

**MAY 11th 2002**



## **THE GOLDEN JUBILEE**

As it is fifty years since the Queen's Accession to the throne, and forty years since the Queen visited the RGS, it seemed appropriate that we should reprint extracts from the article about the visit that appeared in the Wycombiensian that year, together with some photographs.

**"Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II visited this school on April 6 1962, on the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its foundation by Queen Elizabeth I"**

The weather was fine. Hats, dresses and uniforms appeared bright and colourful and later the Queen's vivid dress was shown to advantage. When boys and guests arrived, they were segregated according to their tickets. Pupils scattered to their form rooms "for inspection of clothing, hair etc and for issuing souvenir programmes". From 9.30 to 10.30 was a period when acquaintances met, sometimes after a period of years, and exchanged news. School heroes of yesteryear with their girlfriends, those who were still at university, others who had entered jobs straightaway, masters who had left – all were there.



The CCF was in position, the large contingent of sailors and marines had manoeuvred into place, while the police held back the crowd and directed the traffic. Everybody was ready: 10.36, the time she was due to arrive, came; nothing happened. The CCF then came to attention; there was a movement in the crowd and a police car appeared and went past; a few minutes later 4 shining black limousines turned into Hamilton Road. Out of the cars piled the pressmen.



Five minutes later the CCF again presented arms and the crowd rustled: preceded by motorcycle outriders, a car bearing the Royal Standard drew up followed by many other cars. The Queen had arrived. Various dignitaries were presented to the Queen. The boys saw the Queen clearly, dressed in a cherry red black fur lined coat, over a black dress with a silk petalled hat, also in cherry. Inside the Hall became hushed. As soon as she appeared to the senior boys and special guests, she was greeted with enthusiastic, yet slightly self-conscious applause, which those in the rear courtyard recognised as conclusive evidence of her presence.

A number were presented to her in the Hall.



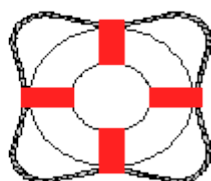
Of the staff, those presented were Mr S Morgan, second master, Mr P L Jones who had been a master at the school for 46 years, Mr W J Clark, and Mr W B Watmough, a representative of the younger staff. While the Queen visited the Science buildings the Madrigal choir, conducted by Mr J S Dawes, entertained those remaining in the Hall. In the Science block Mr A C Hills showed her Majesty the original charter of the school in Latin, still perfectly legible after 400 years. The Queen signed a special copy of the grey book and accepted another copy. The Open and State scholars were spoken to by the Queen, who asked them questions about the universities they were going to and the subjects they were studying. She then entered the Duke of Edinburgh's award section where a comprehensive display of hobbies was laid out. On the first floor Her Majesty spent 10 minutes examining 4 laboratories.

The Queen left the building followed by the masters in processional form. On the way through the cheering crowd she stopped to talk to Michael Abii and R Watanangura, Mrs Hunt the chief cook, Mr Lawrence the scout master, and P Taylor and G Boireau, the two senior scouts.



At a final ceremony Her Majesty spoke to the architects and builders of the new part of the school and unveiled a plaque. As she left past the side of the school, the Head Boy called for 3 cheers, which reverberated across the valley and from the front of the school. The visit was over”.

### **SAD NEWS**



It is sad to report the death of George Ray, who was at the RGS 1917-1923. He was a regular attender of Annual Dinners and was Vice-Chairman of Governors for many years. His obituary will occur in the next Magazine.

It is sad also to report the death of John Waller. After a long career in the RN, he taught Maths at the RGS

in the period from 1970-1975 and was in charge of the RN section of the CCF.

David Tanner, who was at the RGS 1940-46, died on Feb 8th after a six-month illness. We extend to his widow, Valerie, over this sad loss. We have also heard that B W Barnet (1934-40) died on April 8th and Eric Miller (1934-40) on April 5th.

**A FORM REUNION** - Were you in 5USB in 1964-5?

If you were, would you like to join Roger Martin-Fagg, Christian Koefed-Nielsen, Richard Davis, Brian Johnston, Michael Beattie and John Laurie on July 11<sup>th</sup> at the Axis Restaurant, Aldwych/Strand, London for a reunion Dinner? If you are, please contact John Laurie at 80, Rowland Hill Court, Osney Lane, Oxford, OX1 1LF. Tel: 07796 268759)

**WHERE ARE THEY NOW?**

**Julie McGuinness** taught English from 1981-1991. She went with her husband when he became a vicar in Nottingham, and recently moved with him to Ellesmere Port. She has done some Counselling, writing and broadcasting, with an occasional spot on Radio 4 at 6.25 a.m.

