



2005 PRIZE GIVING

A number of OWs attended the RGS Annual Prize Giving in July. The prizes this year were presented by Fergus Walsh, who was at the RGS in the years 1974-1980. He was the Health Correspondent for the BBC TV News for seven years, and has been the Science Correspondent for three years. His current role is to appear “live” in studio during the 6.00pm news. In his short speech, he said that it was the first time that he had been on the stage in the Queens Hall. He told us about a number of incidents in his career, both serious and amusing, and stayed behind to mingle with the guests. It was a real joy to see him again. Do look out for him on the News!.

RICHARD STAYNOR

Those of you who were at the RGS in the late 1960s might remember Richard. He emigrated to Australia, where he works as a Lawyer. He no longer plays hockey at which he excelled at the RGS and afterwards. It was great that he visited the school in July with David Wiltshire, and saw all the new buildings, and met a few of the teachers who remembered him.

PHOTOGRAPH OF David Stone, David Wiltshire and Richard Staynor outside School House at RGS



RGS MEMORIES: HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

Brian Ransley 1947 - 1952

RGS seemed ever present during my childhood as my bedroom window looked straight out at the Georgian façade. RGS had always appeared large, across the vacant fields between Totteridge & Terriers. It was from this window that I watched the 'doodlebug' crash onto Redfords Sports Fields just a couple of hundred metres short of the school. Fortunately the window was one of the few that survived the explosion.

Actually my first contact with RGS was circa 1943, when as a very small boy, I accompanied my brother Leslie Ransley (1940-47) and I think Dave Perfect, on a Saturday afternoon visit. This was essentially to collect something Les had left behind in his locker. On arrival we watched the ATC 708 soccer team score a convincing win, with 'Gunner' Hunt, the RGS centre-forward, having his usual strong game. I was told that the ATC side at that time was one of the most successful such teams in the South of England. On the adjacent pitch, running parallel with Green Road, was a game of rugby. It was the first time I had seen rugby. RGS won 22 to nil and Les explained that it wasn't as big a score as it sounded.

As we couldn't get into the locked school in the conventional way, the three of us climbed through a window. Unfortunately Mr Tucker, no doubt investigating the noise, suddenly appeared in the changing room. Les said that it was my presence there that had saved them from a 'coshing', - whatever that meant!

We had several grammar schoolboys living near us in Totteridge. Don Turner, who lived next door, went to Jesus College, Oxford in 1936. He went with strict written instructions from his mother 'to give any girls a wide *birth*'. Eddie Sharpe lived around the corner and Barry Self down the road from him. All these were more my brother's age as were Tony & Michael Clarke. The Clarkes, the Bignells and the Ransleys were all pairs - why did we go there in families?

I was one of fifteen boys from Springs Gardens School who passed the *Eleven-Plus* in 1947. 'Spring Onions' were therefore well represented in the 'new bug' intake of ninety pupils. We were streamed in three forms; 2A, B & C according to age and situated in what was then called the Junior Building. Our Form Master in 2A was 'Arthur' Leggett who also took us for Physics, Mr Tucker, the Boss, was our Latin Master; Deputy Head Sam Morgan -Geography; Reg Howard -English; 'Mister' Cowan - French; 'Doc Muffin' -Divinity; 'Bill' Ashford -History and 'Doggie' Scott for Maths. Teachers' given names were the subject of some conjecture when unknown, and some nickname origins were lost in antiquity. The Head Boy was Lamb and his assistant was Tony Clarke. Ted Woodward, a soccer contemporary of my brother, was the 100 & 220 yards champion and was now making a name on the rugby field. Ron Emery, a very popular master, was in charge of sports & physical education. Mr Hett was in Canada for a year which seemed to be a popular move with some pupils. There were two 'Mr Tuckers', the other one, 'Johnnie', left to take up at Hatters Lane School in 1948. I believe that Peter Fry was Head Boy in 1948 followed by John Carrick, a fast bowler in the 1st XI.

My first day at RGS was less than productive. Firstly Brian Bignell & I decided to not be in the school choir so we sang off-key when Mr Rainbow tested us. As it happened, not being a choir member virtually excluded one from future school productions, which that year had changed from Shakespeare to Gilbert & Sullivan. Lined up in classes we then walked past 'Cruiser' Hood as he called Arnison, Disraeli, Fraser, Youens. I went home and announced that I was in Arnison House, the same fate as Bignell. Brother Les hit the roof. He had been in Disraeli, which according to him was a much better house, and asked why hadn't I told this to the master?

