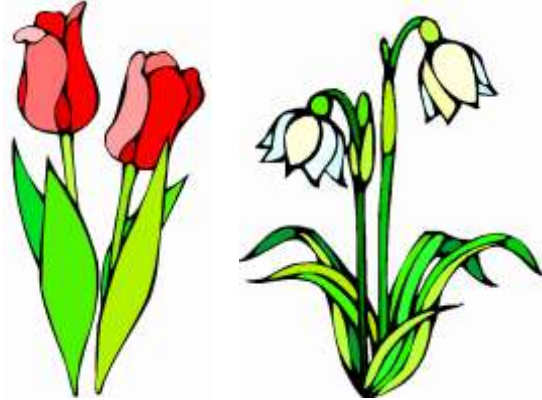


MARCH 2004

[Headmaster's report](#) [Help the RGS](#) [Iain Meyer](#) [Memories of the 30s](#) [Memories of the 60s](#) [The Olympics at RGS!](#)



ANNUAL DINNER

AND SPORTING REUNIONS

A good number of OWs have requested tickets for the Dinner on 24^h April in the Queens Hall, and the response to the Sporting Reunions in the afternoon has been encouraging. I would wish to stress that, while we think that £30 Life Membership is excellent value, you do not have to be a member of the OW Club to come to the Dinner. If you are reading this before 16th April it is still not too late for you to apply. It is well worth emailing or phoning me to see if there are any places left for the Dinner or one of the teams in the Sporting reunion. Full details of both events are published here. ([Details of the dinner and sports reunion](#) and [Photographs of last year's dinner](#))

The following teachers and former teachers hope to come:

Roy Page (current Senior Deputy Head)

Rowland Brown

Ian Clark

Mike Moffatt

David Stone

Roger File

Martin Berry

Ray Dosser

Jon Cave

David Willmot

Mike Grout

Peter Toller

Malcolm Cook

John Roebuck

Garth Ratcliffe

Richard Shreeve

John Mitchell

10 of the 1994 leavers are planning to come to Dinner along with 5 of the 1991 leavers. If you are a 1991 or 1994 leaver, would you like to join them? If you are not, would you like to arrange for a party of your year group to come?

ANNUAL MAGAZINE

If you are a member of the OW Club you should have received your magazine by now, unless by chance you live in a country where communication by post from Britain takes a long time. Please let me know if you didn't,

as it almost certainly means that we do not have your up-to-date address. This year, so far 58 magazines were returned with the comment "Unknown at this address". **Please let me know your new address if you move.**

For your interest if you like statistics, 78 magazines were posted to overseas addresses, Australia and the U.S.A. being the most popular. We have no OW member in Russia or China or South America, but some in U.A.E. and Japan, and relatively few in E.E.C. Countries. Does this tell us anything? In addition 1509 magazines were posted to addresses in Britain, 61 of these being new members.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? ? ? ? ?

We have regained contact with a lot of members, who have gone "missing" mainly because OWs have looked at the section on this site where there is a list of "[missing members](#)" and have given us a contact address. Now that our list has been updated, please [click here](#) and see if you can put us in touch with any on the list. We would be very grateful if you could do that. Recently an OW emailed me to give me the email address of a "missing" OW, who was sailing across the Atlantic. I emailed him and within 24 hours I had received an email from mid-Atlantic to say what his permanent address was!!

We have also updated the section giving [information and contact addresses for individual OWs](#), and also the section on [OWs abroad](#). If you have sent in information about yourself recently and it is not there, please contact me. If you would like to give information about yourself so that other OWs can contact you, please send it in to ianreclarkuk@yahoo.co.uk. At the moment about 625 OWs have their details recorded here. Do encourage your OW friends to send in their details.

NEWS FROM NEIL NOAKES (1991-1994)

Neil Noakes wrote to tell me that to his surprise he and a fellow student had been nominated for a BAFTA in the Interactive Arts category of their interactive Awards. This was for a final piece of work in a course for a Masters in Design for interactive media. Well done, Neil. For those who would like more details, their website is www.urbanscrawl.us Their email is us@urbanscrawl.us

HAS ANY OTHER OW BEEN AWARDED A BAFTA OR NOMINATED FOR ONE?

