



NEWSLETTE R

1 JULY 2003

CRICKET AND GOLF REUNIONS ON JULY 16th

On Wednesday July 16th the Old Boys' Cricket Team will play the School Team on the School Field, starting at 2.00pm. The game will be for the Duncan Moore trophy, in memory of

Duncan, (1990-1996) tragically killed in a road accident. As a fast bowler, he had played regularly for School Teams. There have been two games in the series, with one win to each side.

The following Old Boys hope to be playing:

Bobby Dix (1994-2000)

Russell Bowry (1995-2001)

Jonathan Nelson (1995-2001)

James Nicholas (1994-2000)

Jason De Gelas (1989-1995)

Jonathan Carr (1976-82)

Jordache Myerscough (1995-2001)

Sajid (Ali) Zaib (1982-1988)

Arif Amin (1963-1969)

If you know any of them, do come along to support them and perhaps meet them for the first time for some years.

On the same day at Hazlemere Golf Course there will be a Reunion of OWs, who



will be playing a match against the Teachers.

The following OWs hope to be playing:

Paul Bedford (1969-76) Paul Dolphin (1969-76) David Merriman (1969-76)

Martin Priestley (1955-63) Robin Dorkings (1957-63) Charles Lloyd (1969-73)

Mark Forrester (1958-63) Howard Thomas (1969-76) Ian Wagge (1975-1981)

If you volunteered, but your name does not appear above, please [contact me](#).

The following teachers/former teachers hope to play:

Mike Moffatt	Ian Clark
Steve Gamester	Trevor Woolliams
Ian Wilson	Roy Page
Joan Allen	Roger Pantridge
Will Phelan	Roger File
Andrew Pearson	Malcolm Cook

There may be room for one or two more. If you would like to play, please email me as soon as possible on ianrclarkuk@yahoo.co.uk

Please do not feel that you have to be good, as any scoring system will be based on your handicap.

We hoped that there would be a Tennis Reunion, but, as the response was so low, this will not happen this year.

After the games of golf and cricket, it is hoped that there will be a barbecue near the pavilion on the School field at about 7.30pm. If you do not want to play but would like to come to the barbecue, please phone me (01494 530782) or email me beforehand.

Full reports of the games will be published in the September Newsletter.

2004 ANNUAL DINNER

DATE: SATURDAY APRIL 24th

VENUE: QUEEN'S HALL

GUEST OF HONOUR: MIKE MOFFATT

Head of Geography (1968-1973) and Deputy-Head (1973-1997)

If you do have any memories of Mike, please [email](#) them to me.

A REMINDER

If you have not yet seen the Photographs of those Old Boys who turned up to the Dinner, do have a look and see if you can recognise your old friends. Many thanks to Ian Saunders, who identified three in one picture.

A REMINDER

If you want to receive a copy of the revised Constitution that was approved at the last AGM, please send me a SAE.

A REMINDER

If you want to receive a copy of the School Magazine, which is published in July, please send me a cheque for £4, if you live in this country, or £7, if you live abroad.

A REMINDER

The RGS Archivist, John Mitchell, has recently published a book on the history of the RGS in pictures. It is absolutely fascinating, and details of how you can order one [can be found here](#).

A FREE OFFER

We receive lots of memories of the RGS in the early and middle years of this century, which is great. We do not receive many of the 1970s, 1980s, or 1990s. It would be very interesting for OWs to read of those decades. If you were at the RGS in one of those decades, and would like to send in your memories of the RGS that can be published on this web site (about 500 words) I will send you a **FREE** copy of John Mitchell's History. That's an offer you cannot refuse! (Just 6 copies available!)

REFLECTIONS ON A VISIT TO THE SCHOOL BY JOHN FELLOWS

After fifty years one has to expect change and indeed, apart from every building seeming to be much smaller than faulty memory dictated changes there were. These were almost all for the better.



My two particular interests were the Music Rooms and the Cross-Country Courses. The latter seemed to be built over with housing. The former in the post-war period occupied wooden huts, built to house the Ingersoll Instrument factory during the war, which had some of the qualities of a sieve. Pianos were rendered difficult, if not impossible to play and brass instruments rapidly went green.

