

OKS Offcuts

May 2012 No.35

OKS ASSOCIATION

THE HEADMASTER SPEAKS

On behalf of the Association, Stephen Woodley (who has edited Offcuts since it began in 1999) put questions from OKS Committee members to the Headmaster, Peter Roberts, on 24 April.

Ed. Headmaster, I bring the goodwill of The Association and a few questions from some members of its Committee. Firstly, a distinctive event, last term, was *West Side Story*; we thought you might like to tell OKS something of the School's plans for the Old Malthouse?

HM. Thank you, Stephen. I hope that members of the OKS are able to follow on the King's website the video on the making of *West Side Story*. We wanted to put something together about how the School approached a major production, which was seen by 6,000 people in the Marlowe Theatre. It was about how the young people approached the production and about the huge work backstage and on the music side, as it was a very demanding score for Howard and his orchestra to take on. For the whole of the King's family it was a blockbuster, and the fundamental point I would make about the Malthouse project is that next time we have a blockbuster we would love to be in our own theatre. Drama is an area of huge strength at King's.

Ed. Since the mid 1970s the School's facilities and plant have been transformed in many ways; besides giving greater facilities for drama and this very exciting Malthouse project, what are the other priority areas that need upgrading for the School?

HM. The development plan which has been built up over a number of years by the Governors, by the excellent work of my superb Bursar, Mark Taylor, many of the King's staff, and by many people within the King's family, and importantly with OKS involvement, centres not on King's being sucked into any facilities arms race of the top schools, but to build upon our existing strengths. The areas which the Development or the Master Plan focuses on besides drama, the performing arts and music, are secondly to enhance our academic provision, particularly in an area where we are already strong, which is Science, where we have a very encouraging group of 6th form girls and boys going on



Photo Matt McArdle

to do science at University, whether it's to study medicine or the pure sciences. We have really good teachers, but facilities are cramped and we want to make a statement about the academic vitality and interest of the School through a new science building and new science department. We are not absolutely sure about the location of that yet, but we must ease the pressure on some of the buildings around the Mint Yard and extend our Outreach programme with primary schools. We would like to take that further to become a centre of excellence not only for ourselves but because the remit of science teaching is under question nationally and we want to be leaders in keeping up the research and interest in science for the good of the country. Also we know that our King's girls and boys are really talented at putting across science to young people.

Ed. That sounds appropriate for William Harvey's School.

HM. We are the school of Marlowe, thinking about the Malthouse project, and we are also the school of Harvey and of Linacre. The third area which we feel is an existing strength is the diversity of sport, as well as trying to achieve really high standards in particular sports. Here the development plan has some deliverable objectives as regards to Hockey, a fantastic sport for both girls and boys, and tennis,

equally a great sport for a co-educational school, but also indoor facilities which would be useful for cricket in the winter. It is after all the school of David Gower, and that sense in which sport is really good for boys and girls, as well as the pursuit of their other interests, is part of the development plan. The final area of the development

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CANTERBURY GIFT CONCERT

On 28 April the Crypt Choir, reinforced by some thirty younger OKS, and conducted by Howard Ionascu, sang with the English Chamber Orchestra (whose first performance in Canterbury this was) in a magnificent concert in the Cathedral. An audience of just over 500 was also privileged to hear world-renowned tenor Mark Padmore, an Old Langtonian.

The Crypt Choir opened and concluded the concert with Handel : from *Zadok the Priest* to *Dixit Dominus*.

plan where we are really looking to the OKS to carry on their marvellous tradition of generosity towards to the School is building up a stronger Endowment for bursaries. We get a lot of interest from families within East Kent from backgrounds where it is financially not possible for them to consider a King's education. At the moment we are restricted to about three or four pupils coming in at Sixth Form level: we are talking about 70% - 100% bursaries, making a profound difference in some talented young people's lives. We could perhaps get that up to 10 - 15 and would love to do so. It would make the King's Sixth Form an ever more interesting and vibrant place.

Ed. If the School could manage that, it would follow through from older traditions.

HM. I would say strongly, as I did at the Legacy Lunch, that another important area as regards endowment must be the very talented musicians, like the ex-choristers that we attract from Cathedrals.

Ed. Now to move on to a couple of questions from the first decade of OKS ladies, in the late 1970s. Firstly, what do you feel is the key to success at King's in meeting the pastoral and academic needs of both sexes?

HM. I think it is important that the tradition for co-education is now a long one at King's. The longer and the harder you work at this the better you become as a school. It is not just a given, there are ways in which individual boys and individual girls learn and, as Geoff Cocksworth would quite rightly point out, the way that young people learn has hugely changed in the last ten years, owing not only to the internet and the digital revolutions, but in terms of the impact of the information culture in which they live. Now, all that means that a really good school on the academic side is looking to put huge emphasis on teaching and learning within the modern context. Added to which a good school is where the teaching faculty understands the way in which young people learn, which has changed enormously, and is able to put that teaching and learning experience within the context of how much things have changed in the Prep schools, and are changing all the time at University level. A really successful secondary school would be one which is able to keep ahead of the curve in respect of the diversity, the vitality, the interest that you have got to put across and I think the co-educational setting of King's, the way that girls and boys learn together, is very exciting. I am in my 26th year within the profession, and I know that the young people going through schools now are incredibly interesting, open-minded, full of ideas. The Common Room is based upon equality between the sexes, and so increasingly is the management of the School.

Ed. Secondly, from another member of our Committee who was one of our first girls,

in the first ever hockey team in the late 1970s. How does one ensure that King's is regarded as a properly academic school without compromising the tradition it has of providing an education in the broadest sense?

HM. The self-discipline, the quality and breadth and understanding of different situations and building up your contribution as a whole person, this is what these schools are about as much as about the academic role and those who contribute most towards this School often are the ones that do best academically. The qualities of self-discipline, really being determined to bring the best out of yourself, which you learn perhaps on the sports field or treading the boards, or in the debating chamber, or playing chess, or sailing with Richard Maltby down at Westbere, or rowing with Jon Williamson, those same skills have to be applied to your academic studies.

Ed. One of Fred Shirley's young men, as they were, has asked: "An essential part of the ethos of King's when I was there was to help the individual student, who might not necessarily be one of the most gifted, discover their talents and then help them to maximise their potential. Do you see this as part of the continuing ethos of the School?" Particularly perhaps in terms of somebody who was not one of the most gifted?

HM. I think the answer was passionately and interestingly put by Air Chief Marshal Sir John Day at the CCF OKS Military Networking Dinner in January. What he said, which I thought was absolutely spot on, is, ultimately, what gives me the most pleasure within my role as a HM, and I think it is something which Fred Shirley was very strong on, and it is when you see within your pupils and former pupils, and colleagues, the truth that it is not what the school does for you that counts, it's what you do for the school.

Ed. Now, two questions directly academic, from our past Head of Science. What are your views on the suitability of using IGCSE examinations at King's? And what are your views on the IB?

HM. As regards the IGCSE, we need to bear in mind these things. Firstly, that the top 80-100 independent and maintained Schools are academically committed to IGCSE, even if it has the effect that for Berkshire Eton is bottom of the government league tables! IGCSE syllabuses have international quality. They are not subject to government manipulation for statistics. They have got intellectual integrity. Secondly, they are hugely helpful across the subjects, particularly in Science, to give young people at 15/16 both the building blocks and the skills which they need to go on to do Science successfully at university. Or, if they are going to go on the Arts side, they will have the basic cupboard of scientific knowledge which they need for future lives in the twenty-first century.

Thirdly, all those schools have said that they will not pursue a modular approach to public examinations for 15-16s simply because you get pushed towards those Boards which are perceived as being easier than others or into a retake culture. The last thing is that IGCSE really comes from the academic departments. They see this as the best way to develop their subjects. However for some of the creative subjects, whether Music, or Drama, or CDT, there is no doubt that the best syllabuses there are, are the GCSE syllabuses.

Turning to the IB, I don't think there is any mystery there. The IB is a bit like the pre-U qualification which some other top schools have taken at A level, these are interesting intellectual disciplines. But the balance between a good academic provision at A level, leading on to good Oxbridge and university entrance to the Russell Group and the 1994 Universities, for this we should keep to the gold standard of the A Levels, because it enables the King's girls and boys in the Sixth Form to remain balanced human beings as well as successful on their pathway towards top Universities. The great thing about the A Level programme within King's is that it is challenging and they can get these astronomically high grades they need for University entrance, but at the same time have plenty of time, space and breadth for their other activities. That is not possible within IB which is all-consuming within a public examination system. Nor is it possible within Pre-U which is too academically focused into one area, and becomes a bit like hot-housing.

Ed. The next couple of questions are about games. How well can games' coaches fulfil the role of looking after school teams? And could we ever again win the Schools Head of the River Race and be in the Final of the Princess Elizabeth Cup at Henley?

