

Crewkerne School

Text: David Gibbs and Ian Ball Photographs: Brian Tasker, Ian Ball, Desmond Tout

Brian Tasker contributed these photographs of treasured mementos of his 1940s days as a pupil at Crewkerne School, the local boys' grammar school before the days of comprehensive schools.

The school was founded in 1499 and was originally in Abbey Street, in a building that is now the church hall. Thomas Hardy (captain of HMS Victory at the Battle of Trafalgar) was once a pupil there. In more-recent times, the school was in East Street, in a fine building that is now an apartment block. The school closed when comprehensive schools were introduced.

In its final years, the school accepted fee-paying pupils and also scholarship boys, but it was a small school by today's standards and places were limited, especially for scholarship boys who were recruited from the town and from the surrounding villages.

To pass the scholarship, as Brian did, was a fine achievement. Not many boys did. One or two that did pass chose not to attend because it was an expense their families could not afford.



Caps, tie and exercise books. The dark blue cap was worn by prefects.



Below, more examples of clothing associated with Crewkerne School, proudly worn by Desmond Tout who lived and grew up in Lower Street, Merriott. This rather elaborate blazer and matching tie were basically dark blue with light blue and white stripes. The initials over the school badge say OCA, so was this was an Old Crewkernians Association blazer rather than a school blazer? It seems the Old Crewkernians Association might still exist:

www.crewkernetown.org/crewkerne-information/other-clubs-and-associations/92-old-crewkernians.html



From Ian Ball:

When I came across the Merriott website I was fascinated to see some photos of caps and ties etc from Crewkerne School. I was a boarder at Crewkerne School from 1954 to 1961. The Old Crewkernians Association is still going although it has been decided to close it in 2019 which will be the 100th anniversary. I was president in 1980 or '81 and I felt its time had come even then. The Crewkerne Committee was very keen on encouraging former pupils of Wadham to join the OCA. I felt that since the school had closed we would be a self-liquidating society (rather like The Old Contemptibles or The Dunkirk Veterans) and suggested that the last man standing should collect any cash that was left over! It is obviously difficult to persuade young people today to join what they would doubtless perceive as an old farts organisation.



The cap with the horizontal stripes was the bog standard school cap. The plain blue one looks like a Deputy Prefect's cap. This was a rank introduced by Robert Oates when he was Head. The prefect's cap was plain blue with vertical white cord (?) running down the seams. There were three houses: DeCombe, Hoskyns and Sparks and it is the Sparks tie (blue with red stripes) that is in the picture already posted on the website. (see above) As young boys we used to snigger at some Old Boys who turned up at Founders Day in the Old Crewkernians blazer. In the fifties it seemed quite garish and took a brave man to wear it. Here is a photo of my OCA tie; black, purple, gold and white. I don't know how true the colours will emerge but those in the small picture are pretty accurate. Garish or what? I've also attached a photograph of a gathering of former pupils taken in 1919. I established that they clearly had been playing cricket

even though you can only see 10 blokes in cricketing togs because the chap on the left holding a Westie, if you cast your eyes down near the Rudyard Kipling look alike, is wearing the 21st or 22nd cricket boot thus making the 11th man.

