



NEWSLETTER

22 November 2004

[Helena Ellis](#) [Letters to the editor](#) [New school chapel](#)
[Roger Scruton on RGS](#) [School photograph, 1956](#) [Staff photographs](#) [Staff soccer, 1996](#) [Wycombiensian 1961](#)

SAD NEWS

It is very sad to record the death of Mike Eaton, who was at the RGS as a boy from 1942-1949 and was Head of Art at the school from 1958-1989. He had been ill for some time and had been in the Katherine Knapp Home for his final years. At the funeral Roger File who had been with Mike at the RGS as a boy and then teacher spoke most warmly of his great friend. We extend to Naomi and the family our deepest sympathy.

ANNUAL DINNER 2005 - A REMINDER

The date of the Annual Dinner is fixed for Saturday 16th April. It will be held in the Queens Hall, with the Guest of Honour being Andrew MacTavish. Tours round the school will be organised for those OWs who would like one. In addition on the same day it is hoped that there will be some sporting reunions on the Hockey-field, Sports Hall and elsewhere if there is sufficient interest. How about contacting your OW friends and making up a table at the Dinner?

It has been suggested that the following should have a Reunion at the Dinner.

1. The 680 boys who fifty years ago were beaten by the Headmaster or Sam Morgan, on one day.
2. All those who in 1962 were in 5R, the only form I am told in the history of the school where all the boys studied Russian.

Do contact friends from your form, or a shared activity to join you at the Dinner. If you are a member of Friends Reunited, you may wish to contact them through that, but otherwise I could put their names on this website.

If you want to participate in hockey, fencing, or shooting on April 16th, please contact me and also persuade your friends to sign up too.

ADVANCE NOTICE

The Duncan Moore Cricket Match, Old Wycombiensians v RGS on Tuesday 19th July.

BOOK THE DATE NOW!

The OW Golf match versus the RGS Staff will be in the second half of June, probably at the Weston Turville Golf Club. Date still to be fixed.

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE OW CLUB?

If you are a member and have moved recently, please let me know, so that we can post the OW magazine to the correct address.

If you are not a member of the OW Club, would you like to join, so that you can receive the magazine in January? Please [CLICK](#) for details of how to join.

OW WRITES ABOUT THE RGS

Roger Scruton, OW, in his book “England, an Elegy,” published in 2000 has written about the RGS as follows:

It had been founded in 1562; the ruins of its original building—a carcass of Gothic arches in flint and limestone—still stood by the London Road near the centre of town. The school had been several times rehoused, and was now contained in a neo-Georgian building of brick dating from the 1920s. It stood on the crown of Amersham Hill, fronted by a stretch of green lawn and surmounted by a white clock tower, which imparted to the façade a vaguely nautical appearance. The classrooms had tall sash windows, sturdy old-fashioned desks of beechwood, in which many generations of schoolboys had scratched their names, and panelled doors with brass handles. The masters wore gowns and the Head, Mr Tucker, would take assembly in a mortarboard, the tassel of which dangled next to his glasses like a twirling spider on its thread.

Mr. Tucker was ambitious for the school, and had consciously redesigned it on the model of Eton. Of course the raw material being what it was, the school could never actually *be* another Eton. Still that was Mr. Tucker’s goal, and the result was as near to a public-school as chimpanzees could make it. There were rival “houses”, with “rugger” rather than football; there was a cricket pavilion and fives courts and all the military apparatus associated with a flourishing cadet corps. The full paraphernalia of public-school discipline was also imposed on us. The prefects had the ancient right - of which they took full advantage—to beat us with gym shoes; Mr. Tucker and his deputy wielded the cane, while the head of juniors – a man with an impeccable Nonconformist conscience – would, on overcoming his scruples, lash his victim with enthusiastic swipes from a leather strap. We did not go as far as Eton in the way of uniforms, but any boy seen wearing the school blazer out of school without the cap was liable to punishment.