HM. Yes, I hope we could. Thanks to the work of Jon Williamson, whom we attracted down from the University of Durham, we are building up the rowing again, but we need time and space because it had fallen to a low level. I think the pitch for all the sports at King's should be to try in a whole number of sports to compete with the big guns. But just as I said on the academic side, we do not want to go down the hot-housing path. That isn't what we do sport for. We do sport for two reasons. One is that we are aiming to be a leading co-educational school on the sports front, but at the same time we believe in equality and a democratic approach to sport. What really matters to me as Head is what I call the Super Saturday Scene at Birley's, which is lots of fixtures, with a co-educational feel to it. Once we have got the dimension of the Malthouse sport elements, with more tennis and more hockey over at the Malthouse, then I think that will help. But the sense in which our own parents come every week and that visiting parents enjoy coming to King's, as do the visiting staff, and we are not aiming to wipe the board

every week, it is that which matters. In a school where the individual is allowed to develop, there is not a system; the whole year group don't go and play rugby, or lacrosse. This is different from some of those schools who achieve high standards by focusing just on one sport. Some of our leading sports people at the moment are fencers, table-tennis players, sailors, horse-riders – just to take four random examples. That is a strength. They can't compete as they do at GB or European level in those disciplines unless they are given the time to develop their talent and for them to be able to do that, they can't do some of the other sports.

Ed. A young Committee member asks : does the Headmaster feel there will be a fundamental change in the types of pupils going through the system as fees continue to rise in the coming years? And can schools justify such expense (and the increases that continue to be witnessed) given the current economic climate? For that matter, does he feel parents can also justify such an expenditure to themselves?

HM. The OKS families who are concerned about this matter are absolutely right but they should know that when schools like King's are being really successful there will be strong pupil numbers, and parents will feel it is worth it. It is a remarkable phenomenon in challenging economic times that King's is getting stronger. We are sensitive to keeping any fee increases down to a minimum. Our parents are very realistic, they know that there are a lot of cost pressures on us at the moment, and the staff think it is wonderful that families do this, and they have our full support to get the maximum value out of the experience. This again puts the emphasis on building up our Endowment. We do not want to be going down the pathway of some of the top public schools which effectively have become global elite schools in the way that some of the American independent colleges or the Swiss boarding schools are.

Through the endowment side we keep the diversity of the pupil body and of the family body within King's. The more we are successful at that, the more the School will flourish because it will be going back to its origins, which is that it's a foundation independent of government and not subject to the global rich. To speak plainly to the OKS, we can only do that if we do build up our endowment. We are an historic and famous school, but we are not a rich school, and if there is one thing I will be determined to do over my time as HM for the benefit of the future generations, is to keep up the diversity amongst King's families and amongst the pupils and give my successor a school which has a very much stronger endowment.

Ed. After the economic situation it is probably difficult to talk about the political one, but the independent schools seem to have emerged successfully from the threat of charities legislation being used against

them, under the last Government. That has been lifted judicially, but now there seems to be some threat from a politicised determination to let people into the best universities on discriminatory, almost postcode, basis. In your experience have you seen this as a real pressure on our schools or is it something people fear more than is the reality?

HM. Can I deal with that question in two phases? One the Charity Commission side of it, and then the university admissions side afterwards. As regards the Charity Commission, this subject gets me absolutely raging with anger. Throughout the 26 years I have been working within the boarding school sector, one of the ideas that drives me is the idea that within the boarding schools you have got the son or daughter of a marquis alongside the son or daughter of a postman. New Labour, or whichever government of the day, cannot turn around and say their input within the Charity Commission debate has done any good at all. These are institutions which go back into the Middle Ages, which have their own sense of mission about the power and the idealism behind education, and King's as a school is incredibly attractive because of that sense of diversity within, so I get very angry about the Charity Commission. The fact that they have been completely knocked into touch and put in their place is not something I gloat over but something long and well deserved.

Ed. I was glad to have seen it happen: almost the last major speech Lord Pillington made in the House of Lords was on this very subject, he spoke very well on that and at a separate time on the Equality Act.

HM. Turning to the university matter, what newspapers or politicians, not necessarily Michael Gove, to be fair to him, forget is that at Oxbridge, Russell Group, 1994 level of University, the university tutors are teaching Higher Education in serious subjects, tough subjects, for which they want, not surprisingly, not only talented but promising people and they cannot do it by themselves. I would put my hand on my heart and say that I have never seen any discrimination against one of my pupils; if I did I would come down on it like a ton of bricks. The only time it has happened within the independent sector was in 2003, with Bristol University saying they were going to have an added quota from the maintained sector, and the independent schools boycotted them for a year and they came back into line. Secondly, and more importantly, this is about the future of the country and its higher education. We are all in the same trade as teachers, whether we are teaching here or in a grammar school in the city or teaching in one of the Academies that King's is involved in, Folkestone Academy and Marlowe Academy. Teaching, our profession, is about bringing about the best in young people. For them to go on to higher education is a noble ideal, but we

have to be realistic and sensible about its being a competitive and selective system. Just because some politicians have a problem with selection and competition, we should not hesitate to say that that is what it is about. Equally, as you say to pupils, if at university competitive interview or test you are "beaten" by someone from Folkestone Academy or Simon Langton so be it. We believe in a meritocracy, but one established on an even playing field.

Ed. And I now come to the penultimate question, one we have not touched on at all so far. King's is a distinctive, and distinguished, institution in the shadow of a greater one, the Metropolitan Church of the Anglican Communion. This great Cathedral requires £18,000 per day income to maintain the service it gives, including the cost of essential repairs. What is it like to be Headmaster here? How does it feel to be living cheek-by-jowl with the Cathedral?

HM. Wonderful, in the sense in which the Cathedral, Chapter and community are so welcoming to the School. The way in which the relationship is so intimate, the way that it feels as if you are going into the Cathedral as if it is part of the school, and yet at the same time you never lose the sense of wonder that it is special each time you enter. I think the relationship is best illustrated perhaps by the Cathedral Gift concert with current and former pupils singing alongside the English Chamber Orchestra and tenor Mark Padmore this coming weekend.

Ed. And so, finally, how do you feel the OKS Association can best serve the School and your vision for it?

HM. Being part of the King's family is the fundamental point there; I hope that all former members of the School feel that the modern, vibrant King's is very interested in OKS views about the School. I very much hope that OKS want to send their children and grandchildren to the School and feel that it is part of their ongoing relationship to take an interest in and feel part of the School. I find it terribly encouraging that OKS are so broad-minded and lovely about the way they don't want the School to be just how it was in the past. That is a hugely refreshing tribute to the attitude of the OKS community, and a sign of the freshness and special quality of the people who have fallen in love with this School.

Ed. I think we are done. Thank you very much for your time.

WEST SIDE STORY (review)

With two hugely successful musical shows under their belts (*Les Misérables* and *Cowardy Custard*), one would have thought that Graham Sinclair and Howard Ionascu might be tempted to chose a safe option as the big biennial production this year – something well within the known range of talents of the King’s pupils.

But courage underpinned the King’s production of *West Side Story*. It was brave to choose a show of such musical sophistication and complexity and brave to choose a show with such a large cast, bravest of all to do something not attempted in previous productions – dance. The practical considerations were a nightmare – King’s drama facilities do not have space enough to rehearse the dance routines, particularly for such scenes as *Dance at the Gym*, which involves virtually the whole cast. Somehow they did it, and another triumph has been added to the tradition of exceptional drama at King’s.

The story of *West Side Story* is well known – a playing out in 1950s New York of the tragedy of Shakespeare’s ‘star-crossed lovers’, in an altogether darker and more dangerous setting than *Romeo and Juliet*. The theme of disaffected youth ganging together in tribal warfare is as old as that of romantic love, and, combined as powerfully as they are here, has as much resonance for us today as in 1950s America or 16th century Verona.

Many of the messages left on the Headmaster’s Forum section of the school website remarked on how easy it was to forget that these were school pupils acting, dancing, singing and playing in the orchestra. It is almost beyond the realms of the possible that such a level of performance could be achieved by teenagers who were bound by a full academic timetable (many or most with public exams looming), as well as sporting and musical commitments. They sacrificed most of their free time and all day and evening on Sundays for a term and a half. So, as well as their exceptional talent, we must salute their commitment, enthusiasm and professionalism.

If you have seen the film or a professional stage production, you will have missed one of the essential elements of the drama – the youth of the protagonists. These are teenagers; physical, angry, emotional, headstrong, uncontrolled. Adults forget the overwhelming intensity of teenage emotions

and even the best actors cannot hope to recapture their rawness. The stars of the film version were all in their mid to late twenties when they played the parts, and lacked the dynamism, the exuberance – the divine spark – that was so evident to the audiences of the King’s production.

Graham Sinclair had the unenviable job of casting the show, and, in this, his experience and judgement proved to be as reliable as his directing was inspired. He spotted for example that a studious, self-effacing 14 year old (**Jemima Chesterfield**) had it in her to play a brilliant, sensuous Anita – something which surprised even her parents.

