



# Bushy Tales

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



## Special Edition

# London Central High School Closing on

# May 15th, 2007



**Gary Schroeder (55)**

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As your editor for Bushy Tales I have mixed emotions about the closing of London Central High. It's sad to think our school has closed its doors for the last time. Sad yes, but my mind keeps asking the question "Was it really our school that closed, or did OUR school close in 1962 when it moved from Bushy Park AFB?"

Granted they both had the same name, or did they? How many of us thought of our school as London Central High School? Did we not then, as we do now, think of our school as "Bushy Park"? Was it London Central High School where I, as well as many others who were there on the first day it opened, started creating the history of our school, or was it Busy Park? My memories were then, and will always be, of Bushy Park.

I think the best way to express my feelings would be to print part of the cover letter I sent out with one of the first issue of this newsletter. See below:

*Forty-six years have passed since our school first opened. Thirty-six years have passed since it was moved to a different site in England and the school lost the nostalgia of the school we all remember. True, it is still London Central High School, but it's not Bushy Park anymore. No longer can seeing the*

*NCO Club, the bomb shelters, the dorms, or our old classrooms bring back the memories of the things we accomplished and the fun we had. Our Bushy Park no longer exists, except in our memories. We were all in a country far from our own, in a new school with no history except for what we, as the students and teachers, made for it. The fifties were a great time to be alive. To this day on occasions people will dress and try to act the way we did in those days. They can dress, and try to act the way we did, but they can never experience the feelings of those days. Even those who lived those days will never know the feelings and memories we had as classmates in our Bushy Park.*

*We made many friends, some found their life long partner, while we were at Bushy Park. Over the years most of us have lost touch with those friends, but the memories are easily brought back by a name, a song, or a picture.*

Some of the fondest memories of my life are of my time at Bushy Park, being in England, and the many life long friends I made there.

It may sound strange, but to me our school has never closed. As long as we are all keeping in touch and keep the memories flowing with reunions, mini reunions, emails and the newsletter our Bushy Park will live on. Only when the last one

of us has gone on to the last great reunion will  
Bushy Park close its doors for ever.



**Barry J. Smith (56)**  
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### Places No Longer

Memories fading  
as twilight illuminates  
etched lines of connections  
from times long past.  
Leaping un-heralded  
into present consciousness.  
A dusty satchel opened  
emotions streaming  
from long ago  
thought long since  
placed behind.  
Happiness of youth  
reigns once again  
via connections re-established  
not broken  
more modern than then.  
And yet, sadness  
too, for places no longer,  
except in memory  
of a few.  
Oh grassy plains of Bushy  
where barracks  
converted once stood.  
The stanchions of wisdom  
proclaiming amidst  
voices of youth  
gathered round.  
Connections made then,  
etched for all time,  
now renewed  
in the deepening shadows  
of twilight.

15 May 2007  
Clan of the Bear (BJS)  
as  
CHS Closes its Doors



**Gail Kelley (Faculty)**  
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Well, I thought of you, Gary, last week at the  
Closing - you and all those first Bushy kids - you  
would have loved it! I hope you are enjoying the  
forwards and school sites and I cannot wait for your  
Special Edition.

There was a poster in the small gym at High  
Wycombe that said: SOMETIMES I SITS AND  
THINKS, AND SOMETIMES I JUST SITS - says  
it all.

Thanks to my sons Duff and Sean, I ventured to  
High Wycombe last week for the closing  
ceremony afternoon of the high school - What a day  
of reminders and memories, reunions and  
reminiscences! A total nostalgic wallow, everyone  
there was emotionally involved with the London  
Central High School. Heyho and great - and such  
fun to see my old teaching chums who could make  
it - we never stopped laughing the entire afternoon.

They also read letters from some famous Bobcats,  
including Dan Peek (America) and Bo Bice - that  
kid was *always* late to class. Time and again some  
tall, good-looking man or lovely, well-groomed  
lady would stop me - 'Mrs. Kelly/Coach, do you  
remember me? I was in your sophomore  
English/track team...' Very touching, all the  
positive feelings they had about the Central  
experience. It was a wonderful day! We took  
Sean's 2 oldest children Cameron (curls in tact) and  
Erin (in Jesse's letter jacket - cute) to the LCHS  
Closure for a smile - they loved it! - Cameron said,  
'I quite enjoyed meeting all those people who knew  
my dad.

Below are a sampling of my emails from former  
students - other teachers have received the same -  
very heartening for us - my colleagues and  
administrators really cared and aimed to achieve  
excellence in our high school - Martha Gail Kelly  
(use as much or little as you wish)

"It is a shame the school is closed, LCHS is the best  
school I have ever been to and I did go to 14  
schools so I do believe I am a subject expert in the  
matter. The school promoted so much more than  
just the basics, and we all were really a  
family." Denise Boyd Destrache

"Thank you for the link to the article.