But it was not in these outward trappings of imperial Britain that the school excelled. Its real virtue lay in its teachers, two of whom were responsible for my first real glimpses of England, in those days when (though we did not know it at the time) last glimpses were the only glimpses to be had.”

Roger then went on to write eight pages about Mr. Chapman, who taught Physics, and about three pages about Derek Broadbridge. If you remember either of the two teachers, you may want to buy or borrow the book from a library, as I have done.

Another quotation from the book:

“My Grammar School devoted itself – with only partial success - to the production of gentlemen.”

If you were a contemporary of Roger, do you agree with his statement? If yes, did it succeed in your case?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ian,

I think your newsletter gets better and better. Well done! It's great. Your comments about "the great beating" really did stir memories. I think the school had about 750 boys in 1955 and if you take out the prefects who were not beaten then about 20 to 30 boys missed out and one claim to fame was that I was one of those. I believe I was at school on the day with an awful cold, didn't participate in the battle because of it and was sent home early that day. I was then away for a day or two and returned to discover what I'd missed. There were no significant reports of parental objection, at least none that spread in the school. Don't times change!

My wife and I had a week's holiday in Cornwall last week and stayed two nights at Rosevine on the Roseland peninsula. It is less than a mile from a village called Portscatho and I was last there in summer 1960 or 1961. There were at least 7 of us from RGS camping with tents and a caravan. Mike Pattinson, Sam Baxter, 'Hoss' Simpson, 'Fleur' Fowler, Peter Yates, 'Pip' Dronfield and myself. We lived on pasties and beer and had the use of a very ancient Wolsey car, which needed a pint of oil for every gallon of petrol we put in.

You asked about the 'new' cricket pavilion. I think it cost £3000.

Ralph Stockwell.

Editor: Does anybody else have memories of the "great beating"? If so, do write them down and send them in. If you are one of the names mentioned above and would like to get in touch with Ralph, again do contact me. Who broke the window that caused the beating? Any names to me please.

Dear Ian,

I am sorry to have to write to you at this stage, but I thought that I should let you know what I did twenty years ago.

You wrote a letter to my father (attached) (not my father - the letter), and posted it on Nov 9, 1984. I, for the next three days, exhibited some very unusual behaviour. I woke up daily up at 5am on the dot, and could be seen hovering around the hallway / living room / front door vestibule. Just 'post' the 'Postal Delivery Officer' had made his visit, I would simply then present his offerings to the appropriate individuals in the house. On day three, these deliveries within a delivery were, I now admit, one light - the letter to JB with an RGS crest on it.

Secretly scurrying upstairs to read the words of a man appropriately disappointed, I stuffed the thing into one of my snooker magazines never to be thought of again. Or so I thought. About five years later, I came across it while reminiscing in some of the old mags I had brought. With great glee, I made an official presentation of the offending item to both parents - their reaction was memorable to say the least! It then remained in the family 'Nicholas' file until last month, when Jeremy came across it himself. We both reminisced together, before I realised that the 20th anniversary was coming up soon. Hence this letter to you, sir!

I did learn my lesson, and hope this electronic post reaches you in fine fettle.

Sincerely

Nic Barrow

(Still in Dubai.)

Editor. What a wonderful surprise to receive that letter from Nic, who incidentally is the National Snooker Coach for Dubai! I started the letter in the way Nic did, "I am very sorry to write to you at this stage." The incident involved letting off a firework in a totally inappropriate way! I wonder if any other readers remember intercepting letters, which would not have perhaps shown you in the best light. Now is the time to confess!

Anybody remember Nic?

Dear Ian,

During the blitz I was privately evacuated to Bryants Bottom near High Wycombe. As I had come from Wembley it was thought best if I joined Chiswick, which would have the same curriculum as it was a Middlesex School. They shared the same building with the RGS for a few years during the war. They ran as separate schools I remember. The RGS had studies in the morning and the O.T.C. in the afternoons, and Chiswick had one lesson in the morning and studies in the afternoon until about 5.00 p.m. Is there any permanent record of this arrangement, which seemed to work satisfactorily in the circumstances? I am prompted to write to you, as I recently met two Old Boys, not as old as me, who were unaware of this piece of history.