The sweetness and clarity of **Emily Davis**’s voice would always have put her in the running for the role of Maria, but her acting abilities more than matched her singing talent, and she gave a wonderful, touching performance. She brought to life Maria’s vulnerable yet feisty character and provoked tears in many eyes in the scene with Tony

(**Shaun Wood**) where, acting out a wedding ceremony, they sing *One Hand, One Heart*. The dynamics between them were powerful, moving and utterly convincing. Shaun conveyed Tony’s restlessness and increasing maturity extremely well (*Something’s Coming*), and even in the love scenes with Maria he possessed a manliness consistent with the respect shown him by the Jets.

The Jets and the Sharks, so impressively led by **Dimitri Gripari** (Riff, leader of the Jets) and **Elliot Evans** (Bernardo, leader of the Sharks, brother of Maria and boyfriend of Anita), have a huge impact on the pace and vitality of the production and the male cast rose wonderfully to the challenge of complex choreography in dancing and fighting. In this they were trained by **Stuart Hopps**, an extremely eminent, and, luckily for King’s, local choreographer who worked tirelessly with them and achieved the near miraculous feat of training coltish youths to a level which wouldn’t shame a professional production.





The Shark girls' scenes (*America, I Feel Pretty*) provided a welcome break from the testosterone-fuelled aggression of the gangs and brought a leavening of humour to the play. They were very convincing in their Spanishness and, like the boys, the professionalism of the dancing and singing belied their youth.

Adult characters don't feature much in *West Side Story*, but there was never any chance that **Sam Gearing**, as Glad Hand, would be overlooked. Completely out of his depth in dealing with the opposing gangs at the Rumble, Glad Hand's camp hand-flapping and ineffectual pleadings were wonderfully comic as portrayed by Sam, and provided a darkly humorous counterpoint to the mounting tension between the Jets and the Sharks. There were also excellent performances from **William Allen** as the biased Lieutenant Schrank, **Joseph Haynes** as Officer Krupke and **Patrick Demir** as the world-weary Doc, all of whom made their presence felt on stage, even amidst the energy and aggression of the gang members.

Mention must be made of the fantastic dancing and singing of the whole cast. They only had access to the Marlowe Theatre on the day before the first performance, so had practically no time to get used to the space or the acoustics. The dancing was flawless, the singing as good as one would expect from King's and their diction and projection immaculate – all a combination of natural talent, extremely hard work and brilliant direction.

The staging of *West Side Story* was as impressive as the performances. The scenery – outlines of tenement buildings, very cleverly turned round to reveal the interior of the bridal shop and Maria's bedroom in the relevant scenes – was imposing without taking the focus from the action. It did, however, provide an additional layer of difficulty for the cast, having to double as stage hands when it needing moving. The

very effective sound and lighting also represented a substantial achievement, given that the actors had to dance as well as sing and talk, and had to have microphones securely attached which would withstand the very vigorous action.

Having the costume designer and supervisor, **Simon Brett OKS**, as a house guest for the six months leading up to the performances gave me an insight into the amount of planning, work and expense which goes in to putting on a show like this of which most theatre goers are entirely ignorant. Ninety pairs of dance shoes; thirty or forty elasticated microphone belts, all hand-made; all costumes needing to fit well but allow for dancing and fighting, and all to be sorted and cleaned between shows; wigs and hairstyling needing to be designed and practised and even, in some cases, the actors needing to have their hair dyed. This was a substantial challenge for a young designer (Simon was not even 21 when he took the job on) but he had the talent and experience to do an outstanding job of it.

Last, but definitely not least, we must take our collective hat off to the members of the school orchestra, led by **Fenella Chesterfield** and conducted by **Howard**

Ionascu. They are the invisible heroes of the production, whose individual musical talents blended so perfectly that they would be welcome in any professional orchestra pit. Unlike the actors, the orchestra never has an opportunity to take a break, so for them it was a marathon of concentrated effort for *six* performances (including the dress rehearsal). Howard is much to be congratulated for inspiring and directing them.

This was the first time that the school has put on a production in the new Marlowe Theatre, where the seating capacity has now risen from 900 to 1,200. Nevertheless, every performance was sold out, with some enthusiastic parents of cast members attending every performance. Although it is obviously a great privilege to stage a school production in a city theatre, it is not without its difficulties. First and foremost is, of course, the expense. Secondly, the set designer, cast and orchestra only had access to the building the day before the first performance, and had to clear everything, including the set, immediately after the last one, working until the wee hours to do so. Additionally, the school did not have full technical control.

King's Drama has struggled manfully for years with inadequate rehearsal and performance space, and achieved miracles in spite of the lack. It is shameful in a school so renowned for its drama, and the Malthouse project is well worth supporting. Drama should be a major part of every pupil's experience at school; it teaches better than any other subject the merits of courage, co-operation, responsibility, reliability, hard work and respect for others, quite apart from the cultural benefits. The cast of *West Side Story*, interviewed after the play, were passionate about what they did and considered it to have been the most worthwhile experience of their time at King's, which really says it all.

Tricia Emlyn-Williams



CAUGHT IN THE RIOTS

Phoebe Roberts was a member of Broughton House between 2001 and 2006. She graduated from Liverpool University in 2009 and is currently working for Burberry. In August 2011 Phoebe was caught up in the London riots, and played a vital role in the ensuing clean-up.

My involvement really began when I was sent home early from work because news of the trouble had reached the office and people were worried about getting home. I got on a bus from Elephant and Castle, heading towards Peckham, where I live. The bus was hit by a rock and the driver was told to stop the journey in Camberwell rather than continue into Peckham where a bus had already been attacked. Many people on the bus were quite frightened, including parents with young children. We all had to get off the bus and into the street, where the atmosphere was quite menacing, and continue our journey to Peckham on foot. There were no police to advise people and it was odd to see so few cars and lots of people walking in the same direction, all in the middle of this increasingly unpleasant atmosphere.

I arrived home at the same time as my brother who hadn't been aware of what was going on so had gone to Brixton to buy a DVD, where he found the Currys being taken apart. We sat down to watch the news, where we remained for the rest of the evening.

I was following the unfolding events on twitter and helping a *Guardian* Journalist whom I follow to dispel myths as there was quite a lot of false video footage and rumoured disruptions that hadn't actually happened. Just after midnight Dan Thompson, whom I also follow on Twitter, suggested the idea of cleaning up. He initially put three points of contact for people to clean up in the badly-affected areas; one in Hackney, one in Notting Hill and one in Peckham. I was the designated Peckham contact so I just had to tweet the details of where to meet and be there to greet people who wanted to help out when they showed up. I also tweeted to other people I followed to get them to spread the word, which happened in the case of Dan Walker and John Prescott, which was great as they have loads of followers. I then

realised that while the [@riotcleanup](#) was very well intentioned, everything might be a crime scene and the police/council might not want help so I called the police at 1am to advise them about our plans. They said they were too overwhelmed to deal with non-emergencies and that I should call back at 5, which I did. I let them know what was happening, following which I received calls from loads of the London police stations, and in fact the MET Special Branch (which was a bit scary) but they all condoned what was happening so it went ahead.

When I arrived outside Peckham Library at 7.30am it was just the Southwark council street cleaner and me for about 10 minutes, but thankfully then lots of people started to arrive. We did a lot of sweeping and helped shop owners who were very upset by making phone calls and getting police attention. Everything was cleaned up by 9.30.

(Phoebe was in conversation with **Charlie Lyons** LN 2002-07)

The Prayer Book Society: Promoting the 1662 Book of Common Prayer

I have had a profound love of the Book of Common Prayer since childhood, which has continued and deepened as the years have progressed. What began as an attraction to beautiful language, and to the ancient and enduring as opposed to the new-fangled and transitory, evolved into a recognition that the Book of Common Prayer is the most solid and authentic expression of Anglican Christianity, whose own internal logic (if one takes it seriously) admits of no half-heartedness. The words are not only beautiful, but also starkly un-minced, in an age in which the mincing of words (perhaps especially in the Church of England) is the norm.

I was in my mid-twenties when (aware that the Book of Common Prayer was under threat) I first became actively involved with the Prayer Book Society, the national Charity which exists to promote and preserve the use and understanding of the Book of Common Prayer, eventually becoming its fourth national Chairman in 2006. I have also been a member of the General Synod since 2000, which has been

invaluable in making contacts and learning how the church operates in terms of its internal structures and decision making processes.

What I have learned is that, paradoxically, things are getting both better and worse for the Prayer Book. The Prayer Book Society was founded in 1972—this year is our Ruby Jubilee—when it seemed likely that the Book of Common Prayer might be swept away by the tide of liturgical reform. The Prayer Book became deeply unfashionable, even despised; it was widely assumed that it would die out with those who grew up with it, and hard-core liturgical modernisers made it their business to work towards this end. Study of both the doctrinal foundation and the practical use of the Prayer Book was rooted out from theological college syllabi, and new clergy were taught to regard it as a historical footnote with little relevance to present-day worship.

