



SCHOOL SPIRIT AT C.C.I. (WITH APOLOGIES TO THE HAMLET OF BOGNOR)

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Over the years on both radio and television, comedy shows have contained a number of fictitious fraternal organizations such as “The Mystic Knights of The Sea” on the *Amos ‘n’ Andy* show; Frank Fontaine’s drunken character ‘Crazy Guggenheim’ on Jackie Gleason’s hour-long variety show belonged to a lodge called “The Smiling Sons of The Friendly Shillelagh” and Gleason’s character Ralph Kramden and his best friend Ed Norton on *The Honeymooners* were members of “The International Order of Friendly Raccoons”.

Unless you attended Collingwood Collegiate around 1964 (was that really 54 years ago?), you probably would not have heard of an organization called “The Loyal Sons of Bognor”. One of the founding members happened to be looking over a map of

Grey County one day and discovered the hamlet of Bognor and thought it would be a real hoot (sounds like one of the C.C.I. Owls, doesn't it?) to have a club named after it. His father designed a logo of a drooling, hump-backed elderly moose and this was emblazoned on a burgundy-coloured sweatshirt. "Membership" was open to anyone, male or female, who bought a sweatshirt. Friday was "Bognor Day" with the wearing of the sweatshirt to school. Members included me, Dave Wilkinson, Donald Kelly, Bob Michalak, David Towns, David Lunan, Sue Storey, Nelson Jones, Valerie Sproule, Doug Paterson (co-founder), Tim Sandell, Harvey Graham and Rick Jamieson (co-founder).

The one and only useful idea we came up with was the establishing of The Loyal Sons of Bognor Bass Drum and Bugle Band (guess who banged the drum). We stood on the sidelines during football games and made a lot of noise to encourage school spirit (in Collingwood, not Bognor). The cheerleaders, of course, were the main ones exhorting C.C.I. teams to play their best with cheers such as, "*Euripides, Themistocles, The Peloponnesian War; X Squared, Y Squared, H2SO4; French Verbs, Latin Verbs, Ancient History; Come On C.C.I., On To Victory!*" The Loyal Sons of Bognor cheer was much simpler: "*L.S.B.! L.S.B.! Bognor, Bognor, Rah, Rah, Rah!*". Unfortunately, one of our female fellow students (not a member) decided we were the worst of juvenile delinquents whom she thought were

advocating for the use of the hallucinogenic drug “L.S.D”!
“Uncouth”, she said of our cheer.

A 2014 episode of the Rick Mercer Show featuring the C.C.I. Marching Band revealed that there is no shortage today of school spirit at C.C. I. The “Fighting Owls” logo for C.C.I. sports that I saw in frequent photos in the now-defunct *Enterprise-Bulletin* appears to generate plenty of school spirit. In the earlier days of C.C.I., sporting events took place under the watchful eye of the Wise Old Owl which had been the official school symbol since the 1870’s. It was accompanied by the school motto *Sapere Aude* (Dare To Be Wise). The school symbol and motto were displayed on a semi-circular masonry plaque over the main entrance of the 1874 building at the corner of Hume and Ste. Marie Streets. That plaque was subsequently reused high up on the Hume St. façade of the 1925 building and when it became Senior Public School in 1954, the plaque was covered over with wood. The current version of the Wise Old Owl displayed on the outside walls of the school of today at Cameron St. shows a mature, elderly owl in a calm, pensive pose as though it might be silently conjugating its Latin verbs—a peaceful, sedate and academic owl—quite a contrast to the newer logo since the 1980’s of an aggressive young owl in a fighting stance that urges sports teams on to victory.

William Williams—CCI’s Headmaster/Principal from 1873 to 1901—would not likely be amused by this newer owl. Perhaps the Wise Old Owl was modelled after him—Williams was both “Head Master” and “Modern Language Master” and he looked the part with his beard. In this age of instant photos it must be remembered that in the 19th century it could take up to several minutes for a photographic exposure to complete and in some cases individual subjects had to remain absolutely still with the help of a head brace to avoid a blurred image. People did not smile for photos because it is not easy to maintain a natural-looking smile for several minutes (try it) without moving your facial muscles. Another theory—discounted by some—that has been proposed for why people did not smile for photos in that era had to do with the fact that many people had bad teeth or, in some cases, no teeth. The Victorian era mindset also felt that smiling in a painting or photograph made the subject look ridiculous.

Regardless of the reason for not smiling, many of the faces in images from that era have a frozen, staring look, and, in the most severe cases, they looked “stuffed and mounted” as did Williams in his official photo that used to hang in the hallway at C.C.I. during my time there (see pg. 23 in the history book *In Days of Yore*. Indeed, one can study the many 19th Century photos in that book in vain to find a smiling face). Just by way of interest, even today with modern dental care and instant

photos taken for granted, not everyone smiles the same way for a photo. Some people naturally smile with their teeth showing (this was once called the “Pepsodent Smile” promoting toothpaste—*“You’ll wonder where the yellow went when you brush your teeth with Pepsodent”*). Others, with lips closed, smile with their eyes and some unhappy people seldom smile at all. Observance of a modern group photo will reveal this difference. Even today in the 21st Century when we go to renew our Driver’s Licence and have our “Wanted Dead or Alive”-type ID photo taken for the licence, we are told not to smile and we, too, end up expressionless and looking stuffed and mounted. Some things never change.

As our school spirit group graduated from C.C.I. and moved on in the mid 60’s, The Loyal Sons of Bognor ceased to exist. The sweatshirts were worn either until they disintegrated (one member wore his to school every day in violation of protocol) or, like mine, were given away and the hamlet of Bognor was deprived of the “Sons” it never knew. If one of these sweatshirts still exists, perhaps the owner will donate it to the C.C.I. Archives. School spirit thrives at C.C.I. today now with two different owl symbols, the Wise Old Owl for academics, and the Fighting Owl for sports. *“Oh, it’s glorious, simply glorious, we’re here to make the C.C.I. victorious; we’ll tell the world with shouts uproarious, we represent the good old C.C.I.”*

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