Canon Basil Jones

Editor: The official History of the RGS says: "To make life more uncomfortable from September 1939 until July 1942, a part of Chiswick County High School, about 200 strong, shared the buildings with the RGS on a shift system." I wonder if any OWs who were at the RGS or indeed at the Chiswick County High School at the time remember the arrangement. Do write and let me know.

Dear Ian,

Many thanks for your reply. My class friend and fives partner was John Neville who was to become a heart throb with Richard Burton as a Shakespearian actor. He was Brutus in the school play of Julius Caesar and I was Mark Anthony. Heigh ho!
Basil

Dear Ian,

Re the pictures of the last newsletter,

In picture no. one right hand side, third in side face is Paul Verhoeft, ex Tylers Wood 1948-1952.
Paul

Dear Ian

Nice to talk with you the other day.

As discussed, the Educational Excellence Campaign is seeking to recruit at least one Old Boy on to the campaign committee. We have in the past had three representatives on the team but due to various personal commitments, they have had to stand down.

We are now looking for someone who is enthusiastic about the school and who feels they could spend a little of their time helping to re-unite former RGS pupils with their old school and ultimately help in supporting the campaign.

His role on the committee would be to oversee an Old Boy team and would entail attending a regular monthly meeting - currently being held on the first Tuesday of each month. As a team leader he may also like to hold his own team meetings etc. with other Old Boys to develop their network.

We believe that Old Boys are crucial to maintaining the excellence of this wonderful school and hope that they too would feel it an honour and privilege to help support it.

If you do know of an Old Boy who remains passionate about his old school we would be delighted to hear from him.

Kind regards,

Bill

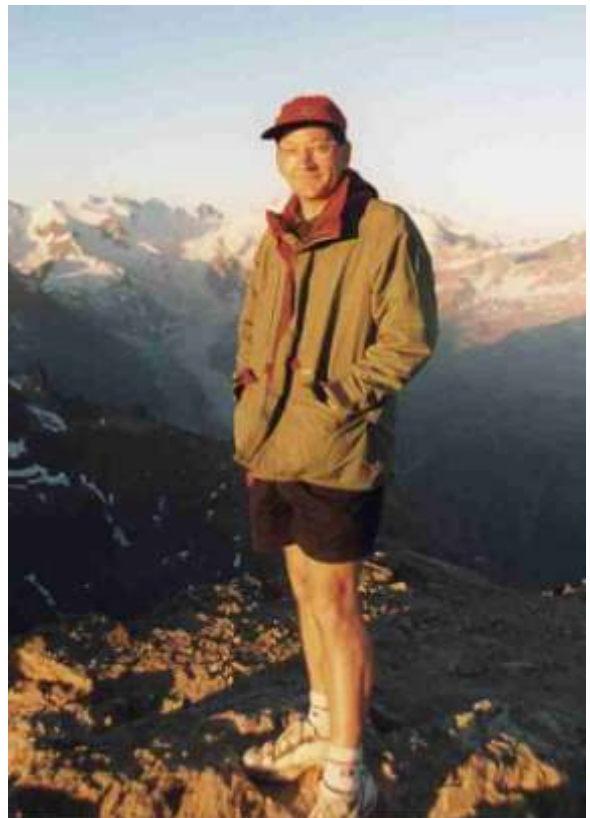
RGS Enterprise Manager

Te 1:01494 551412

EDITOR: If any Old Boy thinks that he can help the campaign, please contact Bill.

MARTIN BERRY'S PHOTOGRAPHS

Here are some more photographs of some teachers who taught at the RGS in the 1980s and 1990s. If you were at the RGS in those years, can you name them all?