Now, in 2012, the landscape looks very different. The Church of England has become consciously postmodern, affirming



choice and diversity in a 'mixed economy of worship', with the old and the new coexisting. The visceral hostility to the Book of Common Prayer has gone, and the Church of England's Liturgical Commission—once regarded by supporters of the Prayer Book as the enemy—now consider the Prayer Book Society to be a 'partner organisation'. To be sure, the 'mixed economy' model is much at variance with the view (which most members of the Prayer Book Society would tend to hold) of the Book of Common Prayer as a complete

spiritual system; but in practice, we live in the real world, and this model does enable us to co-operate with the Church hierarchy.

At the same time, partly because of pressures on the syllabus and partly because of residual 'old attitudes' in some places, the Book of Common Prayer remains largely excluded from most formal theological training. As a result, far too many ordinands emerge from training with scant knowledge of the Book of Common Prayer, and are consequently often reluctant, especially initially, to use it in their subsequent parishes. Much of the work of the Society is therefore currently focused on ordinands and younger clergy,

many of whom are encouragingly enthusiastic about the Prayer Book.

This year is, of course, the 350th anniversary of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, and the Society is taking the opportunity to raise awareness of the Prayer Book. We were especially encouraged that the Archbishop of Canterbury made extensive reference to the 1662 anniversary in his Christmas sermon.

Happily, today's King's pupils are in excellent spiritual hands under the present Senior Chaplain, the Revd Fredrik Arvidsson, who is the Prayer Book Society's Youth Officer. (Readers of *Offcuts* may have heard him leading Prayer Book Matins from

King's on Radio 4's Sunday Worship at the beginning of Lent this year, with the Archbishop preaching.) Fred Arvidsson's work demonstrates just how effective and relevant the Book of Common Prayer can be in nurturing the faith of young people, and is an exemplar which the whole Church should take seriously.

Prudence Dailey (MT 1982–84)

The Book of Common Prayer: Past, Present and Future, edited by Prudence Dailey, is a collection of essays in celebration of the 350th anniversary of 1662 (Continuum, 22nd September 2011, ISBN 9781441128188). One of the essays in the book is by Fredrik Arvidsson, Senior Chaplain of King's.

IN MEMORIAM: SIR ROBERT HORTON (1939-2011) (Forrens, WL, LN, 1952-57)

Sir Robert Horton, former Chairman of BP and Railtrack, a Governor of King's from 1983-2005 and Chairman of the Legacy Club, died on 30 December 2011. The Thanksgiving Service was held at St. Andrew's, South Stoke (Oxon) on 9 January and was conducted by The Revd Canon Dr Anthony Phillips (Headmaster 1986-96). His Address and that by Rabbi Julia Neuberger may be found verbatim in *For the Record*; extracts from the first Address, by Bryan Sanderson, and a personal tribute by Paul Pollak follow.

Bob was a truly remarkable man endowed with so many talents. A great leader whose energy and ambition, always tempered by Sally's unwavering support, would have taken him to the top of any institution. It was BP's good fortune that he resisted the allure of politics and other attractions for a career in the company. I joined a few years after him in the early '60s and watched his progression over thirty years.

To provide context to those of you who weren't around, BP in those days was run like a giant civil service department, thousands of staff in Head Office operating in a rigid hierarchy of departments, divisions, branches etc. Progress was measured by whether or not your office had a carpet and whether your afternoon tea was brought in on a tray. In to one part of this suffocating corporate anthill, the delightfully named Procurement Branch, stepped what would now be called a 'change agent' – Bob. A bundle of energy wearing as I remember the most appalling red braces. He must have been about 25 or 26 at that time but already possessed a combination of vision, self-confidence and charm which swept him through doors

which were firmly closed to most of us. It was immediately obvious to all that he was going to make a difference.

BP, to their credit, had the wit to see that he was special and selected him to go to MIT to learn about and to bring home the latest American management practices (very dark arts in Britain in those days). He finished top of his year and not only took on techniques and skills he later put into practice but developed an abiding admiration of the U.S. and in particular its drive and optimism about the future. This optimism and lack of cynicism did of course fit well with Bob's own character.

It is not the place to go through every stage of his career but there were few sectors where he did not leave his mark. There was for example his spell as Head of BP Shipping, a massive fleet billed at one stage as second in size only to the U.S. Navy. It was beautifully painted and a source of great pride but could no longer compete with cheaper chartered shipping with foreign crews. It was then Bob developed a taste for slaughtering sacred cows – and saved the shareholders millions. He was subsequently to apply the same remorseless logic elsewhere, most notably in BP Chemicals where he made big strides into converting a hodge-podge of acquired bits and pieces into a homogeneous company.

These tasks and the whole process of modernising BP and turning it into a commercial entity were often not attractive management jobs or in some areas popular. It was perhaps his most notable attribute at the time that he accomplished them by developing a vision for the future and then using his highly developed political skills and undoubted charm to explain what had

to be done and how to get there. All these presentational skills were fully tested later. Firstly, at a very young age, in his mid 40s, Bob was elected to the Main Board and was able to give full vent to his strategic acumen with responsibility for Finance Planning & North America.

North America was critical to the Group. BP had taken majority ownership of SOHIO : Standard Oil of Ohio; the original Rockefeller company with its roots and staff deeply embedded in U.S. culture and the Mid-West in particular. I remember sitting in Bob's Cleveland office looking at Rockefeller's diary.

The culture did not welcome the arrival of a foreign multi-national. It started to go badly wrong, with an expensive rival Head Office and parallel organisation. Bob was asked to resign from the BP Board and go over there to sort it out. No easy task and certainly very high risk for him personally. Many would have stayed at home, comfortable as a Director of Britain's biggest company. Not Bob, he hit the U.S. like a tornado.

He seemed to clone himself. He was everywhere, not just re-organising SOHIO but setting an example for the regeneration of Cleveland itself. He gave high profile support to the orchestra, baseball, schooling and even a Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame. Using all his political skills, he projected all this to such effect that he was described by the local press as the best city mayor in the U.S. The Americans loved him, his leadership and his big personality.

In all these areas and later in Railtrack Bob undertook extremely difficult but necessary

Continues on page 8



Sir Robert Horton

business tasks. Unlike many others, he never closed his eyes to the human and societal consequences of all these actions. His approach always exemplified the compassionate conservatism of his Bow Group youth.

I can hear him telling me to stop now and deliver the three main points. Here they are then, Bob. I will remember:

- Your integrity
- Your courage
- Your humanity and concern for those less fortunate in society

Thank you Bob for all that you taught us. You provided example and leadership at a critical period, you will be greatly missed. Our hearts go out to Sally, Simon, Ruth and all your family.

Bryan Sanderson

Early in the Summer Term 1952 I was sitting in my deckchair by the side of the open-air swimming-pool on Blore's. I was supervising a 'General Bathe' – an unstructured recreational affair. The essential requirement of the supervising master was that he should not be allowed anywhere near cricket. In addition, when a boy at King's in Cornwall, I had obtained the Bronze Medallion of the Royal Life Saving Institution, thanks to Harold Goodburn's unusual enthusiasms. Had a General Bather in difficulties been like a dinner-plate at the bottom of the pool, I could have coped.

Among the boys in the pool on that occasion was one who looked both uneasy and determined. I knew his name was Horton (no soppy Christian names then) because, unlike most newly elected King's Scholars, he'd joined the school early, in

May, and not the following September: so he stood out. He looked uneasy because it was necessary, for some health reason, that water should not enter one of his eyes: and this the others regarded as a challenge. He looked determined because he was not going to give up his bathe. I dealt with the situation in my usual way, leaping about in a rage at the water's edge. It worked and 'Horton' became a regular attender. That is how Robert and I first met.

His first House was The Forrens (now part of the Priory classrooms), a Waiting House for boys for whom there was no immediate vacancy in their senior House. The Housemaster was Humphrey Osmond, who in 1953 became the first Housemaster of Linacre. Robert had by then spent a year or so in Walpole but, probably at Humphrey's request, he was chosen to become one of the founder-members of Linacre. Canon Shirley, too, was keen to populate the fledgeling House with a superior ensemble.

I next came across Robert in the Sixth Form, where he was among the mathematical specialists. He had a very good brain but mathematics was for him a means to practical ends. I doubt if, unlike the ancient Greeks, he was too bothered that the side of a square and its diagonal were incommensurable. He passed his A levels in 1956 and although he did not leave King's till the next year he did not sit that examination again – possibly a rare failure of Canon Shirley's strategy for the School's academic glory. Nor did Robert follow the conveyor-belt to Oxford or Cambridge: he went, with a studentship, to Queen's College, Dundee, a part of St. Andrews University, to read Applied Science. Canon Shirley's summary on Robert's record card

reads 'Very good; serious-minded; reliable'. It could have added 'knows his own mind; is determined; has a career strategy.'