HAS ANY OTHER OW BEEN AWARDED AN OSCAR OR BEEN NOMINATED FOR ONE?

Please let me know, so that we can compile a list.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hello Ian,

Since watching with glee the series on Channel 4 last autumn, I've been looking for photos of Andrew MacTavish. He was unrecognisable and I hope only playing at the part of the shouting "Boss". I hope Andrew is well. I noticed he was missing from some of the filming last summer.



He used to be very pleasant when he first came to RGS in about 1966. The 1964 Speech day (my last) photos were of the last parade at which ER Tucker was headmaster. Andrew MacTavish was the officer in charge of the parade and I looked after the Guard of Honour behind him. ERT died while we were at camp on Summer Camp on

Dartmoor in 1964. His graveside flowers tell of how well known and popular he was in High Wycombe. We found the news of his death stunning. I think his funeral was held while we were still way - I seem to remember the CO "Moan" Pattinson went to represent us. I also have a photo of his grave soon after covered in flowers. I must have gone to see it, as I couldn't get to the funeral.

One memory of Andrew sticks in my mind still. He was member of the local TA (Ox & Bucks Light Infantry I think). Andrew arranged for a group of us to go on a weekend away with them to Salisbury Plain, where we witnessed an exercise involving the notable 25-pounder field gun being fired. He took us to the "observation point" overlooking the target area - in between the guns, some miles behind us and the targets. While we were there a smoke shell landed nearby - by mistake in loading the shell with the wrong amount of charge (these were hand loaded bags of gunpowder of different powers) we presumed! Had it been a high explosive shell Andrew and the rest of us may have not been here to tell the tale! I found the CCF great fun, especially the Easter and Summer camps, when we spent time away from home playing at being soldiers. I ended up with the quite untrue reputation of keeping my sergeant's strips on even when in my pyjamas.

I still remember the adaptation of the morning reveille bugle call being sung to the words "Hubie, Hubie, get out of bed, Hubie, Hubie, Hubie get out of bed". Try it, it fits well, but it also hurts when your real middle name is Hubert! The photos of camp life include one of the "hard" warrant officers Shackel, Janes, Thompson (an old boy) and myself sitting outside our tent. Bill Harrison, with the tea mug, was our Quarter Master Sergeant - a great character and good cook too. The photo of the pipers, Jock Gibb and MJ Holgate was also printed in the Wycombiensian that Autumn. ER Tucker had me down as "Staff Officer" material on my last school report. I went to see round Sandhurst with some others from the CCF but was so horrified by the potential for getting wet and cold I left the honour to braver souls. I opted for the soft life of TV production. The long Dartmoor expeditions live on though. All my family enjoy a long hike and I often get soaked to the skin rigging lights in the pouring rain for local events in Ealing.



From about 1960 to 1964 the stage-lighting team was led by Mr "Alpha" Leggett of the Physics department. (He was well known for sneezing a lot - if he got to more than 6 we were allowed to count them out loud!) I say led, but he in fact left us to our own devices only showing his presence when we either tried to do something unsafe or probably in my case spent too much time playing at preparing lighting for productions. "We" consisted of Robin Wilson, Pete Farmer, Taffy Davis and myself. In the old hall the controls were stuck up one side of the stage with only a tiny hole through which we could see the stage. The wing space was small but large enough that when during our production of "Yeomen of the Guard" one of us was allowed to fire a blank 303 round in one of the CCF rifles as the effect of an harquebus shot required in the first Act - Just consider a pupil being allowed to do that these days! The lighting was very primitive by today's standards - we were very proud when we took delivery of two brand new Strand fresnel spots. They were the only lamps we took with us when the new Queens Hall was opened and we had all new kit to play with. The photo shows some of the team performing a lighting change. This either involved many hands or the use of a long piece of wood to enable several dimmers to be pushed up or

down at once. We just push buttons these days and the whole rig moves! The first opera we performed in the Queen's Hall was Ruddigore. I probably had a small hand in the lighting but the photo shows me being transformed from a smooth skinned youth into Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd by Tim Newling who also produced the show. We had the school radio and sound equipment up in the lighting gallery. I can remember hearing the news of President John Kennedy's assassination on it.