Having an elder brother who had just left after being at RGS for 7 years was a mixed blessing. He had been a Prefect and a clique of miscreants had ideas of taking retribution on his 11 year old kid brother. Maybe it was my threat of a potential link with Clarke & Woodward which precluded any further action! The masters were somewhat curious that this dark haired little boy was the brother of the red-headed Ransley who in 3rd year sixth had sported a moustache. When Mr Hett arrived back from Canada he assumed that Ransley L A was my uncle!



During the first term, the junior school had a lecture in the hall given by 'one of the last full-blooded Maori'. I remember him commencing with the words - '1.8 million people - 40 million sheep', but the rest escapes me. I know he omitted 'half a million rugby players!' At the end Mr Morgan thanked him and said to the gathering in his inimitable laconic style 'I guess you'll all be thinking of emigrating now!' Just a coincidence, Sam!

2A in 1947/8 was notable for being a trap for masters with less than a good memory for names. Our complement of thirty included the identical twins Gerald & Bernard Mayo, two Hearn and four unrelated Keens; Corris, Giles, Lawrence and Terry. Alas we also had a Smith and Jones. Unfortunately Giles Keen was to lose his life in the Royal Navy very soon after leaving school. Masters did not address any pupil by his given name preferring to surnames sometimes linked with uncomplimentary adjectives such as 'scraggy' or as in the case of the Keens, initials. Later we were to snigger when Emlyn addressed his son as Jones!

At the end of the first year we were streamed into X, Sc and A. I was fortunate to scrape into the X form which was designed to sit the recently established 'O' Level exams at 15 instead of 16 years. Unfortunately the government seemed to have other ideas and though we did indeed sit these in the 5th form under the Oxford conditions, the exam could not be officially taken until the following year.

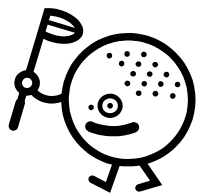
We spent five years in the 'Junior Building' as it continued to be called, gradually moving down the corridor, progressing to the end, next to the prefects' common room. Our X form had some notable

scholars including Dave Griffiths, Peter Keeling, Geoff Sherlock and Barri Jones. Barri's father, Emlyn Jones, was our form master seemingly for ever! I was never much good at French so Mr Jones & I had an unhealthy mutual disrespect as he believed in seemingly huge amounts of homework and invariably tested the preparation in full.

Other X Form names that come to mind are John Pursey, Alan Dale, John Guttridge, Brian Church, David Rear, 'Swot' Hatfield, Ben Johnson, Rob Small, Mick Lines, Tony Rushby & Brian Bignell. Including the Mayos, six of us had come from Spring Gardens.

Sam Morgan took me for geography throughout my time at RGS and I enjoyed every minute of it. This was thanks to some good advice from my brother who had pre-warned me of my inevitable doom if I was caught being less than 100% alert! I sat for nearly 5 years in the far left-hand corner of the geography room, next to the radiator and the window overlooking the parade ground. A view I never observed when Sam was in the room! Had I had paid as much attention to the other masters as I had to Sam, I believe my academic record would have been substantially better.

Many of the significant memories I have of RGS involve Sam Morgan: the throwing of Hearn's 'life savings' out of the window when he was caught counting it and the retort 'You'll be playing with your father's gold watch next!': the numerous pens and bric-a-brac thrown from the same window onto the parade ground below: the threats to 'tan your silly bottom' which were rarely carried out: the golf ball smashing the window above my head as I was entering the geography block: Sam's choice of 'For those in peril on the sea' at assembly after a wild winter's night and who could forget the strident call to "Get out the magazines!?"



There was also Pilgy Jones's 100 hp elastophication (now 75 kw) and his offer to take pupils for a trip around the parade ground for half-a-crown, after taking delivery of his brand new low headlight Morris Minor, and his comments on school reports such as 'Spends far too much time trying to be funny' or 'Should try a little work for a change'. He also caused a stir by placing Bignell on permanent detention.

Whilst in memory lane, Reg Howard's English and 'Sammy' Male's Latin periods also stand out for differing reasons.

There was not much change to RGS during this period of post-war austerity, however we did get the *en tout cas* tennis courts, when a plea went out during construction for us not to pinch the granite chips! A dining hall was also erected and lots of concrete laid between the boarding house, dining hall and the main building.