Robert's great achievements in the next 40 years will, I imagine, be recorded by other contributors to these memories. The allusive language of heraldry attended to some of them when, following his knighthood in 1997, he obtained a coat of arms with the help and advice of his King's School contemporary Hubert Chesshyre (till recently Clarenceux King of Arms). Certain tadpole-shaped features refer to drops of oil, an echo of BP rather than of emollition; heavy bars recall British Rail sleepers; a Cornish chough, Becket and Canterbury (and the University of Kent where Robert was Chancellor 1990-95). His chosen motto, *Vires ratione gubernet* (May power direct through reason), suavely blends idealism with realism.

Robert's interests and knowledge beyond industry and public affairs meant that he and I never lost contact in those years. He was a very well-informed collector of rare books, especially those of the Aldine Press. Characteristically, their appeal – beauty apart – lay in their practical format: the Penguins of the new learning. He served on the Development Committee of the Bodleian Library at Oxford. When, as school archivist, I needed some manuscripts there looked at, or some other bit of botheration, a word from Robert in the appropriate ear accelerated the search wondrously.

Perhaps I came to know Robert best when he and his dear wife Sally used to invite me to stay with them, for a few days, in Venice. 'We usually rent a palazzo in the spring and early summer – would you like to come?' And proper palazzi they were – on the Grand Canal, with stripy mooring poles and all. One of them had a 'back door', flanked by twisted Solomonic columns and big enough for a double-decker bus to pass through. Returning there, perhaps after a visit to Torcello (a favourite excursion), one naturally shared their satisfaction with the signori: 'Be it never so humble, there's no place like home.'

In Venice, Robert was at ease (although he still had his BlackBerry with him), responding to its beauty, pleased that he knew it so well: he and Sally the most generous and fun-bestowing hosts. That is how I, and many others, will remember him: a many-sided and very dear friend.

Paul Pollak

(MO 1941-44, Common Room 1950-88, Second Master)

BRUSHED BY MOMENTOUS EVENTS (ONE)

Two near-contemporaries in Cornwall have evocative but differing memories of the later years of the War and of Monty's visits.

John Allchurch (SH 1943-48), KS, became a School Monitor and Head of House, Captain of Athletics, represented both the 1st XI and the 1st XV for two years, and won an Open Exhibition in History to St. Edmund Hall. (It is no disparagement to add that this was early in the long history of RW Harris's pupils winning History Awards.) The pace-stick he was awarded (a considerable achievement) on passing out of Mons OCTU in 1949 ('Scots Guard pipe band playing at the passing-out parade') is now awarded annually to the most promising CCF cadet. After a varied career he owned and ran a successful recruitment company in the West Midlands.

Paul Pollak (MO 1941-44) was Senior Scholar, Vice-Captain of School, and won a Demyship in Maths to Magdalen College, Oxford. He returned to teach at King's from 1950-88.

We were privileged to receive their respective letters.

To The King's School, Canterbury
Reading *For the Record* No. 13 (with *Offcuts* No. 33, September 2011), I find to my amazement an error of dating. Archives Page 11 records grateful thanks to several OKS including Godfrey Holliday's press cuttings relating to Montgomery's 1944 visit to the School.

How I have dined out on my memories of that occasion, when Monty commenced his "lecture" with the words: "I will now tell you how I won the Battle of El Alamein". That was not in 1944 – by which time he was in the "Falaise Gap" in France. His visit was the year before the invasion of June 5-6 1944. Which I also remember, for on June 5 I sat at my desk in the School House Hall of the hotel in Cornwall and watched the continuous fleets of ships going up the Channel. That night we were all kept awake in our rooms by the incessant noise of the planes going up the Channel. We had guessed that something was up for on the beach below, or rather to the left of the school as you faced the Channel, all the US Army had been practising invasion exercises for at least two weeks.

Yours sincerely,

John R Allchurch, OKS

PS Fred appointed me a scholar for one week, having in June 1948 been luckily awarded a Scholarship to S.E.H. Oxford – but I was Captain of School House 1947/48, at the end of my five years. Look me up in the School annals – a jockstrap career.

In a second letter, John Allchurch writes: "El Alamein was our first victory in the war and after that, apart from the "Bridge too

far", we never lost. I must say that not so long ago I was at that bridge and wept. Of OKS I've visited (Philip) Snoxall in Oz – with all his family over 6'6". Met him at St. Edmund Hall, another colonial boy, from Prince of Wales School in Nairobi." [Philip Snoxall, LX 1946-50; brother of Derek Snoxall, LX 1946-52; uncle of Justin Snoxall, GR 1975-79 and of Sarah Snoxall, GR 1979-81; great-uncle of Annabel Snoxall, HH 2006-11].

"I was sorry not to have met Kneller before his passing – I asked his advice by letter about visiting the land of my birth (Kenya), he said, "If you have happy memories, DON'T", though we did make the German colony of Tanganyika (War reparations in 1919?)".

In response,

Dear Editor,

Thank you for giving me sight of John Allchurch's interesting letter.

'What is truth? said jesting Pilate' – and Francis Bacon reported that he 'would not stay for an answer.' It is a very good question for archivists who, however, must not scuttle.

That General (as he then was) Montgomery visited the School (and St. Edmund's, our wartime mate) on 25th March 1944, at Carlyon Bay in Cornwall, is well attested. If John cares to look at p. 100 in his *Imps of Promise* (surely he has a copy?) he will see Montgomery signing the Visitors' Book, on a conveniently positioned King's School boy, some St. Edmund's boys also looking on, and, of course, Canon Shirley. In the School archives, among many memorabilia of that visit, is the pennant from Montgomery's staff car, which he presented to the School; also a photograph of him, the St. Edmund's headmaster, and Canon Shirley, striding from the 'Parry': it is Canon Shirley who has the pennant in his grip.

There are two strange aspects of this visit. First, how was someone in Montgomery's position able to spend two days (he stayed overnight) away from HQ when D-Day

wasn't far off? Second, how can it be that an intelligent (nearly) 14 year-old ('nearly' refers to the age) did not embed this in his memory – a visit to his School by, next to Churchill, the greatest hero of that wartime? It has been suggested that Montgomery's visit was part of a big scheme to mislead the enemy about the imminence of D-Day; and even that it was a 'double' who impersonated Montgomery. Had any of this been so, it would surely have emerged in post-war reminiscences; and the 'double' would have had to be brilliantly trained, down to tricks of speech and imitations of handwriting, with subsequent bread-and-butter letters to keep up the deception. More likely is that Montgomery, as he himself said about Alamein, having done what needed to be done by way of planning the action, 'retired to his caravan' and didn't fret: to mislead any spy-observers would have been a bonus. I cannot explain the second strange aspect.

John can still dine out on his reminiscence – if he didn't hear Monty in Cornwall he may have done so when the Field Marshal, as he became, visited King's in Canterbury, which he did for the Cathedral Service of Thanksgiving for the School's safe return from Cornwall. He read the Lesson. He also, at least once, spoke to the School in the Chapter House, having first told 'the Press' to leave – his revelations were too sensitive to go beyond King's School boys' ears.

The visit I recall most clearly was one after John's time at King's – sometime in the early 1950s. Montgomery spoke to us in the Parry (the real one, not its namesake the Cornish garage) and, indeed, it was about Alamein. He had a blackboard on an easel and coloured chalks, and 'Rommel was here', 'I was there' etc. When the talk and questions were over, and the Field Marshal gone, this historic diagram was simply rubbed off, and the blackboard returned to its normal use. That didn't strike me as odd, in the slightest. Another one for Pilate.

Yours faithfully,
Paul Pollak (MO 1941-44)



The OKS Military Networking Dinner



Air Chief Marshal Sir John Day, Patrick Clews, Hamish Courtauld Giles Dean

On Thursday, 26th January OKS and King's CCF pupils arrived at the Regimental Headquarters of the London Scottish Regiment for the first OKS Military Networking Dinner. The evening was open to OKS who were members of the armed forces or who had retired from service in

the armed forces, as well as King's pupils who intended on a career in the armed forces. As it was held at the London Scottish Regimental Headquarters the evening had a distinctly Burns' Night theme, including Haggis and Piper. Major Stuart Young of the London Scottish Regiment kindly and expertly toasted the Haggis, which was piped in and out by the Regiment's Pipe Major. Dinner was concluded with speeches by the Headmaster, Peter Roberts, and also **Air Chief Marshal Sir John Day** (WL 1961-64) who inspired both OKS and CCF pupils alike with an account of his RAF career. The evening finished with drinks in the Officers' Mess Bar.



The OKS would like to thank **Lt Col Marc Overton** (BR 1983-88), Officer Commanding of the London Scottish Regiment, for hosting such a wonderful and entertaining evening.

Kirsty Mason, OKS Coordinator

Wartime Memorabilia

Those OKS who have been following the day-by-day series in the *Daily Telegraph* ("Singapore is being defended by very experienced Imperial troops, and will not be surrendered") may have picked up references earlier this year to two OKS of the time.