I've got another photo of Mr "Polly" Flinders applying make up to my face for what I guess was my last G&S performance - a production of Ruddigore. This was the first one to take place in Queen's Hall. I remember making "Jack" Dawes - head of music - organist of Wycombe Parish Church - a special conductor's baton to use during the blackout needed in the second act while the portraits were being revealed. Out of small beginnings ... I'm still in the profession of lighting design. Reference to www.adlight.co.uk will reveal some photos! I later discovered that my wife (who went to the High School) had been to the show - she had come to hear Clifford Hughes play the tamps - they knew one another from their journeys into Wycombe along the West Wycombe Road. Clifford's loss was my gain. Susan & I met at Leicester University the following year!

I must stop rambling...

Cheers

Andrew Dixon 1958 to 1964 please reply to adixon@iee.org.

Dear Ian,



I have trawled my files for any other pictures of interest and could only come up with this to use it. All the Pipe Band pictures are hard copy and the staff IT copier is temperamental. There is an image of Anzac Day on the Brisbane Boys' College website (recently updated and worth a visit if you have time (and audio) under Co curricular activities - Pipe Band. I meant to add that I used to think that RGS CCF Easter Camps were hard - freezing cold and wet but at least Mrs Cooper's meals were something to look forward to. All meals at annual camp

here are eaten out of mess tins in M.A.S.H. style accommodation and you must check your boots every morning for small scorpions and other such nasties!

Yes, I would love to visit the school. I am amazed at the building developments that have sprung up. Have they built covered accommodation for the Head of Geography's rusty moped yet? I always thought I'd try to arrange a trip to coincide with the OB dinner. Perhaps when I eventually retire, who knows!

With best wishes for Xmas and 2004,

Iain

Ed. If you want to read more about Iain Meyer and see another great photograph of him, please look up the [January newsletter](#).

Dear Ian,

I am impressed by the RGS website, and am wondering if the enclosed bits and pieces may help to swell its "treasures" even further.

I have very fond memories of the school under E RTucker, from whom in 1936 I received six of his best cane swipes on the seat for cheating during a Geography quiz on homework set by Sam Morgan. "Boy" says Sam, "go and see the Headmaster. It's a nice, cold day, so I expect it will sting a bit."

On another occasion I recall, again circa 1936, ERT caned 30 or 40 Beaconsfield boys, who were reported to him for smoking on the train. After two announcements at assembly on two consecutive days, and nobody owned up to the misdemeanour, the whole contingent was whacked. I can't think that anyone suffered in later life because of the incident, but a lesson was learned.

The OTC uniform looks a little like World War 1 and it felt like it, but we all got on with it and enjoyed ourselves. Sissy (C.E.C. Eastman) was our Captain, and I think did a good job. I still have my Cert A signed by him after the exams in Feb 1940.

I still have my school reports from 3LB up to the 6h Form, and chuckle at many of them.

The school photo from 1936 is a bit battered, but if considered worthy, might well add to the store of nostalgia to the relatively few of us who were at the RGS before World War 2. (Editor: as the photo was too large to publish here, it has been given to the school archivist John Mitchell, who welcomes all such photographs from OB's).

Boxing Finals in the Wycombe Town Hall show me 2nd from the left in the front row. My opponent on that occasion was Pocock who sits second from the right on the front row. Modesty forbids that I tell you that I beat him! Sissy Eastman and Pat Pattinson were in charge. I could never fathom Pat Pattinson (P.E.) who would spend ages swinging his golf clubs on the big P.T. mats outside the gym. As a fanatical golfer now, I should have paid a little more attention then, as he went on to be a County Player- well above my class. However as Chairman of the RAF Golfing Society, I am sure that I have had every bit as much from the game as he did.