In these sad and sodden huts, however, there was wonderful teaching by Bernard Rainbow and Mr L W Piner. Mr Rainbow had a personality to fill the old school hall (now the library) and a signature to match that personality. Probably the only musical mistake Mr Rainbow made was to suspect that I could sing a long solo in tune. Such was his mistake that after playing the part of Kate in *The Pirates of Penzance* (1947?) All future productions saw me playing the tamps in the orchestra.

Perhaps the greatest disappointment for me was the loss of the original view of the old building from the main road. This sense was modified by seeing the splendid new hall and teaching accommodation that this building houses.

Do you remember Bernard Rainbow or the Gilbert and Sullivan operas? Please let me have your memories!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ian,

Thank you for organising such a wonderful OW Dinner. It was one of the friendliest gatherings I had attended for a long time. And the memories come flooding back. When I joined the school in September 1937 Mervyn Davies was also new and, whereas I believe that he had come to teach Modern Languages, he was set to teach boys of 3 Lower B Latin and Divinity. He probably didn't like that. J.C. Milner gave us one history lesson and then left. He may have been called Tiny earlier, but we had a much less complimentary nickname for him.



He left a lifelong impression on me with his stature, orotund voice, and dislike of local dialect and pronunciations. A pre-war master of whom I have so far found no mention, was our PT Instructor, Mr Aitcheson. A bronzed young man, oozing fitness, he went away to the war, and never returned, killed, I believe, in the North Africa campaign. As I am a professional engineer these days, it is fitting that one of my clearest memories is of the Physics master, EC Millington. Didn't he get a PhD for some thesis he'd done shortly before he left the RGS? Some of us used to firewatch with him during the war, when he'd let his hair down a bit and we would hear some of his grumbles. He had a deceptively easy-going and jocular manner and he had his nickname of course, but he commanded universal respect. Nobody made a monkey out of ECM. Would that I could meet and chat with him now! We would have more in common. The other person, to whom I owe a great deal was WN Bicknell. To him I owe a lifelong love of the English language and a facility for writing readable and persuasive management reports later in my career. Other pre-war masters I remember include the redoubtable Sam Morgan. He terrorised me more than most: I was a nervous child! It's a pity I left so long before the end of his career, because I have the theory that he was really a very nice man. (Editor: "He was.") Then there was W Clark briefly and then we were back with PL Jones until the sixth form. "Piljy" was held in great, if sometimes circumspect, affection and his nickname was never to my knowledge, used pejoratively. He had his memorable sayings, notably "Quite easily done" and "Quite easily finished", courtesy of Euclid. TH Price (chemistry) was always warning us that we were on the threshold of the age of "plahstics", and now look at us! My first French teacher was Alfred (?) Marti and years later I met a couple from Nice in a hotel bar in Madeira who were struck by my French accent, which was the same as theirs. When I explained that I had been taught by a French-Swiss, they said, "Ah, yes. Just over the border." After Marti we had Nicholas Polmear, an Englishman but a true Francophile. It was a fitting tribute to the quality of his teaching that, although he was replaced at the beginning of the School Certificate year by a man, who was not, in my opinion, up to the job, most of us passed with credit.

What of the men who joined us during the war? There was Mr Kay. Was he Mr Price's replacement or his assistant? I forget. Mr Charlie Black, a mild-mannered little man with curly, iron-grey hair, who taught sixth form maths. He had a concert pianist staying at his home and some of us were invited there one Saturday afternoon to hear the Great

Man play our requests. Mr Savage (English) had a shrewd insight into human nature, and it was rumoured that he was a part-time policeman. And there was a Mr James, whose real surname, it was rumoured, was Tucker but not used so as to avoid confusion.



And the lady wartime teachers. Miss Hemming was the gym mistress who did handstands on a beam (an impressive sight) while we were changing. Miss Ross (Biology) was tough but kind. Miss Turner (physics) mistakenly thought I was good at picking locks, and Miss Killick was young and beautiful, and I remember her jiving with one of my contemporaries at a sixth form dance. There was also a lady who tried to teach a smattering of German to a few of us in the Science Sixth. It was summertime and we sat around her on the grass outside. She was a mature woman, but not unattractive in her summer dress, and I for one did not learn much German. I don't remember her name.

