lines and the boy handed him another batch straightaway.

Another opportunity for Old Hertfordians to meet is at the annual Great Hornead cricket match, when a Geoff Cranville XI plays a team from the village. Mark Surridge said: "As well as keen cricketers like myself and

Eric Riddle, other old boys come out of the woodwork, either to play or to attend the festivities in the local pub.

"This year we were particularly pleased that three of our old teachers came along: Gerry Rowe, Dave Boatman and all the way from New Zealand, Alwyn Williams." The reunion organisers are now trying to trace some former classmates to invite them to the next get-together.

They are Alan Heward, David Miller, David Twigger, David Witney, Graham Swain, Ian Davis, Keith Hollingsworth, Keith Lupton, Martin Carter, Michael James, Mick Ward, Robert Swain, Robin Keeble, Steve Tickner, 'Streaky' Henderson, Mick Simmonds and Nigel Parks.

● *Anyone who knows where they are now can email reunion@bengeo.com or call (01992) 589740.*

From the Mercury archives

10 YEARS AGO

I've started, so it'll finish next month!

THE drama and humour of TV quiz show *Mastermind* was recalled when presenter Magnus Magnusson launched this year's annual Hertfordshire Reading Festival.

The writer and broadcaster was celebrity guest at the launch of the 15th annual festival, held at Knebworth Barns in the grounds of Knebworth House.

The festival, entitled Words Alive 98, is organised by Hertfordshire's library service as part of the National Year of Reading.

Mr Magnusson spoke of his career as *Mastermind* presenter and signed copies of his history of the programme, aptly entitled *I've Started So I'll Finish*.

The broadcaster described the programme as "civilised intellectual jousting".

New building is topped out

25 YEARS AGO

A SPECIAL top-level ceremony, high above the buildings of Hertford, set the seal on the newest addition to the town's roof line – a £2m shop and office development called Centurion House.

The building fronts Railway Street and Bircherley Street and is shielded from public view by orange boarding, but the main structure was complete for the ancient topping-out ceremony, performed on Tuesday by mayor of Hertford Cllr Peter Ruffles.

Around 100 guests attended the ceremony, most following the mayor as he scaled steep ladders to reach the roof and two skyline platforms which took him to the weathervane right at the top of the building.

"It is a privilege to risk my life in this manner" he joked before placing a wreath – said in old times to ward off evil spirits – over the weathervane.

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