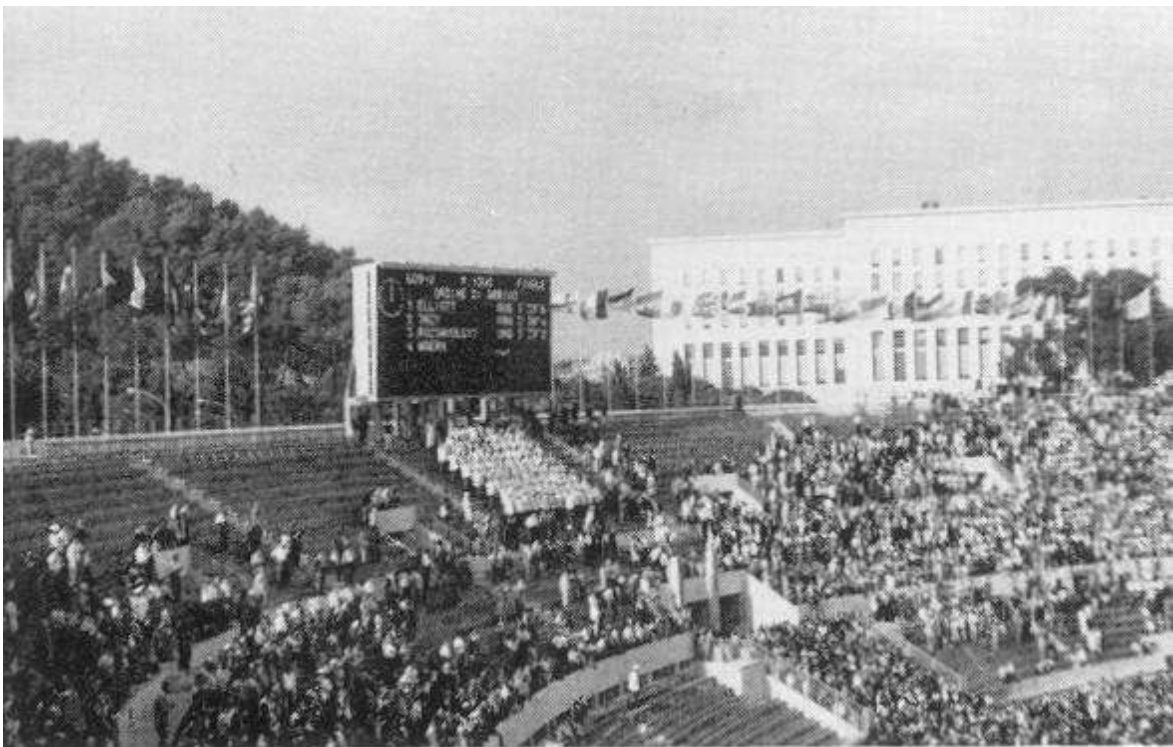






WERE YOU AT THE RGS IN 1961?

The following are extracts from the Wycombiensian of that year:





The top photograph shows a photo of a place important in 1960. The bottom one shows a scene from the School Play.

(1) Can you name the place?

(2) Can you name the play and the two actors?

Read on to find the answers.

- An influx of about 180 boys has increased the School's strength to a new peak of 1050. (Editor: It is now over 1300)
- This year's Staff XV found a very fit Rugby XV too strong for them in the match in December. (Editor: Does anybody know the year when the Staff v Boys' Rugby Match was last played?)



SCHOOL 1st XV
P. A. TAYLOR (Tough Judge), J. H. DAVIS, M. FORDHAM, P. J. CLARK, E. M. HINDSLEY, V. W. PUNTON, J. H. COMPTON,
B. R. PARSONS, H. A. G. STOCKWELL, J. S. SIMPSON, A. W. BARRY (Capt.), R. F. QUINN, J. A. JOHNSON, M. F. TOLSON

The Boxing Championships were won by Arnison, thanks, it seems, to their House Spirit. (Editor: Does anybody know the year when the Boxing Championships were last held? Does anyone have any memories of any outstanding fights?)