I was proud of my school for many reasons, but principally for taking so many boys from quite ordinary backgrounds and setting them on the road to eminence, sometimes fame, in their various fields.

Richard Rance

Dear Sir,

Whilst browsing through the net, I came across the photos of the Queen's visit to the RGS in 1962. At that time I was in Form 5X, just preparing for O Levels, and I was selected to be one of the boys "performing" a scientific experiment in the new Science block. I can't remember what the experiment was, which was devised by the then Head of Chemistry Mr DR Pelmore. (We nicknamed him "drip" but very affectionately!) The Queen did pass a few words with myself and my partner in crime, whose name I forget. Possibly it was Jeremy Knight or Mark Carritt. The latter got an open scholarship, I think in 1965.

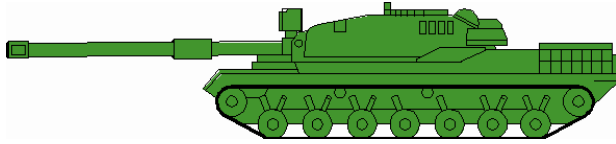
Yours,

Brian Russell

LETTERS FROM THE PAST

Buried for some years in the room of a teacher, (Any guesses which one?) a pile of letters written to Sheila Mawhood in 1994 when she was putting together the RGS Directory has recently been found. Here are some extracts:

1. "I was weaned by my father on stories of the First World War and for the Sunday walk often went to the rusty tank that stood outside the school until it went for scrap.



He regaled me with stories of what it was like, so I could not wait to join the O.T.C. and when war broke out, we patrolled the lanes round Hazlemere waiting for the paratroops to drop! Live ammunition was issued but there was never a case of irresponsibility or foolishness and this lasted for a few months until Dr. (Colonel) Reynolds told the Headmaster that if paratroops did land, we should all be shot, so that put an end to that! I became a very keen Sgt. Major and went on to Sandhurst. The church I attended had a photo-engraving of Youens V.C. and the story of his heroism, so this was very uplifting for a boy."

2. "It was war-time and we were about to receive yet another new master (as younger, fitter ones were called up). Maths was the only subject, which easily sank into my head: certainly not languages which up to my third year in the school had been highly boring.

My memory shows me a clear picture of him coming into the classroom at speed, gown billowing, the contrastingly, relaxing against the windowsill. His breezy personality and introduction gave him instant and lasting loyalty from what was a class with some tradition of rebelliousness. Even I managed to matric in what became such interesting subjects as French and English with a lifelong respect for someone who sadly died only two tears later.

He introduced himself:

"I well remember a new master coming into my class when I was at school introducing himself simply as "Strict's my name and strict's my nature." My name's Savage."

3. The masters I remember were Mr PL Jones (known as Piljy) who taught me Maths and had a habit of flicking a rubber band against one's ear if he detected any error; it did concentrate the mind! Also Mr Morgan, our Geography master never referred to a book; a quite superb example of teaching at the blackboard. He was a massive fellow, built like a barn. One look or remark from him was sufficient to quell instantly any indiscipline. He was known as "Sarcy" as sarcasm was his forte. He was a constant attender at the Art Master's (Mr Grant) Hobby Club Camp in the Summer Holidays He was a very powerful swimmer.

Dear Mr Clark

I may be using this new toy wrongly, but you will no doubt be able to correct me if so. Michael's letter was very interesting as it covered my time at the RGS (1940-47) and I write to add my recollection of a few matters he requested support from any survivors of that time.

The boys' school from London that was somehow absorbed into an already full school was the Latymer School from the Hammersmith area. They brought their Sea Scout troop with them and some of us joined it.

The Rev master's name was Macavan. He was in charge of one or both the Frome harvest camps and was a very capable manager.

I do not remember that Gen Eisenhower addressed us at the end of the war, but the C.O. of the 8th USAAF, Gen Ira C Eaker gave an oration to those units that took part in the Victory parade, on the Rye.