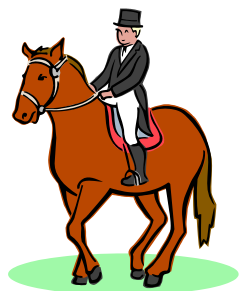
Geography, Chemistry (with Major Pattinson a representative golfer) and sport were most important. Pat Sharpe dominated as a cricketer in my mid-years. I had played cricket with Pat in the asphalt playground at Spring Gardens, before he moved to Beaconsfield. I enjoyed playing cricket as a 4th form Colt and as a 5th former in the Second XI with Roger File in 1951. I also represented the school at rugby as a new boy but regretted not being able to do likewise at soccer, which I could have done by going to a similar school in New Zealand.

Memories also include being a member of the newly formed Naval Section of the CCF and wearing bell-bottoms to school. These required extra large cycle clips to avoid the chain.

My final term at RGS pending my departure to New Zealand was less productive, being banished to the school library to study NZ History by 'Bill' Ashford. Sam had seemed surprised that I should be 'serious' about going to NZ. Reg Howard observed that they were cleaning up the country at last and

Emlyn Jones said that I should do well 'out there', which could have been construed as less than complimentary to either myself or my soon-to-be-adopted country!

My arrival in New Zealand coincided with the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki. Sports mad Kiwis were quick to point out that NZ had picked up the gold medal in the Women's Long Jump whereas the only British gold was for a horse! My sporting discomfort was to be increased not long after with the All Blacks tour of Britain. After several high scores in favour of NZ, I warned my colleagues to beware of Woodward when they play England. On the Monday after the Twickenham Test my tormentors, though conceding that Ted had played very well on the losing side, were quick to point out that he had been taken from the field on a stretcher. Ted had run into Dalziel a somewhat larger Canterbury sheep farmer!



There have been a few reminders of far away RGS High Wycombe in the past 53 years:

- My hearing that an Ashby drove to school in a Jaguar at a time, when most of the masters were still commuting by bicycle!
- I spoke with Dick Wing in Sydney maybe 25 years ago.
- Paul Jeans, has lived in Auckland for 50 years and we are still in touch. Paul has a nephew currently at RGS.
- I exchange occasional emails with Brian Bignell. We played soccer & cricket and travelled to school together for maybe 10 years.
- A fellow golf club member had a son at RGS, by the name of Devine, maybe in the 1970s.

About 10 or 15 years ago, I happened to see the *Parkinson* TV program interviewing Ian Drury. My ears picked up when Wycombe was mentioned. The name Drury meant nothing to me until my daughter said 'Hit me with your rhythm stick'. The content of the interview was quite amazing and I suspect this uncut version was not screened in UK.

More recently we've seen the various series of *That'll Teach 'Em*, screened in prime time. A bit like spot the building!

It was 30 years before I first returned to High Wycombe. A quick business trip in 1983 had conveniently required me to go to Princes Risborough and Hughenden. I enjoyed conducting my eldest of four Kiwi daughters around Wycombe including RGS. I have since returned with my wife having retired some years ago. My brother lives in Stevenage and we are usually based there when in UK. Maybe Les & I will get to the 450th Old Boys' Dinner in 2012!

Brian Ransley

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SIXTIES

Many thanks to Chris Andrew, who sent in a lot of photographs. We publish some below.



Can you recognise the actors, the musical and the year?



RGS Shooting team 1964. Can you name the marksmen?

RGS Memories 1959-64

I have just finished reading the July newsletter and this time I'm going to put electronic pen to paper rather than just intending to! We emigrated to New Zealand 20 years and I increasingly enjoy keeping up with OW news. The internet makes it so easy.

I started at the RGS in January 1959 at age 12 when the family moved from Shropshire. I had an unconventional introduction to the School. I had taken the 11+ at age 10, "for practice" and actually passed it, so started at my Shropshire grammar school very young. The equivalent RGS class was 4X and this is where I started my school career, in the portable Terrapin hut in Uplyme. However, a combination of my youth and the more rigorous RGS teaching approach, meant that I soon began to struggle. An example of this was in English, for which we had Mr A C ("Min") Hills. At my previous school we had combined History and English into a subject called Humanities. This meant that I had not yet covered some of the basic stuff like sentence construction. When I explained the concept of Humanities to "Min", he was most amused and asked me if I had learnt Chemistry and French together as well. This drew much laughter from 4X, although it didn't seem particularly funny to me at the time! I had "Min" for English again in my O Level year by which time my English had improved and we got on well. He was one of my better teachers.