On Saturday, November 26th 1960, there took place an event of very great importance in the history of the School, when the new School Chapel was dedicated by the former Bishop of Buckingham. The erection of the new Science Building had made possible the conversion of the former Chemistry Laboratory for this very purpose. The very fine furnishings are due to the generosity of Governors, Old Boys and friends of the school.

On 15th March, the Bishop of Buckingham confirmed thirty-four candidates. The following morning the newly-confirmed made their first Communion together with staff and other boys, some one hundred and sixty in all, in the Chapel. (Editor: Does anyone remember being there? I am staggered that such a number could have got into the chapel.)

The Chapel became the Business Studies Department last year.)



THE NEW CHAPEL

A girl attended the RGS for the first and last (?) time, Helena Anne Ellis, and she gave her impressions as follows:

The first memory I have of the Royal Grammar School is getting lost on my first morning there in what seemed a mile-long corridor, and being gravely redirected to the Staff Room by a very polite small boy. When I told him that I was as much a pupil as he was, he gave me an unbelieving look and fled. The next thing I remember is making vain attempts at prayers to see over the shoulders of enormous Sixth-formers, and after that the trepidation I felt when first introduced to my startled fellow-students.

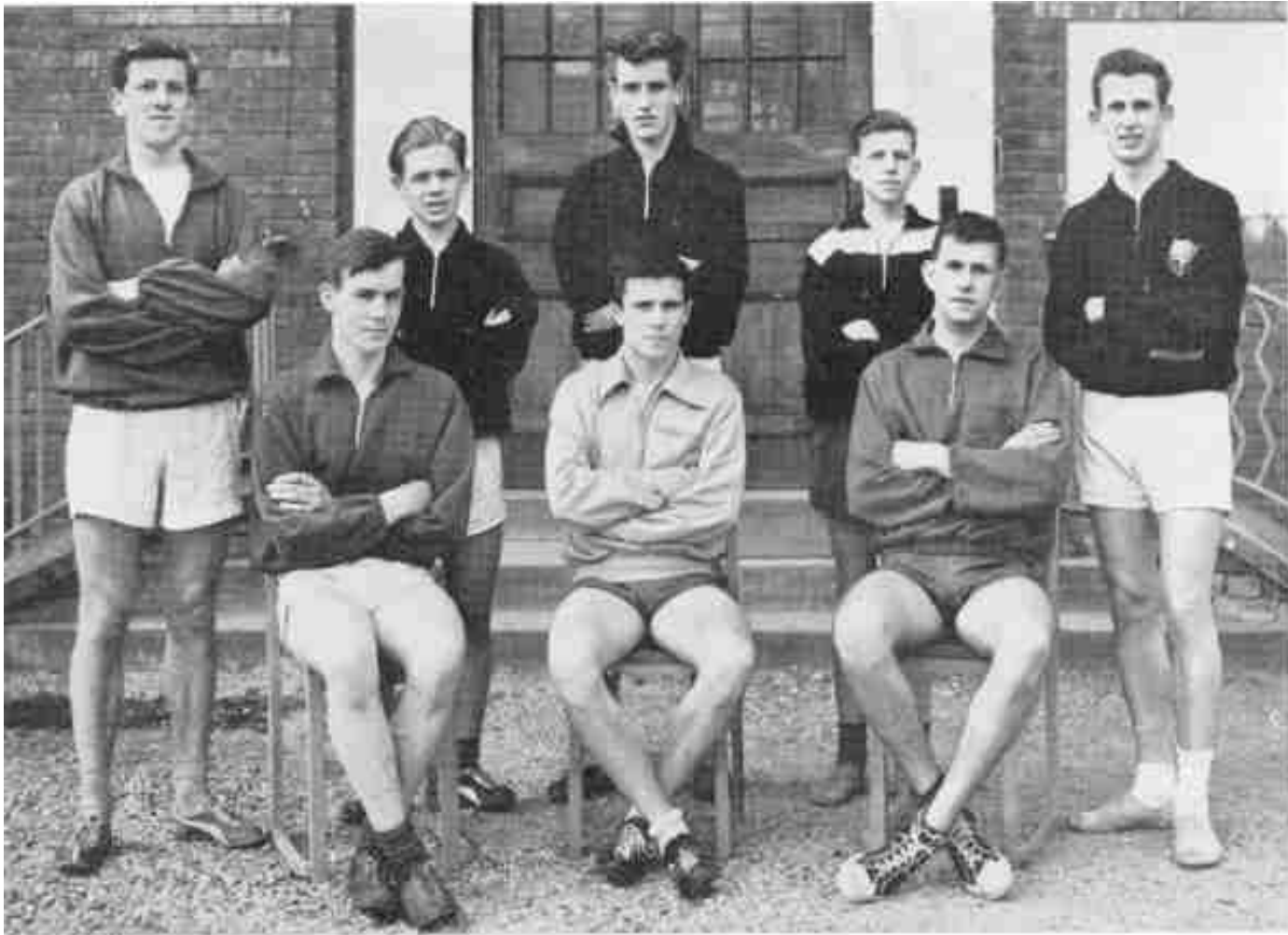
I found almost immediately that if I wanted to keep the banner of feminine equality aloft I had to work far harder than I had done in Scotland and not mind if my marks were considerably worse. For under the Scottish system of education, the student negotiates his big examination in the 5th form, and is therefore free on the whole to spend the Sixth Form “integrating” himself pleasantly in preparation for the university.