I think the Head prefect referred to was Tony Duckering, a good musician, and a large chap who took on Ted Woodward in a boxing contest. Honours were even if my memory serves me, and the fight was carried out with both fighters smiling broadly whilst launching blows that would have felled an Ox, had they landed.

I lived in Sands in a shop opposite the school he taught in 1945, and the Head, Mr Berry lived nearby. It is very possible that Michael called in for a few essential items from time to time.

Yours sincerely

Edward (Bill) Mercy.

Dear Ian



You asked about Ian Dury in your last newsletter and I was in the same form from 1955 to I think 1959 when Ian left after O level. It was the A stream and I certainly don't remember him as studious but I remember him as intelligent and quite idle. He was very artistic and talented in that field. It was not a key subject at RGS at that time though there was an art room and Mr Grant took the first two years for a double period each week. I don't recall anybody doing art through to O level. It was the time of Rock and Roll, Bill Haley and the Comets were probably the first and I recall Ian getting a guitar at some stage.

I was always surprised at the reported comments about the school and how unhappy he was said to be. He walked with a calliper, boarded in School House, mixed well and certainly seemed happy. If I was asked for one memory that remained with me it was of someone who in more affluent times with more choice would be in a different environment that would have challenged him intellectually. Post War Britain was fortunately able to educate people well if they were fairly "standard product" but Ian was outside the norm.

He was a likeable rogue who was mischievous with his disability. We had a maths master for most of that period, and he was not good at controlling teenage boys, a Jock Evely, I think, and Ian gave him a very hard time. I remember he "fell over" at the form room entrance door at the start of most maths lessons and was duly picked up by Jock every time.

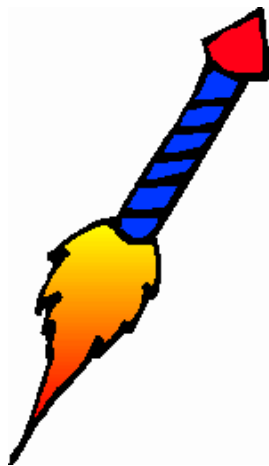
One final point that was I think totally misrepresented in the Press. The reports commented about frequent beatings. Beatings by Boss Tucker, Sam Morgan and Pilgey

Jones were not as I recall frequent for even the most sinful. Beatings by the Prefects were more memorable perhaps but had to be rare because it was required to refer a persistent offender upwards to the staff. However on top of all that I don't think he ever received corporal punishment from anybody because of the disability, which was understandable!

Ralph Stockwell

Editor: I hope to get permission to publish extracts from Ian Dury's book in the next newsletter.

THE EDITOR WRITES:



"I had a most interesting visit to the home of John Axton, who was at the RGS in the 1920s, the second oldest old boy, as far as I can tell. He told me about the RGS in those days, some of which has been published in the OW magazine in recent years. He told me how he had in his first year boarded with the Rev Berry in a house near Terriers Church. After he had moved into the Boarding House, on one occasion he was trying to light a firework on November 4th, which was very much against the rules in those days. When a prefect came round the corner, he pushed the firework into his pocket. Luckily for him when it burst into flames, he was near the showers and he jumped under them so that the water could put out the flames. The Boarding House master was more annoyed that a new pair of trousers was required than concerned at any possible injury to him! He also recalled going shooting on the Hughenden Estate with the OTC under Capt. Robinson, who was also a Geography teacher. Many thanks to John for your hospitality!"

OW SOCCER, RUGBY AND CRICKET CLUBS

Do you remember when these clubs existed? How long did they last for? Did you play for any of them? Please write and tell us your memories.

Anyone know of Charles Peter Keeling (1948-55)?

An old boy of his generation would like to contact him. Any information please.

OW Internationals

A board is to be put up in the School, with the names of all OWs who have represented their country any sport. A list will be published on this web site in about 2 weeks. Please check to see if there are any omissions.

NEXT EDITION

The next edition of this newsletter will be published on September 10th. In the meantime, we wish you a very good summer.