**Neil Cooper** joined the RGS in 1960. Some of you will remember him as Head of the Uplyme Boarding House, others as Head of Classics and form-teacher of the Classical Sixth, and others as Head of the CCF. He retired in 1996 and still lives in Bovingdon Green, near Marlow. He continues to enjoy singing and going to concerts, and returns to the RGS for school events.

**John Mitchell** taught English at the school from 1972-1997, and was Head of English for most of that time. He retired and still lives in the Wycombe area. For one day in the week he is in the RGS working on the school archives. If you have photographs or any other memorabilia of the RGS, please contact him at the RGS.

**David Kenningham** was Head of Physics from 1968-1972. He went to Kenilworth as Deputy-Head, became Head of an Oxford School, and finally Head of the Lord Williams, Thame. He has now retired and working on special projects in Oxfam.

**THE ANNUAL DINNER**

The A.G.M. and the Dinner were held on April 27<sup>th</sup>.

At the A.G.M. it was agreed that there should be one form of Membership, Life Membership, the present cost of which is £30. It was also agreed that the number of Vice-Presidents could be increased, and Malcolm Cook was elected a Vice-President after his magnificent service as Secretary for 22 years. The following members were elected to the committee for the first time:

George Bates 1948-56    Simon Molden 1989-95

Robin Dorkings 1957-63    Ralph Miller 1940-45

The Dinner was attended by 83 OWs, 15 teacher or former teachers, and seven Senior boys. Tim Dingle, the Headmaster, spoke about all the very good things that were going on at the RGS, as well as the severe financial challenge facing the School. Roy Page proposed the toast to the Guest of Honour, Malcolm Cook, paying tribute to his many fine qualities, as well as telling some very amusing stories from Malcolm's past. Malcolm in his reply revealed his usual wit, which so many of us have appreciated over many years. A lot of the OWs enjoyed a guided tour of the school, and there was plenty of time for conversation before and after the dinner. John Mitchell, the School Archivist, had organised a display of photographs of the past. Quite a few who came to the Dinner for the first time said how much they had enjoyed it, and would come again next year.



[Click Here to see photographs of some of those at the dinner](#)

The following teachers/former teachers came to the dinner.

|                    |                   |                      |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Tim Dingle         | Roger File* 45-53 | John Samways         |
| Roy Page           | Mary Nickols      | Mary Campbell        |
| Malcolm Cook       | Ray Dosser        | Steve Goldthorpe     |
| Ian Clark          | Martin Berry      | David Willmot* 67-74 |
| Harry Clark* 51-58 | Nick Cousins      | Jenny Holt           |
| Mike Moffatt       | John Mitchell     | Joan Allen           |

\*Also Old Boys

The Chairman of Governors also attended.

Letters received since the Dinner indicated that some did not feel that the microphone system was effective, and that they would have appreciated more of the school being open. We shall need to look for improvements next year. Do let me know what else needs to be improved.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir

It was the photograph of cast members of *Pirates of Penzance* that prompted me to respond in a moment of nostalgia. Sadly Bernard Peatey, who was the subject of your quiz question, died a couple of years ago. I was privileged to play opposite him in *Pirates* - as Mabel - and again in the next production - *The Gondoliers* (April 1949). I well remember how in 1947 Bernarr Rainbow, the newly appointed director of music managed to persuade the Headmaster (ERT) that it would be "a good thing" for the school to depart from the tradition of presenting the Shakespeare play set for the year's School Certificate. The success of this initiative resulted in G&S operettas being produced annually - certainly until I left and I recall returning to the school in its centenary year (1962) to see an excellent performance of the *Pirates of Penzance*.

In your last newsletter you discussed the OW tie. I recall that post 1952 there were two. The first, which existed when I left, resembled the RAF tie and I believe that it was often confused with it. This was replaced by the second, one of which I still have, which depicted the date 1562 surmounted by a crown in gold on a dark blue background.



Did you know that when I started at the school in 1946 we had to attend lessons on Saturday mornings? Thankfully this was discontinued the following year but instead we had to remain until 4.00pm four afternoons a week. (3.20pm Fridays)

Because of clothes' rationing only ties and caps were regulation school uniform in 1946. Prefects were distinguished by gold braid quartering on their caps. In time this was changed to a gold tassel. Caps were, de rigeur, worn at impossible angles defying gravity. I suppose in this enlightened age there is no formal way of acknowledging masters (and mistresses now!) We had to raise our caps of course.