Before I left this calm and rather leisurely existence my Classics mistress had told me; “You’ll like working with boys - they’ve got such tough minds”, and I have discovered that this is quite true. For (if you will excuse the generalisation) they seem to work very hard and not show the strain as girls sometimes do; though not over-ready to air their opinions they can be clear-headed and single-minded in argument: and they are apparently gifted with a fund of hard logic and common-sense more often denied to young ladies. Above all, judging, that is, from Royal Grammar School boys, they are friendly, full of energy and always courteous.

Without giving away my views about co-education, I should like to say that I consider it an honour to have been educated with boys. I am grateful to the headmaster who overcame so many obstacles to let me continue studying Classics, but also to the masters who have been unfailingly kind and helpful and the boys who took care of me and are all of them charming. Thank you! I was sad to leave but shall enjoy being an “old girl”: *olim meminisse iuvabit*.

Editor: It would be great to be in contact with Helena again. Does anybody know where she is? Has anyone any memories of Helena when she was at the RGS?

- Numbers in the Naval Section were 150, while numbers in the RAF section were 135. Three cadets represented the RGS in the 14th All-England Aircraft Recognition Competition, where they had to identify aircraft in photographs projected on to a screen for a period of about half a second.
- M.Goodman wrote a poem on a Stone-age Lad, C.R.Sabine on the Marylebone Express, and C.P.Challis about a holiday in Ceylon.
- R.L.Smyth wrote a short story.
- M.J.Payne wrote about a visit to Dublin, G.Smyth about sailing, Entellus about House Spirit, R.P.Browne about “Beetle Killers”, R.G.J.Shelton about dormice, L.R. Berryman and R.E.Woods and R.P.C. Farrell about trips to Holland.
- There were articles on Herschel’s Treatise upon “Organic aethers and their subconscious equivalents”, on the first nights of Shakespeare at the Aldwych by D.A. Rees, Georges Bizet ,by R.M.Layton, and Mele Kalikamaka by M.Peterson. (**Editor:** Mele Kalikimaka means “Happy Christmas” in the simple language of Hawaii, whose alphabet contains only seven consonants, h, k, l, m, n, p, and w and five vowels.)
- There were the meetings of the Art Society, Classical Society, Jazz Appreciation Society, Modern Language Society, Music Society, Natural History Society, Science Society, Twentieth-Century Opinion Society, and the “13” Society. The “13” Society met at Mr. Broadbridge’s home in Beaconsfield, and listened to talks on subjects as widely differing as “Atomic Power” and “Four Quartets”, “Friedrich Nietzsche” and “The Theory of Number”, and “The Mediaeval Theatre” and “The Philosophy of Pythagoras”. (Editor: It is interesting that there were many more subject-based societies then compared with recent years.)
- There were reports from the three Boarding Houses and the six Houses. (Editor: Can you remember the names of them all?)
- There were reports on the Scouts and all the different Sports.
- In the Inter-House Boxing Tournament over 140 boys took part!
- In the Inter-House Cross-Country Championships the watch stopped, and therefore no timings were recorded!