Have just noticed that in the inscription of the Boxing photo the N in "Finals" is written backwards. Another thought appears. The person back row left is, I think, Mr Aitchison, a fine figure of a man (a P.E. Instructor) and a particularly good friend of Mervyn Davies. He was killed very shortly after the war started.

I've rambled on, so I think that I'll wrap up and go to the post with the letter, and then do 30 minutes chipping practice on the lawn.



Yours very sincerely,

Ray Piercey (1935-1940)

Hi Ian,

I was a student at RGS from September 1965 until June 1967 when my family migrated to Adelaide, South Australia. I've visited the old school a couple of times, the last being in 1995, when I was returning to Australia via India after a couple of months in the USA and Europe. My wife and I are planning a visit to the UK late this year. Or in the summer the year after. I was a 2A student in 1965, then RGS

abandoned its tradition of first year starting with "2", so next year was 2X – an "X" stream student, no less, and a Mensan. I still have my old school reports, except one that was so bad. I destroyed it and forged my father's signature on the acknowledgement. Got away with it too.

One vivid memory of RGS is running down to the ground that used to be up the road (maybe it still is) and playing Rugby. During the game, it started to snow - so badly that you couldn't even see who to pass to. Nobody was playing particularly vigorously as the ground was trampled and frozen and hitting the ground meant bad cuts and bruises.

Eventually someone at the school remembered we were there and called us back in, for a cold shower and an early finish to the day. Then running down Amersham Hill to catch the early No 42 to Booker. It was a very different world then.

What are my chances of getting an old school tie or scarf?

Regards

Stephen White (1965-1967)

(Ed. Does anybody have any memories of heavy snowfalls while you were at the RGS? A note to all OWs. You can buy an OW tie from G.A Wood, Church Street, High Wycombe.)

Dear Ian,

I had especial interest in the recent TV programmes as I was Head Boarder of School House from September 1948 until leaving the school at the end of March 1950. I can assure you and others that life in the boarding house was not as severe as portrayed although the meals were somewhat similar. One reason for the kinder atmosphere resulted from the complete change in boarding in 1948, with a number going to Tylers Wood and Uplyme boarding houses.

I was also interested in the School House photograph on page 67 of J.I.Mitchell's publication. I am fairly certain that this was taken in 1951 as I recognize many of the boys in it. Birch and Platt in the second row next to Angela Tucker were in the Sixth Form in 1950, and should have left by 1952. Others in the back row were already "middles" in 1950. Of particular note is Roger Sainsbury (no relation), second from the end, who later became Bishop of one of the London dioceses.

Yours sincerely,

Donald Sainsbury. (1943-1950)

When the Olympics came to the RGS!



Philip Barker (1974-1980) has very kindly sent in an article on the Olympic Games and the RGS. Here it is:

The Olympic games have no doubt served as an inspiration for many RGS sportsmen, but few walking through the quad would realize that the Olympic flag once flew above the school .

The year was 1948 and in a week's time the London Olympics were to be opened by the King at Wembley. These were the austerity games organized at very short notice and because Rowing and other water sports were to be held at Henley the competitors were billeted in and around High Wycombe. It was decided that the Olympic flag, (five

interlocking rings to symbolize the unity of the five continents) should fly above the RGS.

There was one obvious candidate to perform the ceremony, J.E "Ted" Woodward, later to become the school's first Rugby International, but at the time the outstanding athlete in the school. He'd just competed at the English Schools Athletics Championships at Bath where he won the 100yds in 10.6. Such speed would serve him well in four years time when he made his international debut for England

A week before he received instructions from the Town clerk Philip Beecroft in a formal letter, very formal.