I also recall that the school was used as accommodation for rowing competitors in the 1948 Olympics at Henley during the summer holidays and all the various nations' flags were displayed on poles alongside what was then the drive up to the school. Maybe other old boys may have a memory of this?



**HELP!**

If Paul Stephenson, who left in 1979, reads this could he please contact me, as someone wants to get in touch with him. If anyone else knows his whereabouts, please let me know.

Also does anybody know anything of the whereabouts of Denis Denis, David Kirby, Amin Shadil, and Adrian Paull?

## **OW TIES**

A number of Old Boys have asked, "Can we still buy OW ties?" The answer is "Yes."

G A Wood of Church Street, High Wycombe sells OW ties, blue with a crown and date. Cost £11.50.

## **A CONVERSATION WITH JOHN TAYLOR**

### **The Editor writes:**

I was so pleased to have the opportunity to meet John Taylor, who was at the RGS for the period 1918-1923, and was therefore present at the school on Armistice Day in 1918. I was able to ask him questions and gained a very clear picture of what life was like at the RGS over eighty years ago. These are extracts from our conversation. A fuller version will be published in the next OW Magazine.

Was there much caning when you were at the RGS?

I remember a character called Tippets, who must have been rather unintelligent or at least he must have had the hide of a rhinoceros. Every day he went out at lunchtime to the woods, called Piggy Woods, at the top of Green Hill, to have a smoke. (I wonder if that brings back memories to later generations of Old Boys. Editor). Unfortunately for him it was about the same time when the then Headmaster, Arnison, would also go to the woods for his walk and probably to smoke his pipe. He regularly caught him smoking and took him back to his study to give him six of the best. It didn't seem to bother Tippets. I said "every day". It probably wasn't that often. It just seemed like it.

**Did you ever get into any trouble with Arnison?**

I had one or two brushes. I remember that when our numbers were increased to about 270, we went upstairs to what was called the Art room for some reason or other (not that I ever saw any Art taught there) for our Music lessons. I was no chorister, and indeed my wife tells me now not to sing whenever we go to funerals. The Music teacher, who used to teach singing down in High Wycombe, couldn't keep order at all. So we all fooled around, and among other things sang some pretty ribald songs, adapting the words of what we should have been singing. I was told to go down to see the Headmaster for the stick. I went into his room and said, "Mr. Britnell has told me to come here for the stick, sir." Mr. Arnison asked, "What did Mr. Britnell want the stick for!" I replied "For cheek, sir".

He was a man of some sense, for he decided that, rather than use the cane, I should do eight "tots". These were eight sums, with twelve figures each way, and you had to get them all right. Unfortunately, and I was good at Arithmetic, it took me three visits before I got them all right, because you were never told which one you had got wrong. It was a much worse punishment than if I had had the cane.

**What was discipline like generally?**

It was generally very good. One or two couldn't keep order, but the vast majority could. Brand, the Sports Master, was very easy; he often gave lines, but did not always remember to ask for them. I remember Berry. He was a very good disciplinarian. He was the parson at Terriers Church, a very tall man. I suppose some people today would suggest, quite wrongly, that his habit of slapping our legs indicated latent paedophile tendencies. You wore short trousers then and when you'd go up to his desk for him to look at your work, for no apparent reason he would give you half a dozen slaps on the knee. I suppose it must have given him some sort of pleasure. I remember my best teacher, J E John. He taught English,

and was a charming, little Welshman who never had to raise his voice. The reason was that he made the lessons so interesting. Most of the teachers didn't. Berry taught History. I don't think that he knew much History, at least that was the impression he gave. He also taught what was called Religious Knowledge, although we called it Religious Ignorance. That seemed a better name for it.

**Did you find that because a number of the normal RGS teachers were away at the war some of the teachers were women, as happened in the Second World War?**

I arrived at the school two months before the War ended, and there were then two women teachers, both charming individuals. Miss Herbertson taught us English, had a cast in one eye and was a pretty good disciplinarian. The other one taught us French and had the appearance of being French with what looked like a ginger bird's nest on her head. We had a lame parson who lasted just a term, who was called Thomas. There was a teacher who taught a Year 2 form on the bottom floor, who started a lesson with 30 boys in the class and ended with about eight. Some had been given permission to go the toilet and never returned, others had climbed out of the window without being spotted. A very good friend of mine, who was something of a delinquent, was very good at that. I remember Robinson who was in charge of the OTC used to cuff you round the head and it was not unpainful.