A strike at Betteshanger Colliery cost the war effort 20,000 tons of coal, and it was **A.K. Mowll** (KSC 1890-94) who prosecuted its leaders on behalf of the Ministry of Labour and National Service. The Mineworkers' Branch Secretary received a sentence of two months' hard labour and two of his colleagues a month each; of the three men, two were Deal councillors. (24.1.42)

In the House of Commons on 17 February 1942, **Sir Cuthbert Headlam** (KSC 1890-93), MP for Newcastle North, criticised the BBC's propaganda, saying that there was great harm done by the "silly rude things said about Hitler and his gang." (18.2.42)

PUBLICATIONS

The next *Offcuts* will appear in mid-Autumn and subsequently it will be published twice per year.



Left: AGM – Charlotte Pragnell (OKS Vice-President) & James Bartlett (OKS President)

BRUSHED BY MOMENTOUS EVENTS (TWO)

John Drew (LN 1952-57) wrote to express thanks “for including a notice of my modest little booklet about a wartime cricket match” in *For the Record* No. 14 but more particularly about memories “occasioned by the death of my Linacre contemporary, **Jeremy Paul Roche**, the actor” and also by the success at the Swan Theatre, Stratford of **Oliver “Orf” Davies**, the “second of a trio of talented professional actors (along with Jeremy and **Ian Thompson**) who once together graced Linacre House and School productions in Fred’s time.” Following on from the brief review of **John Butler**’s book, *The Red Dean*, in the January *Offcuts*, this is an insider’s account of the celebrated petition to **Dr. Hewlett Johnson** in 1956.

THE KING’S SCHOOL PETITION TO THE RED DEAN, 1956

In all the penny newspapers I was quite shocked to see
A long harangue against our Dean,
professedly signed by me.
But I swear I didn’t sign it, this article obscene,
This vile and cheap attack upon Our President, the Dean.
Are God and Russia then at strife
and crypto-communists?
Surely in all this universe some compromise exists
Where God can keep his court amid cold, swirling, darkling mists
And leave a little outpost here where tolerance persists?
He’s Our Dean, the Red Dean, and when the R.D. dies
I hope to see a thousand tears well from a thousand eyes
For one who held his principles through venom and the lies
Of the obscurantist leaders in the Councils of the Wise.

David Buchan (GR, 1956)

A recent biography of the Red Dean of Canterbury makes one of those slips of pen that bedevil all who write. It mentions that in November 1956 300 boys at the King’s School, Canterbury signed a petition deploring the refusal of the Dean, Chairman of the School Governors, to condemn the Russian invasion of Hungary. Actually 186 boys signed. The slip is so minor it would not be noticed - except

perhaps by someone who had tramped round the Cathedral Precincts to get the signatures.

There was a great deal of concern everywhere in Europe as the Russians sent their tanks into Hungary in the autumn of 1956 to depose the reform Communist leader, Imre Nagy, and so many Hungarians, having bravely fought to stop them, poured over the Austrian border. Oliver (Ford) “Orf” Davies, the well-known actor, drafted the text of a petition that was put together by several sixth-formers in Linacre House (neighbouring on the Deanery). I still have that draft, with amendments suggested (I believe) by the **Headmaster, “Fred” Shirley**, since (having rewritten it in clearer handwriting) it was I who, with **Paul Niblock**, had to collect the signatures and deliver it to the Dean.

We got a good response to our petition until we reached the Grange, where we were rather nonplussed to run into quite a number of boys who refused to sign. Grange was something of a warren of dissidents (though the avant-garde composer Cornelius Cardew had left by then) and it was typical that when the History Master, **Ralph Blumenau**, wrote an impassioned editorial for the *Cantuarian* at the end of term beginning: “Hungary bleeds...” and dealing with the rape of Hungary, the Grange House Newsletter came back with a parody: “Grange House bleeds...” bewailing the theft of the house bath plugs.

Facetiousness aside, at the time of the petition David Buchan spoke for others in Grange (and perhaps elsewhere in the school) when he wrote the poem celebrating the dear old Dean and excoriating those who did him down. David was perhaps the one boy who could out-face Fred during daily Assembly in the Chapter House (Fred later spoke of the way that while all the other boys had their heads bowed in prayer or prep or a penny dreadful, David alone stared unflinchingly ahead). David saw better than I did that the petition was as much the outcome of a battle going on between Fred and the Dean as between the two sides in the Cold War.

I was naively unaware of Precincts politics and was actually nervous of missing Sunday Matins in the Cathedral, as Paul and I had

to on account of delivering the petition to the Dean. The Dean was charming and, with his wife Nowell in attendance, sat us down to a salutary lesson in 20th century history, spiced with personal reminiscence. He did regret that the situation in Hungary had come to an armed intervention but he reminded us that, as we spoke, Britain and France were still acting in a 19th century imperialist style by attacking Egypt in Suez. The Dean left us with plenty to think about and ended by regretting, in a memorable metaphor, that an Iron Curtain had been erected between him and the boys at the King’s School.

I soon had more to be nervous about. My father was News Editor of Beaverbrook’s *Sunday Express* and, after I had told him that the boys were upset by the Dean’s refusal to condemn the Russian invasion of Hungary, he had sent a reporter down to the school on the Saturday to find out what was happening. An (accurate) report of the petition appeared in the paper the next day (November 18th) under the banner headline: BOYS OF THE UPPER SIXTH REBUKE THE RED DEAN.

I went out on a family exeat to Folkestone that day, blissfully unaware that reporters from every national newspaper except the *Daily Worker* were descending on the Precincts to follow up the story, eleven accounts appearing on the Monday (with a couple in local papers later in the week). I returned in the evening to hear that Fred wanted to see Paul and me. Fred appeared to be furious, though I now suspect (apart from snobbery about the gutter press) he was only rattled not to be in total control of a scenario that was (in fact) unfolding much as he would have wanted it to.

Paul and I returned from the dressing-down by Fred to face our tall, bespectacled and slightly gawky house-master at Linacre, **Humphrey Osmond**, and apologize to him for the disturbance to his day he had experienced. To our surprise, dry as he usually was, he said it had all been rather fun. Good old Humph, bless him.

Fred got **Miss Milward**, his secretary and very much right-hand woman, to write a stinker to my father for dragging the name of the school through the Press in a way likely to put off prospective parents from choosing the school. My father replied,

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Continued from page 11

repudiating the charge with his usual aplomb and good humour. His schooling had been in the world of newspapers and he could respect, without deference, both the Headmaster and the Dean. He recognized that King's had been transformed under Fred – academically, aesthetically and athletically – and he also had a healthy regard for the Red Dean's take on Christianity, often referring to his work in Manchester and his record of being one of the first to go and take a look at Red Russia and Red China. (I have a picture of him talking with the Dean on the Green Court the following summer.)

Years later, after the fall of the Iron Curtain, I was appointed British Council lecturer in British Studies at ELTE, the University of Budapest. Among other things, I organized a lecture series at the university whereby distinguished Hungarians who fled Hungary in 1956 and became British citizens told their stories, based on the theme of being Inside Two Cultures. By then, having visited Plot 301, the grave of Imre Nagy, I had a far greater appreciation of Hungarian history and

understood that, while the 1956 refugees feared the return of a Rakosi-style Communist reign of terror, the Dean was haunted by the even more dreadful oppression of the Fascist thugs in 1944. Each day in Budapest I waited for my bus home across from the building where, in their District XIV HQ, the Arrow Cross mashed in the faces of those who had bravely hidden Jews. The events of 1944 and 1956 are as alive today in Hungary as are those of the 1848 uprisings R.W. "Duffy" Harris made central to his lectures to us on European history.

Two footnotes for the record

As it happens, it wasn't long before the school was ready to swallow its distaste for the grubby world of Fleet Street. **Simon Stuart**, an English teacher at King's, was being blackmailed in the Precincts by a boy called Jimmy with whom he had had a relationship when he'd taught in the East End. Ultimately he was forced to take the matter to court, as grave a decision for him as it had been for Wilde. The school learned that *The Times*, the one posh paper they respected, had decided to put a name

to Mr X. Miss Milward urged my father to use his good offices to have the name suppressed, although in the event he could do nothing. Stuart, I might add, was the most inspirational teacher I have ever encountered, able to make Chaucer and Shakespeare live for the bright and the "blogos" alike.

Two further words about Fred. At some later point, Fred became concerned about an unjustly hierarchical pay structure for clergy and my father took him out for a meal in London to discuss the matter with a view to publishing a story on the subject. Somewhere I have an amusing thank you letter to my father from Fred expressing surprise on finding that the train he caught home took him to Whitstable, from which he had to take a taxi back to Canterbury. Later still, when my young wife and I were living in a one-room flat in Ebury Street, I had an equally whimsical letter from Fred noting the elegance of the address and saying that he had known a novelist called Filson Young who lived there and owed him money.