SCHOOL CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM

(E. H. POISSON, P. R. FAYOURE, M. PUGH, TAYLOR, P. M. G. SMITH)

- Someone in the Classical Sixth described the achievements of the Classical Sixth in their badminton, rugby and soccer fixtures.
- The Rugby Fixture List contained matches against two Oxford Colleges, which would not be allowed today.
- The Cross-Country Team had 20 fixtures, and was organised by “Tus” Sheppard, and Neil Cooper.
- The Hockey matches were all played on grass.
- The Chess Club had almost 100 members.
- The Boat Club was run by Bernard Leighton-Jones.
- The Tennis Club was run by Mervyn Davies.

At the OW Club AGM the annual subscription was raised from 7s. 6d. to 10s. 0d. It was announced that sufficient money had been raised to pay for the Swimming Pool. **(Editor: The pool is now covered)**. It was said that a History of the RGS was to be published, and it was hoped that Mr. G.R. Arnison, who was responsible for the School moving to its present position on the top of Amersham Hill could attend the next Reunion.

The Annual Dinner of the OW Club was held in the Georgian Room of the Red Lion Hotel and 200 Old Wycombiensians attended. **(Editor: It would be great if we had 200 attending nowadays)**

The School Production

The photograph seen earlier on in the newsletter was of Patrick Hamilton's play "Rope", a "comedy thriller". The stars of the of the cast were David North, Peter Uppard, and Christopher Pye, and they were well supported by R. Laskey, P. Findlay, M. Bird, M.Snodin and Ian Blyth, later to teach at the RGS.

Finally the place in the photograph at the beginning of this newsletter was the Olympic Stadium in Rome.

If you were at the School in that year, do the above extracts from the Wycombiensian bring back any memories? If so, please send them in.

DO YOU LIVE IN THE LEEDS AREA? ARE YOU AT LEEDS UNIVERSITY? (DO YOU LOVE LEEDS UNITED? – Asks Judy!)

Jonathan Lippiat (1987-1993), who is a Lecturer in Biomedical Sciences at the University of Leeds, would like to start a Leeds branch of the OW club. If you are interested please contact him. His email address is J.D.Lippiat@Leeds.ac.uk

SOME REMINDERS

CALLING ALL OW LAWYERS

Arshad Khan (1987-1993) has written suggesting a network of Old Wycombiensians who are lawyers. This seems to me to be an excellent idea

He is hoping to get the ball rolling by meeting up later in the year at a venue near Chancery Lane.

If you are interested in finding out more or wish to put your name down for meeting up with others please contact Arshad Khan (contact details: tel. 07775 502895 or email arshad.khan@sacker-partners.co.uk)

IF YOU ARE A LAWYER, DO CONTACT ARSHAD

DO YOU LIVE OR WORK IN LONDON?

Martin Davidson (1990-1996) would like to organise an informal get-together of OWs in London to catch up with old friends and the latest news from school. Anyone interested in attending should contact him at:

E-mail: rgslondon@hotmail.com

Mobile: 07989 744832

Address: 32, Lavender sweep, Battersea, London, SW11 1HA

DO CONTACT MARTIN.