I know Dan will be pleased to know his letter was used in the proceedings.” Regards, Tom Peek

“I believe the DoD school atmosphere created a much closer family of students and faculty than the average American public school. We all had similar experiences with frequent moves and living out of the States and could relate to one another. We had more of an urgency about our friendships as we knew none of us would be around long. Racial prejudice and segregation if not exactly non-existent, was at least tamped down and muffled. I heard such horror stories from my Stateside friends and cousins about school desegregation in the 1970’s and I was sheltered from that unrest in my overseas school since we were already desegregated and hadn’t given it a moment’s thought.

Opportunities to witness cultural diversity firsthand were plentiful. I have very fond memories of LCHS, my friends there and teachers, volleyball practices, the French class fieldtrip, a report on Mayans that I did (terrified to speak in front of the class!), having an exchange day with a local British school, making a barbecue fork in shop class – I still have the wooden bookends that I made there and I will never forget the job aptitude test I took that said I was best suited to be a fireman! LCHS will continue to live long in all our memories.”  
Debbie Seger Donnelly

“Thank you for sharing this. I have many good memories from London Central. In fact it was the best school experience that I had in ALL of my years of schooling!” Andy Victor-Gasper

“Many memories are gushing and I cannot concentrate on my work! (Thank You Gail!!! :)”  
Phil Rosenthal

“So sad that it finally happened. I had a blast at LCHS and am grateful for my time there. Thanks for sharing, will pass it on.” John Partin

“I bet that was nice ceremony! Seems sad to end such a wonderful school. Will always cherish those years! What a beautiful impact you have had on all of us!!” Heather McLeod Robb

Over 75 photos of the LCEHS Closing Ceremony can now be found on the school web site. Follow

the link from the school homepage <http://www.lcenhs.eu.dodea.edu/>



**Patti Fawbush Webb (58)**

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### **Memories on the Closing of Bushy Park**

I was fortunate to attend Bushy Park (Central) for my junior and senior years.

Who can forget . . . ?

- Those long bus trips to school every Sunday afternoon and back home every Friday night
- Imposed study hall each night in the dorm followed by the chance to buy a snack like Cadbury’s candy
- The field trips to London on the bus and opportunities to attend the ballet, see Shakespeare, or listen to classical guitar
- The times we traveled back to school from a London field trip in fog so thick that someone had to walk along the side of the bus to guide the driver
- Waking up some mornings to see the fog “roll in on little cat’s paws”
- The teachers who loved to teach and enjoyed exposing us to the world we were living in at the time
- The trip to Brussels for the senior trip
- Friends (though seldom seen now) seared in my memory bank
- The realization that the opportunity to live and study at Bushy Park was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that enriched my life forever



**Suzanne "Snookie" Garrison (54)**

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Here are a few thoughts. Hope I don't ramble too much:

I remember when my father flew to London in June of 1952. The rest of us, my mother, Pete,(my brother), my younger sister, Paulette, and I were to follow in July.

Daddy wrote that he had found the perfect English school for me with the description of the uniform I would be wearing: navy blue jumper, white blouse, navy bloomers(keeping out the cold),blue blazer, heavy dark stockings, with a lovely sailor hat and his information just got worse and worse.. Course, he had been kidding as he then told us the true story, that there was an American high school that my brother and I would be attending. This did relieve us quite a bit.

In September of that year, we boarded Bus 3A at South Ruislip AFB and drove the many miles to Bushy Park. It seemed that we made instant friends on that bus ride. There were the brothers, Baldwin (Gary and H), the brothers, Schroeder, (Gary and Dick) with their sister, Beverly, Kay Gfeller, Ruth Davis, Craig Barnes, Jean Beard, and a lot of others, whom I can't recall at the moment. I know we all were wondering what would be ahead of us and perhaps a few of us were missing our high schools which we had left in the States.

However, nothing had prepared me for the feeling of belonging which I felt after only a few hours at Bushy Park. For the first time in my life, I was with kids from all over who came, basically, from the same background as Pete and me. No more prejudices against us because we hadn't lived in one place all of our lives and had no place that we could call our home town!! It was a wonderful feeling and that is why I think our years at Bushy Park were so important to all of us. Maybe, our education was not the best it could be at that time, but we gained so much more then what came out of the books. I'm sorry that those kids who could still have that feeling will miss out due to the closing of our school.