So, it was demotion to 3X for me, much to my relief. Since 3X occupied the other half of the Terrapin hut, I simply pushed my desk out of 4X, across the corridor and into 3X and ended up sitting next to Edgar Piper. We are still friends and I hope to catch up with him again when we visit the UK next year. After that spectacular entrance, school life for me settled down into a conventional routine for the next five years.

My journey to and from School was somewhat of an epic. We lived at Chalfont St. Giles but my father knew that the RGS was a good school and persuaded the authorities that I should go there, even though the local grammar school was much closer. So each school day I left home at 7.30am, walked to the bus stop, caught the bus to Gerrards Cross, then the train to High Wycombe and then either caught another bus up Amersham Hill or walked up "The Back Way", beside a cemetery. The process was reversed in the evening, we had me arriving home any time between 5.00pm and 6.00pm, depending upon which train I caught and the bus connection.

Although my journey was probably the most tortuous, there were other boys who travelled greater distances, such as the pull of the RGS.

Often the train journeys between Gerrards Cross and High Wycombe were the highlight of the day, especially in the early days when the configuration was a steam engine pulling carriages without corridors. I can vaguely remember light bulbs being thrown out as we passed through the tunnel between Beaconsfield and High Wycombe and even the lights being fused by the cunning insertion of tin foil into the light socket. The train journeys also enabled us to catch up with our friends from the High School but that's another story!



A couple of memories from the Uplyme days. The first is of the legendary Fred Bog (real name Spencer, I think) who was the caretaker/cleaner, hence the nickname. He was a red faced saturnine man with a permanent scowl whom we teased vigorously from afar. I don't know whether he was miserable because we teased him or we teased him because he was miserable! We had Music in one of the older Uplyme classrooms (I cannot remember the teacher) and at one stage we were learning a song about Chronos, Charioteer to the Gods. The words were quickly adapted to something like "On with you Spencer, gallant charioteer/Away to the bogs, away to the bogs" etc etc. We sang this with much gusto within Fred's earshot and it produced the desired effect. This seemed a lot funnier at the time than it does now.

The second memory is along the same lines and relates to how we used to mercilessly tease and bait boys who were a bit different and whom we must have sensed were vulnerable, reducing them to tears on occasions. This behaviour was not confined to the third form and went on well into the fifth. I was as bad as anyone else at this and am really glad looking back that I was never on the receiving end.

The best teacher I had by a country mile (is that a New Zealand expression?) was John Phillip who taught us Physics in 6T3. He joined the RGS from the Navy where he had been an instructor and so had no problem maintaining discipline, despite a less than imposing physical presence. Physics was never easy for me but Phillip unlocked many of the mysteries which enabled me to think my own way through that subject. He managed to coax a B at A Level out of me and I don't know which of us was the more surprised! I don't think he stayed at the School for very long and I occasionally wonder what happened to him and whether any of my contemporaries remember him with the same affection that I do.

My worst memories of a teacher relate to a certain Modern Languages teacher whom I had for French up to O Level. The memories relate to his teaching methods and style. He taught using a mixture of fear and humiliation that drove me to virtual incoherence in class on occasions. Once, during a particularly bad run on the receiving end, I drew a picture of him on a piece of paper when I got home and proceeded to violently stick pins in it! This of course made no difference whatsoever and the incident has long been part of family legend. He was by no means the worst teacher I had and under him my results would have exceeded expectations. I was probably an over sensitive soul but do the ends justify the means? He certainly knocked out of me any love I may have developed for the French language. There were also other teachers who sporadically erupted into violence and bullying and who probably should have never been allowed to go anywhere near a classroom.

Sam Morgan's lessons were always interesting and often eventful. The incident that remains most strongly with me relates to a time when we were having Geography in an upstairs classroom. One boy (I cannot remember who and it wasn't me!) persisted in fiddling with his wooden pencil box. Sam gave him a couple of warnings and when the fiddling persisted seized the box and hurled it through an open window! It smashed to pieces on

the concrete below. Looking back, it was fortunate that an innocent person was not walking by underneath at the time.