John Drew (LN 1952-57)

Oliver Ford Davies (LN 1952-57) - A Tribute

"No player matched face, voice and gesture more perfectly than Oliver Ford Davies as Mercutio. Indeed his was one of the finest and most vital performances yet seen. His Queen Mab speech really did cast a spell and his death scene was almost unbearable." (*The Cantuarian*, August 1955)

These words have haunted me for coming up 60 years and over many of those I have been proud to watch him as he has eased into an outstanding presence in British Theatre and Television. Those words were in the review of *Romeo and Juliet* in the Summer of 1955. I was 14, in my second term at King's, and was thrust into the limelight by being chosen to play Romeo.

Two years later and ... "Oliver Ford Davies did much to fill the part of Sir Toby Belch with a full measure of boisterous, good natured roistering. He did much to keep the action of the sub-plot alive." For the second time at King's, as Orsino then, I "trod the boards" with the finest actor the school had had and inevitably a career in theatre seemed a foregone conclusion. Not so.

Years later, I had never seen Oliver "live" in the theatre. I had been unable to get to his highly praised *Lear*, a play that taxes the great, and the reviews he received made the disappointment even more telling. So, when a new play by David Edgar, *Written on the Heart* (well outside Edgar's usual genre) was performed at the Swan Theatre a trip to Stratford was inevitable.

We met after the performance. My wife Juliet and I were riveted by the play and the tour de force by the whole cast. The play tells the dramatic story of the translation of God's word into English. Powerful, piteous, heart-rending choices faced Oliver as Bishop Lancelot Andrewes (who weaves his way through the cleverly-staged flashbacks and searing choices of conscience). It took me back to some of the rich sermons from "Fred" as well as the agonies of growing up in a Cathedral environment.

And we talked. He of the eventual inevitability of a stage career after some years teaching. The realisation that his personal strengths made him more and

more attractive for the greater parts in theatre. We talked, too, of Jeremy Roche with whom he and both their families had a life-long friendship. Jeremy died early last year.

Oliver is 2-3 years ahead of me in age. His energy, gentle wisdom, and generous nature will keep him in the forefront of British acting for years ahead.

There is a chance that *Written on the Heart* will come to London. Hopefully OKS galore will seek it out. Not just for an outstanding play but for an outstanding OKS. Queen Mab cast her spell those years ago – Deo Gratias.

Anthony Austin (GR 1955-59)

[*Written on the Heart* began its London run at the Duchess Theatre on 19 April. In his *Spectator* review, Lloyd Evans wrote: "Ford Davies commands an amazing treasure-house of stage effects. He has the geniality of Santa Claus, the solemnity of Moses and the comic timing of Kenneth Williams"].

Unknown OKS 8: Bradford Smith Hoskins (1832-63): Volunteer

Bradford Smith Hoskins was the son of the Revd William Edward Hoskins, Rector of St Alphege's. He entered the King's School in 1843, but it is not known when he left. He joined the British army, becoming an ensign in the 65th Light Infantry in 1852. He soon transferred to the 44th regiment and served in the Crimean War. Hoskins was at the Battles of the Alma and Inkerman, and at the siege of Sebastopol. He observed the administrative inadequacies of the campaign, which he attributed to "the listlessness which from so long a peace had been allowed to pervade the Home Department". He retired as a half pay Captain in 1855.

One side effect of the War was the creation of the Volunteer Force. Hoskins was an enthusiastic supporter, and in 1860 put this enthusiasm into practice by joining the "little band of 600 English Volunteers who, anxious to 'follow to the field some warlike lord', placed their rifles and services at the disposal of the champion of liberty" – i.e. Garibaldi. He participated in the campaign in Naples, and in particular the siege of Capua, and described himself as 'Major on the staff of the Army of the South of Italy'. The experience reinforced his views on the

value of volunteers: "if these men will act thus in a foreign country and under every disadvantage of being hastily brought together, almost strangers to each other and to their own officers, what will they not do when fighting in defence of their native land?"

Hoskins then moved to Canada, where he wrote a pamphlet – *A Few Thoughts on Volunteering* – which included some reflections on his own experiences in the Crimea and Italy. Looking for further adventure, perhaps, he joined Mosby's

Confederate Rangers in the American Civil War. Hoskins apparently wore his British red coat, and although the commander insisted that his men carried revolvers, Hoskins only had a sabre in his hand when he was shot in a skirmish at Grapewood Farm, Virginia on 30 May 1863. He died the following day and was buried in the nearby Greenwich Presbyterian churchyard. There is a fine monument to him there.

This photograph of Captain Hoskins was taken in 1861. It is reproduced by courtesy of the McCord Museum, Montreal (McCord I-01-.1)



This edition of *Offcuts* has been produced at the King's School Press by **Lee Rigley**. OKS publications are dealt with by **Sue Wittich** and all features and photographs for *Offcuts* or information for inclusion in *For the Record* should be sent to her: s.wittich@kings-bursary.co.uk, Tel: 01227 595778.

Both *Offcuts* and *For the Record* are edited by **Stephen Woodley** (Common Room 1969-98), who is indebted to **Paul Pollak**, **Peter Henderson** and to all the OKS and Foundation Staff.

David Copperfield and other Fictional OKS

In the Charles Dickens bi-centenary year, it may be appropriate to remind ourselves that **David Copperfield** came to school in Canterbury. It is easy to imagine that “the grave building in a court-yard, with a learned air about it” is indeed the King’s School. The similarities between the matrimonial misfortunes of David’s headmaster Dr Strong and of John Birt (Headmaster 1816-32) are also striking. The author himself was clear and firm in his denial, however. In a letter to J.S. Sidebotham (KS 1843-48), dated 24 November, 1865, he wrote: “allow me to assure you that I never was at the King’s School, Canterbury; and that if there be any resemblance between David Copperfield’s Doctor Strong and the Doctor Birt whom you mention, it must be purely accidental, inasmuch as I never before heard of the existence of the last-named gentleman.”

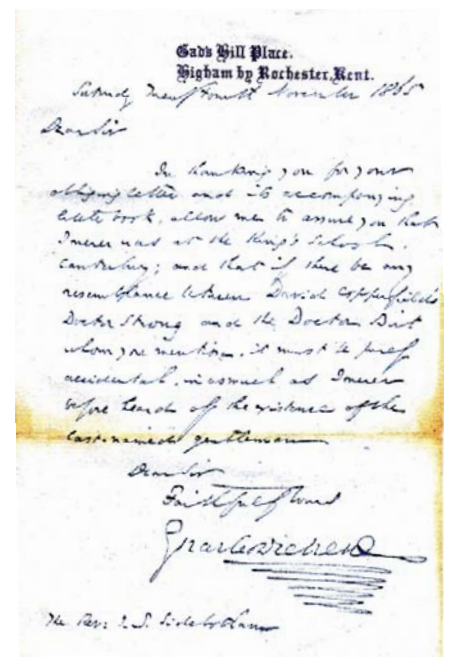
Many other fictional OKS can be more definitely identified. It should not be a surprise, for example, that OKS authors should have drawn on their own experience at school in their novels, though the School is generally given a pseudonym. **Emerald Uthwart** in the novella of that name (1892) is the alter ego of Walter Pater (KS 1853-58). **Philip Carey** in *Of Human Bondage* (1915) comes to ‘The King’s School, Tercanbury’, and Somerset Maugham (KS 1885-89) does little to disguise people and places. Maugham also used the surname of a schoolfellow in his stories about the spy **John Ashenden**. *The Cathedral* (1922) by Hugh Walpole’s (KS 1896-98) opens: “**Adam Brandon** was born at Little Empton in Kent in 1839. He was educated at the King’s School, Canterbury, and at Pembroke College, Cambridge.” **Jeremy Cole** is perhaps another Walpolean example. *Jeremy at Crale* (1927) could be seen as a very imaginative version of the writer’s time at Canterbury, and the character of the old boy **Potshorn** is a portrait of his friend John Kettelwell (KS 1904-09). *Mr Perrin and Mr Traill* (1911), however, came out of Walpole’s time as a teacher at Epsom College.

Arll, Batchelor, Flight, Randall and others – it’s surnames only in the 1920s – turn up in *Seventeen* (1930) by Alaric Jacob (KS 1922-25). The author noted in the introduction to this book: “*Seventeen* bears

its name because it is by a seventeen-year-old about seventeen-year-olds.” Jacob’s novel is thus of unusual interest as a contemporary picture of life in the ‘Commoners’ Yard’ at ‘Furlington’ in the 1920s. His account can be compared with Jacob’s later autobiography *Scenes from a Bourgeois Life* (1949) in which the School appears as ‘Cheriton’. More recent examples are **James Bishop** (and his friend **Shag Lawrence**) in *Cathedral* (1992) by Ian Maitland (GR, LN 1949-54) and **Matthew Smollett** in *Breathless Hush* (1974) by John Batchelor (GL 1955-60). Some pupils (boys and girls, now) also appear in Susan Moody’s detective story *Penny Dreadful* (1984), set in Abbot’s School, Canterbury. The author’s sons were in Linacre in the late 1970s and aspects of King’s Week 1979 are recognisable.