.I wanted to say one more thing, about the feeling of belonging. That same feeling came back to me when after 40 years after graduating, we met in 1994 for our first (for some of us) reunion in San Antonio, Texas. There were some of the old gang from Bus 3A; Kay Gfeller, "H" Baldwin (now Hal), Gary was having a bout in the hospital, which scared all of us, Craig Barnes, Billie Culp, Pete and me. There were so many of our friends, from the classes of '53, ' 54 and ' 55 whom I thought I would never see again. It was a magical weekend and even the spouses who were there could feel that we had had a special bond. I doubt that we will ever lose that bond. A few of us try to get together, outside of the reunions, whenever we can and it has been great. I often think, how pleased, my parents would be that the friendships which I had formed in England are even stronger now then they were in 1952.



**Karen (Harvey) Petroni (55)**

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Thanks for sending out the information about the closing of Central High. I can identify with the memories of all the students who attended the school, but the REAL Bushy Park will always be in Teddington for me. It was the first time in my school experience when acceptance was so quickly granted and the best friendships of my life formed. There were no long established social groups in which to try to be a member, no economic barriers to overcome and the past of constant moves was shared by all.

As we left ,one by one, some of the partings were shadowed by the war that was being waged on the other side of the world, and others by the naive belief that we could come together easily in the social climate that prevailed in the States. Many of us will only meet in our memories.

As the ties were rekindled by the reunions, it was difficult to accept the fact that time had extracted its measure and some reunions would not take place on this earth. As for the school, it will always survive as I remember it. Thanks for bringing it close again through the newsletter.



**Mike Murphy (58)**

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This is an interesting article, (the one in the Stars and Stripes) but if you read it, there is no mention of LCHS Bushy Park or Lakenheath. How these people can say this is their legacy is way out. I have written a letter to Stars and Stripes telling them about the other Schools that preceded Daws Hill. If you read the article, it's like we never existed. What a shame. Thanks Mike Murphy class of 1958. Graduate of the original LCHS Bushy Park, London England.



**Clifford Gunderson (Faculty)**  
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I can feel sympathy for both us and the last generation claiming status and recognition. We need a reporter to the "Stars and Stripes" to put in an amendment article concerning our bit of history in London Central Schools.



**Judy (Risler) Covington (60)**  
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Do any of you guys feel historically cheated? It just seems to me that whenever I read anything about the overseas school system in England, the only thing offered is a blip about High Wycombe. Does that p--- off anyone but me? I've never seen anything written about good old Bushy Park. Did we not count for something? Now I read that the LCHS school system is about to close, but there is not one word about it's history, or how it came to be a school at all, or that for ten years, from 1952 to 1962, it was the only American dependent boarding school in the UK. Lakenheath isn't ever mentioned either, and it came AFTER Bushy Park.

Are we the only ones who give a rat's ass? I'd love your input.



**Anita (Hardy) Johnson (60)**  
[anita42phil@msn.com](mailto:anita42phil@msn.com)

I agree 100 % with you Carol,

And I already replied to Judy (Risler), asking her when was she going to submit an article to the Stars and Stripes?

We need a good writer who can give a brief history and maybe a photo of the FIRST London Central High School. I think a letter to the editor along with the submitted article would be just peachy. And yes, I do feel cheated that they didn't mention us-at all!! Hear Hear!

Where's that soap Box in Hyde Park when you need one.



**Carol (Condron) Coles (62)**  
[ccoles@bellsouth.net](mailto:ccoles@bellsouth.net)

No, you're not the only one!

Let's ask a few of our own activists (e.g., Gary Schroeder, Wanda DeVary, Bob Harrold, the class reps) to join you (*the official Bushy Park historian, come author*) in sending a message to these folks--a synopsis of what those 10 years were all about, and how we're all still connected today. The way you write, Judy, the *Stars & Stripes* will publish a special edition.

That's what *I* think!



**Ren Briggs (60)**  
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After reading some of the letters that people have responded, I have mixed thoughts. OUR school closed in 1962. End of a era. This Central High School at High Wycombe was not our school. It is THERE school and it was the closing of THERE school.

Maybe Bushy Park and Lakenheath should have been mention as former and other High Schools in England, but is all about THERE SCHOOL that was closing. I for one never put Central High at High Wycombe in my thoughts as being the same school. I sure others will feel different.

**Billie (Culp) Bules (54)**  
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Thanks for sending these articles about the closing of Bushy Park. To me it closed when I heard that our old school building at Bushy Park had been torn down.



**Grover Cannon (Faculty)**

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I received an e-mail and then a telephone call from Sean Kelly re: the book he has compiled about the different teachers that have been at LCHS over the years. He interviewed me over the phone for about 45 minutes. He told me he had interviewed about 41 teachers and there memories etc. make up the book. We got to know each other very well during the interview. I am looking forward to getting the book when it is published about the middle of June.

I read the article from the " Stars and Stripes " It is sad all the schools in the U.K. are closing . I have wonderful memories of my five years at Central High at Bushy Park and all the great students and basketball players.



**Sue (Miller) Dalberg (62)**

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As long as one of us has breath, it will stay alive in our hearts and memories.