Away from the classroom I surprisingly enjoyed the CCF, once a uniform was found that fitted my non-standard (rotund) shape. I rose to the dizzy heights of Corporal in the Army Section. I recall a weekend exercise under canvas at the Army establishment in Beaconsfield which was great fun, despite the food that we cooked (Compo Rations?) being the worst I had tasted up to that stage in my life. On the Saturday night we were allowed to go to the NAAFI (but not to drink!) and I felt very grown up. There was a Dusty Springfield record ("I Only Want To Be With You") being played over and over again on the juke box and whenever I hear it that NAAFI scene comes instantly to mind.

I also enjoyed my involvement with Spotlight, which was a fortnightly "wall magazine" that was posted on a notice board at one end of the main corridor. It was edited by Rodney Sabine and supervised by either Mr MacTavish or Mr Broadbridge (my memory has gone again) who had censorship rights. These were the days of satire ("That Was The Week That Was" on TV etc) and we fancied ourselves as being at the leading edge of that particular genre. I contributed a series of biting articles under the name "Disillusioned" and I would love to read them again now. However, despite our pretensions we actually did some good. Before the first edition we tested the School's fire hoses and found them leaky and in sore need of fixing; they were repaired soon after our scathing expose appeared.

So, just a few memories. Looking back from over 40 years distance, the RGS was a mixture of good and not-so-good times for me. I was certainly not unhappy but those days were not the happiest days of my life.

Regards to anyone who remembers me and to anyone who doesn't.

Chris Williams (1959-64)

Dear Ian,

Thank you for putting the notice about Matthew into the RGS Old Boys' website, we appreciate it very much. I notice however the dates are wrong, his dates at the RGS were 1994-2000, not 2004.

On a happier note, our Michael (RGS 1997-2003) recently participated in the filming of a television show about Viking boats; as part of a team of Oxford lads he was flown to Denmark where he lived in a Viking village for three days and then competed against a team of Cambridge boys to row and sail round the coast of the North Sea and back to England. (Not wearing Viking garb though - they had proper modern thermal sailing clothes from Gibb!)

The show was commissioned by Channel 4 and will be televised sometime in December; a separate edit may also be shown on the Discovery Channel. I will send further details when we know the exact dates, as you may like to put this in the newsletter - I expect those who knew Michael at school might have fun watching him battling five foot waves in the North Sea and having to sleep in a reproduction Viking stable!

regards,

Nora Bennett

Ed. For those of you who missed it in the July newsletter, we reported then the very sad news of Matthew Bennett's death.

Dear Ian

I've just seen the website and thought you might like this photograph of the RGS Cross Country team 1952-3. I can't identify all but here are some:

Back row:1? 2? 3? 4 George Smythe 5?

Front row: 1 ? Fellows 2 Alan Barrett (Capt) 3 ? Carpenter 4 Richard Garratt (Vice Capt) 5 Dick ?(colours)



Perhaps your readers can name some more of the others.

Incidentally Taffy Rees, a Loughborough graduate was our sports master in 1952 and he took a party of about 30 boys from RGS to the 1952 Olympic games in Helsinki. Zatopek had already won the 10,000 meters before we arrived from Denmark but I saw several memorable races. Bannister came a disappointing 4th in the 1500 meters and Chris Chatterway fell on the last bend of the 5,000 meters which Emil Zatopek won. Perhaps for me the greatest memory of the games was of seeing Zatopek enter the Olympic stadium to win his first ever marathon. So it was wonderful to see last Sunday Paula Radcliffe win the 2005 World marathon title in Helsinki and in a time faster than Zatopek's in 1951!

Best wishes.

Alan Barrett

Ed. Has anyone else any memories of the trip to Helsinki?

PLEASE CHECK THE INFORMATION

In recent weeks we have updated the list of Missing OWs, list of OWs abroad and the personal details of OWs that have been sent in. If you wonder why you are on the Missing list, this is because you are a fully paid-up member of the OW Club, and the annual magazine has been returned with the message "Gone Away". Do let me know your present address, and you can then receive the magazine. Also please let me know the contact address of any friend, whose name appears on the list. Please check that your details are correct, and if you

find that the information about yourself or your email address is out-of-date, please send me any amendments.