"Dear Woodward" it began

"At the close of the entertainment, you will raise the Olympic flag and afterwards the company will be entertained to tea. I think it would be rather nice if you were to be in your sports gear, that is to say white shirt and flannels"

The Mayor Councillor Geoffrey Baker and Alderman Alfred Gibbs and their guest made a whistle stop tour to others schools before arriving at the RGS where Councillor Baker addressed the gathering. The Bucks Free Press notes as follows:

"The principal ceremony was performed at the Royal Grammar School, the headquarters of the Olympic Centre for the area, an honour unique in Wycombe's history. Alderman Gibbs had handed over the school to the Olympic Committee for the period of the training"

The main speech came from J.Eaton Griffiths of the organising Committee.

"The committee was very grateful for the school authorities for making premises available to the competitors. The mission is to so arrange matters that the competitors, the cream of youth from around the world will congregate amongst you in friendship happiness and sportsmanship and will take back a message of hope to the nethermost ends of the earth"

In the words of one of the bemused and burly Canadians Athletes, the Olympic competitors are "just tickled... these characters think of everything". A local organizing committee included Old Wycombiensian DR Whitney and Secretary Mr E Owen was made RGS Commandant!

Ted Woodward never competed at the Olympics for Great Britain, but in the Olympic year of 1952 he began a distinguished International Rugby career for England. Another RGS athlete Martin Gillingham later astounded the pundits by winning the 1984 AAAs title at 400m Hurdles. He went to the Los Angeles Olympics.

(Ed. Can any other OW add any information to this account? Do let me know.)

Dear Ian,

With regard to the 1973 6th Form Photograph, published in the latest newsletter I recognise many as being in the sixth form at the time, as I was.

It was quite a surprise to see the picture on the Site. Unlike John, I never have any problems finding myself on a group photograph - right in the middle at the back so the smaller fellows can see!

Best Regards,

Terry Dowdeswell (1967-1974)

SAD NEWS

It is very sad to report the death of the following Old Boys:

Gerald Beckett reports that CGF Williams (1935-1940) has died. He did come to the dinner once, but has lived in America for many years, where he had quite a significant career. At one time he was Comprador (whatever that may be) of Cunard, based in the West Indies. He claimed to have been the first inhabitant of the new Police Station cells in an effort to discourage him from scrumping Farmer Steven's apples. He was not there long, but regarded it as his first in anything.

The deaths are also reported of the following:

Donald Stammers (1936-1941) on 23rd October.

Bernard Lance (1936-1942) on 28th May.

Revd. Dr. Leonard W. Cowie, who taught History at the RGS in the 2nd World War

NEWS FROM THE HEADMASTER

The Headmaster, Tim Dingle, gave a report on the RGS to OWs, which was published in the OW Magazine in January. It is reproduced here:

Headmaster's Report

January 2004

Dear Old Wycombiensian

It is always a delight to report on the progress of the School and we have had a wonderful term so far. The joyful Arts Week and opening of the Royal Bank of Scotland Music Centre (by Old Boy Howard Jones) was a highlight. The Music Centre has seven dedicated practice rooms, two recording studios, two Music Technology rooms and high tech classroom suites. This wonderful facility was built with the money raised by parents, old boys and friends of the School. Howard Jones liked it so much he is coming back to give an 'unplugged' charity concert on 28th January 2004 in the Queen's Hall, to raise funds for the Campaign for Excellence.



[More Photographs](#)

Remembrance Day at RGS was particularly special this year with the whole School gathered in the quad for a moving and emotional ceremony. As the mist swirled, our pupils were very respectful and understanding of the meaning of sacrifice in the great wars and conflicts over the last 100 years.



[More Photographs](#)

The winning of the Rugby World Cup has once again invigorated the boys in their desire to be the next Matt Dawson and 150 watched the final at School before the 1st XV went to play against Uppingham School (and winning all their matches!). Matt is due to come to the School for his benefit dinner in February and we are working hard to try to get 'Bill' to come too; what a potential treat for the boys!

Our Music and Cultural activities have had a real boost with the opening of the Music Centre. The Choir performed at the Wycombe Mayor's Festival of Carols at the Swan and the School's Carol Service. Roger Montgomery, Principal Horn Player at Covent Garden is to visit us on 4th March for various workshops during the day and a recital in the evening. The joint musical with Wycombe High School this year is "Singing in the Rain".