**Was there much bullying at the RGS then?**

No, not much. I do remember Peter Ellis, was bullied a lot by the boarders. They would push him through the window of the Boarding House, bring the window down on his back, so that he could not escape, and then beat him on the backside with a tennis racket. He would complain to Arnison, who did nothing, and so he got more of the same the next day. Mind you, memory can be a funny thing! I remember certain things as very important or happening very often, when perhaps they were not really important or happened just once or twice.

**Did you have School Assemblies?**

Oh, yes. The Headmaster would enter wearing his gown and mortarboard, the teachers wearing their gowns. They also wore them to teach. The Head Boy always read the lesson and we would sing a hymn. There was no formal address, just a few routine announcements by the Headmaster, the names of naughty boys and so on. Assembly was absolutely compulsory. George Ray, Percy Cutler and I would often sneak in late. You did not get into trouble, as long as you were there before the end. Of course when Percy Cutler became Head Boy he had to get to school five minutes early. Sometimes a boy might knock into a dumbbell that was immediately

behind where the 6<sup>th</sup> Form stood, and it would fall to the ground causing a considerable disturbance.

**More extracts of the conversation about the RGS and High Wycombe in 1920 next time. I would like to have a conversation with an OW of every decade in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Would you like to volunteer with your memories of the time that you were at school? Please drop me a note or send an [email](#).**

### **KEEPING IN TOUCH: JOIN THE OLD BOYS' LODGE**

A very special way of keeping in touch regularly over the years is through the Old Wycombiensian Masonic Lodge, which meets in Marlow four times a year.

Founded in 1949, it is still going strong, and one of the original founders of the Lodge, CSW Harte (1926-1931) is still a member.

Other Old Boys who are involved in the Lodge include Jan Lord (1932-39), Asst. Secretary, Pat Langston (1942-1947) Immediate Past Master, Willie Shackell (1951-1960), Director of Ceremonies, and Don. Varney (1944-1948) Lodge Chaplain and Asst. Provincial Grand Master of Buckinghamshire.

Younger members include R.Millington, the Master Elect, and Nick Hughes (1988-1994) Inner Guard. Derrick Ardron, junior Deacon, is the father of a RGS boy who was at school.

Freemasonry is much more open these days, and in recent years the Lodge has held an open evening in November attended by members' wives and other non-Masonic guests. In June they hold a Ladies' Summer Supper, also attended by the members' wives and non-Masonic guests.

All Old Boys are eligible for membership, as are current or former members of staff, together with their fathers, sons and brothers. The current Master, Ken Brown, is a "Parent Member", having two sons at the School.

The Lodge meets at the Marlow Masonic Centre on the first Thursday in February, March, October, and November. All applicants are assured of a friendly and enthusiastic welcome. Existing members of the Craft would be warmly welcomed, either as guests or joining members. The joining fee is only £30.

Christopher Swinhoe-Standen (1971-79)

Telephone:01494563754

Email: [cdsss@waitrose.com](mailto:cdsss@waitrose.com)

### SOME MORE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE YHA TRIPS



Do you recognise the individuals in the photographs? Do let me know? email [dmb@rgshw.com](mailto:dmb@rgshw.com)

### **PROF. DENIS STEVENS**

[Professor Denis Stevens \(1933-1940\) came recently to a Music Concert](#) in the Queens Hall when the organ, which he had so generously presented to the RGS, was first played.

### **ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION I PUT IN THE LAST EDITION**

What was the cost of a place in the Boarding House place in 1949?

Boarding fee in respect of the spring term 1949 £25

Extras for the Autumn Term 1948:

|          | £ | s  | d |
|----------|---|----|---|
| Laundry  | 0 | 18 | 6 |
| Haircuts | 0 | 5  | 0 |

Milk of Magnesia 0 3 2  
Games 0 1 0  
**TOTAL £26 5s 8d**

I wonder whether present boarders could work out the total in old money and have actually tasted Milk of Magnesia!

***CORRECTION***

*In the March edition, Iain Johnston's email address was incorrect. It should be:*

[iainjohnston1@tesco.net](mailto:iainjohnston1@tesco.net) and he was at school between 1949 and 1953. Apologies to Iain.

Anyone wanting to go to a reunion of all those in Tylers Wood at that time, should contact him.

**NEXT EDITION**

In the next edition will be several memories from different Old Boys. What are your memories of the Queen's visit, of life in the boarding-house, when you had to take Milk of Magnesia, E.R. Tucker or indeed anything else? Do send a letter or [email!](#)