2005 WYCOMBIENSIAN

This has recently been published. With this issue, we mark 100 years of publication of the School Magazine. Dr. Martin Smith, present Editor of the magazine, has written an article entitled One Hundred Years Ago and here are extracts from it. The full magazine is available to [download here](#)

The first Wycombiensian appeared in December 1905 and sold 116 copies. Its editor was the newly-appointed Second Master and Mathematics teacher, Reginald Threlfall. His opening editorial expressed the hope that the magazine “will serve as a link between past and present generations,” and “that those who are now in the School will some day turn with pleasure to the record of their doings in their boyhood.”

Initially the magazine was issued each term, but publication was irregular during the Second World War because of restrictions on the use of paper. Thereafter it has appeared biannually and since 1980 it has been published annually.

For the RGS 1905 was a highly significant year. In April, following the sudden death of the Headmaster, George Peachell, a new man took the helm. This was George Arnison, aged 30, and his appointment coincided with, and to a large extent was responsible for the beginning of the ascent that would make the RGS one of the leading schools in the country.

The school in 1905 was a pale shadow of what it would become. Firstly it was very small. Standing on its Easton Road site, its comparatively new building, (now St John's Place), dating from 1882-83 and lit by gas, had accommodation for 100 boys. However, although Wycombe's population had risen to 20,000, there were only 46 day boys and 10 boarders in 1905. The staff numbered just four. It was also a very young school. Because many of the more affluent parents treated the school as a 'prep' school, few of the pupils stayed beyond the age of 13. A maximum of 10 boys were Foundation Scholars, who occupied free places open to boys from elementary schools: the rest of the pupils were 'capitation boys', charged £6.75p a year, if under 12 and £8 if over 12. Boarders paid between £44 and £50.

In fact for most of its long life the RGS had languished as an educational backwater, small in size and almost wholly lacking in academic distinction. It was particularly hampered by the absence of much 'hinterland' in the town. Two reasons account for this. For a start, there was a long-standing indifference among the mercantile and commercial classes of High Wycombe to the academic secondary education, emphasizing classical disciplines, which the school offered. Religious nonconformity also played its part. In the English Civil war Wycombe had been a stronghold of Presbyterians, Baptists and congregationalists: Wesleyan Methodism then made inroads in the eighteenth century. The school, with its Latin Grammar, Church of England catechism, and Anglican Headmasters, many of whom were in Holy Orders, therefore stood somewhat apart from the town. Although the RGS had ceased to be an Anglican monopoly in 1856, this tradition of detachment continued.

Also holding back progress was the poverty of the ancient charitable foundation on which the school rested. In 1904 the foundation's annual income was just over £700, of which the school received £474. Money was so scarce that Peachell had even subsidized his assistant teachers' salaries from his own pocket!

How the RGS turned the corner in the early decades of the 20th century will be revealed in the next newsletter.

FAREWELL!

A number of teachers recently left the RGS, and the tributes to them are published below:

DR RAY DOSSER

Ray graduated from the University of Wales and after studying for a PhD in transition metal chemistry went onto further research at the University of Sussex. He enjoyed taking tutorials and decided that a career in education was worth considering. However Ray didn't fancy doing any more exams so he did his PGCE at Chelsea College, because it was an exam-free zone.



Ray joined the RGS in 1973 along with Mike Earl and Steve Gamester, and as well as contributing to the Chemistry Department was asked by Jock Learmonth to run the first rugby B Team of the Under 13s to play on a regular basis. Ray knew so little about rugby, because all his previous involvement was with football, that he had to rely on the guidance of Derek Stubbs and particularly television to learn enough to run the team, which he did successfully for 16 years!

You can say a lot about Ray's character by looking at his life-long devotion to football as a player and fan. Ian Wilson announced in a staff meeting that Ray had played in over 600 games for the staff over a 30-year period, and even in his last season Ray's skill and commitment were still respected by the boys.

Ray's perseverance, tolerance and in fact fatalism are well illustrated by his support of Wolverhampton Wanderers, man and boy. Despite the Wolves not experiencing a lot of success in recent years, Ray remains convinced that the glory days will return. In fact Wolves were the early model for the Chelsea revival, having a rich supporter pumping lots of money into the club to buy success. It was only the result that was different.

While carrying out his post-doctoral research, Ray once worked alongside a man whom he described as being pretty quiet, had one research assistant and was yet to make an impact. This turned out to be Dr. Harry Kroto, who later won a Nobel Prize for discovering the structure of a completely new and unexpected form of the element carbon. Ray always was an excellent judge of character!