Several non-King’s School authors have given their characters an education in the Precincts. **John Newchurch** in Harold Webb’s *Canterbury Bells* (1938) attends the Priory School, Canterbury, in the 1520s and then experiences the dramatic events of the next few decades. **Geoffrey Neame**, the hero of Frank Dilnot’s *Neame of Kent* (1928), is sent to the King’s School in 1629. He is expelled after attacking Jasper Herrill, a new master, who had just hit a junior boy. It is also worth noting that it is **Master Tom** in R.H. Barham’s *Nell Cook: A King’s Scholar’s Story* (1842) who tells the famous ghost story in order to avoid being sent back to School through the Dark Entry. **Jack Archer** of G.A. Henty’s *Jack Archer: A Tale of the Crimea* (1883) lives in Harbledown and attends the King’s School under Dr Wallace. Jack then goes out to the Crimea and fights in several battles and at the siege of Sebastopol.

Two recent books describe real people who did not in fact come to King’s. Clive and Dorothy Himsworth’s *Hong Kong Boy* (1999) is a fictional memoir of non-OKS Eric Himsworth – **John Aldcott** in the book – the father of Clive (W 1961-66). More curiously in *Dutch: a Memoir of Ronald Reagan* (1999), the Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer **Edmund Morris** himself appears, in fictional guise. He spends three and a half years (1924-28) at the King’s School, before being expelled for singing an obscene song after succumbing to an overdose of sherry.



Our final examples illustrate the imaginative creation of ‘back-stories’ for popular heroes. C. Northcote Parkinson in *The Life and Times of Horatio Hornblower* (1970) reveals that **Horatio Hornblower** was sent to the King’s School on the death of his father early in 1793. “All we do know is that he was a tolerable mathematician but a mediocre ‘Grecian’ by the time he left the school...” C.S. Forester himself appears to have overlooked this phase of Hornblower’s life. And fans of the 1960s television series *Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons* will be pleased to learn that **Colonel White**, Commander in Chief of Spectrum, “studied at King’s College, Canterbury, Kent, a private school, until the age of 17”. As he was born in 2017, he is not yet on the OKS database.

Peter Henderson (Archivist)

FOOTBALL: FAREWELL FROM THE SKIPPER

March 2004. Having secured a hard-fought draw for the OKS, turning out for our annual game against the school at Birley's, the thirst for more regular and competitive OKS football, beyond the solitary game, was apparent. This thirst resided in myself and **Ed Wyand** (SH 1994-1999) who had a dream to re-form the '1998 Dream Team'. Looking back, I don't think I realised just how much would be achieved by the OKS Football Club and how much joy and mental pain it was to bring to so many people!

The first serious discussions about entering the Arthurian League were held in 2004. After a lot of administration and attendance at meetings the OKS became an official affiliated football club in 2005 and began its journey qualifying for the Arthurian League (www.arthurianleague.com), spurred on by the late Mike Press. The League itself has been in existence since 1961 and it seemed extraordinary that a school of the standing of King's Canterbury was not a part of an old boys' network that involves somewhere in the region of 600 people (24 fixtures featuring an average of 25 players) on any given Saturday from September to May. We were therefore understandably proud to

have gone through the full qualifying process in 2005 and early 2006, fulfilling fixtures on some rather choice pitches and against some 'over-friendly' opposition, thereby taking The King's School, Canterbury into the same bracket as other prestigious public schools.

So it was that we started the 2006-2007 season in Division 3 (the league comprises a Premier League & Divisions 1 through 5), started slowly, and lost our opening 2 fixtures. At that time, the general consensus was that we were just in the league to have fun and would not mind. But by half-way through our first season we'd started to string some results together and this culminated in a historic promotion from the division (finishing runners-up) at the first time of asking. More impressive still was the cup run that saw us defeat opposition in the higher Arthurian leagues, most notably Charterhouse II's, before lifting the Junior League Cup at the first time of asking on a sweltering afternoon in May on a pitch akin to something Curtly Ambrose would be more used to. What a first season! How could it be bettered?

Bettered it was! The club was fortunate to have a core of players who showed a commitment to spending their Saturdays on a football pitch, and ground out results across London. 2007-08 saw a familiar start to the season (losing our first 2 games) yet a remarkable run of 9 games unbeaten through the winter period saw us as title contenders. The title itself proved a step too far as we contrived to lose 2 of our last 3 games, yet there were so many positives and a fantastic season continued our ascent of the Arthurian League with another promotion, narrowly missing out on the title but finishing 2nd in Division 2.

2008-09 Division 1. Just another stepping stone on our ascent to the Premiership? Down to earth with a bump. Our first nine games saw eight defeats and a solitary draw. A cold dose of reality. After a pretty miserable season up to Christmas, it required a Herculean effort to avoid relegation. However, oft it is the case with the OKS, that when the chips are down the team pulls together. Our final six games saw us notch four wins and a draw, crucially winning the last three games of the season

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Below: John Hillier (3rd from right front row)

OKS OLYMPIANS

As the London Olympics approach, there are two OKS training to represent GB in the rowing: **Fran Houghton** (WL 1993-98) and **Tom Ransley** (MR 1999-2004). As they pursue their arduous but little-visible preparation, **Hugh Robertson** (BR 1976-81) has a not-necessarily-enviable prominence as Minister for Sport and the Olympics. Meanwhile one of the VIPs will be **HRH Prince Tunku Imran (Peter Ja'afar, MO 1961-66)**, who has represented Malaysia on the International Olympic Committee since 2006.

(It may well be that there are other OKS hoping to be selected; we shall be grateful to hear of or from them in due course.)

As for past Olympics, the Archivist has these records to hand (medallists underlined). We would be pleased to hear of any omissions.

2008 Frances Houghton: silver medal (rowing)
2004 Frances Houghton: silver medal (rowing)
2000 Fred Scarlett: gold medal (rowing); Frances Houghton (rowing)
2002 Winter Olympics: Hugh Pritchard (biathlon)
1996 Nick Strange (rowing)
1988 John Maxey (rowing)
1976 Thomas Bishop (rowing)
1964 Roger Sutton (hockey)
1960 Richard Fishlock, Colin Porter (rowing); Simon Osborne (athletics)
1952 Richard Norris (hockey)
1936 Alan Barrett: silver medal (rowing)
1920 Leslie Housden (athletics)

An insight into the memories of two of these Olympians was to be found in the alumni publication of St. Edmund Hall, Oxford, which they both attended: Richard Fishlock (WL 1950-56) writing that "one of the best things I ever did" was giving up cricket and starting to row at age 16, and Roger Sutton (WL 1951-56) describing how he took up hockey at King's at age 15 and was in the 1st XI after two games: "King's is a prominent hockey school".

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on the bounce to somehow avoid relegation by the narrowest of margins (goal difference!).

Three seasons later we still ply our trade in Division 1, picking up wins, draws and more often than not losses, but playing a brand of football akin to Swansea – pretty to watch and true to our values.

Seven years and 125 games on, the club has seen 94 OKS players pull on the OKS shirt, ranging in ages from 17 – 34. OKS of all ages who share a common bond become team-mates, and those team-mates become friends. Friendships are also born with opposition teams, such is the nature of the league. There is so much I could write (and a glut of stories to tell) but it remains one of my fondest achievements to have seen the club grow, mature and continue to evolve. I can honestly say that launching the OKS Football Club has provided me with great personal joy and, I believe,

helped individuals deal with some of life's darker moments. It is during these times that I see the real benefit and ethos of the club. What started out as a personal quest has morphed into something far greater and goes beyond just playing football each weekend; a set of individuals, bound by a common bond, typifying a strong set of core values – teamwork, friendship, commitment & camaraderie.

With the birth of my daughter, the headache of team selection and weekly organisation is now in the much more capable hands of **Rupert Colchester** (MR 1997-1999, MO 1999-2002) (organising the OKS is like a part-time job!). I hope I have the longevity of Scholes/Giggs to keep turning out for the club when time allows. The future of the OKS is bustling, very bright and I'd encourage any keen footballers reading this to get involved. I guarantee it will make a lasting impact on you...

John Hillier (MO 1993-98)

Dates for Diary

14th June

OKS Summer London Drinks,
The Antelope, Sloane Square

15th June

OKS Careers Day,
Canterbury

23rd June

Pilgrims Boat Club and KSC
Boat Club, Fun Day &
Dinner, Canterbury

28th June

King's Week commences

29th June

OKS Cricket, Birley's

30th June

Pilgrims Boat Club & KSC
Boat Club, 150th Anniversary
Row Past, Henley Royal
Regatta

OKS v KSC Fencing,
Green Court

1st July

OKS King's Week Lunch,
Green Court

14th September

OKS Canterbury Drinks,
The Dolphin,
St Radigunds Street

15th September

Mitchinson's House
30th Anniversary Reunion

29th September

The OKS Jubilee Concert
St James's Piccadilly