Finally to end with some photos.



PHOTOGRAPH OF STAFF SOCCER TEAM IN 1996-7

If you were at the RGS in the 1990s, how many of these can you remember?



ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL, HIGH WYCOMBE

May



1956.

EXTRACT OF A PHOTOGRAPH of SCHOOL IN 1956

If you were at the RGS in 1956, do you recognise yourself on this photo?

If you wish to make any comments on what is published in the newsletter or write anything for publication, please contact the Editor, Ian Clark, whose email address is ianrclarkuk@yahoo.co.uk

Old Boys' Invitation Cross-Country Race

Every December, Thames Hare and Hounds stages an Old Boys' Invitation Cross-Country Race on Wimbledon Common. This year, it is the intention to enter an RGS Old Boys' team for the event. The details of the race are as follows:

Date: Saturday 11th December 2004

Time: 3.00 p.m.

Distance: 5 miles

Teams: Four to score

Venue: The race starts at the Thames Hare and Hounds clubhouse,

Memorial Playing Fields, Putney Vale, SW15

The clubhouse is just north of the Robin Hood junction on the A3.

Please see the following link:

http://www.multimap.com/map/browse.cgi?client=public&db=pc&cidr_client=none&lang=&pc=SW153PQ&advanced=&client=public&addr2=&quicksearch=SW15+3PQ&addr3=&addr1

By public transport, the easiest way to reach the clubhouse is by the number 85 bus from Putney Bridge underground station. It is about a 25-minute journey and you need to get off at the Memorial Playing Fields, which is the stop soon after the Asda supermarket on the A3.

If you are interested in running for the RGS team, please contact Simon Molden on 020 8423 2588 (home), 07813 908126 (mobile) or simonmolden@pmpconsult.com

RGS CHRISTMAS CARDS 2004

Do you want to buy an RGS Christmas Card?



*Season's
Greetings*

Specially printed Royal Grammar School Christmas Cards are now on sale. Cards feature a classic colour picture of the RGS Clock tower and quadrangle. The greeting inside reads "Best Wishes for a Happy Christmas and a joyful New Year."

A pack of 10 cards with envelopes costs £3.

STOCKS ARE LIMITED

All proceeds from the sale of cards will be used by the Parents' Association to support projects beneficial to RGS, for example, school minibuses.

Cards can be purchased from the RGS Resources Centre during the hours 8.30am-4.00pm. Alternatively, to secure your cards, please complete the form below and return it to Mrs Russell in the Resources Centre at the RGS as soon as possible so that the cards can be posted to you. It may be worth telephoning to check that there are some available. (01494 551433)

CARDS WILL BE SOLD ON A FIRST COME FIRST SERVED BASIS

We/I wish to purchase packs of RGS Christmas Cards at a cost of £3 per pack of 10 plus postage and packing as listed below:

We/I enclose a cheque (payable to RGSPA) for

Name..... Telephone
No.....

Address.....
.....

Postage and Packaging charges are as follows:

1 pack of 10 cards 50p 2 x 10 cards £1.00

3 x 10 cards £1.40 4 x 10 cards £1.85

5 x 10 cards £2.00

(This represents the cost of second-class postage and a small charge for packaging)

RGS PARENTS' ASSOCIATION 500 Club

If you would like to join the 500 Club, and thus support the RGS, please [CLICK](#) here.

OW DRIVES IN SPA 6-HOUR RACE

Former RGS pupil, Oliver Bryant (1998-2004), took part in the prestigious Spa Six Hours race.

Driving a beautifully prepared MGB, Oliver and two friends competed against Aston Martin DB4s, E-Types, Mustangs and TVRs and they finished a very creditable 10th out of 78 starters.



The next newsletter will be published on 22nd January

HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND PEACEFUL NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS!

From Ian, Martin and Judy