Joking apart, Ray had massive respect both from staff and the boys throughout a career in which he made an enormous contribution to the life of the school. Ian Clark, who worked closely with Ray when Ray was a Middle School Head of Year, describes him as absolutely dedicated to the work, great at dealing with the masses of paperwork involved and very skilled when facing difficult cases, where he displayed care, compassion and determination.

Ray accepted a variety of further roles during his career, including Press Officer, Head of Chemistry and on a rotating basis with Heads of Physics and Biology, Head of Science. His family were also heavily involved with the school, his son studying at the RGS and his wife contributing to its musical life.

On behalf of the Department, you have been a great colleague to work with. Enjoy cleaning out the loft and reading Malcolm Cook's diaries! Happy retirement!

Peter Butterworth

HAPPY RETIREMENT TO DAVID KEYSELL! A full tribute to him will appear in next year's Wycombiensian

WILL PHELAN

Will Phelan was appointed to the History Department in 1995. He quickly settled in to his HQ in Room 22, despite being the largest member of staff located to the smallest room in the school. There was hardly any room left for the boys and they certainly had no space in which to muck about. In any case that was not going to be an option. Will never put up with any nonsense, and his booming voice would quell dissent not just in his room, but in most of those around him.

He has made an invaluable contribution to History teaching at RGS and put his own stamp on lessons by pursuing his individual enthusiasms. There will be many boys who will cherish memories of the outside enactments of the battle of Hastings and will take to their graves a knowledge of Vlad the Impaler. At Sixth Form Level he made himself into something of an expert in nineteenth century Irish history. He has also been a regular staff presence on the French/History trips to France and he has taken gangs of Sixth Formers to lectures in London. He has grappled with and embraced the bewildering demands flung at us by the merry-go-round of syllabus changes with admirable flexibility. In addition, his contribution to games in the school has been enormous. In particular, he has steered U15/16 rugby teams through successful seasons and through numerous rounds of Sevens competitions. Cricket is a great passion of Will's and in his early days in the school he took on cricket teams. I know that his recent election to the MCC was a highlight of his life.

David Levin propelled Will into pastoral work in the Middle School. Here he found his future career development, cutting his teeth on the mad and the bad in Years 10 and 11. His mixture of authority and empathetic understanding of problems enabled him to make this a successful period of his life at the RGS. It was on the basis of this that he secured a well-deserved promotion that takes him and his wife, Lorna, off to be Head of Sixth Form at Abingdon School.

Will Phelan will be much missed in the History Department for his infectious joviality and loyal support, but the video tapes will heave a sigh of relief that they are now less likely to be mangled, mammoaked or mislaid.

John Roebuck

ELIZABETH EDWARDS

Liz Edwards joined the staff in September 1999 as second in charge of the English Department, and left in 2004 to go to with her husband, Paul, and 2-year old daughter to Wales where Paul has taken up a teaching post. She settled in to the RGS English Department very quickly, and was immediately popular with her commitment and sunny personality. She was a very effective and efficient second in department who was happy to full responsibility for Key Stage 4 and help wherever necessary.

As a teacher she was respected and popular and worked very hard for the pupils. She showed equal enthusiasm for her Year 7s and her Sixth Form classes.

Liz taught Communication Studies for a while when there was a vacancy, she set up a review reading club, she ran the creative writing club and she was instrumental in starting the Year 7 Accelerated Reader programme. She is an aerobics teacher and one year she ran after school classes for the staff. She is also musical and she performed in one of the staff revues. In fact she entered wholeheartedly into the life of the school and made many firm friends.

Liz is sadly missed by the school and the English Department for her professionalism, her inspirational teaching and her friendly personality. We wish both her and Paul every success in the future and hope that work and family will prosper in Wales.

FAREWELL also to Ian Fullarton, Head of Physics for four years, Peter Turner, who taught Maths and was much involved in rugby and cricket until 2004, and Lyn Turner, who taught Business Studies and ran the young Enterprise Scheme until 2004.

Margaret Carroll, who had worked at the RGS since 1976 on the Caretaking Staff, retired this year as Senior Caretaker. She was never one to hold back when she had a clear view or

opinion of any school matter, but underneath was a heart of gold and a real love for the RGS. We wish her a long and healthy retirement.

If you have any memories of any of the above staff, do send them in!

WHY ARE YOU LATE AGAIN?

A further selection of some excuses written recently in Matron's Lateness Book:

Roads closed.