Like many of our classmates who have passed into a different life, it shall remain a permanent part of who we are. "Thanks for the memories".



**Gail Kelly (Faculty)**

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**Subject: Fw: Extra LCHS Yearbooks**

Hello All - please tell your Bobcat acquaintances, Reunion attendees, site followers - my son gathered up the rest of the yearbooks from Cary Sand.

I have a very worn 57 Vapor Trails, some 60s - 63 (2), 64, 65(3), 66, 67 - 70s: 75, 77, 79, 80s: 82, 87 - 90s; 95, 97 and a 2005. Happy to send them for just the postage.

There's a Bud and a couple of those art/creative writing anthologies - all DoDDS schools represented. Duff was hoping to get that sign over

the AYA - HOME OF THE BOBCATS with the Bobcat - we'll see....Cheers, Gail



**John Sakelaris (62)**

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Dear Classmates,

To learn the old school closed does not come as a surprise. What was a surprise is that it has been open for so long. When I last walked the campus in 59 the world was vastly different than today. I can still remember the smell of a foggy morning in the school yard and clearly recall most of your faces as though it were yesterday. The span of time from then to now is even more surprising, I have several times marveled at just how much I packed into all those years. Race cars, flags and guns, motorcycles, universities, pot, wife and kids, boats, corporations, world travel, retirement, grandkids, another business and so on. What a trip I have experienced!

Now I stand in front of my bathroom mirror looking every much like my Grandfather hoping I didn't forget something important. And to all of you, my fellow classmates and friends, I hope it went as well for you. My travel days are a bit limited now but should any of you happen to pass through Bradenton Fl. and care to, Please look me up so we can compare notes. John Sakelaris The tall skinny kid that dated Susan Rigsby.

**Editors Note: See next page for information about a book being written about our Facility.**

FROM  
THE FACULTY  
LOUNGE



Memories of  
London Central  
High School

SEAN C. KELLY

## “FROM THE FACULTY LOUNGE” SET TO RECALL LCHS AND BENEFIT AOSHS

What is likely to prove one of the most fascinating books yet written about a DoDDS school is set to be published this summer.

‘From the Faculty Lounge’ is a first- person account taking readers back through the history of London Central High School, England, through the memories of some of its teachers and staff.

With London Central closing its doors this June after 56 years of operation at three different locations around London, the book is a timely look at an acclaimed DoDDS school. The 60,000+ word book contains individual memories from some 30 teachers and staff gleaned in interviews with them over the last three years. Those interviews were undertaken by Sean C. Kelly, an LCHS Class of '78 graduate, and the son of a former DoDDS teacher and coach Martha Gail Kelly

*From the Faculty Lounge* is essentially a fond look back at a school which, thanks to its dormitories, had an international catchment at one point stretching from Moscow to Hawaii. However it is the school and life in England, rather than the dormitories that is the major focus of the book that will also contain a small section of reproduced maps, letters and photography.

Comments Sean Kelly:

“Students attended London Central from the early 1950s through to 2007 and most of them would say that LCHS played a major part in their lives. So much has changed over the years that the experiences that my classmates and I had during my time at LCHS from 1972-1978 differ as greatly those from my fellow Bobcats in the 1950s as much as they do from the ones of those who became Centralites in the early years of the new millennium.

“As students we had snapshots of LCHS. What connects us? The answer, - for me, at least - is a

shared experience –even if it is one that is decades apart and worlds away. And part of that is in the teachers faculty and commonly instilled educational ethos in a unique environment and with a unique faculty. Former LCHS students share lots of their memories on the internet these days, but one aspect that they have not necessarily heard a lot about is the memories of their teachers. This book aims to partially redress that by interviewing a selection of faculty and staff from the early days right through to the final year. I would like to think that the book will rekindle mostly happy memories of what, for me, and I hope for many others, formed a cornerstone in our education and outlook on life.”

The book, due to be published on 15 June, will be printed through Long Dash Publishing in Hackensack, NJ ([www.longdash.com](http://www.longdash.com)) Price \$24.00 + postage. Email: [longdash@gmail.com](mailto:longdash@gmail.com) and put FROM THE FACULTY LOUNGE INFO REQUEST in the Subject Headline Box if you wish to be informed when the book becomes available.

Monies raised from the sales of the book are going to creating scholarship funding of \$1,000 for two students in this final graduating year of LCHS. I’m also delighted to say that any additional monies raised after that will be coming to AOSHS in support of its on-going programs to preserve memorabilia from former DoDDS and overseas schools.

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Contact Sean Kelly [sean@creativeartsDOTcom](mailto:sean@creativeartsDOTcom) (replace DOT with a dot!)

Stars & Stripes article about the [closing ceremony of LCHS](#)

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