Our Language College goes from strength to strength. 2003 has seen continuing developments both at RGS and within our family of schools in the community. In the Spring we are running adult evening classes in Mandarin, Spanish, Italian, Russian and French (details on the website) and Year 12

students choose from either Mandarin, Japanese, Spanish, Italian or Malay for TAA. The website (www.languagesonline.org) has received national and international recognition, thanks to all the teachers who are continually adding to it. Pupils from local primary schools are enjoying their language learning visits and we continue to deliver language teaching to Years 5 and 6 children. Our main secondary links are with Highcrest and St. Bernard's.

In conclusion, the School is in good heart, and I hope you will support our continued campaign to remain excellent. You are always welcome to come and see round the School, appear on touchlines and at concerts!

Best wishes

Tim Dingle

Headmaster

If you wish to find out more about the activities of the RGS, please click [here](#).

CAN YOU HELP?

HOW YOU CAN HELP THE RGS

1. Two OWs have recently contacted me to ask if they can help in any way with the Careers' education at the RGS. Certainly Janet Philpott, **Head of Careers**, would welcome any such offers. She is always looking for people ready to give talks on particular careers, to help on "Introduction to Industry" Days in Year 10 (**6th and 7th July 2004**) or to offer places for Work Experience or Work Shadowing. Please contact her on **01494 524955**.
2. If you ever buy books from Amazon, or whisky please put your order through the RGS website www.rgshw.com Please click [here](#). The RGS receives money for every order.
3. The RGS, like other schools, needs to increase its financial resources. If anyone would like to make a contribution, perhaps for a particular project or Sponsorship Scheme, or would like to hear of ways that the RGS can benefit through a bequest, please contact **the Enterprise Manager, Mr Bill Dobbs on 01494 551412** for full details.
4. On Saturday 26th June the RGS parents' association is holding an Auction of Pledges to help raise funds that will directly benefit boys at the school.

TV personality Eric Knowles, who appears regularly on Antiques Roadshow, will be the expert auctioneer as he did so entertainingly in 1999 and 2001. This special evening has been a huge success on those occasions and a lot of fun, with items on sale to suit every budget. Some great bargains should be possible and you may even be able to bid for items that you just can't get anywhere else.

Examples of items from previous years range from the grand; a stay at a Park Lane Hotel, England rugby tickets, tickets to the Grand National enclosure, signed sports and pop memorabilia - to the useful; dinner-party dinners cooked for you, language lessons, car washes or a day's gardening.

All items at previous auctions have been pledged by parents, old boys and local companies and this is where your contribution could be vital. Do you have an item, service or skill that you can offer for auction - or do you know someone who has? Perhaps you work in, or have contacts in a business that might welcome the chance to

help and, in doing so, they get the opportunity to show what they can do for a prospective customer.

If you are able to make a pledge or you would like to but aren't sure what would be appropriate email Steve Davenport at steve@dport.demon.co.uk or call him on 01494 447879. Steve is also the point of contact if you are interested in coming to the auction. Tickets will be going on sale soon so if you are interested in coming register now - this event always sells out quickly. Even if you can't attend on the night sealed bids can be submitted so it's worth registering anyway to receive an Auction Catalogue, which should be available around the end of May.

The PA looks forward to welcoming many of you and your guests on what promises to be an excellent and entertaining night.

Just before the end of this newsletter Judy, (Ian Clark's secretary) would like to add something:



Ian Clark is a Wycombe Wanderers Football Club season ticket holder, and I (Judy) am a Leeds United Football Club season ticket holder. At present both our teams are in the relegation zone in our respective divisions. By the time the next newsletter appears our destiny will be known. I am sure there are many of you out there who will want Wycombe to stay up – but I am not so sure there will be many of you wishing the same for Leeds!

The next newsletter will be published on or about 25th May, and will contain a full report of the AGM and Dinner, with, I hope, photographs. If you would like to comment on anything you have just read, or send in your own memories of your time at the RGS, or photographs, please do not hesitate to do so.



A very happy and peaceful Easter to all