Did not wake up.

My birthday.

Dad busy.

Took different route.- bad idea.

Hockey kit needed to be tumble dried.

Bad blisters.

Breakfast late.

Forgot it was Mufti-Day; went back to change.

Estate agent coming so I had to clean my room.

Ed. Can you remember any excuses you ever used for being late or missing school?

There are the usual reports on sports, societies, and trips in this year's Wycombiensian.

If any of you would like to receive a copy of this year's Wycombiensian, please send me a cheque for £4.

SAD NEWS

Jonathan Chapman (1991-3) who came to the RGS for the Sixth Form from Claires Court, was killed on Saturday 30th July in the Gulf of Mexico while working underwater as a commercial diver. We extend our deepest sympathy to his family and friends.

MORE PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE EARLY FIFTIES



CCF Annual Inspection 1952 – can you name any of the chaps?



Prefects c 1952 (I think some look too old to be prefects – Judy said) – can you name them and give their age – that will test you!

Many thanks to Danny Thomas for sending these in. Some were published in the July Newsletter.

LATE NEWS!

TIM DINGLE, Headmaster of the RGS since 1999 is to leave the school. The following article by Margaret Smith appeared in the Bucks Free Press.

TIM Dingle, head of the Royal Grammar School in High Wycombe is leaving the school at Easter to take up a job in Argentina.

The 46-year-old, who has been head at RGS for the past seven years, has accepted the position of head at the "Eton of South America", St George's College in Buenos Aires, an English-speaking mixed private school taking children from three to 18.

One of his first jobs, when he gets to St George's, will be to welcome the RGS 1st rugby 15, who are touring Argentina in the summer and have a fixture against the college as their first match.

Mr Dingle was head-hunted a year ago and has been offered headships in public schools in this country. He turned them down.

"There are very few places I would consider going to from this place. I think RGS is a better school than all but the top two or three in the country. But this was interesting. It seemed a job where I shall have real challenge and a wonderful adventure."

Mr Dingle came to RGS after 18 years at the public Mill Hill School, in London. In his time at the school he has always been outspoken about things he thinks are not right with Buckinghamshire Local Education Authority, and he is still critical. But he says he is not leaving for that reason.

"Sue Imbriano (Bucks education chief) knows that I and the LEA have had challenges. They will continue, whoever is head."

It is not the chief, whom he admires greatly, but those below that he is criticising. He says they do not give the schools proactive support, do not visit often enough and do not understand the daily problems heads face.

"Officers lower down the tree are not of the quality that Bucks deserves," he said. "We are letting our schools down. We are not offering the cutting edge innovation and education we should in Bucks, even though we are the best. The really good practice in so many schools is not being shared, particularly through the inertia of the LEA."

"But this has nothing to do with my decision to leave. There comes a time when you have to make a change before you get too old."

"I am very sad to be leaving. I am passionate about the school. I love it."

The sporting pictures and prints that decorate the walls of Mr Dingle's study will now move to South America. They reflect his view that a school is about more than exam results.

"When I arrived, I said I wanted to make the school great, but that was not about making it an academic hothouse, but about love of learning, music, drama and sport."

On his study wall, a printed message reads: "You can have everything you want if you have the courage to dream it, the intelligence to make a realistic plan and the willingness to see it through."

That now applies to him as well as the boys.

Ed. We congratulate Tim on his appointment and wish him well.

REMINDERS

- 1. If you are a member of the OW Club, and left after 1950, and want to continue to receive the OW Magazine to be sent out in January, please let me know. All those who left before 1950 will automatically continue to receive the magazine.**

2. If you live or work in the London area, and would like to be in touch with OWs there, do contact either Martin Davidson (Martin.Davidson@herbertsmith.com) or Arshad Khan (Arshad.Khan@sackers.com)

Can anyone help?

Daniel Barton who left the RGS in 2001 and has just completed his MA in Politics is looking for job opportunities in the political field. If anyone can help, please email: db312@yahoo.co.uk

DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL DINNER SATURDAY APRIL 22ND

BOOK THE DATE NOW!

NEXT NEWSLETTER

This will be published on November 22nd. Please send in your contribution, your memories, your photographs to me, Ian Clark ianrclarkuk@yahoo.co.uk

Ian edits the Newsletter, Judy De Gelas embellishes it and Martin Berry ensures that it appears on the website.



RGS High Wycombe